

Arp Schnitger Gesellschaft e.V., Brake

Newsletter II

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Contents:

1. Reconstruction of the Schnitger Organ in Golzwarden

(Helmut Bahlmann)

2. The Restoration of the Christian Vater Organ in Wiefelstede

(Thomas Meyer-Bauer)

3. Kulturerbe und Klanggedächtnis: International conference for research and preservation

(Manfred Cordes)

4. Interview with Dr. Cornelius H. Edskes

(Hans Davidsson)

Dear Friends of Arp Schnitger and his Organ Art,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the second Newsletter of the International Arp Schnitger Gesellschaft in its new bilingual form. I hope you had a wonderful summer and fall, including memorable Schnitger organ experiences. There have been many opportunities here in the Northwest to hear the unique instruments of our organ-building master. Recently, the Schnitger Festival 2015, produced by Musikfest Bremen, presented a whole week of concerts for full audiences. All concerts were sold out. The re-inauguration of the Kröger/Huß organ in Langwarden (1650-51) performed by Harald Vogel was a particular milestone and success. In 2014-2015, the reconstructive conservation of the organ was carried out by Hendrik Ahrend and coordinated with a complete technical documentation performed by the Arp Schnitger Institute of Organ and Organ Building (ASIOO), and its organ researcher Koos van de Linde. Thomas Meyer-Bauer and Harald Vogel served as organ experts. You will read more about this project in coming issues of the Newsletter.

In the next issue, we will publish the presentations given at the annual meeting of our society in Hamburg on May 9 2016. In this issue you can read about the reconstructive restoration of the Vater organ in Wiefelstede, a pilot project implementing the interdisciplinary research method developed by GOArt in Sweden and carried out by Henk van Eeken (NL), the annual organ research conference organized by ASIOO in collaboration with the congregation in Wiefelstede in February, and a report on ongoing developments at the Schnitger Center in Golzwarden.

Most importantly this issue of the Newsletter is devoted to the memory of Dr. Cor H. Edskes who died in the late afternoon of September 7. Dr. Edskes's contribution to the preservation of the historical organs in our region and as an organ expert and researcher cannot be overestimated. He was the leading international organ expert for more than 60 years. In addition to the texts in memoriam of Dr. Edskes you can read an extensive interview with him from April 2014. In this interview, Dr. Edskes shared interesting aspects of his lifetime achievement as organist, organ building expert and organologist, and he also outlined what he considered to be the most important areas of research and initiatives for the future preservation and cultivation of the Schnitger heritage. In the interview, he repeatedly said “there should be more time for research and experimentation,” and “...everything should be documented.” On September 15, a memorial service in honor of Dr. Edskes was celebrated in the Martinikerk in Groningen – a complete liturgy with organ works exclusively by Johann Sebastian Bach performed by Wim van Beek on the magnificent Schnitger organ, whose restoration was a visionary goal of Dr. Edskes. In 1971-72, Dr. Edskes published a detailed documentation of this organ, soon after he established a comprehensive plan for its reconstruction and restoration, which, finally, was carried out by Jürgen Ahrend and completed in 1985. Many people from several countries filled the sanctuary of the Martinikerk for the moving memorial service, and later in the afternoon joined the family for the farewell ceremony in a cremation center. Inspired by Dr. Edskes work, we continue to manifest our interest and involvement in the preservation and promotion of Arp Schnitger’s unique organ heritage,

and together work for its safeguarding and integration as living cultural heritage in the global culture of the 21st century.

I wish you a happy New Year, and I wish you success with your work for Arp Schnitger and his heritage.

Hans Davidsson

1. Reconstruction of the Schnitger Organ in Golzwarden

Since 1999 and the beginning of its activities, the Arp Schnitger Gesellschaft e.V. (ASG), has strived to increase awareness about Arp Schnitger among the general public, and develop its appreciation of the Schnitger organs as a collection worthy of world cultural heritage status. Arp Schnitger was born in Schmalenfleth, and the Arp Schnitger Gesellschaft has its headquarters in Golzwarden (Brake). With the establishment of the Arp Schnitger Centrum near the St.-Bartholomäuskirche in Golzwarden, the church in which Arp Schnitger was baptized, the society took a first step toward making Golzwarden a qualified member of the ensemble of important sites for the organ culture of Arp Schnitger. For a representative presentation of the internationally admired Schnitger culture, instruments as well as music, it was considered necessary to establish the goal to reconstruct the Schnitger-organ in the baptismal and home-church of the organ builder. The new organs should be built as close as possible to the condition it had, when it was erected on the west gallery of the church in 1698.

In the book "Arp Schnitger und sein Werke" which was published by the ASG and the "Stichting Groningen Orgeland," it is stated laconically:

Hopefully there will once be installed a proper instrument in Schnitger's organ case which matches the impressive history and interior of the church.

Based on an appeal by the ASG for a reconstruction project, the church council of the Evangelic-Lutheran congregation at the Weser made the following decision:

The church council of the Ev.-Luth. Congregation "Brake an der Weser" decides to establish a working group for the project of the reconstruction of the Schnitger-Organ in Golzwarden. Together with the "Bezirkkirchenrat" and the "Kreiskantor" Gebhard von Hirschhausen and the organ expert of the Ev.-Luth. Church in Oldenburg as well as further experts the working group is supposed to develop a proposal regarding questions of principles, timetable and financing of the project which would serve the church council for further evaluation and final decision in this matter.

On the 18th of February, 2015 the working group gathered for a meeting. Representatives of the church congregation (the priest Christian Egts and Dirk Jährig from Golzwarden and the church eldest Hartmut Froese), as well as representatives from the authorities overseeing building projects and the preservation of historical buildings and monuments (Oberbaurat Achim Knöfel, OKR Oldenburg), the church music (LKMD Beate Besser, Oldenburg, Kreiskantor Gebhard von

Hirschhausen, Brake) and the organ expert of the Ev.-Luth. Landeskirche in Oldenburg (Natalia Gvozdkova from Berne), took part in this gathering. It was decided to establish as soon as possible a foundation, which in addition to other tasks has as its main task to raise funds for this significant project. Meanwhile a constitution for the foundation has been put in place. At the end of April the "Förderverein Arp-Schnitger-Orgel Golzwarden e.V." gathered to establish the association and began its work. With this the first and ground-breaking step was taken in the realization of the described and ambitious goals.

The project of building a new instrument into Arp Schnitger's organ case in Golzwarden combines all the lines of development which were contained in the original instrument in 1698: The Dutch way of building in the late 16th century, the central German style from the middle of the 17th century and Schnitger's "integral" concept which we still can experience today as a highlight of the baroque art of organ building (H. Vogel).

Furthermore it would be possible for the first time in Germany to develop a reconstruction project based on scholarly documentation and research, and which would be guided by the goals formulated in the application for the world cultural heritage.

Helmut Bahlmann

2. The Restoration of the Christian Vater Organ in Wiefelstede, 2011-2014

During a Festival Week in June, 2014, the restored Christian Vater organ in Wiefelstede was re-inaugurated. The restoration work was carried out by the firm of Henk van Eeken (Herwijnen, NL) with Thomas Meyer-Bauer as principal consultant. The ideas underlying the restoration are based on research done at the Göteborg Organ Art Center in the last decade of the twentieth century. The restoration of the Christian Vater organ in Wiefelstede, 2011-2014, is the first consistent application of the procedures developed there, that has been carried out outside of a research project. Very precise research into the constitution of the original materials and proportions, as well as the detailed search for signs of the working methods of Vater and his team, gave valuable data which made possible a reconstruction of the original manufacturing processes.

