

Newsletter

**Vol. 11 No. 4
August 2021**

GIOA
GÖTEBORG INTERNATIONAL
ORGAN ACADEMY

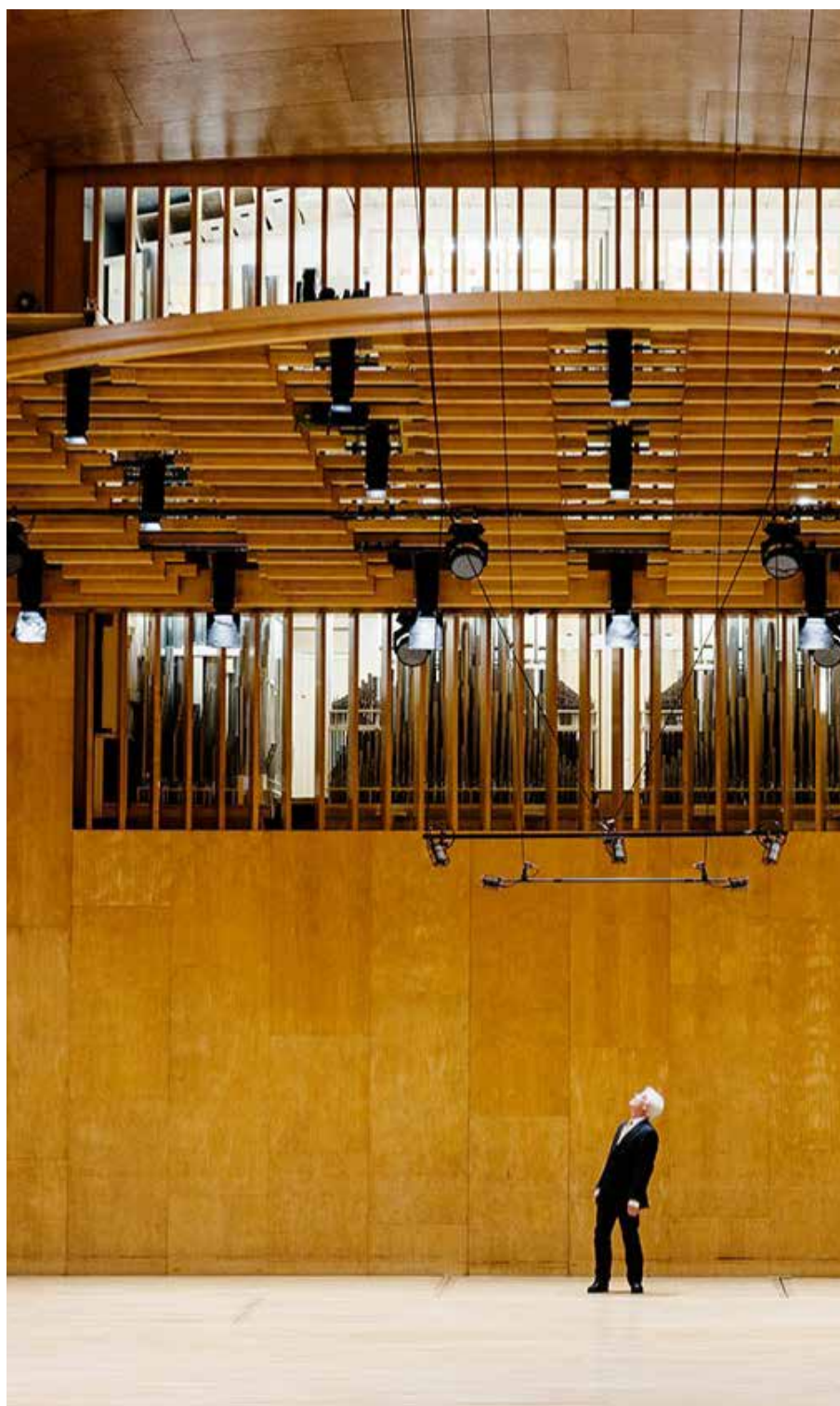
SURFACE MAIL

GIOA c/o Lars Storm
Värlöksgatan 2C
417 06 Göteborg Sweden

CONTACT

Phone +46 704 41 42 09
info@organacademy.se
www.organacademy.se

**GÖTEBORG INTERNATIONAL ORGAN FESTIVAL
OCTOBER 13-24, 2021**





Welcome to the August issue of the GIOA Newsletter!

