



Classicism and modernism meet each other in many different ways, abounding in charm. Schwerin can justifiably be described as the cultural capital of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. And this position has been held for many hundreds of years now. Art and culture, in particular, were furthered at the ducal seat.

Schwerin State Museum is among the most significant museums in Germany. In particular, with the internationally renowned top-class collection of Dutch paintings as well as the works of Jean-Baptiste Oudry and Marcel Duchamp. Much of it originates from the legacy of the dukes, while other pieces are of a contemporary nature. In 2013, for instance, the gallery acquired a collection of art pieces by Günther Uecker, which provides a comprehensive reflection of his work and is one of a kind in Germany.

Mecklenburg State Theatre is among those with the most visitors in Germany. And one that is steeped in history. Following restoration work carried out in compliance with regulations for listed buildings, the magnificent building once more stands out with its grand-ducal aura, lavishly decorated with gold and velvet. The programme includes opera, musicals, theatrical performances, ballet and concerts. The latter is predominantly provided by the music ensemble **Mecklenburgische Staatskapelle Schwerin**. First formed over 450 years ago, it is one of the oldest orchestras in the world.

In the summer months the ensemble performs major operas right on the doorstep, so to speak. Each year it delights tens of thousands of visitors with the festival productions **Schlossfestspiele Schwerin** on the enchantingly beautiful site between the theatre, castle, gallery and lake. The opulent performances with spectacular stage effects, with top-class soloists and large choirs have long since earned themselves a permanent position among the top-ranking, prestigious opera festivals on an international level.

Concerts of the festival productions **Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern** as well as those on the Ladegast organ in the cathedral are also among the highlights of the Schwerin classical season.

The **Schweriner Kultur- und Gartensommer** lures guests with exquisite cultural offers and wonderful entertainment. Visitors to the three-day castle festival **Schlossfest** are taken on a journey through time to experience the history of this location. Culinary delights are served by **GourmetGarten** in the romantic castle garden.

In May the **Filmkunstfest MV** presents new films and a large number of celebrities. The autumn is enriched by the literature event **Schweriner Literaturtage** and the **Christmas market** provides a touch of solace from the winter blues. In addition, multifaceted cultural events offer a wide range of entertainment from jazz to rock, from smaller-scale performing arts through to arts and crafts, from markets to galleries.

Stately homes, gardens and art collections of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Schwerin State Museum (Staatliches Museum Schwerin)

Schwerin State Museum accommodates one of the **highest rated collections** of Dutch and Flemish paintings of the 17th to 18th centuries, set up by the dukes of Mecklenburg. They acquired works of **world-famous masters** such as Rubens, Rembrandt, Jan Brueghel the Elder and Frans Hals. One **particular treasure** is the Sentry by Carel Fabritius.

This perhaps most notable Rembrandt student founded Delft Light-painting and left behind just 13 paintings.

Since 2013, a further 155 paintings **donated by Christoph Müller** have aided visitors in experiencing for themselves in more vivid fashion the variety of the masters, styles and eras. Schwerin's reference collection of Dutch paintings is thus regarded as one of the most significant **on an international level**.

The basis of the collection was acquired by Duke Christian Ludwig II. (1683-1756). Over 400 small- and medium-format works of exquisite quality provide differentiated insights into the multifacetedness and wide range of subject matter of the "Golden Age" of Dutch painting. The painters Willem van Aelst, Gerard Dou, Paulus Potter, Adriaen van Ostade, Ludolf Backhuysen, Jan Davidsz de Heem and Jan van Huysum are also represented in the collection with several of their works. Schwerin also boasts some outstanding individual pieces such as the Ice Scene by Hendrick Avercamp, Woman at a Harpsichord by Frans van Mieris the Elder, the Lovesick Maiden by Jan Steen and the two brilliant Boys' Heads by Frans Hals. The Old Man's Head by Jan Lievens is also remarkable. Over 80 still-life paintings ranging from the Haarlem Breakfast Still Life to magnificent flower arrangements of the early 18th century are a highlight of the collection. Names including Simon de Vlieger and Ludolf Backhuysen are representative of Dutch marine painting.