The organ builder Christian Vater

Christian Vater was born in Hannover in 1679 as the son of the organ builder Martin Vater. He probably received his first training in the family company. In 1697 the young organ builder began a five-year period as apprentice in the Bremen workshop of Arp Schnitger. In 1702 he returned to Hannover, where he created a great number of instruments. His works show, despite their clear individual traits, the influence of his great teacher Arp Schnitger. Besides building organs, Vater also made harpsichords and clavichords. In 1709 he took over the position of organist at the Neustädter Hof- und Stadtkirche St. Johannes in Hannover.

The Vater organ in Wiefelstede

For the county of Oldenburg Vater made nine organs in the period 1710-1734; the next-to-last

was finished in 1731 in Wiefelstede. On September 2, 1729, a contract was made with Vater for a new organ in the St. Johannes-Kirche in Wiefelstede. The new organ was approved on 4 January, 1731, by the organist Christoph Lanau of Oldenburg. Due to the period of mourning after the death of the Danish king Friedrich IV, it was played for the first time in a church service on 21 October, 1731.

- In 1909 the organ was drastically altered by Johann Martin Schmidt of Oldenburg. At that time the Quinta 3', Mixtur, Waldflöit 2' (partly), Sesquialt, and all the reeds of Vater were lost.
- In 1935 the organ was restored according to the views of the Orgelbewegung by Alfred Führer. The disposition was partly restored at that time, but two of the four original wedge-shaped bellows were lost.
- In 1982 the organ was again restored by the firm of Führer from Wilhelmshaven. From 2011 to 2014 it was restored by Henk van Eeken Orgelmaker in Herwijnen. The wind system and the wind trunks, the keyboards, and the original disposition were reconstructed at this time. We have here the most completely preserved instrument of Vater, although in the first decade of the twentieth century nearly half of the pipes were lost.

The restoration and reconstruction of the pipework in Wiefelstede

The historical pipework was inventoried, measured, documented and restored with the greatest care. Fortunately, the measurements provided details that permitted conclusions to be drawn about the construction processes of the lost registers. With this observation we touch the basis of the conceptual goal of the Wiefelstede restoration: the reconstruction of the manufacturing process using copious documentation. Besides study of the instrument itself, the Vater organs in Fedderwarden (Wildeshausen 1711/12), Bockhorn (1722), Amsterdam - Oude Kerk (1726), Amsterdam - Westerkerk (1726), Gifhorn (1748), Hohenrode (Gestorf 1749) und Kloster Marienrode (1752) were studied in detail for information about the parts that were to be reconstructed. The following registers were made new:

Quinta 3', Mixtur 4 ranks 2/3', Trompet 8', Vox humana 8', Waldflöit 2' g-c'', Sesquialt 2 ranks 2/3', Dulcian 8', Posaun 16', Trompet 8', Trompet 4'.

Using the analysis of the historical pipe material and a thorough understanding of the composition of old English tin and of eighteenth-century lead, the alloy for the new pipes was made: 1 part tin to 10 parts lead; both ingredients contain the familiar "impurities" due to traces of various other metals. The metal for the pipes was cast on a bed of sand. In this way the metal sheets were made, by the hands of organ builders who are very experienced in this manner of construction, in such a way that the crystal structure is correct and the thickness very close to what is required. The metal rested for a year before being planed by hand to the correct final thickness. The analytical data provided by extensive ultrasonic research was invaluable in this phase.

The forms of the lips, their position, the nature and adjustment of the languids, the scalings, and the relations between body and foot were all taken precisely from examples by Vater. There was one historical pipe in the Wiefelstede organ (bottom A of the Gedact 4'; see the photo), which was considered to be unaltered, and was thus given a key role in the voicing of pipes. Nicks have been reversibly closed using a special wax. Systematic studies of relatively unaltered pipes of other relevant organs were used for reference. In particular, the presence of the Hinsz organ from Meeden in the workshop in Herwijnen was a case of good fortune for Wiefelstede, since there were here many useful reference pipes.

All of the flues of the Vater organ had been reduced on the side of the lower lip in a seemingly careless manner. On pipes with ears, this was done in such a way that the long sides of the flue were not parallel. It was clear that the reduction of the flues had been done to pipes that were already assembled. The same treatment was found on the original Vater pipes in Bockhorn, but not in a single example from the workshop of Schmid, who worked on the Wiefelstede instrument in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Before the restoration of 1982, these clearly original shapes were still preserved: in the restoration report we read: “the generally much too narrow flues have been given a healthy size” (see also Restoration Report in: Fritz Schild: *Denkmal-Orgeln / Dokumentation der Restaurierungen durch Orgelbau Führer 1974–1991*, Teil II, S. 874). We consider this manner of treatment of pipes to be an adjustment of the work of the pipe-maker by the voicer, perhaps made in the church.

Another passage from the report of 1982: “The most satisfactory wind pressure was decided empirically from the sounds of the pipes. It is 58 mm. Using the wind pressure of 70 mm found in the organ, it was not possible to get the middle Principal pipes (4', 2', 1' length) to speak naturally. On the other hand, this wind pressure [58mm.] was essential to give the large Principals and the pipes with soldered caps a satisfactory speech.” There was thus in the last phase of the work in 1982 a serious problem: there was no functional wind pressure to use for the whole organ. The wind pressure is now close to 69,3 mm (this would be 29 Grad Hamburger inches, using old units), almost identical to that of the organ before 1982.

The Quinta 3' has the same scale as the original Octav 4'; the Mixtur and Sesquialt have the same scale as the Octav 2' - exactly as described in Christian Vater's shop notebook. (The 4-rank Mixtur repeats four times on C, c, c', c'') [$2/3'$, $1\ 1/3'$, $2\ 2/3'$, 4].)

Christian Vater's original reed stops had all been lost; only 8 (e-h) resonators of the original Posaun were still extant. These resonators however were very important for the restoration, since they still demonstrably had their original lengths. After the missing parts of the pipes (resonators, shallots → [diameter, depth, slot {both above and below}], width of tongue and thickness above and below, boot, boot block) had been reconstructed using the most precise possible measurements, the first pipes were assembled using the original resonators, in order to get the correct relationships with the resonator length.

Acoustical studies of the original resonators led to the conclusion that Vater had tuned these resonators 100 to 125 cents higher than the tuned pitch. This is significantly higher than Schnitger's practice. For the pipes with covered shallots, this tendency was followed in the reconstructed Posaun and Trompet resonators, also taking into account the acoustical adjustment of some resonators of the 16' Posaun in Bockhorn. With reference to the extant resonator lengths in Marienrode, the Trompet resonators in Wiefelstede from 8' tenor A follow more closely the “longer” practice of Schnitger. These last steps, and also the voicing in the church, were preceded by extensive study.

All Pedal reed stops (Posaun 16', Trompet 8', Trompet 4') have "boot blocks" of fir. The Manual Trompet and the Vox humana have wooden boots, the Dulcian has a boot block of oak. The blocks are of maple. All shallots from tenor A (8') are open; the lowest octave of the Posaun is covered with thin calfskin. The shallots of the smaller reeds have a trumpet scale from tenor c; the scaling in the bottom octave starts narrower at bottom C & widens gradually until tenor c. Length and diameter of the resonators of the Vox humana in each individual 8ve are identical.

