

Newsletter

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A SILBERMANN-STYLE JEWEL IN WEST SWEDEN Foss Church unveils new organ



*Façade of the Orglarstvo Močnik organ in Foss Church (2025).
Photo: Jon Liinason.*



From October 8–19, 2025, Gothenburg hosts one of the world's most vibrant organ festivals, with more than forty concerts alongside workshops, talks, and seminars. Musicians, scholars, builders, and audiences from across the globe will gather for a twelve-day celebration of music and ideas.

This year's theme, *Visions*, highlights the organ's unique power to inspire imagination, innovation, and connections across time.

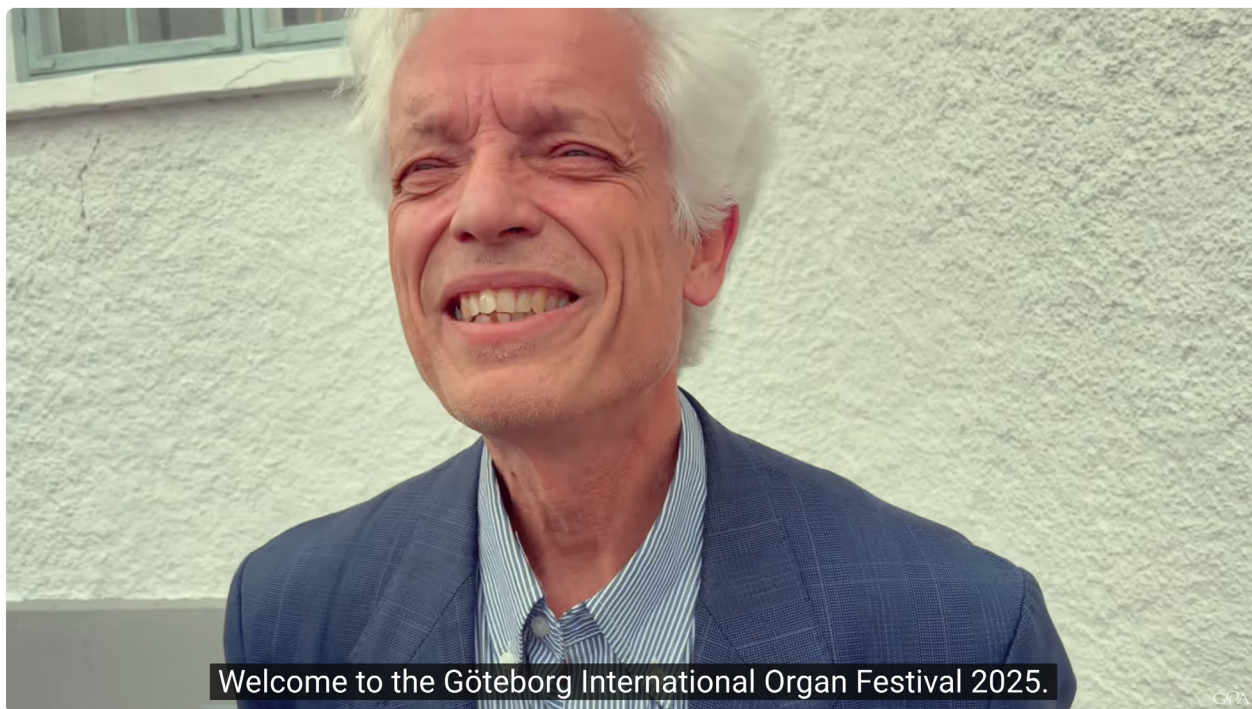
The festival reaches audiences of all ages. Many events are free of charge, ensuring broad access. The opening weekend features the Youth Organ Festival, beginning with a camp and culminating in concerts. This intergenerational spirit underscores that the organ belongs to everyone.

Organ music has always carried a visionary quality. The festival opens with works by Arvo Pärt, heard alongside organ, choral, and vocal music with the renowned British ensemble *Tenebrae* and Sweden's *Lux*.

Other highlights include Messiaen's *Les Corps Glorieux*, Nielsen's *Commotio*, Hindemith, and Elfrida Andrée on the 1909 Lundén organ in Vasa Church. These programs bring together the radical voices of the early 20th century with today's imagination.