After a long, sunny and pleasantly warm summer, we return from our summer holidays, and we hope that life will get back to more normal circumstances than during the spring of 2021. Since more than half of the Swedish population is fully vaccinated, our society has opened up gradually, and we now are able to enjoy live music and organ encounters of various kinds again, with less strict regulations than previously.

It is my distinct pleasure to invite you to the 2021 Organ Festival with its theme of “Encounters” October 13-24. The main focus is the inauguration of the new organ for the city concert hall, which we have written about in previous issues of this Newsletter. Please do read more about the Festival in the present Newsletter issue. On our homepage you will find the complete festival program; there you can also register for participation in the festival. During the summer, the installation of the concert hall organ has progressed according to plan. The single most exciting item was the installation of the separate bass organ with 40 large pipes (Subbas 32 and Flute 16, 20 pipes of each C–g#) under the concert hall floor, like an acoustical subwoofer. The effect is quite wonderful, giving the lowest frequencies (below 60 Hz) audible presence in the hall! The organ is scheduled to be completed in September.

In late June, ten selected historical organs in West Sweden were documented in audio and film. This project is part of Organ Vision West, and a continuation of the online presentation format that we established with the 18th century organ database. During one week, the Dutch organist Sietze de Vries and his team visited us and improvised on all stops of the organs. Please read Eleanor Smith’s report in this issue. In July, Paul Peeters and Alf Åslund visited Axel Unnerbäck to discuss the Sonora project, study Dr. Unnerbäck’s personal archive and work with the new, updated version of the *Orgelinventarium* by Erici and Unnerbäck. During the spring and summer, Eleanor has been preparing for this edition by transferring the contents of the 1988 publication into digital format.

The Arp Schnitger Academy took place in Göteborg August 8-14, 2021, providing a small group of participants (maximum 10 organists) the opportunity to work with the meantone organs in the Örgryte new Church and the Haga Church. The focus this year is the organ works of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck and the north German chorale fantasias of the 17th centuries.

I hope you have had – or are enjoying – well-deserved rest and vacation, and I wish you success with all your organ activities during the rest of the summer.

Hans Davidsson



Photo: Ola Kjelbye / GSO
www.gso.se/konserthuset/orgel-i-goteborgs-konserthus

Welcome to the Göteborg International Organ Festival (GIOF) 2021
This year the theme is ENCOUNTERS

During the pandemic, almost all concerts, cultural events, and festivals had to be cancelled. Thanks to live-streaming technology, alternative spaces to meet were created for us. These digital encounters helped our society to function and stay connected. However, our desire for physical meetings, and our need for art and music in times of crisis generated a strong impetus for us to create the theme for this year's festival: GIOF 2021 – ENCOUNTERS. The festival will be performed for live audiences as well as live-streamed around the world.

The organ art brings us together across all borders and boundaries for a multitude of encounters; in concerts, multi-art performances, in artistic, creative, and social processes and interdisciplinary endeavors. Whether we participate in an organ-building workshop for children assembling four hundred parts of an organ-kit in less than an hour, or we work for five years with Rieger Orgelbau and an international reference group to build a new organ for Göteborg Concert Hall, we forget about time and space and engage in creative, mu-

sical and social acts. Now, we invite you to join us in a twelve-day organ feast including more than 30 concerts, a two-day marathon concert, the Göteborg Youth Organ Festival, ten workshops, many lectures, panel discussions, and social gatherings.

- The inauguration of the new concert hall organ by Rieger Orgelbau
- Creative Collisions with the meantone four-manual and pedal organ in Örgryte new church
- Celebration of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, Michael Praetorius, and Jeanne Demessieux
- New music by more than ten composers
- 40 concerts, 10 workshops, many lectures, panel discussions and social gatherings

The GIOF 2021 begins with the inauguration of the concert hall organ. Gothenburg was founded on June 4, 1621, and the building of a new concert hall organ was initiated as a celebration of the 400th anniversary of our city by HIGAB (Gothenburg Municipality Real Estate Company) and the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra. The Göteborg International Organ Academy was given the responsibility to spearhead the project.



Photo: Sven Andersson

The first weekend of the festival presents three inaugural concerts with different programs performed by seven organists from five countries, all members of the international reference group for the project, and will include premieres of new works by four composers. Bine Bryndorf, Karin Nelson, Hans-Ola Ericsson, Magnus Kjellson, Nathan Laube, Joris Verdin and Hans Davidsson will perform music from four centuries, including new works by Madeleine Isaksson, Molly Kien, Tebogo Monnakgotla, and Martin Herchenröder. On October 21 and 22, Mattias Wager will join the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra in the premiere of an organ concerto composed by B. Tommy Andersson. In the second weekend, forty-nine organists, representing all of the municipalities of West Sweden, will perform a two-day marathon concert, and people from across the whole region will join the celebration.