The length of the conical lower part of the resonators of the Dulcian follows the example of the Oboe in Marienrode; the widths follow Vater's shop notebook.

The following original models were used: the Posaune 16' in Bockhorn, the Posaune 16' and Trompete 8' (Pedal) in Marienrode, the manual Trompete 8' in Marienrode, the Trompone 16' of the builder Schaper in Marienrode (which contains shallots, boots, and reeds of the original Vox humana of Vater, (D-c")), the Vox humana in the Westerkerk in Amsterdam, and the Oboe in Marienrode.

(It is noteworthy that Vater's shop notebook describes the Dulcian in the Liebfrauenkirche in Bremen: "Dießer Dulcian ist enge Mensur stehet zu Bremen in der St. Lefrauen Kirche [an organ by Sieborg altered in 1699] in der Brust klinget recht wie eine Hoboi und hat mihr ser gut gefallen, die Lenge werde ich absonderlich finden."

The refinement of the procedure and the extent of the useful documentation and research certify that this restoration has brought back the essence of the old organ, which is much more important than the realization of the intentions of the restoring organ builder. As a result, the Christian Vater organ in Wiefelstede sounds again in its ancient glory; its principals and flutes display an extremely fine and differentiated sound, and the six reed stops are of excellent color. The almost completely original key action fits perfectly in the total picture. A great gain for the organ world!

Thomas Meyer-Bauer
(Translation: Dale Carr)

Technical information and photos: *Henk van Eeken (Herwijnen, NL)*

Captions:

- 1) A photo of bottom A Floit 4' Brust, showing original intonation marks from Christian Vater.
- 2) Façade of the Christian Vater organ in Wiefelstede.

3. Kulturerbe und Klanggedächtnis: International conference for research and preservation of the historical organs in North Germany

Monday, February 23, in Wiefelstede

Brief Report

The conference was organized by the *Arp Schnitger Institut für Orgel und Orgelbau* (ASIOO) at the *Hochschule für Künste Bremen* in cooperation with the Lutheran congregation in Wiefelstede (represented by Dr. Giselher Bechmann) and intended to serve as a platform for communication and exchange of information among organ builders, organ experts, organists, scientists, and interested people from the general public. With 60 participants from Germany and abroad, the conference became a milestone in ASIOO's attempts to generate dialogue among many disciplines, professionals and interested laymen who contribute to the safeguarding of historical organs and to

strengthen our common goal to preserve this important cultural heritage in our region for the future. The conference was characterized by an open and dedicated atmosphere and generous exchange of ideas and experience between all participants.

After welcome notes given by the priest of the congregations, Mrs. Schaer-Pinne, in Wiefelstede, and the organ expert Thomas Meyer-Bauer, who was in charge of the restoration of the Vater-Organ, as well as welcome words by the director of ASIIO, Prof. Dr. Hans Davidsson, a demonstration of the restored Vater-organ followed. After four years of restoration, the organ was re-inaugurated in the summer of 2014. Prof. Dr. Harald Vogel, who also served as advisor for the project, demonstrated and presented the individual registers of the organ in his masterful manner. At the end of the presentation the "small" prelude in e-minor by Nikolaus Bruhns was played, however was transposed to d-minor because of the unequal temperament of the organ.

The conference continued at 11:00 a.m. in the Rudolf-Bultmann-Haus, which was kindly put at our disposal by the congregation. The following points and themes were discussed:

- I. Christian Vater in Wiefelstede
- II. The geometry of organ pipes and intonation
- III. The Threat to the cultural heritage (corrosion and mould fungus)

I. Christian Vater in Wiefelstede

To begin with, Thomas Meyer-Bauer informed us about the history of church in Wiefelstede and particularly the organ, which was completed and inaugurated in 1731. He also listed the changes that were done to do the instrument in the following years and throughout the centuries. He then turned to the principles of restoration and reconstruction which had guided his work as an organ expert since the beginning of the project in 2007, and how these were finally realized by the organ builder Henk van Eeken and his firm in the Netherlands. As an important source the annotation book from Christian Vater's workshop had been taken into consideration. Meyer-Bauer pointed out that the missing original reed stops in Wiefelstede had been reconstructed based on documentation preserved reed stops by Vater in other organs. Based on studies of the original pipes it was possible to reconstruct the original pitch, which was 458,5 Hz. It was decided to use an unequal temperament according to Kellner/Bach.

Organ builder and restorer, Henk van Eeken continued with an interesting presentation of general guidelines and ethics of restoration and reconstruction, he gave a detailed description of the condition of the organ before the restoration. With many photos he showed the condition of the organ case, the bellows and wind supply system, the windchests, and the original pipework. Everything was documented carefully by the organ builders: the scaling, the wall-thickness (ultrasound measurements), the composition of the metal (Röntgen-Fluoreszenz-Spektrografie) and the combination of material used for the pipes was put into scales, it was possible to establish that an alloy with the proportion of ten pieces of lead and one piece of tin had been used; based on this information and these results the missing flue pipes were reconstructed. A particular challenge was the reconstruction of the reed stops. As models for the reed stops preserved stops from other

instruments by Vater, especially in Marienrode and Bockhorn, were used. After the presentation, there was time for questions, discussions and additional information.

II. The geometry of the pipes and intonation

Koos van de Linde (ASIOO) presented his ongoing documentation of the (Hus-)Kröger organ in Langwarden. At the time of the conference, this organ was under restoration by organ builder Hendrik Ahrend. He talked about observations concerning geometry of the mouth area (labium) in Langwarden, and, in particular, the proportions between the mouth width and the diameter of the pipe. In general, he concluded that the scaling was based on simple and consistently applied principles, and, accordingly, the voicing was basically determined already in the pipe making process, and afterwards only minor adjustments were carried out. From this perspective it became clear that the voicing was not an “artistic“ act according to the aesthetics of the twentieth century that transformed the “raw-material” into “art,” but the general sound of a pipe and a stops respectively was determined already in the workshop and as a result of the pipe making process guided by the scaling, geometry and construction established by the pipe maker.

Munetaka Yokota (GOArt, Sweden) started his presentation with observations regarding the scaling of the organs by Arp Schnitger. Yokota continued to talk about the geometry of the pipes (the proportion between width of the foot and the body circumference) and referred to the often found "simple" (Fibonacci-) proportions 5:8, 3:5 or 2:3, which were not continuously modified in the higher octaves and the high-pitched stops and mixtures. Yokota then turned to the quite conical form of the toe wholes of the pipes, like he had also seen them in instruments by Casparini, and explained this in detail with the help of sketches and drawings on the black board. Finally, he went on to observations concerning the cut-up, the angle of the upper and lower lip and their relation, and to the often detected nicking of the languid and when they may have originated. Yokota reported that in the tradition of Arp Schnitger, the upper and lower lips are often positioned in line with each other (no „over-bite“ etc). He stated that according to his experience and opinion the main factor for the special character of the speech of the Schnitger pipes.

Heiko Lorenz continued with a presentation concerning his experiences from the restoration of the Schnitger-organ in Ganderkesee. He focused mainly on the tendency with straight lower lips in Schnitger-pipes and explained various possibilities to shape the lower lips efficiently with different tools. He continued to share some of his observations and experience regarding wind pressure, he finally also talked in general about nicking and different methods of dealing with them.