The festival marks 25 years of the Örgryte German Baroque organ, the renowned historical reconstruction of a Hamburg Schnitger style instrument. Built through an international research project, it has inspired countless recordings, concerts, and discoveries.

To celebrate, ensembles such as *Weser Renaissance* and the *Hanseatic Ensemble* perform Hamburg repertoire, with *Deutschlandfunk* recording on site. Göteborg Baroque presents Baltic music, while organ pioneer Harald Vogel, inspired by Hans Henny Jahnn, offers programs from Hamburg's 17th century.



Trailer GIOF 2025



VIDEO TRAILER (with English subtitles)
Hans Davidsson presents the 2025 Göteborg International Organ Festival
www.youtube.com/@gioa

The festival also looks ahead. The launch of *SONORA* (Swedish Online Organ Archive) brings together over 140,000 documents on Swedish instruments up to 1860.

The European project REM@KE, uniting Gothenburg, Pavia, and York, explores how rare historical instruments can inspire both digital reconstructions and new builds, opening new perspectives for research and performance.

Contemporary voices also resound: the *Stockholm Saxophone Quartet* presents premieres, including one by Paula af Malmberg Ward, alongside improvisations and fresh performance formats.

The new *Night Visions* series offers five late-evening concerts at 9:30 PM, inspired by Tomas Tranströmer's phrase "vision in the dark." Programs include *Suzanne Vega Songs* with organ, a *Go Bach to Sleep*-meditation with organ and harpsichord, and Broadway-inspired events.

Admission is free, as with many lunch concerts.

Just before the festival, West Sweden welcomes a new voice: the first Silbermann-style organ in the region, inaugurated in Foss Church. Built by Slovenian organ builder Tomaž Močnik, it fulfills a vision long nurtured by organist Sven Åke Svensson. With its luminous strings and colorful eight-foot stops, it brings the legacy of Silbermann into the 21st century.

For twelve October days, Gothenburg will resound with music spanning centuries and continents. The festival invites us to listen, imagine, and envision the organ's future.

Welcome to the Göteborg International Organ Festival, October 8–19, 2025!

Hans Davidsson & Ulrike Heider
Artistic Director & Artistic Co-Director
Göteborg International Organ Festival

A SILBERMANN-STYLE JEWEL ARRIVES IN WEST SWEDEN
Foss Church unveils new organ





All photos of the Orglarstvo Močnik organ in Foss: Jon Liinason.

The organ landscape of West Sweden has been wonderfully enriched this summer with the installation of a magnificent new organ in Silbermann style at Foss Church. This instrument, the first of its kind in our region, is a significant cultural addition and the culmination of a dedicated vision.

A VISION REALISED

The new organ is the result of a long-held dream championed by organist Sven Åke Svensson and the parishioners of Foss. Their goal was to acquire a larger instrument that could meet the vibrant musical demands of the congregation and the community today, while also possessing the distinct power, poetry, color, and character for which Gottfried Silbermann's 18th-century instruments are renowned. They envisioned an organ that would not only enrich the musical life of West Sweden but also stand as a legacy for generations of organists and worshippers, inspiring the community and visitors from far and beyond.

THE MASTER BUILDER AND THE SOUND

To bring this vision to life, the parish chose the internationally established Slovenian organ builder Tomaž Močnik at Orglarstvo Močnik. The connection was made through Sven Åke Svensson's previous tenure as organist at the Swedish church in Oslo, where he became intimately familiar with a new Močnik organ built and installed on his initiative. The exceptional quality and inspiring sound of Močnik's instruments, substantially influenced by the 18th-century master Silbermann, were precisely what Sven Åke was convinced would best serve the vision for Foss.

A UNIQUE VOICE FOR THE REGION

The instrument itself features 24 stops distributed over two manuals and a pedal division. While firmly rooted in the Silbermann tradition, it also includes a few features that reflect the broader central German organ school of the 18th century. These include two beautiful string stops (Viol di Gambe 8' in Hw and Viola da Gamba 4' in Ow) and, most notably, an Unda maris 8'. This particular stop, Latin for "wave of the sea," is a direct copy of the one found in the famous Trost organ in Waltershausen, Germany – a two-rank flute stop of wooden pipes (see figure 1.) – making it the first of its kind in Sweden. It creates a delicate, shimmering effect, adding a unique and expressive color to the organ's tonal palette.