The globally unique four-manual and pedal meantone organ in Örgryte new church will generate many contrasting encounters during the festival; concerts and workshops devoted to the music by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck and Michael Praetorius, both celebrating jubilee years, and encounters with composers from different genres who create new music in a series of concerts labelled Creative Collisions, including Anna von Hausswolff, Kali Malone, Katt Hernandez, Palle Dahlstedt, Henrik Denerin, and Hans-Ola Ericsson.

Several concerts, including dance and other art forms, will be presented in the Vasa Church with the recently restored and renovated Eskin Lundén organ (1909/2020). The Brombaugh (1992) and Marcussen/Åkerman & Lund (1861/2004) organs in the Haga Church will be heard in daily concerts at noon followed by lunches, an important gathering point each day.

The Göteborg Youth Organ Festival will present organ building workshops, organ fairy tales, concerts, the Youth Organ Camp and other activities. The GIOA Young Organ Scholars 2021 will be announced during the festival.

The regional festival program celebrates the rich organ landscape of West Sweden, including the oldest playable organ in Sweden, the Hans Brebos/Elias Wittig organ (1604/1715) in Morlanda Church on the island of Orust.

Morning workshops, afternoon seminars, lectures and panel discussions address a rich variety of themes for organists, scholars, organ builders, and restorers.

Please read the detailed program (subject to change) and join us for the Göteborg International Organ Festival 2021, a twelve-day organ feast including more than 40 concerts, ten workshops, many lectures, panel discussions and social gatherings – ENCOUNTERS with a world of tactile passion and new sounds.

THE SONORA PROJECT

A short note about the visit to Axel Unnerbäck's archive



Axel Unnerbäck
Photo: Jon Liinason

On July 14 and 15, Alf Åslund and the undersigned visited Dr Axel Unnerbäck in Vadstena to learn about his archive in more detail. Axel Unnerbäck is an organ expert and researcher, art historian, and architectural antiquarian, who has published extensively on the Swedish heritage of organs. He has been head of the division for the care of historic buildings at the Riksantikvarieämbetet (RAÄ), the Swedish National Heritage Board, from 1963–2003. In that capacity, he was also responsible for the organs in the church of Sweden and is one of the foremost specialists in the Swedish cultural heritage of organs.

During his time at RAÄ, he established a file system, including each of the organs he was consulted on. The issues could vary from simple questions regarding small changes to be made to organs (new façade color, new blower) to long ongoing, compli-

cated restoration projects. For the 436 historical organs up to ca. 1860 included in the Sonora project, this collection of files is a very important source of information.

For his research and publications, Axel studied Einar Erics's archive, especially the excerpt books and information about organ builders that also are included in the Sonora project. An index to places/churches/organs and organ builders in these Erics documents has been made in the form of a card catalogue. It goes without saying that this is a very important 'entrance' to the extensive material and central for our study of Erics's work.

Paul Peeters



*Sietze de Vries, Albert Jan de Boer, and Sander Booij walking up to the church in Jonsered.
Photo: Eleanor Smith*

At the beginning of July, a group from GIOA were joined by Dutch organist Sietze de Vries, organ-builder Sander Booij, and sound-engineer Albert Jan de Boer on a five-day road trip to document organs in the Dioceses of Göteborg, Skara, and Karlstad as a part of the ongoing inventory work in these churches (which will also complement the eighteenth-century organ database). Our working group was led by Jan Börjesson, whose knowledge of the Göteborg school of organ building is unrivalled – it was particularly wonderful to have his expertise as we travelled around from church to church. The rest of the working group which varied a little from day to day consisted of Jon Liinason in charge of all camerawork and interviews, organists Lars Storm and Benjamin Kjell, and myself as resident organologist (and apprentice equipment carrier for Jon).

Over the course of the five days, we visited ten churches in three dioceses (with two extra stops

for our own enjoyment to the organs of Örgryte, and the clavichord in the German Church). In each church we were given a warm welcome by the cantor or other members, including much appreciated fika in several places. The first order of business at each organ was for Jan and Sietze to play through the instrument, working out where there were any minor niggles, and to check the tuning (as well as to consolidate the impression of the instruments). Sander would then go through and identify what was causing any problems and work some in-the-field magic to fix any mechanical issues – before giving the reeds a thorough tuning. At the same time, the tech crew would also be getting ready, Albert Jan setting up the audio recording equipment, checking the acoustics of each building for the optimum recording position, and running some sound checks. We even had to check the lighting systems in some churches, as dimmer systems were making noises that would be audible on Albert Jan's recordings!