In the following presentation, Hendrik Ahrend discussed the principles of restorations with particular focus on the question how to establish priorities between the value of the organ as artifact and the practical use and maintenance of an instrument. He demonstrated the challenge by showing many photos that showed the condition of organ pipes prior to restoration. The decision how to preserve and restore the instrument and make it practically useful and possible to maintain was previously made primarily based on practical and functional reasons. This led to changes of the pipework, and accordingly many historical pipes arrived at the workshop of his father, Jürgen Ahrend, so substantially changed that it was often impossible to reconstruct for example the original pitch and temperament.

III. Threat to the cultural heritage

In his lecture, Dr. Peter Plagemann's (Fraunhofer IFAM Bremen) focused on observations which he had gathered together with Dr. Herbert Juling, Amt für Materialprüfung, Bremen, on corroded and damaged pipework in the organs in Mariendrebber (near Diepholz) and Belum (near Cuxhaven). The investigations of the corrosion in the lead-rich organ pipes in these instruments were part of a pilot project initiated by ASIIO. Plagemann explained the electrochemical procedure of the corrosion in general and went on with the particulars of the lead corrosion with regard to the concerned lead-rich pipes. With impressive images from x-ray photoelectron-microscope, he demonstrated the progress of corrosion of organ pipe metal and the surrounding air with enlargements that made thousands of a millimeter of the material visible. The various possible explanations for the corrosion seemed to originate in the lead-rich alloy's tendency to react with acetat (acetic acid) and water (high air humidity). Furthermore Plagemann talked about the interaction between the climate of the room, ventilation, heating, humidity in the air, and mould fungus.

Indeed, the lively and engaged discussion that followed witnessed how challenging the problem with damaged and corroded organ pipes is. The participating organ builders reported on their own experiences and their continuous search for techniques and methods to repair and prevent the damage of organ pipes. Plagemann reported about an application to the European Commission (Horizon 2020) that IFAM in collaboration with ASIIO, MPA Bremen, and several international partners had submitted, and which had aimed at the development of different methods using nanotechnology for surface protection of potentially corroded material. Although the application was a finalist, the consortium recently received news that the project had been refused. All who participated in the conference agreed that continued research concerning corrosion of organ pipes and the existence of mould fungus must remain a priority and that it is a central task for the preservation of the historical organs and the cultural heritage.

Manfred Cordes

4. Interview with Dr. Cornelius H. Edskes (April 24, 2014)

In April 2014 I visited with renowned Dutch organ-building expert, organologist and organist, Dr. Cornelius H. Edskes in Groningen. As I was walking across the Grote Markt square, approaching the impressive tower of the Martinikerk, I recalled my first visit to Groningen in 1986. At that time, I was a student at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam, and Mr. Edskes generously offered me a guided tour of the recently restored Schnitger-organ in the Martinikerk. Primarily, I was interested in exploring original registration indications in the organ music by Matthias Weckman (1616-1674). Mr. Edskes was such an accommodating and kind host; he showed me the monumental organ, let me play for a while, and then, at a coffee shop, talked about his many visits to the Scandinavian countries, particularly to Sweden and Denmark. Proudly, and with surprisingly accurate pronunciation, he offered some welcoming phrases in Swedish, and later when we departed, he bid farewell with an "Adjö" (Good bye) and "På återseende" (Auf Wiedersehen).

As I was approaching our meeting point, I thought about the further encounters we have had over the years; when I played recitals in the Aa-kerk or in the Martinikerk; and particularly in Göteborg in 1996, when Mr. Edskes gave the honorary lecture at the doctoral promotion, during which he received an honorary doctoral degree from the University of Gothenburg for “long and exemplary research on and work for the historical organs in the Netherlands and northern Germany.” During my tenure as professor of organ at the Hochschule für Künste in Bremen and chairman of the *Arp Schnitger Gesellschaft*, we had the opportunity to visit several times and collaborate in various publication and research projects. Most importantly I thought about the remarkable lifetime achievement of this legendary organist, organ expert, and scholar. During more than seventy years, he played, studied, and documented Schnitger-organs. In the 1950s, he was the instigator of a new approach to organ restoration, and ever since, he has served as a leader in its continuous development. He was the mastermind behind almost all the restorations of the large Schnitger-organs.

A few minutes before 11 am, I entered the door to the *Café Kosterij*, directly at the south-west corner of the Martinikerk, found a table in a quiet corner, sat down and organized my papers and recording equipment. 11 am sharp, Dr. Edskes entered the door, in his distinctive and elegant way, walked up to me, and with a vivid and welcoming gesture, greeted me with his kind and noble smile, sat down and ordered coffee and sandwiches for both of us. “I hope your trip was smooth, and that all in Göteborg are doing well,” he said, kindly looking at me as he folded out the napkin on his lap.

Transformed by the Aa-Kerk Organ: the Birth of a Passion

We started talking about Groningen as a Schnitger-city, the instruments in Martini, the Aa-kerk and the Pelstergasthuis-kerk, and I asked Dr. Edskes: “When did you actually first get acquainted with these wonderful organs?” He told me that as a child he went with his family to the services in the Aa-kerk, where he was baptized and where they were members. “As long as I can remember, the sounds of this organ and the image of its magnificent façade were part of my life,” he said. Occasionally, the family went to the Martini-Kerk and other churches in the city, and he curiously looked at and listened to the organs. In 1938, Mr. Edskes was allowed to play the organ in the Aa-Kerk; it was the first time he played a Schnitger-organ. It was a moving and life-changing experience, and he admired its beautiful, rich, and full sounds. The organist in the Aa-kerk, Johan van Meurs, an authority not only as an organist, but also as an early music pioneer and pedagogue, introduced Mr. Edskes to the organ, and became his first teacher. Mr. van Meurs enjoyed the habit of demonstrating particular stops and sounds of the organ to his students while they were listening downstairs in the church. He told them which stops he was going to play, described their sounds, and finally, he played games with them, asking them to identify stops and registrations they heard. Mr. Edskes admired all the stops and remembered particularly how he enjoyed listening to the façade Principal of the *Rückpositiv*, the *Gemshorn* combinations, and, not the least, the *Dulcian*. “Where do you find a better *Dulcian*?” Dr. Edskes asked, and continued, “I still find this the most beautiful of its kind anywhere in the world.” He found the Schnitger-organ in Martini-kerk very impressive, powerful and magnificent, however the Aa-kerk organ at this time remained his favorite. Under the tutelage of Mr. van Meurs, he developed fast, and already in 1941, he was offered the organist position in Uithuizen. At the age of sixteen he became Titular organist of the Jacobi Church, at the significant two-manual and pedal organ, built completely new by Arp Schnitger in 1701. He was stunned by its magic sounds and colorful character. “Indeed, it was exciting every time to travel to Uithuizen and play this remarkable organ,” he said.

Johan van Meurs—we may call him the “Organistenmacher” of Groningen—educated several of the leading Dutch organists and teachers-to-be at conservatories around the country, including George Stam (Leeuwarden), and Simon C. Jansen (Amsterdam), and he installed in them a passion for the historical organs. In the following years, Mr. Edskes visited many historical organs around the country. He took private lessons with George Stam and Simon Jansen, and later with Flor Peeters in Belgium, and Helmut Walcha in Germany. Mr. Edskes never received a formal education as organist, instead, he studied economy, law, and art history at the University of Groningen and pursued a career also in these fields. Nevertheless, organs and music remained his passion. As a young teenager, he took private lessons in keyboard and music theory with Friso Molenaar, organist and professor in Groningen, who had studied in Leipzig in Germany. Molenaar served as organist in the Doopsgezinde Kerk in Groningen. In 1943, he decided to retire and leave the position. Together with several other organists, Mr. Edskes auditioned for the position. In March 1944, he was offered the job. Due to the war, it was not possible to travel to Uithuizen anymore, and at the age of eighteen, Mr. Edskes accepted the position as Titular Organist in the Doopsgezinde Kerk, a position that he upheld until 2009.