INAUGURATION AND CELEBRATION

The official inauguration of the new organ will take place on Saturday, September 20th, 17:00, 2025. We are also thrilled to announce that the world-renowned concert organist Kimberly Marshall will be the first international artist to perform on the instrument Wednesday October 15, 19:00, 2025, as part of the upcoming Göteborg International Organ Festival, October 8–19, 2025.

This project is a testament to what a clear vision and a dedicated community can achieve. Our heartfelt congratulations go out to Sven Åke Svensson, the congregation in Foss, organ builder Tomaž Močnik, and all who were involved. A noble vision has materialized, truly enriching our organ landscape with a high-quality instrument in a style we have long been missing.

– Hans Davidsson

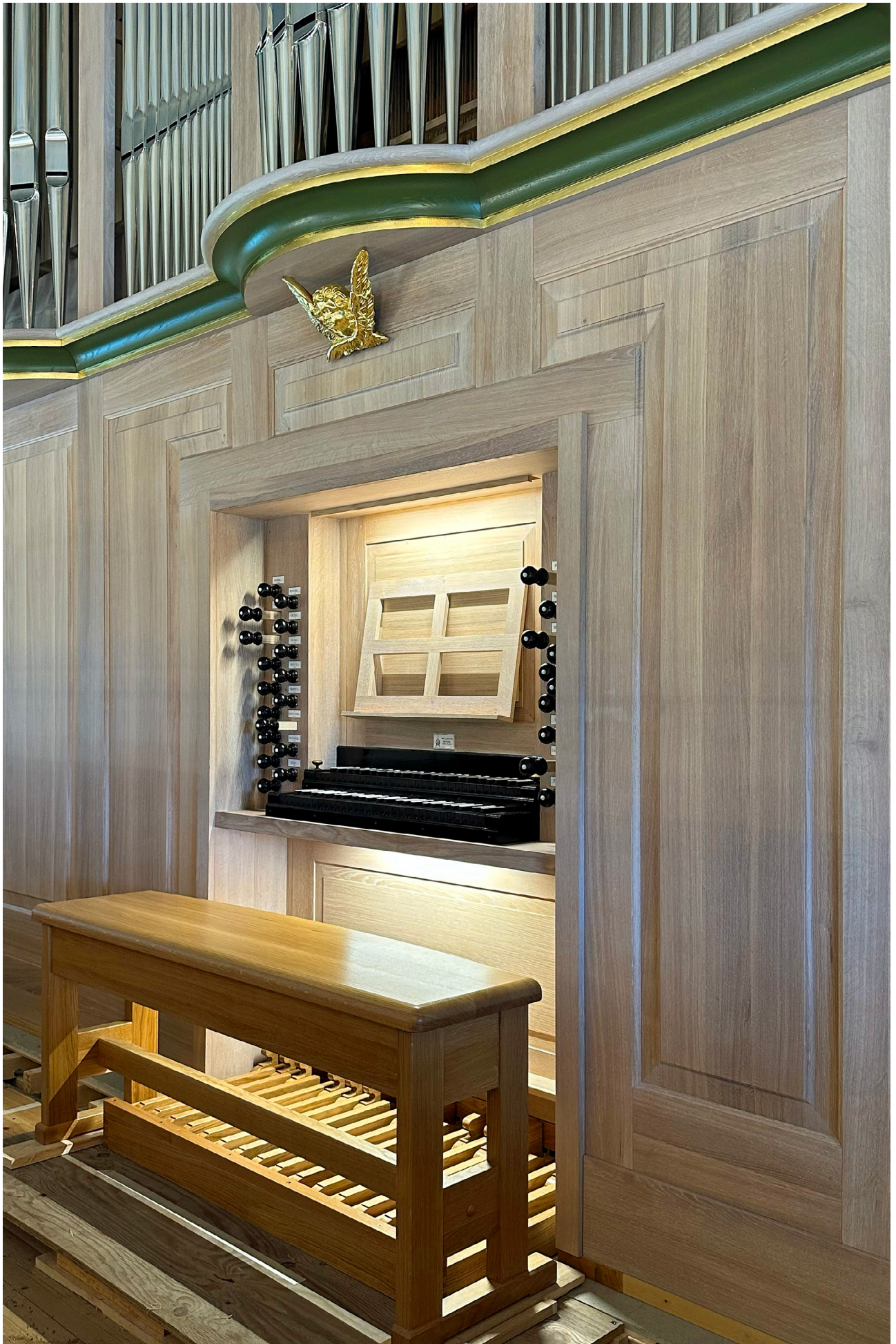


EN SILBERMANN-KLENOD I VÄSTSVERIGE: Foss kyrka inviger ny orgel

VIDEO TRAILER (with English subtitles)
Sven Åke Svensson & Hans Davidsson present the organ
www.youtube.com/@gioa