By the end of the week, we were all picking up every creak, squeak, and whine (some of them imaginary!)

For the first time, Jon was using a drone to capture video of the area around the churches (achieving his drone pilot's licence for the purpose): having seen some of the raw footage from this drone flying, it is a really impressive addition, and really adds a sense of the beautiful buildings and countryside where these amazing instruments are found.

The documentation process itself was impressively efficient! Sietze gave a demonstration of each organ, exploring all the stops available on the different divisions, and giving a flavour of the individual stops. He would then improvise in a style appropriate to the date of the instruments. Barring any technical issues with the organs these were recorded in a single take from the description through the improvisation – a incredibly impressive feat! Only once or twice did we have to retake the improvisation demonstration due to ciphers or other minor niggles. Following Sietze's demonstration, while the main audio equipment was being packed up ready to move, Jon set himself up as a one-man recording studio, to record interviews with Jan (and sometimes also Lars) about the organs and the churches in Swedish. This was also Sander's opportunity to play the organs as he is also a talented organist and improviser. Often the rest of the team would take the opportunity to walk a little around the churches while the final interviews were recorded, giving Jon and Jan a nice quiet building to work in! Once these interviews were recorded, Jon would take some final photographs of the church and the organ to be used within the videos before we moved on to the next instruments.

Our first day began in Stafsinge at the 1788 Everhardt organ rebuilt in 1825-26 by Pehr Strand. This instrument was built for the German Church in Gothenburg but moved to Stafsinge in 1864: Jan was able to show us a drawing of how the organ was originally designed over a central arch – and how the case had been re-arranged for its current situation.

After lunch we moved on to Vinberg Church and the sixteen-stop Thorsell & Erikson of 1899 (which Jan has previously recorded on). We were particularly struck by the beautiful painting of the church in Vinberg, which was used as a reference for the redecoration of the Örgryte New Church. In fact, once the day's work was complete, we were very pleased to be able to go to Örgryte so Sietze and Sander could spend some time with the north German baroque organ which they were both in raptures about. We were even treated to an 'organ conversation': with Sietze and Sander improvising across the church, also using the 1871 Father Willis (no mean feat considering the pitch difference between the instruments)!

The second day of the trip was the longest, with a visit to Karlstad and Skara Dioceses – the first stop was to another Gothenburg School organ, the 1902 Johannes Magnusson in Högsäter. We were met after our early start and long drive with the most magnificent spread provided by the cantor, which was most appreciated. The second stop was to the 1879 Molander & Erikson organ in Norra Vånga.

Our third day consisted of two very contrasting instruments: the 1783 Schiörlin organ in Jonsered, and the Åkerman and Lund organ in Backa Church (which is a new organ but built using old pipe material and based on the style of Söderling). The Schiörlin organ in Jonsered was a particular highlight for me, not only as one of the older instruments on the documentation trip, but also because my introduction to Swedish organ-building was through Schiörlin. We recorded this instrument using both the modern electric blower, but also with bellow treading (nobly provided by Benjamin!). To then move on to the Backa church with its organ based on mid-nineteenth century Johan Niklas Söderling gave a real flavour of how organ-building had changed: but also how the values of strong support for congregational singing, contrasted with ability for solo playing, had stayed very much at the forefront.

Another personal highlight for me after these two churches was outside of the scheduled



Hymn book provided for the bellows treader in the Årstad church.
 Photo: Eleanor Smith



*Left: Sander Booij at the Morlanda organ.
Right, above: Sietze de Vries at the console of the 1902 Johannes Magnusson organ, Högsäter.
Right, below: Jan H Börjesson demonstrates the 1879 Molander & Erikson organ in Norra Vånga.
Photo: Eleanor Smith*

trip: as we met up with Magnus Kjellson at the German church to show our Dutch guests the claviorgan. To hear both Sietze and Sander improvising on the instrument, exploring the different timbres available, and revelling in the instruments' possibilities was a real joy – further cementing my own research into the instrument as one for professional musicians who would improvise.