“Schnitger-weather:” Organ Studies by Bike

Mr. Edskes was fascinated by the sound and quality of the Schnitger-organs and went by bike to play and study as many instruments as he possibly could, not only in the Groningen region and in the Netherlands, but also in Germany. He smiled, and said that “when the sun was shining we used to say: ‘It is Schnitger-weather,’ and off we went on our bikes.” Soon he discovered that most of the Schnitger-organs in the Netherlands were better preserved than those in Germany. The German organs had been substantially changed by more than one generation of organ-builders. After World War Two, builders who were influenced by the organ reform movement (*Orgelbewegung*), for example Paul Ott from Göttingen, often did radical changes. These “restorations,” or rather drastic rebuildings, did not only affect the technical structure, the key- and stop-action of the instruments, but unfortunately also included changes of the sound: the wind-pressure was lowered, the toe-holes opened, and the cut-ups of the pipes were lowered. Mr. Edskes gave several examples, and he mentioned that “in the large Bielfeldt-organ in Wilhade [Stade], a new *Rückpositiv* was added to the original organ case, and the *Oberpositif*, originally placed behind the *Werk* was placed in the new case. So strong was the projection of subjective ideas of a true style and the authentic sound!” Around Groningen, the Schnitger-organs were well-preserved and sounded different, colorful, with character, beauty, power and brilliance, and the young organist got more and more interested in the secrets behind the beauty of sound embedded in the construction and voicing of the pipes. “I wanted to learn about organ-building, and quite soon I was able help tuning organs. This gave me the opportunity to study, analyze and learn,” he said. After the war, Mr. Edskes was often in the workshop of the Groningen organ-builder Klaas Doornbos, whose health was not so good anymore, and who gave the young organist many opportunities to assist and help out with various things. Doornbos maintained the organs in the city of Groningen, and this included the tuning of all reeds every Sunday morning. Thus, Mr. Edskes, walked from church to church and tuned all reeds, before he played the service at the Doopsgezinde kerk. He was given more and more responsibility by Mr. Doornbos. In the restoration of the Wenthin-organ in Nieuwolda (1787), Mr. Edskes was asked to help with the voicing, and in the reformed church in Ruinerwold (built in 1743 by the Schnitger-student Matthias Amoor), he was given the responsibility for the whole concept of the restoration, including the design of a new *Rückpositiv* based on the same division of the Schnitger/Freytag-organ in Noordbroek (1951). However, the most challenging and also inspiring projects he did concerned the

Rückpositiv in the Schnitger-organs in Martini-kerk in Groningen (1952) and in Noordbroek respectively (1955-58). “I had some of the pipework of the *Rückpositiv* [of the Martini-organ] in my studio and workshop in Groningen, located in the house of my parents. It was an extraordinary opportunity to study and document. I carefully restored the voicing of the pipes. My parents and my siblings were confronted with continuous blowing sounds from organ pipes early as well as late!” he chuckled, cleared his throat and continued. “I envisioned the whole Martini-organ reconstructed and restored [at this time it had electric action], and, finally, in the 1980s, this dream came through. I studied and documented the whole organ over several decades and published the results [1971/72]. Based on this, I developed the reconstruction plan, and it was skillfully carried out by Jürgen Ahrend.” During the interview, he several times expressed respect and admiration for Jürgen Ahrend’s work.

Contacts and Developments in Germany

Since the 1940s, Mr. Edskes had many contacts in Germany. He helped the Schnitger-scholar Gustav Fock document the Dutch Schnitger-organs, and he was also active as organ consultant, researcher and organ expert in Germany. He got acquainted with the German organist Helmut Winter, a student of Helmut Walcha, and an organ expert of the Lutheran Landeskirche in Hannover. Helmut Winter and Mr. Edskes studied several historical organs together, for example the Schnitger-organs in Lüdingworth (Antonius Wilde 1598 / Arp Schnitger 1682), and in Cappel (1680). Around 1950, Mr. Edskes worked several months in Cappel, and helped Paul Ott make the organ playable again. This gave him the opportunity to do in-depth studies and a careful conservation of this miraculously preserved organ, the only playable Schnitger-organ with original tin-rich façade pipes in Germany. “I was surprised by the discovery of this well-preserved master-piece in the midst of all changed historical organs in Germany,” he said. Helmut Walcha made his famous gramophone records of Johann Sebastian Bach’s organ works recorded by Dr. Erich Thienhaus, the first example of historical organ recordings that were distributed all around the world, and Walcha later played many recitals in Cappel. “I was completely fascinated by the sounds of this organ, particularly by the façade principals – and the *Pleno* registrations!” Dr. Edskes continued, increasingly engaged: “Just pull the Principal 8 and Octave 4 together with the Mixture of the *Werk*, and you have already a *Pleno*, – loud and full, but not at all ugly, like in so many other organs. The blending of these three stops is remarkable. The character and speech of this *Pleno* should be studied by as many organists and organ builders as possible. Fortunately, Rudolf von Beckerath hardly changed anything important during his restoration of the organ in the mid 1970s,” Dr. Edskes continued, “however, he did the usual things with the wind-chests: covered the inside with white glue and attached boards under the channels to prevent leakage. This should not have been done, and hopefully it will not cause problems in the future. The organ in Cappel should be preserved in its current state. It is the best-preserved Schnitger-organ we have.” We continued to discuss the value of this instrument, how significant it would be to document the details of its pipe construction and voicing sometime in the future when it may become necessary to clean the organ. “My documentation from 1950 is quite detailed”, he said, “and I am willing to add it to a future publication” [partly published in Winter, Helmut (Ed.): Cappel St. Petri und Pauli, Orgelstudien 2, Hamburg 1977]. We talked about the Schnitger Database that, at the time of our meeting, was in its final preparation phase (published in September 2014), and Dr. Edskes was interested in hearing that also detailed documentations can be published and made available in this way. “We must increase the awareness of the value of the Schnitger-organs, promote them for acknowledgement as World Cultural Heritage. The organ in Cappel is the most important of all Schnitger-organs,” he concluded.

Danish Influences

We returned to the organ-building scene in the 1940s. “While the building of new organs in the Netherlands and Germany barely had begun, there was an interesting and strong development in Denmark, even during the wartime. In 1952, we went to the inauguration of the new organ in Varde [new design and organ case]. It was fascinating! These organs were well designed with well-engineered mechanical action, slider chests, technically of very high quality, – and the sound was fresh and fine. Particularly, the reeds impressed me a lot.” I asked about his contacts with Sybrand Zachariassen. Dr. Edskes smiled, rested for a while, and then continued: “I met Sybrand Zachariassen and Poul-Gerhard Andersen for the first time in Sorø. Zachariassen was a visionary organ-builder and the dynamic leader of the Marcussen organ-building workshop. P-G Andersen was his most skilled colleague, very talented, did the architectural design, often developed the concepts, and had the responsibility for the reed-making and voicing.” Zachariassen and Andersen decided to make a study trip to the historical organs in the northwest due to the influence of the Dutch organist Johannes Legêne (Dutch organist and organ expert, who worked in the Marcussen workshop around 1945) and to Mr. Edskes' visit to the firm in 1947. Mr. Edskes organized their visit, and they went around studying and discussing historical organs for several weeks. Mr. Edskes stayed in regular contact with the Danish organ-scene, and continued to follow the development in Denmark closely.