Figure 1. Unda maris 8' (a copy of the one found in the famous Trost organ in Waltershausen, Germany)





SPECIFICATION

Orglarstvo Močnik (2024)
Foss Church, Munkedal, Sweden

I. Hauptwerk (C-f³)

1.	Bordun	16'
2.	Principal	8'
3.	Viol di Gambe	8'
4.	Rohr-flött	8'
5.	Octava	4'
6.	Spitz-flött	4'
7.	Octava	2'
8.	Sesquialtera II	3'
	Quint	3' (double-drawing stop from no. 8)
9.	Mixtur IV	1 ½'
10.	Trompet	8'
	Tremulant	

II. Oberwerk (C-f³)

11.	Gedackt	8'
12.	Quintadehn	8'
13.	Unda maris II	8' (from g)
14.	Principal	4'
15.	Viola da Gamba	4'
16.	Rohr-flött	4'
17.	Naßat	3'
18.	Wald-flött	2'
19.	Tertia	1 1/2'
20.	Zimbeln II	1'
21.	Chalumeaux	8'
	Glöcklein	
	Tremulant	

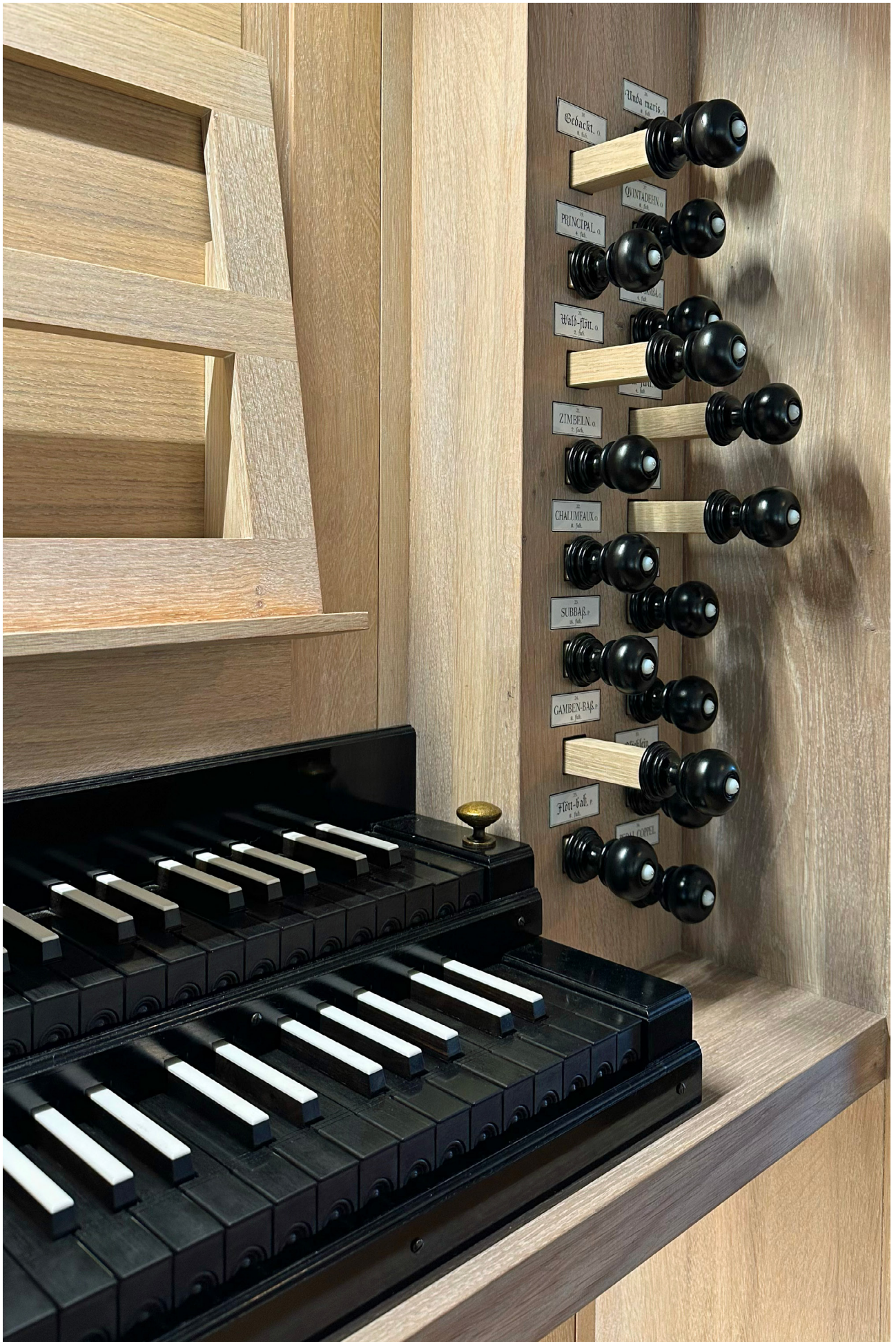
Pedal (C-d¹)

