
13th International Alpine Music Festival Saas-Fee

A village full of music

The International Alpine Music Festival took place from 8 to 11 July 2010 in the village of Saas-Fee. Over four days, villagers and visitors enjoyed excellent performances from five local musical societies, nine landler groups, a yodelling duo and an Alpine horn and panpipe duo, as well as from the famous band the Mürztaler, who were regulars at the Musikanten Stadl concerts.

Under the slogan "Folk music by and for folk music fans", countless musicians and music fans met once again in Saas-Fee for this year's International Alpine Music Festival. From Thursday to Sunday, the glacier village became a musical stage, and music, singing and laughter could be found at every turn. Landler groups performed on many of the village's restaurant terraces, while the yodelling duo and the AlpPan duo moved through the streets, stopping to play at various points around the village on Saturday and Sunday. There was also a joint concert by all the landler groups on the village square every day. The first of these, which took place on Friday evening, welcomed audiences to the festival and marked the beginning of the groups' performances in the village restaurants. On Saturday and Sunday there were two more performances by the "Big-Ländler-Formation", which was assembled at short notice especially for the event. This year an Austrian group also joined the many Swiss landler groups, meaning the upbeat Schwyzerörgeli sound alternated with Styria's own entertaining brand of folk music. A particular treat was the AlpPan duo, who played at the festival for the first time in 2010. Kurt Ott and Käthi Kaufmann charmed their audiences with wonderful melodies on the Alpine horn and the pan pipes.

Actual start of the festival on the Thursday

However, the festival actually started on the Thursday evening in the Festival Hall where the local clubs (alphorn friends of the glacier village, "Gletscherecho" yodelling club, old-time music, the Saas-Fee dance group in traditional costumes and the Crazy Potatoes from Saas-Balen) were enthusiastically received by over 200 visitors. After these performances, Gersau-based band the Smashing Potatoes played some typical Swiss folk songs in their very unique, lively style.

The second evening of dancing and entertainment followed on Saturday. Everyone was invited to the Big Folk Music Evening in the village hall, where they had another chance to see all nine

landler groups, the yodelling duo and the AlpPan duo on stage again. After each of the landler groups had performed, a joint concert warmed up the crowd for folk music band the Mürztaler. The Austrian band knew exactly how to work their audience, and had them under their spell from the very first song; by their second number the dance floor was full. With their friendliness and knack for getting the audience involved, the Mürztaler kept everyone in the mood for dancing until the early hours of the morning.

The International Alpine Music Festival in Saas-Fee – in 2010 another successful mix of folk music, Ländler music, hits, yodelling and local tradition, providing fun and ensuring a relaxed and happy atmosphere. Surrounded by the highest mountains in the Alps rising to 1,800 metres above sea level, visitors were able to enjoy this festival in authentic surroundings in a way that was both genuine and unforced. An opportunity for dancing, celebration, enjoyment, for people to meet old friends or make new ones. Occasions like these which bring audience and musicians so closely together are rare. One of the reasons why the festival should be a permanent fixture in any calendar.

Half of the groups and musicians have already signed up to play again next year, so make sure you save the date: 07. – 10. July 2011. *15.07.2010,sf/ar*

Text released for publication.

Text length: 3730 characters with blanks (without titles). Further information available from Saas-Fee/Saastal Tourismus, Anja Roy, PR & Events, events@saas-fee.com or 027 958 18 67 (direct).

Images: www.photopress.ch/image/saas-fee