In the summers of the early 1950s he also visited Sweden, and got acquainted with the historical organs in the south as well as in the north. He remembers a visit to the Morlanda organ (Leyden, 1575, later identified as Brebos, Copenhagen, 1603-04) on the island of Orust, north of Göteborg, and to the organ-builder Nils Hammarberg, who had just restored this instrument. In his workshop, Mr. Hammarberg showed Mr. Edskes three old pipes, “that he could not find a place for in the restored organ,” Mr. Edskes laughed. He was fascinated to find several well-preserved organs from the seventeenth century in Sweden. In Övertorneå, north of the polar circle, he found an organ originally built for the German church in Stockholm in 1609 and was moved to the north in 1780. Mr. Edskes also visited the organ-builders Grönlund in Gammelstad. He suddenly stopped, recalling a recording that he made of a new organ built by Grönlund in the church in Norrfjärden for the National Swedish Radio. “The church and the new organ burnt down a few weeks after the recording... maybe the recording still exists?” he said, with a glimpse of curiosity in his eyes. “The organ-builders in Sweden did good work, but nothing that could be compared to that of the Danish builders, and particularly the Marcussen firm in the early 1950s,” Dr. Edskes concluded. “Zachariassen and Andersen were in a different league and worked well together.” He then recalled a visit he paid to the church of Hässeholm in south Sweden in 1955, during the installation of the new three-manual Marcussen organ. In front of Mr. Edskes, the two organ-building gentlemen had a strong disagreement about the voicing of the façade pipes. Zachariassen usually voiced all flue and façade pipes, but in this case, Andersen had done the initial work on the façade pipes, and he had set the speech in a slightly different way. Zachariassen did not agree. As a result, Andersen abruptly left the church, and it took three weeks until they would even talk to each other again. In general, however, they had a very good collaboration. It was not until after the sudden, unexpected death of Zachariassen in 1960, that Poul-Gerhard Andersen established his own business in the Copenhagen area.

A Marcussen Organ for Groningen

In the 1950s, Mr. Edskes worked as an organ-expert in the Netherlands for the reformed church and for the Dutch National Heritage Board, and he referred to his interaction and collaboration

with other organ-experts, among them Lambert Ern , a strong proponent for the Marcussen firm. Although they disagreed about some things, Mr. Edskes supported Mr. Ern 's effort to let Marcussen build a new organ in the Nicolaikerk in Utrecht in 1956. During this period, Mr. Edskes decided to get a new Marcussen organ to the Doopsgezinde Kerk in Groningen. The church was under restoration and it was time for a new organ. He found a potential sponsor for the project, a member of the congregation who owned a printing business in Groningen, and they traveled to Aabenraa in southern Jutland in Denmark. After a successful visit to the Marcussen workshop and to their new organ in the Nikolai church, they were invited to dinner in a big white castle in M gelt nder, where the Danish nobleman count Hans Schack resided. Count Schack was a true organ-enthusiast who helped organize the international organ-weeks in Denmark, beginning with the 150th anniversary of the Marcussen firm in 1956, and continuing in the next few years with featured guest organists like Marie-Claire Alain (1926-2013) and Anton Heiller (1923-1979). "Everyone in the organ-scene in the northwest, and from the Scandinavian countries, came to join. It was fantastic, so much music and such a feast – we had no time to sleep!" This celebration in 1956, the organ-weeks, and the recordings on Marcussen-organs by Alain and Heiller, made the quality and style of the Danish organs known and admired abroad. Count Schack offered the delegation from the Doopsgezinde kerk in Groningen a wonderful reception and delicious dinner, and entertained generously. At the end of the evening, the contract was signed. Since the funds were available, it was possible to make the decision to purchase the new organ from abroad, from Denmark, and from the Marcussen firm. When I asked Dr. Edskes about the reactions to this project in the city of Groningen, he frowned, smiled and continued: "Its arrival was quite a revolution. It was the first three-manual [and pedal] organ that had been built in Groningen since the nineteenth century. And – what we did not know – it was to become Sybrand Zachariassen's last organ. He was responsible for the voicing of the principals and flutes. P.-G. Andersen designed and voiced the reeds." Dr. Edskes talked about the installation process and said that only small adjustments of the voicing were done in the church by Adolf Wehding, lead voicer at the firm at that time. Dr. Edskes has continued to play the organ ever since and finally stated: "The Marcussen organ always works, it never needed maintenance nor tuning, except for the reeds of course, – indeed a strong statement for its quality."

Danish Seventeenth-Century Organ-Building

The quality of Danish twentieth-century organ building was indisputable, however, the lack of historical organs with original pipes posed challenges for further development in the country. Instead it was in northern Germany the development continued; J rgen Ahrend and Gerhard Brunzema, in close collaboration with Mr. Edskes, established a new practice of organ-restoration and a historically informed style of building. However, Mr. Edskes continued to work in Denmark, and in the late twentieth century, he got involved in two important projects in the cathedral in Roskilde and in St. Maria in Helsing r. The historically informed approach was applied, and the Danish seventeenth-century organ building was revived. In collaboration with Kristian Olesen [Dom-Organist in Roskilde], he developed master plans for the projects and served as advisor to the Marcussen firm, which was responsible for these milestone-projects.

We continued talking about the seventeenth-century Danish organ-building style, about organ-builder Johan Lorentz, his contacts with the Buxtehude family, and the next generation, the family Botzen. The father of Johan and Peter Petersen Botzen had his organ-building workshop on Jutland. His sons took over the business, moved to Copenhagen, renovated and rebuilt the organ in Roskilde cathedral, and built a new organ in Vor Frelzers Kirke (Our Savior's Church) in Co-

penhagen. The Botzen organ-building style was extraordinary and refined, with clear concepts and the highest craftsmanship, an absolute “*Prachtstil*”. Unfortunately, very little is left of their work, in terms of pipework it is almost limited to the exquisite façade principals in Roskilde and Vor Frelers Kirke. “It is important to do more research about these builders and find out where they got their influence,” Dr. Edskes said. He recalls a visit to Vor Frelers Kirke in 1965 that coincided with P.-G. Andersen’s installation of a new organ behind an absolutely magnificent organ case from 1698, and the exciting moment when the Botzen façade pipes were given wind and could be heard again after many years of silence. Unfortunately, P.-G. Andersen had set the wind-pressure too high, resulting in a speech that was too aggressive, and accordingly the sound of the pipes was forced and out of balance. Andersen was enthusiastic about the sound, and unfortunately not receptive to Mr. Edskes’ critical remarks. “It is very important to correct this mistake,” Dr. Edskes said, “and let us hear the Botzen pipes in their natural beauty and balance.”

The server appeared at our table, took away our empty plates, and we ordered a second cup of coffee. Suddenly, the sun broke through the clouds, and from our corner of *Café Kosterij* we saw the branches of the impressive old trees, located along the south side of the church, just about to turn green, shake in the brisk wind. Indeed, spring was, although somewhat reluctantly, arriving.

