

Press Release

February 25, 2008

Auditorium organ for the Elbe Philharmonic Hall Hamburg

The internationally renowned organ makers Klais win competition

The organ makers Johannes Klais Orgelbau GmbH & Co. KG have emerged as the winners of the competition to build the organ in the large auditorium of the Elbe Philharmonic Hall Hamburg. Over the next two years the long-standing company, which is based in Bonn, will plan and build the organ together with Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, the building's architects. Six organ makers took part in the competition. Building of the organ has been made possible by a seven-figure donation by the entrepreneur and former President of the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, Peter Möhrle.

Peter Möhrle, who donated the organ, said that: "I was taken with the Elbe Philharmonic Hall Hamburg project and in particular the design of the concert hall from the outset. I would like my donation to ensure the Hall creates a sensation not just in architectural terms. In order to be able to include the entire repertoire of all genres of music in the concert program, the building of an organ is absolutely imperative. Not least of all the organ will make this auditorium a very special venue for performances."

Cultural senator Prof. Karin v. Welck thanked Peter Möhrle for his generous donation and emphasized that this was further proof of the unusually high level of commitment on the part of the citizens of Hamburg to the Elbe Philharmonic Hall Hamburg project. Of the competition winner she said: "I am extremely pleased that the internationally established organ makers Johannes Klais won the competition. I am convinced that both in terms of its musical quality and appearance the organ will meet the exacting standards associated with the Elbe Philharmonic Hall Hamburg."

The organ will be designed as a four-manual instrument with some 65 stops, a mechanical action and a second, electric, moveable console. An echo organ with an additional four stops is planned for the reflector above the orchestra. The sound produced is intended to correspond in particular to music as of the 19th century, as well as the requirements of contemporary music.

The General Manager of the Elbe Philharmonic Hall Hamburg and Laeiszhalle, Christoph Lieben-Seutter, said that "Philipp Klais was inspired both by the main auditorium in the Elbe Philharmonic Hall Hamburg as well as his discussions with the architects to produce a design that blends in harmoniously with the entire project. We were won over in particular by the aural concept: a clear, consistent line whose starting point is Late Romanticism and which will produce an authentic rendition of the major repertoire for organ and orchestra. This organ is set to be a major asset for the concert scene in Hamburg."

Whether in Tokyo or Singapore in Madison or Caracas, in Athens, Cologne or St. Petersburg, in Brisbane or Kuala Lumpur: For over 125 years pipe organs that can be heard in churches and concert halls around the world have been built in Bonn by Klais.

Philipp C.A. Klais: “We are delighted to be able to be a part of this exciting project. The Elbe Philharmonic Hall Hamburg will be a building that is open to everyone. It will be a milestone for Hamburg, as well as for Germany and, I am convinced, Europe. In this context it is important for us to build an instrument that fills the auditorium with its warm, full sound and that is accepted by the audience on account of its sound, thereby finding a place in their hearts. When building a concert organ we have no standardized ideal solution. Each instrument is designed with the specific musical, acoustic and architectural concept of the auditorium in mind. In order to achieve optimum results we work closely with the architects and design team. In doing so, over the decades in which we have been building organs we have come to know organ experts, acousticians, and architects not just as specialists and engineers, but also as artists, each of whom in their own special way design space, and as such acoustic space. As a 3D auditorium with flowing balconies and galleries, configured on a dockside warehouse, the Elbe Philharmonic Hall in Hamburg represents a particular challenge.”

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any further questions.

Contact:

Stiftung Elbphilharmonie
Gesa-Thorid Schuwirth
Ferdinandstrasse 65/ 67
20095 Hamburg
Germany

Tel.: + 49 (0)40.32825261
Fax 040.32825264
Gesa.Schuwirth@Stiftung-Elbphilharmonie.de