Schwerin owns the **largest collection worldwide** of the French animal painter Jean-Baptiste Oudry with 34 paintings and 43 freehand drawings. *The series of exotic animals originally painted for the Royal Botanical Gardens in Paris is now on display once more following restoration work at the Getty Museum Los Angeles, including the famous Clara the Rhinoceros.*

English portrait art of the 18th century is represented by the splendid full portrait of the Mecklenburg Princess and the English Queen Charlotte from the studio of Thomas Gainsborough. A **Winter Landscape by the Romanticist Caspar David Friedrich from Western Pomerania** is one example of works from the 19th century. The 19th and 20th centuries are represented in Schwerin by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Max Liebermann, Lovis Corinth, Franz von Stuck, Lyonel Feininger, Alexej von Jawlensky and Max Beckmann.

The Schwerin Marcel Duchamp collection comprises a total of 90 pieces, including ready-mades, sculptures, graphic art, poster and book designs as well as two versions of his **famous Box in a Suitcase**. Schwerin prides itself in being one of the few places in Europe where works of Marcel Duchamp are on display.

The Duchamp set is complemented by works of related artists such as Sigmar Polke, John Cage, Marcel Broodthaers, Nam June Paik, Ben Vautier, François Morellet, Rachel Whiteread, Daniel Spoerri and Icke Winzer.

Among the most recent works are examples of Mecklenburg landscape painting, fifteen bronze sculptures by Ernst Barlach and paintings from the German Democratic Republic. Pieces of contemporary art have also been added to the collection.

In 2013, the gallery acquired a **collection of art pieces by Günther Uecker**, which reflects his work in comprehensive fashion. As of 2016, all of the works have been displayed in the new annexe.

Günther Uecker is among the outstanding German artists who enjoy an international reputation. The collection fits in here so well as the relief-like nail paintings have their roots in the Mecklenburg landscape.

The most extensive inventory of the museum is the special collection of copperplate engravings. Selected freehand drawings and prints from the 16th to 20th centuries are regularly presented in special exhibitions. The collections of arts and crafts comprise approximately ten thousand objects, including porcelain artwork, predominantly from the Meissen factory, ceramics, glass, gold and silversmith work, furniture, weapons as well as coins and medals. A selection of art and craft pieces is on display in the stately homes in Schwerin, Ludwigslust and Güstrow.

The range of offers of the museum is regularly enhanced by means of a **multifaceted concept of temporary exhibitions**, whereby special attention is given to contemporary art and references to the history of the region.

In addition to refreshments, the museum café offers a large selection of catalogues, books, prints, art cards, ceramics, porcelain, jewellery, glass, design, textiles and toys in impressive museum architecture of the late 19th century. Since 2014, the museum has been the first art museum in Germany to offer an **adventure room for children** providing various offerings in line with each exhibition.

Children can get creative and experience art for themselves, with opportunities for drawing, building, stamping and sticking. They feel unknown objects, make pencil lines produce sounds or venture a glimpse of infinity. All of the offerings are prepared to match the respective temporary exhibition and to suit the ages of the children. The workshop character of the adventure room provides a great deal of distinct ideas and stimulation for any child aged between 5 and 10 years. Parents can watch, join in or continue their tour.

The museum also offers an audio guide for children and a special book designed for inclusion for the blind and visually impaired featuring tactile 3D representations of the most important elements of the composition and an audio CD. On Thursdays the museum stays open longer than usual. The RENDEZVOUS series offers readings, concerts, film premieres, discussions with artists and guided tours from 6 o'clock in the evening.

Mecklenburg State Theatre

The building, which provides the backdrop for five kinds of stage entertainment, has several locations offering an **extensive programme** with operas, operettas, musicals, theatrical performances, ballet, concerts, drama in Low German dialect and puppet theatre. With around 20,000 visitors per season, it is among the **most popular** theatres in Germany as a whole.