Arp Schnitger – a unique organ builder

I asked Dr. Edskes if he could summarize what, according to his opinion, makes Arp Schnitger unique. “Schnitger was unique among his contemporaries, not only in northern Europe,” he replied. “He was the first international organ-builder. His organs were technically of high quality, built to last for generations, the technical structure was clear and functional; he developed the façades, organ cases and specifications individually to each church, its space and acoustics; and, finally, the sound of the organs was extraordinary.” Dr. Edskes continued to talk about the unprecedented output of instruments. “He carried out more than 150 organ building projects in his lifetime, more than any of his predecessors had done, and more than anyone would build before the middle of the nineteenth century.” He explained that this was possible because of Schnitger’s strong vision, his unique entrepreneurial and leadership skills, his creativity, and ability to establish confidence among his customers as well as his workers. He recruited the most skilled organ-builders in northern Europe and established workshop teams in several cities. “He was able to inspire, educate and lead the largest group of talented organ-builders anywhere in the world.” Mr. Edskes talked about some of these builders, “many more than the [approximately] fifty that Gustav Fock mentions in his book,” and he continued to talk about the most influential of his successors. “Antonius Hinsz [1704–1785, in Groningen], Christian Vater [1679-1756, in Hannover] and Lambert Daniel Kastens [1690-1744, in Copenhagen] successfully established themselves in different regions and nations and built many instruments.” Matthias Dropa [1646/65–1732] and Erasmus Bielfeldt [1682-1753] were fine builders who continued working in the region. Well-known builders far away, like Christian Müller [1690-1763], and Joachim Wagner [1690-1749] also learnt from Schnitger. “No other European organ-builder has had such a strong and widespread influence in the organ-building world. Schnitger was a master teacher, and the first international organ-builder of all times. Much depended on his ability to establish himself on the market at the right time.” Dr. Edskes gave an example of how Schnitger, in the 1690s, entered the scene in Groningen, the decade of his international break-through: “Schnitger knew that they desperately needed to repair the organ in Martini – some local builders had failed to do the work – and he convinced the church council and the city that he was capable of doing it.” Schnitger carried out a successful restoration and added large pedal towers with a 32-foot façade Principal.

“Schnitger built the large façade pipes in the same style as the old façade pipes of the *Werk*”, a fact that showed Schnitger’s respect for the past and his ability to adapt to its style. He knew that more organs were needed in Groningen and that the time was right; the money was available. Indeed, the success of the Martini project opened the doors for him. In the next few years, he built several large and small instruments in and around the city, including the magnificent organ in the Aa-kerk. This instrument, built 1694-97, was unfortunately destroyed in 1710 when the tower collapsed. It was later replaced by the organ Schnitger originally built for the Academiekerk (1702). Dr. Edskes stated: “In the 1690s, he built fifteen large organs in his workshops in Hamburg, Bremen, Groningen, Lübeck, and Magdeburg respectively – an unparalleled and remarkable accomplishment.”

Restoration versus Conservation

I continued the interview by asking Dr. Edskes what he considered important for the future preservation of the Schnitger heritage and the historical organs. He immediately answered: “In general, too much work is done in the restoration of historical organs, and not enough time is taken for investigation, research and experiments. One of the most common mistakes is that the wind-chests and the wind-supply system are made too tight. This changes the complete character of the sound and is also technically unnecessary.” We continued talking about recent projects and developments, including the restoration and documentation of the Joachim Richborn organ in Buttforde (1681). In 2010 Dr. Edskes agreed to become a member of the reference group for the documentation of this instrument. Reinhard Böllmann and Hendrik Ahrend carried out the documentation on behalf of the Arp Schnitger Institute for Organ and Organ Building at the Hochschule für Künste Bremen. Dr. Edskes recognized the importance of this documentation case study, involving a rather large group of experts and builders from several countries, and considered it an important initiative to generate discussion concerning documentation and restoration issues. However, he noted, “The weakness of the project was that the documentation and restoration were separate projects,” and continued: “The restoration of this organ is technically very well carried out. Today, the organ is in good condition, however in a state it perhaps never had before.” Mr. Edskes remarked that the character of the sound is different than he remembered it from early times and as late as the in the 1990s. “It gives the impressions to be louder than before.” He commented on the disappearance of the *Trompete* in 1949, when the firm Führer worked on the organ. “Why did they not restore this stop?” he asked, rising the tone of his otherwise consistently gentle voice. After a moment of halt, he cleared his voice and continued: “If we would have had photos, we could have reconstructed the *Trompete*... Everything should always be documented carefully,” and continued, “the new *Trompete* is a very-well made reed stop, – however,” he added with a sly smile, “it lacks the *Formanten*-character of the historical reed stops.” I said I found his remark interesting and suggested that we should make plans for further research. It also offered me the bridge to ask Mr. Edskes what he considered the most important fields of future research in organ building and restoration, particularly pertaining to the Schnitger-heritage.

Future Research on Schnitger-organs

Dr. Edskes looked out the window, pointed towards a rather large and impressive building across the street where, he said, the conservatory used to be located. For a moment he seemed to avoid my question. Soon, however, he turned around, smiled at me, and asked: “Well, don’t we already have it quite well figured out?” Mr. Edskes continued and clarified: “ All the large Schnitger-organs are restored and reconstructed, – I had the opportunity to work with almost all of these

instruments, – and the restorations carried out by Jürgen Ahrend brought the instruments back to their original glory and close to their original state. They are so good that they will play for ever!” Again, he smiled somewhat cunningly, looked at me, and continued: “the north German research project in Göteborg also brought valuable results, particularly on the casting of pipe-metal and the pipe-making process, and the organ is very well made. Is there anything left to do?” he asked rhetorically.

Dr. Edskes halted, looked down at the table for a second, then raised his head and observed my reaction with ill-hidden curiosity. I recalled a similar moment in Göteborg, probably in the spring of 1995, after a visit to Morlanda, when he at the end of a very enjoyable dinner, accompanied by fascinating and colorful stories about his travels in Scandinavia in the early 1950s, we talked about the Schnitger-project at the University of Gothenburg (Örgryte new church). Suddenly, he asked me a question that I could not answer: “How do you tune mixture pipes placed closely together most efficiently?” He left me on my own that evening searching for an answer. To my relief, this time, he smiled, sharpened his view, and continued, more and more involved and engaged.

“One of the most important features of the north German organs is the richness and diversity of the reed stops. No other European organ tradition has such a large number of reeds. Schnitger built complete principal and flute choruses and ensembles, and he built the third group, the reeds, as an independent ensemble. What was the function of the reed stops? What was the particular character and color of each of these stops, particularly the short-length resonator reeds?” Dr. Edskes underlined the importance of diversity of the “*Formanten*” (formants – the characteristic overtones that define the various vowels of the human voice) in the different reed stops, and stated that they are not yet satisfactorily studied and understood. “The detailed construction and shape of, for example, the shallot and the tongues should be studied and documented further. Also the length of the resonator is of crucial importance for the formants of the sound, not the least in full-length resonator reeds. The general practice today, to determine the length of the resonators in relation to the ‘flip point’ cannot be detected in the north German organs.” This term might need an explanation. In his comprehensive book about the art of the organ builder (1766-78), the French organ builder, Dom Bédos de Celles (1709-1779), describes how the voicer should determine the appropriate length of the resonator by putting, and then removing, one’s hand at the top of the resonator. If the pitch flips, and then easily returns, the length is correct. If not, adjustments need to be made, usually by shortening the length of the resonator. “In general,” Dr. Edskes stated, “the resonators were a little shorter in the north German organs than they were in France, – and like they often are today. All these aspects [pertaining to the reed stops] should be studied.” He talked about the new organ in St. Katharinen in Hamburg (Flentrop, 2013), and remarked that this is “a fine instrument, very well built, however, the seventeen reed stops are much too similar. All of them should have different character and more variety of overtones – “*Formanten*”. Unfortunately, the opportunity to do research concerning the variety of the reeds stops, as mentioned earlier, was not taken. This is something that Dr. Edskes regretted, however, he said, this should take place in future projects. He envisioned a reconstruction of the original Aa-kerk organ and/or the Schnitger-organ in Bremer Dom. We talked about the potential of these projects, that they would be a logical continuation of the work in Göteborg, and that it would be important to do a project of this kind in an acoustic of a large church, like Bremer Dom. “However, the Bremen project would not be uncomplicated,” he continued. “The organ was not a typical three-manual Schnitger, since it did not have a *Rückpositiv*.” Dr. Edskes said “The north