22.	Principalbaß	16'
	Subbass	16' (trans. from no. 1)
23.	Octavbass	8'
	Gamben-Bass	8' (trans. from no. 3)
	Flött-Bass	8' (trans. from no. 4)
	Octav	4' (trans. from no. 5)
24.	Posaune	16'
	Trompett	8' (trans. from no. 10)

Couplers

II/I as shove coupler (movable keyboard)
I/Ped and II/Ped as lever couplers





MARIE KRØYER'S HAMMERKLAVIER RETURNS TO LIFE

Festival at Alfvéngården, 30–31 August 2025



The final weekend of August saw the first-ever Hammerklavier Festival at Alfvéngården in Tibble, outside Leksand, the former home of composer Hugo Alfvén (1872–1960). Today owned and managed by the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, the house is both a museum and a vibrant cultural center that attracts visitors every summer. This year, the spotlight was on the return of a remarkable instrument: the early 19th-century hammerklavier that once belonged to the Danish artist Marie Krøyer (1867–1940), who was married to Alfvén from 1912 to 1936.

The instrument had undergone a careful restoration during 2024–25 under the hands of Odd Løge Aanstad, one of Scandinavia's most experienced piano builders and restorers. His work, which combined meticulous craftsmanship with piano-archaeological discoveries, included repairing more than fifty cracks in the soundboard, reinforcing the case, installing new tuning pins and strings, and refinishing the keyboard. The result is an instrument of striking beauty and sensitivity, whose resonance and responsiveness open a direct window to the sound

world of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Joel Speerstra and Ulrika Davidsson, both researchers and teachers at the University of Gothenburg, followed the restoration closely and provided the first musical demonstrations during the festival's opening session.

The two-day festival presented five concerts and lectures that placed the instrument in its historical and cultural context. Audiences were invited into the salon culture that surrounded Marie Krøyer and her circle, with performances of music by Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, Schubert, and Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel. The poet Göran Greider brought Krøyer's own voice into the program by reading from her letters and poetry, paired with intimate performances on the newly restored hammerklavier. Among the featured artists were violinist Nils-Erik Sparf, pianist Björn Gäfvert, soprano Anna Maria Friman, pianist Ulrika Davidsson, violinist Isabelle Bania, and cellist Johan Stern, alongside Finnish pianist Tuija Hakkila.

One highlight was the concert curated by scholars



Photos: Joel Speerstra & Hans Davidsson.

Anders Carlsson and Dan Olsson, which evoked the musical salons of mid-19th-century Gothenburg. Bedřich Smetana, remembered as the father of Czech national music, spent six formative years in Gothenburg (1856–1861), where he and his colleague Joseph Czapek introduced the city to Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and their own compositions. The program also honored Jeanna Åkerman (1798–1859), a gifted musician and composer whose songs remain hidden treasures of Swedish music history. Performed on period instruments similar to those Smetana and his contemporaries played, the concert offered a rare chance to rediscover a lost musical world.