The large building located opposite the castle opened in 1886. After restoration work carried out in line with the regulations for listed buildings, this opulent structure once again captivates the observer with its grand-ducal aura, with an abundance of gold and velvet, exquisite parquet flooring and magnificent chandeliers, with a box for private viewing by the dukes and opulent foyers. However, the 540 comfortable theatre seats mean there is no need for the guests to forgo modern-day conveniences. **Dramatic arts** have had a long tradition in Schwerin. In 1753, it was here that Conrad Ekhof, a colleague of Lessing in Hamburg and who went down in history as the “father of German thespianism”, founded the first German acting school, which was revived by Lucie Höflich after World War II. This great tradition was carried on in GDR times in the extraordinarily successful theatre period from 1974 to 1989 with Christoph Schroth as theatrical director: With the almost 6-hour-long “Faust I and II” and the “Discoveries of the Ancient World” Schwerin becomes a place of pilgrimage for theatre enthusiasts from all over Germany and also beyond its borders.

The theatrical ensemble mastered German reunification in splendid fashion, as most recently demonstrated by the invitation extended to Herbert Fritsch’s staging of “The Beaver Coat” to appear at the “Theatertreffen” festival in Berlin in 2011.

The other major line of tradition is the music theatre **Musiktheater** and the Mecklenburg State Music Ensemble **Mecklenburgische Staatskapelle Schwerin**. It celebrated its 450th anniversary in 2013, thus making it one of the oldest orchestras in the world. It was headed by the composer Friedrich von Flotow for many years. Richard Wagner paid a visit to Schwerin in 1873 and engaged the services of artists here for his first Bayreuth Festivals. The cultural life of the royal seat of Schwerin was characterised by lavish opera performances and they were a flagship for the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg. Among the guest conductors and virtuosos are illustrious names such as Johann Fischer, Johann Wilhelm Hertel, Antonio Rosetti, Felix Mendelssohn, Johannes Brahms, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Camille Saint-Saëns. After 1945, the general music directors included Kurt Masur, Klaus Tennstedt and Hartmut Haenchen.

The second location is the **E-Werk**, beautifully situated on the northern banks of the Pfaffenteich lake. The puppet theatre with its own stage is also accommodated in the former power generation plant. The successful theatre programme pub **werk3** in the heart of the old part of the town was initiated by the Mecklenburg State Theatre in 2008 and has been privately owned since the summer of 2014. The programme includes premiere celebrations, matinées and exhibitions as well as guided tours with a look behind the scenes. During the **TheaterThekenNacht** event held twice a year, and which is always sold out, 50 actors and actresses tour over 20 pubs of the town, serving up the guests great plays in small bites between tables and chairs.

The theatre festival **Theaterfest** is a cultural and social highlight. Guests delight in a gala programme with artists from all areas of the performing arts, an exquisite buffet and music and dancing in all of the rooms until the early hours.

In the summer the state music ensemble **Staatskapelle** invites guests to a picnic in some of the most beautiful gardens of the state in the series of open-air concerts "MeckProms".

Schwerin Castle Festival of the Mecklenburg State Theatre

Hate and love, jealousy and gallantry – there can be no stage large enough for such great feelings and emotion. Be that as it may, the art-loving centre of Schwerin provides just the right backdrop for opulent operas. Each year, **tens of thousands of visitors** are captivated by the castle festival "Schlossfestspiele Schwerin" between the castle, the gallery, the theatre and the lake. What started out in 1993 as an insiders' tip among opera enthusiasts has now not only become firmly established in the summer of culture in the north of Germany but also ranks among the top internationally renowned opera festivals. An enchantingly beautiful location, an ensemble of soloists from around the world, great choirs, spectacular stage effects, and set under the vast **spangled sky of Mecklenburg** ensure guests spend an unforgettable evening of theatre. Moreover, Schwerin's **grand-ducal past** resonates in poignant fashion in the romantic stage performances.

Many guests, however, like to see what is going on beyond the stage. They reserve a table for dinner in a nearby restaurant before the performance, book a boat trip on Lake Schwerin or a guided tour through the old part of the town. Some also stay for a few days, roam the superb palatial castle and discover the 1000-year history of the state, stroll through the magnificent gardens and the art collection of the grand dukes, visit the cathedral and the small galleries dotted all around the market.