German builders were very skilled in imitating the wind instruments of the ensembles, building this large variety of reed stops. One of the main challenges was to render the right character of sound in the full compass of the keyboard. Only the Zink-stop had the same compass as the real wind instrument, f-c'''. All the others had full compass. And he continued, "Unfortunately, some original tongues of the reeds were replaced with tongues of other materials, for example phosphor-bronze, in the nineteenth century, something that makes it more difficult for us to research, however we do have, and I have, some original materials that should be studied."

Dr. Edskes then went on talking about another important research area, the *organo pleno*. He said that the *pleno* in north German organs should be researched, both in terms of its function, the composition of the mixtures and in which way they relate to each other. "What was the function of *pleno*? Why do we find such a variety of Mixtures? Should the mixtures of various divisions be combined [coupled]? It is important to study the speech characteristics of mixture pipes compared to other principal pipes." Mr. Edskes continued: "Also the function of the *Cimbel* should be further investigated. It was a frequently used stop around 1600. In fact, there are a few eighteenth-century sources from the Groningen area, from Rudolf Garrels [1675-1750] and about the Hinsz organ in Appingedam that suggest the *Cimbel* should be used in the *pleno*. The effect of the *Cimbel* in the full organ of our restored instruments does not seem convincing. Maybe this effect was admired anyway? Maybe there is something that is not right with the restoration [reconstruction] of *Cimbel* pipes? The volume of the sound and the speech of the pipes of the *Cimbel* should be studied further." Dr. Edskes continued: "Coupling the manuals was primarily done for the accompaniment of congregational singing. One should always be restrictive with coupling in the north German organs. It usually does not add something to the quality of sound, and often generates problems with tuning and blending of the speech and sound. However, in the large instruments [three- and four-manual organs] the *Scharf* and the *Sesquialtera* of the *Brustwerk* are complementary to the *Mixture* of the *Werk*." Dr. Edskes also talked about the importance of further research about the wind-supply of the organs. The research in Göteborg brought new light on the size and length of the wind-channels and the significance of the check-valves in the wedge-bellows (effecting the interaction of the air in the bellows and the wind-trunks and wind-chests respectively). "The interaction of the wind in the wind-supply system, and particularly the effect on the speech of the pipes should be researched further." Dr. Edskes said.

However, the most important area of research should be focused on corrosion in organ pipes. Dr. Edskes recognized the results of the European research project COLLAPSE (coordinated by GOArt in Sweden) and agreed with the general results: the two main factors that generate corrosion are acetic acid, primarily emitted from new oak wood and/or white glue, and humidity from the air. After World War II, new oak wood and, from the late 1950s, white glue was often used in the rebuilding and restoration of the historical organs. In recent decades, more frequent heating of churches increased the amount of humidity released through condensation when heated air cooled down. Sometimes, the added insulation of walls and attic, or the installation of new windows changed the microclimate in the churches so that the degree of the humidity increased. "However," Dr. Edskes stated, "the quality of the metal was always of crucial importance. In the seventeenth century, most organ-builders used lead-rich alloys and they frequently faced problems with heavy corrosion [most organ pipes were made of almost 100% lead with just 1 % of tin and a few impurities, like copper, silver, bismuth, and arsenic]. Often, old metal was re-cast when new pipes should be made, and corroded metal was recycled. This was a vicious circle. Accordingly, the quality of the pipe metal differed a lot." Arp Schnitger increased the amount of tin in his pipe

metal to prevent it from corroding, particularly in the façade pipes, but also in the inside organ pipes. “Again, we encounter his uncompromising strive for long-lasting instruments of highest quality,” Dr. Edskes said and continued, “Fortunately, only limited problems in the Groningen area have been detected. Simply, the metal used must have been of a better quality. However the old, lead-rich alloy-stops in the Schnitger-organ in Martini have recently been affected by corrosion. This must be documented, studied and taken care of. There may still be some un-known factors in the climate, changes in the atmosphere or other factors that need to be researched. Again, there should be more time for experiments and for research,” Dr. Edskes ended.

The brisk spring wind had turned even stronger. The gusts pushed the frames of the windows of Café Kosterij as if they wanted to move the walls away and clean the base of the giant church tower. Our coffee cups were empty, and while we considered asking for a refill, Dr. Edskes frowned as he peeked at his watch, and for a moment seemed to freeze. However he immediately melted, smiled gently and slowly shook his head. We were both amazed to discover that during our intensive discussions, almost three hours had passed. Dr. Edskes explained that he needed to attend to the Martini-organ, to tune some reeds for an organ demonstration, and therefore needed to leave more or less immediately. As always a generous host, he went to take care of the bill at the counter and closing his purse, returned to our table to bid farewell. He took his coat from the rack in the corner, turned around, reached out to shake my hand, however suddenly moved closer and gave me a gentle and warm hug. “Please pass my cordial regards to Harald Vogel, – and to all my friends in Göteborg of course,” he said. “Adjö” and “På återseende!” He smiled, turned around, and made his way between the tables across the floor towards the exit. As he opened the door, he turned around, smiled and looked at me a last time, and made a swift and proud farewell-gesture with his free hand. I saw him walk rapidly around the corner of the coffee shop in the direction of the church entrance, like he had done so many times before. During decades, he had been responsible for the daily maintenance of the Martini-organ, and until 2013 he tuned the reeds before all concerts in the series “Avondtmusyck Martinikerk Groningen” founded in 1949. As the tall and slender silhouette of Dr. Edskes disappeared around the corner, I gratefully gathered my notes from the interview, disassembled the recording equipment, and deliberated whether I should order another “Koffie verkeerd” (coffee with milk) before returning to the car to start the ride back to Bremen. I sat down, ordered the coffee, and inspired by the long conversation with Dr. Edskes, started making notes about this pioneer and the perspectives of a man who has devoted his entire life to the historical organs and the preservation of the work of Arp Schnitger. Much thanks to Dr. Edskes’ achievements, the Schnitger heritage has been revived, the preserved Schnitger-organs are restored; and they will continue to play and serve many generations to come, this in complete accordance with the vision of the master organ-builder himself. Arp Schnitger rode his horse around the region, visited the elders of the church councils and argued that the organs should be maintained and well taken care of, “so that children and grand children would be able to enjoy such [wonderful] instruments (“damit Kind und Kindeskinden sich an solchem Werk erfreuen können.”) Dr. Edskes rode his bike and traveled a lifetime journey through Schnitger-land, and around the world, with the same mission and goal. An achievement that indeed inspires and challenges us to follow in his footsteps, and that encourages us to play and let everyone enjoy the beauty and brilliance of this treasure of instruments.

Hans Davidsson

Captions:

1) Dr. Cor H. Edskes