Odd Aanstad, who restored the instrument, gave a fascinating lecture on the history of the piano-forte, along with a detailed report from the restoration that highlighted aspects of its construction and the problems he had to solve. An inscription on the music stand provided some information about the instrument's owners, indicating that Marie's mother received it in the 1830s. Joel Speerstra reported on his

research into the instrument's origins, analyzing the handwriting and presenting new information about the possible builder's name, connected to a small town south of Breslau. The story remains a detective case in progress. In any case, it is clear that the piano-forte was made in Breslau (today Wrocław, Poland) or in its surroundings.

Festival curator Hans Davidsson, who oversaw the restoration project in his role as Vice-President of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, emphasized the importance of hearing this repertoire on historical instruments: "The restored hammerklavier does not simply reproduce sound; it transforms our perception of the music and allows us to encounter the same sonic world that inspired composers and musicians two centuries ago."

With its combination of scholarly insight, literary voices, and vivid performances, the Hammerklavier Festival at Alfvängården brought Marie Krøyer's piano back to life and offered audiences a unique encounter with the living heritage of Swedish and European music history.

– Hans Davidsson

MESSIAEN SYMPOSIUM IN GÖTEBORG June 26–27, 2025



The Göteborg International Organ Academy hosted an intensive research symposium on Olivier Messiaen as Organist on June 26–27, 2025.

Specialists on the composer among organists and musicologists came together for two full days of presentations, discussions, and a recital played in the Vasa Church by Adrian Foster, from Montreal.

Together with colleagues participating online, the group consisted of renowned Messiaen scholars from Canada, the USA, the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, and Germany.

Performance-oriented studies on Messiaen's recordings, improvisations, and style of interpretation were able to shed new light on his seminal compositions for the organ, as well as



Messiaen's crucial importance for the instrument during the twentieth century.

The network established during the symposium will organize a further public conference and aims to share its findings in future research publications.

The event was initiated and organized by Jonas Lundblad, together with GIOA's own Hans Davidsson. Riksbankens Jubileumsfond provided the funding that made the symposium possible.

– Jonas Lundblad
Photos: GIOA

SONORA

A unique database of the rich Swedish organ heritage



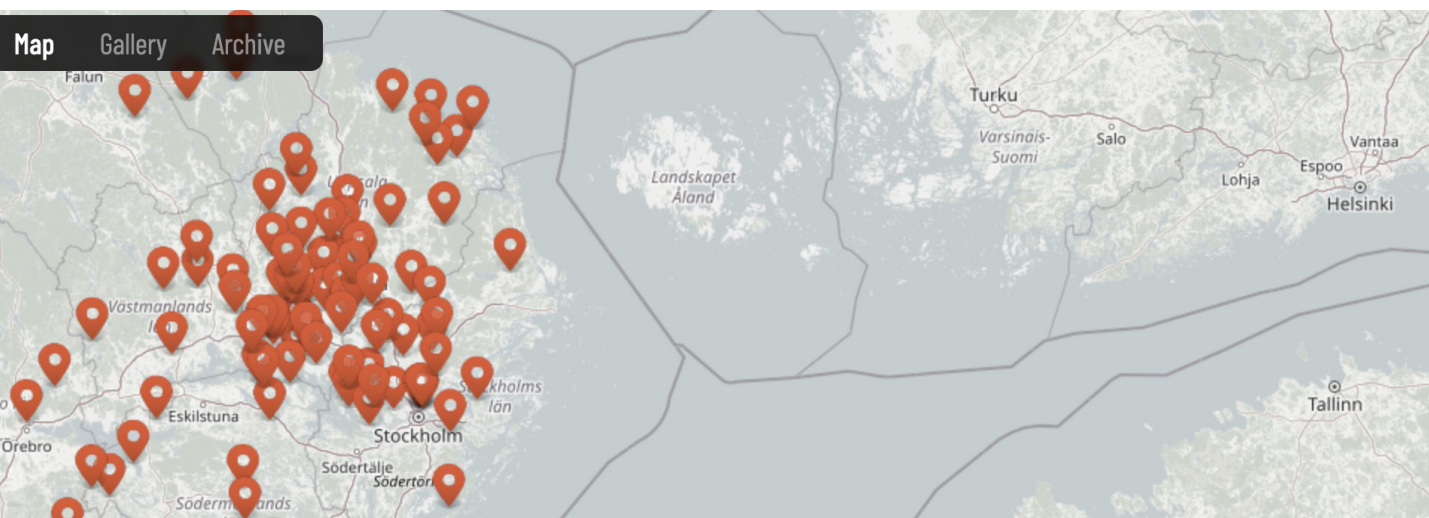
When looking through the program of the Göteborg International Organ Festival (www.organacademy.org/programme-overview) you may have noticed the somewhat mysterious heading, “A Glance into SONORA” appearing at the end of three of the week’s afternoon seminars. SONORA, an acronym for Swedish Online Organ Archive, is a database containing a rich treasure of written documents, drawings, photos, and other material, resulting from many decades of dedicated information-gathering by leading experts in the field. The construction of the database as well as the selection, digitizing and cataloguing of the documentary material is the result of a large-scale research infrastructure project, financed by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, a leading Swedish research foundation for the humanities and social sciences. The project was conducted in 2021–24 by a team from the Göteborg International Organ Academy Association (FGIOA), and we are happy and proud to be able to launch it publicly within the 2025 Göteborg International Organ Academy.

