

Railway Stations of Europe tell their (Hi)Stories

A TV-series 9x30 Min. by Wolfgang Bergmann, Martin Patek, Francisco Aguirre, Neilo Correale

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Part 1: Paris

by Wolfgang Bergmann

La Gare De L'Est, built in 1848-52 by Francois Duquesney, is considered to be the most beautiful station in the world. From here the first Orient-Express train started out in 1883. The old Gare Montparnasse has completely been demolished in the last years. The new station can be considered as an attempt to express the architecture of the new high-speed TGV-train.

Part 2: London

by Wolfgang Bergmann

England is the cradle of both industrialisation and railway culture. English railway stations acted as a pattern and influenced the whole world. In London two stations located close to each other. King's Cross Station and St. Pancras Station in Euston Road, provide a fascinating impression of the topography of English railway architecture. King's Cross is the oldest station built in a strict functional manner, while St. Pancras has the style of a Gothic church, with a large neighbouring hotel for traveller's convenience.

Part 3: Leipzig

by Wolfgang Bergmann

In Leipzig the Hauptbahnhof was created in the form of a joint construction by both the Prussians and the Saxons; it was completed in 1915, in the midst of World War I, and is still today the largest main station in Europe. The traveller has the impressio of entering a basilica.

Part 4: Budapest: Empress, Stalin, McDonald

by Wolfgang Bergmann

In Budapest the West Station was completed in 1870 by the Parisian builder Eiffel – long before he became famous – and has just been restored. It is the most significant monument in Central Europe and symbolizes the merging of architecture from West and Central Europe. Soon after, in 1884, the new East Station was completed under the direction of the Hungarian architect Gyula Rochlitz. The outer construction in Renaissance style conceals the modern and functional character of the whole building. Emigrants meet nowadays at the East Station to ready for the leap to the Mecca of the Western World.

Part 5: Prag-Wien

by Martin Patek

Prague's wonderfully preserved Art Nouveau station has become an important junction for today's emigrants from East to West. We found shots of Charlie Chaplin on the train to Vienna in film archives. Chaplin arrived there at the Franz-Josef Bahnhof in 1931, on a promotion tour for his movie 'City Lights'. Vienna has lost its important former culture in railway stations. The Franz-Josef Bahnhof, the Nordwest- and the Westbahnhof disappeared during the war and the subsequent destructions. That this is not always necessary, we illustrate with a ride on the Vienna metro to Gersthof, one of the skilfully restored Art Nouveau stations designed by the architect Otto Wagner.

Part 6: Istanbul

by Wolfgang Bergmann

In Istanbul, the Orient Express still finished at the Sirkeci and Haydarpasa Station. The old Pullman cars are still in service on the Bagdad line. Here, where Asia begins, we will be more interested in the spectacular journey and the colourful milieu than in the architecture.

Part 7: Madrid: Atocha and Principe Pio

by Francisco Aguirre

Spain has become dynamic member of the European Community. Its railway stations are in the process of being renovated and adapted for the new high-speed routes. They reflect both the past and the future. In Madrid, the Atocha Station is the junction of the lines to Lisbon and to the North. The Paris – Lisbon express will soon stop here. The Atocha Station and the adjacent parks and Prado was a focus of anti-Francoist rioting. The majestic Estacion del Norte used to be the terminus for all lines to the North. Today, it is the elegant housing of the station serving the suburban lines..

Part 8: St. Petersburg

by Wolfgang Bergmann

In Leningrad / Petrograd there are two interesting railway stations which must be presented together: Vitebsky Station for its architecture and Finnish Station for its historical past. Lening came here in the sealed German train; the station was also the point where emigrants fled and people sought protection while fleeing from Hitler's persecution.

Part 9: Mailand - Stazione Centrale

by Nello Correale

In Milan the Stazione Centrale was designed by Staccini in 1906 in Art Nouveau style. The construction was suspended during World War I, but then completed in 1930 amidst the grandiose pomposity which heralded Fascism.