

THE HISTORIC ORGANS IN PISTOIA AND ON THE PLAIN

Destination: Pistoia - The Cathedral of S. Zeno, the Church of S. Maria delle Grazie, the Church of Spirito Santo and the Church of S. Francesco. **Quarrata (Vignole)** - The Church of S. Michele Arcangelo. *We also advise visits to:* **Pistoia** - The Church of S. Domenico, the Church of Ss. Prospero e Filippo, UFIP. **Casalguidi** - The Church of S. Pietro. **Agliana** - The Church of S. Niccolò.

One of the great treasures in the territory of Pistoia that has made it famous throughout the world is the priceless patrimony of historic organs that it still possesses. The visit of the Emperor of Japan Akihito and his wife to Pistoia in 1993 was in fact emblematic from this point of view as, while they were here, the couple expressed the wish to see the ancient Tronci organ preserved in the Church of S. Maria delle Grazie and the Empress broke away from all the official protocol by playing the Ave Maria by Gounod on it.

Pistoia boasted some important organs, like those in the Church-

es of S. Domenico and Spirito Santo, as early as the 17th century. The Tronci and Agati, two famous organ-building families from Pistoia, whose work was appreciated both in Italy and abroad, first started their activity in this field in the 18th century.

The Academy of Italian Organ Music was set up in Pistoia in 1975 with the aim of further increasing the importance of this tradition; in 1984 it was transformed into a foundation under the same name thanks to the collaboration of the City Council, the Province of Pistoia and the Cassa di Risparmio di Pistoia e Pescia (tel. Academy 0573 403053).

The organ in the Cathedral of San Zeno



Luigi and Benedetto Tronci built this instrument for the Villa Rucellai at Campi Bisenzio in 1793; the Cathedral of Pistoia purchased it in 1998. In perfect working order, the organ is considered one of the finest and most interesting organs to have been built by the Tronci family in the province and has also preserved all its original elements, including the

mean-tone temperament with which it was tuned.

How to get there:

by car, from the Pistoia motorway exit: keep to the right and con-

tinue as far as the roundabout. Take the third exit, going past the Infopoint structure and then turn left at the railway bridge. Turn right at the end of the road into Via IV Novembre; carry straight on here and then take Via Cellini, the second road on the left, to reach the free Cellini car park. A shuttle service leaves from here for the old city centre (tel. 800 277825, active from 6.40am to 8.30pm); get off at the bus stop in Piazza Garibaldi. From here take Via Panciatici on the left and continue straight on as far as Piazza del Duomo.

by train: all the destinations on the itinerary are a 10/15 minutes walk away from the station.

Info e accoglienza: Cathedral of San Zeno

Piazza del Duomo - Pistoia - tel. 0573 25095

Opening hours and prices: daily 8am-12.30pm and 3.30-6.30pm - entrance free

The organ in the Church of S. Maria delle Grazie



The instrument is the result of a reconstruction of an earlier organ by Andrea di Nanni, dated 1506; the Tronci family renovated it in 1755 and, although it is still in working order, it is now awaiting a restoration that will give it back its original aspect. The organ was partly restored in 1984 by the Japanese restorer Hiroshi Tsuji, who also made

a copy of it, now preserved in the Museum of Fine Arts at

Gifu in Japan.

How to get there:

on foot, from Piazza del Duomo: walk down Ripa della Comunità and turn left into Via Pacini to reach Piazza Giovanni XXIII. Here take Via del Ceppo and follow it as far as Piazza S. Lorenzo. The church is on the left.

Info and reception: Church of S. Maria delle Grazie

Piazza S. Lorenzo - Pistoia - tel. 0573 23129

Opening hours and prices: weekdays: 7.30-10am; holidays: 8.30-10.30am - at other times the church can be visited on request - entrance free

The organs in the Church of the Spirito Santo



The oldest organ, which is situated on the left wall, was constructed by the Flemish organ maker Guglielmo Hermans in 1664. Thanks to this instrument, Pistoia was able, for the first time, to hear organ music from northern Europe, until then unknown, so that it immediately became an object of great admiration, as well as of inspiration, for

the local organ makers, the Tronci and the Agati families, who copied several of its registers, especially the reeds and the cornet. The twin chancel contains a more recent organ in

North German style, constructed by the organ maker Glauco Ghilardi from Lucca in 2007, whose façade is identical and contemporary to the Hermans organ on the opposite wall. The two organs can be played in duet by two organists.