The database comprises of more than 3,600 documents, and 187,000 images (facsimiles), about half of which are directly connected to a particular organ, and the other half are connected to organ builders, or general organ building and culture. Nearly 8000 archive photos of historical instruments are included. Digitized, although not yet available through the interface, are a number of recordings and videos from the Moberg archives.

This rich material, soon to be made freely available, provides a wealth of exciting information about Sweden’s uniquely rich cultural heritage of pipe organs, ca. 280 preserved instruments, in addition to old pipes and other organ parts now forming part of more recent organs. Most of the documents are stored in the Antiquarian-Topographical Archive in Stockholm, a division of the Swedish National Heritage Board. The remaining documents are held in Uppsala University Library Special Collections, and the personal archive of Dr. Axel Unnerbäck.

It all began back in the 1930s, when the Stockholm physician, Einar Erić (1885–1965), discovered the beautiful sound of the historical organs, but also became aware of the threat to these instruments being posed by a desire for more modern organs according to the prevailing taste of the time. Besides his ordinary work as a laryngologist, Dr. Erić spent an incredible amount of time and effort on visiting the old organs, writing about them in specialized journals and daily press and trying to convince the congregations to keep the “outmoded” instruments instead of replacing or “modernizing” them.

Erić’s magnum opus was the *Orgelinventarium* (1965), a book with descriptions of all Swedish organs built until ca. 1860, which saw a second, expanded edition in 1988, edited by Axel Unnerbäck (b. 1938). A third edition of *Orgelinventarium* is now in preparation by



FGIOA, with the active support and collaboration of Dr. Unnerbäck, whose personal archive on organ issues from his three decades as organ expert at the Swedish National Heritage Board forms an important part of the SONORA material.

The most extensive of the archives digitized in SONORA is that of Harry (1915–1992) and Valter (1915–2006) Moberg, twin brothers, organ builders and pioneers in the field of organ restoration. Their archive contains, besides written documents and technical drawings, a wealth of photos in addition to films and sound recordings.

Another important archive within the SONORA database is that of the organ consultant Carl-Gustaf Lewenhaupt (1949–2000), a leading specialist on Swedish organ building who was behind many restorations and reconstructions of historical instruments in the late 20th century.

The art historian Bertil Wester (1902–1976), author of a groundbreaking dissertation on medieval organ building in Sweden (1936), had an important role as a member of the Organ Committee of the Friends of Church Song (Kyrkosångens Vänners orgelråd), which in the 1930s–60s enjoyed a semi-official status as an authoritative advisor on organ matters. Besides Dr. Wester's personal archive, the archive of the Committee also forms part of the SONORA documentary material.

SONORA's attractive user interface created by our collaboration partner GRIDH (Gothenburg Research Infrastructure in the Humanities) at the University of Gothenburg, allows searching the material in several ways: by instrument, organ builder, location (through a map) or archive creator. In addition to documents of different kinds, the database includes specifications and a brief historical outline of all instruments as well as photographs of most of them.

In the three “Glances into SONORA” during the festival, some particularly interesting features will be highlighted. But these fifteen-minute sessions are, of course, just “glances”, and we hope that they will inspire you to find your own way into the database according to your interest, whether you are a scholar, a musician, an organ builder or just an organ enthusiast.