Day four took us to the wonderful small church of Skummeslöv, Skottorp, with the Söderling organ of 1846 – a smaller instrument but perfectly fitting for this historical building. Of course, one can read more about Söderling and his organ building workshop in Jan's own excellent book on the subject! We then continued to the rather grander building that is Årstad Church, with the 1889 Molander & Co which has been rebuilt over the years but restored again to its 1890 disposition. We were also amused to see that in the bellows treading cupboard, a rather ancient hymn book was set out for the operator – more than a century old! Following the day of

recording, the team had a marvellous dinner in Träslövsläge, not very far from the spot where Jan spent his childhood years!

The final day of the trip was another day of distinct contrasts, featuring both the oldest and the smallest instrument, as well as the largest of the trip. We started the day at the Morlanda church in Orust, recording the Hans Brebos 1604/Elias Wittig 1715 organ – another instrument where we recorded using both the manual bellows treading (this time provided by Sander) and the electric wind supply. To say that this was a special instrument to hear and record is a huge understatement – both Sietze and Sander were thoroughly enjoying improvisations on early dance tunes, even utilising some additional percussion instruments for that extra taste of early baroque dance style! We also took the opportunity to do some more detailed recordings of the organ, which can be used as yet another layer of documentation of this historic organ.



Left: Jon Liinason set up as a one-man studio for recording interviews.

Right, above: Albert Jan de Boer checking sound levels in Norra Vånga.

Right, middle: Sander Booij tuning the reeds of the organ in Stafsinge.

Right, below: One of two sessions where the team recorded their final thoughts on the project, with interviews lead by Lars Storm.

Photo: Eleanor Smith

The very last stop on our documentation trip was in Lysekil, in the wonderfully grand church overlooking the harbour, with the 1917 Eskil Lundén organ (with pipework from the 1879 Molander organ integrated). This was very much the largest instrument of the trip, with an extensive stop-list and many couplers/combinations. An instrument that can really fill the building, but that also has extensive possibilities for liturgical and solo use with contrasts in volume and timbres.

Indeed, as we consolidated our thoughts after five days of different periods and styles of instrument-building, this was something that Sietze and Sander felt really epitomised the different organs that had been recorded. That and the impressively loud registrations available

(particularly the reeds) for leading congregational singing. Sander also commented on how well the instruments we visited had been cared for (sadly not something you find everywhere in Europe) – and the generous design of the organs allowing easy access for tuning and repair. For me, the trip really complemented the work I have been doing for SONORA – and helped bring to life all I have been reading about Swedish organ building – when it is rather too easy to only immerse oneself in books!

Once the documentation videos are completed, they will be made available both through the diocesan inventory pages, and on the Organ Academy YouTube channel. This release is planned for the spring of 2022.

Eleanor Smith

THE SONORA PROJECT

Update on the new edition of the *Orgelinventarium*

The good news from the *Orgelinventarium* project, is that the bulk of the digitisation work of the 1988 edition has now been completed. All the organ descriptions are now available: the text has been scanned, processed with OCR software, and proofed. The registrations have undergone the same process, as well as being re-organised slightly into a standardised layout suggested by Johan Norrback – this will make the layout process for the new edition much easier. This digitisation work was completed just in time for Alf and Paul to show the new files to Axel when they visited Vadstena in the middle of July. Alf was pleased to report back that Axel was very impressed with the work done so far!

As he has already begun to type up his notes from 30 years of research following the last edition, we have divided up the main document into files that are more manageable to work with than the master copy (which is several hundred pages), and these have been passed on by Alf for updating. Alf has also made a digital copy of Axel's handwritten notes for safekeeping – this will also be a useful resource during the editing process of the final volume.

The last steps are to finish the work on the indexes and appendices (which are also now nearly complete), and to return and digitise the various prefaces – once these are complete, we will have a fully digitised copy of the text of the 1988 edition. We hope to rescan as many of the illustrations from original photographs as possible (rather than from a printed copy), and then final decisions can be made about which images to reuse, and if any need to be retaken.

CONTACT

Phone +46 704 41 42 09
info@organacademy.se
www.organacademy.se

SURFACE MAIL

GIOA c/o Lars Storm
Värlöksgatan 2C
417 06 Göteborg Sweden

Vol. 11 No. 4
August 2021

WEST SWEDEN ORGAN RECORDING TOUR July 2021



*Drone footage of Stafsing Church
Organ by Pehr Zacharias Strand (1826)
Photo: Jon Liinason*

Newsletter

GIOA

GÖTEBORG INTERNATIONAL
ORGAN ACADEMY

The GIOA Newsletter is published in two versions: as a limited paper edition and as PDF.
Please join us by subscribing to the Newsletter at www.organacademy.se/gioa-newsletter