How to get there:

on foot, from the Church of S. Maria delle Grazie: go back to Piazza Giovanni XXIII and from here turn right into Via delle Pape. On reaching Piazza del Carmine, turn left into Via del Carmine, then take Via de' Rossi, the second street on the left. Follow this as far as Piazza dello Spirito Santo.

Info and reception: Church of Spirito Santo

Piazza dello Spirito Santo - Pistoia - tel. 347 7429346

Opening hours and prices: daily 8.30am-8pm
entrance free

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The organ in the Church of S. Francesco



The ancient symphonic organ of 1896 in this church is the work of the English organ maker William Hill and of priceless importance. The instrument was purchased by the Academy of Italian Organ Music Foundation and placed here in 1996.

How to get there:

on foot, from the Church of the Spirito Santo: retrace your steps along Via de' Rossi and carry straight on into Via di S. Andrea as far as Piazza S. Francesco. The church can be found on the left.

Info and reception: Church of S. Francesco

Piazza S. Francesco, 1 - Pistoia - tel. 0573 368096

Opening hours and prices: daily 7.30-12am and 5-6.30pm - entrance free

The organ in the Church of S. Michele Arcangelo, Vignole



Originally built by the Agati family, the organ is still in perfect working order, thanks to its recent restoration (restoration by F.lli Ruffatti, Padova, 1989). It was carried out in 1797 and clearly shows that the influence of the Hermans

model preserved in the Church of the Spirito Santo was still very much alive in Pistoia even in this period. The organ case is richly decorated with painted friezes in false relief.

How to get there:

by car, from the Cellini car park: turn left into Via Cellini and at the stop sign turn right into Via Fermi. After about 500 m take the Tangenziale (bypass) in the direction of the motorways. Take the first exit off the roundabout and carry straight on, passing the first set of traffic lights. Turn left into Via Fiorentina Sr66 at the second set of traffic lights. Carry straight on in the direction of Quarrata and, at the traffic lights at Olmi, turn left into Via IV Novembre/Sp6 and continue as far as Vignole.

Info and reception: Church of S. Michele Arcangelo

Via di Mezzo, 134 - Vignole - tel. 0573 718747/718778 (Fabiano Capaccioli)

Opening hours and prices: contact Mr. Fabiano Capaccioli directly at the indicated phone number for visits to the Church - entrance free

We also advise visits to:

Although not in working order, the organ preserved in the **Church of S. Domenico in Pistoia** is particularly important. Carried out by Cosimo Ravani from Lucca in 1617 on a commission from the Rospigliosi family, it is richly decorated and monumental in size.



The **Church of Ss. Prospero e Filippo** contains a richly decorated organ in perfect working order, the result of the joint work of the Cacioli and Tronci families and dated 1745.

A Tronci organ of 1778 can be found inside the **Church of S. Pietro at Casalguidi**, in the Borough of Serravalle pistoiese; renovated in around the late 19th century by the Agati-Tronci firms, it has been recently restored and is in very good working order (F.lli Ruffatti Padova 1988).

Another Tronci organ of 1868 is preserved in the **Church of S. Niccolò** in the Borough of **Agliana** and still in good condition.

UFIP (Unione Fabbrianti Italiani Piatti or the Union of Italian Cymbal Makers) was founded in 1931 by the union of the craft workshops of F.lli Tronci, Zanchi and Biasei, Marradi Benti & C. of Pistoia and Leopoldo Rosati of Florence, though its history dates from much earlier. In the second half of the 19th century, with the progressive decline of the production of great classical organs, the interests of the Tronci family were directed more and more towards bronze work. They started producing huge tubular bells and gongs, some of them commissioned by great composers like Puccini, Verdi and Mascagni. Several craft industries in Pistoia that were specialised in bronze work for musical instruments thus joined forces to form Ufip in 1931.

A member of the Tronci family is still head of the firm, renowned throughout the world for its production of musical cymbals that are used in the concerts of many contemporary rock and jazz percussionists (private structure, tel. 0573 532066 open during working hours). Moreover, the **Luigi Tronci Foundation** (private structure, tel. 0573 994350) has recently been set up to testify to Pistoia's ancient craft traditions in the field of music and displays a collection of extremely valuable artistic and musical exhibits, numerous instruments and a vast corpus of documents.

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