– Sverker Jullander
Project leader of SONORA

Members of the SONORA project team are:
Alf Åslund, Carl Johan Bergsten, Hans Davidsson,
Sverker Jullander, Paul Peeters, Eleanor Smith-Guido, and
Fredrik Tobin-Dodd, with additional support from
Kristina Bergsten.

The SONORA team wishes to thank the Gothenburg University Library and the Antiquarian-Topographical Archive at the Swedish National Heritage Board for valuable help and support throughout the project.

*Massimiliano Guido**Joel Speerstra*

The REM@KE project, a pioneering research initiative led by Massimiliano Guido (University of Pavia), Joel Speerstra (University of Gothenburg) and Andrea Schiavio (University of York) began on September 1, 2025. Over the next six years, the REM@KE team will combine organology, artistic research, and cognitive science to create a new map of the dynamic relationship between historical keyboardists and their instruments.

By re-examining the connections between sound, gesture, instrument, and music, we aim to reclaim the embodied sound at the heart of music-making and secure a better future for historical instruments. This complex interplay between the instrument's physical properties and the specific gestures made by the player is vital for the creation of "a good sound," yet it cannot be fully captured by traditional organology. What has also

been missing from much research into historical instruments is the human element.

The artisanal techniques and deep knowledge of materials developed by builders over the last fifty years closely mirror the knowledge acquired by historical builders. Performers' approaches have been handed down from teacher to student for generations, with different schools of performance practice rooted in different institutions. Curators and restorers of musical instruments have gathered extensive knowledge that, while often published, is not always easily accessible outside the world of museology.

The project focuses on keyboard instruments as highly representative of European history, culture, and society. We begin from the premise that the Early Music Movement was a radical intervention in musical culture, inspiring the creation of copies



Andrea Schiavio

of old instruments and a cutting-edge global performance practice. Yet two aspects of the original instruments' dynamic behavior remain extremely difficult to document: how the action components move when touched by the player, and how the quality of sound is generated.

Many of the instrument copies inherited from this movement have served as everyday companions to generations of young musicians undergoing the long training necessary to develop their artistic skills. Yet in many of their dynamic particulars, they often differ from the originals. In the artisanal market, copies are frequently adapted to the needs or desires of individual musicians. However functional, such adaptations can remove an element of discovery for the performer.

During the GOArt North German Organ Research Project in Gothenburg in the 1990s, which resulted in the organ of Örgryte New Church, the decision was made to copy the working methods of Baroque organ builders using the concept of process reconstruction, a method also central in archaeological research. The phenomenology of the Örgryte organ, as well as Joel Speerstra's 1766 Gerstenberg clavichord reconstructions, has led to new understandings of both the instruments and the music of their contemporary composers, influencing musicians and researchers who have had the opportunity to experience them.



The REM@KE project will employ these tools of process reconstruction to explore examples of keyboard instruments that have so far been relatively neglected by musicians, but that are nevertheless significant for the development of instruments, technique, and composition—and for which abundant historical documentation exists. This exploration will be expanded into the digital environment by developing tools for musicians and builders that provide new perspectives on instruments that do not, and should not, ever sound again.

One such instrument is the Johann Andreas Stein claviorgan (fortepiano organisé) in the Gothenburg City Museum collection, originally brought to Sweden by Patrick Alströmer. Complementary to the REM@KE research project, the Organ Academy team is developing a project in collaboration with the City Museum that will further expand knowledge of this important musical object and its place in the musicking of the city.

Throughout the project, our teams will strengthen and expand existing connections



Artwork designer: Michele Todini (Italian, Saluzzo, Piedmont, bapt. 1616–1690, Rome)

across professions. Rather than following the traditional model of one-way dissemination of outcomes, we prefer to imagine these connections as multidirectional, with mutual benefits that generate new and unforeseen research frontiers. Music educators will also find valuable resources for fostering an embodied approach to technique—one that frames performance as a genuine dialogue between individual player and specific instrument. Performers, organologists, and musicologists will have opportunities to share their knowledge with each other, as well as with conservation scientists,

gaining a truly multidisciplinary perspective on their work and experience.

We look forward to discussing the REM@KE project with you during the afternoon seminars at the 2025 Gothenburg International Organ Festival, and to future collaborations with the GIOA team.

On behalf of the REM@KE team:
– Massimiliano Guido, Joel Speerstra, Andrea Schiavio

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*Console of the Orglarstvo Močnik organ in Foss Church (2025).
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