

August Martin

Founded/Born

1808 - 1892

Closed/Death

Still active?

no

Description

August Martin (1808-1892) from Dachwig (Thuringia) worked in Riga from 1837. He is known to have built about 67 church and 19 school organs in the Baltics, Russia, and Poland during 1840-1885. His largest instrument, originally built for the Old Church of St Gertrude in Riga (1867-1876, III/P/31), was removed in 1906 to the New Church of St Gertrude in that city. His son Emil Martin (1848-1922), who worked for four years under Friedrich Ladegast, installed the instrument in the Catholic church of St Jacob in Riga (1913, II/P/35, Opus 322). Friedrich Weissenborn from Thuringia, who lived in Riga, Krustpils, and Jekabpils (Jakobstadt), produced 85 organs in Latvia and Lithuania during the period 1865-1894.

Sources

<https://www.gdo.de/veroeffentlichungen/acta-organologica/acta28-d>

Kaltene, Kaltenes Sv. Katrīnas evaņģēliski luteriskā baznīca



Builder	A. Martin
Year	ca. 1843
Period/Style	Romantic
Stops	15
Keyboards	2+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical

Description

During the years of church oppression in Latvia after World War II, organ dismantling and relocation were often carried out with the motive of saving the instrument, although the outcomes were unfortunately often unsuccessful. The facts speak for themselves: the Koknese instrument (by A. Sūnāklis) lost 8 registers on its way to Sigulda, and today, only a wind chest, a pile of pipes, and sparse façade fragments have returned to Koknese, but what next? The Anglican Church organ was moved to Ķemeri in the 1960s, losing its second manual during the transfer, and it is evident that this instrument is unsuitable for Ķemeri. Similar examples could continue, not to mention the separate organ parts that, as a result, make it possible to "read" almost the entire short course of Latvian organ building history in some instruments today. Undoubtedly, it was a different time...

The situation becomes much more complicated when the instrument's relocation from one church to another did not occur during the Soviet era...

A notable case is the Gulbene-Kaltene organ. To understand it better, first, a brief historical overview.

In 1843, the Riga organ builder August Martin (considered by several Western organ experts as the best master working in Latvia in the 19th century) installed a two-manual organ in Gulbene Church, which is the oldest instrument built by this builder that has survived to this day. A. Martin (1808-1892) worked in Riga from 1838 to 1885, during which time he built around 70 church organs, mainly in Latvia, and several instruments in Estonia and Russia. The quality of A. Martin's instruments was highly appreciated during his lifetime, but his work's evaluation would be especially relevant today when less than a third of his creations have survived.

In 1934, the Gulbene congregation purchased a new organ built by A. Sūnāklis and sold the old one

to Kaltene Church. From today's perspective of organ art trends, this would be a completely reckless move, but at that time, the era of pneumatic and electropneumatic organ systems prevailed in Latvia and the world, and it was believed that 19th-century mechanical tracker action instruments were outdated. Apparently, A. Martin's organ was still in sufficiently good condition, as evidenced by the Kaltene congregation's desire to purchase it.

Thus, the organ from Gulbene Church was moved to the much smaller Kaltene Church. Not only was the organ's visual appearance distorted by shortening the façade to fit into the low church (see photo), but the pedal pipes also turned out to be too long, so a hole was cut in the church ceiling above the organ, and now the sound of the pedal pipes fills the church's attic rather than the nave. The instrument, built for a completely different-sized space and acoustics, sounds more oppressive than uplifting in the small Kaltene Church.

One might wonder why even talk about it now?

The instrument installed in Gulbene Church in 1934 perished along with the church tower, and to this day, there is no organ in the relatively large church.

In fact, this article was prompted by a recent announcement in the newspaper "Svētdienas Rīts" about an organ donation to Gulbene Church. The instrument in question was built in Sweden in the 1960s and has come to Latvia to be installed in Gulbene Church.

So, the current situation is as follows: the organ loft in Gulbene Church stands empty, while its historical instrument is installed in an unsuitable-sized space in Kaltene Church, and it needs restoration. True restoration of the instrument in Kaltene is not possible. It is clear that this undeniably extremely valuable organ will only reveal its true beauty if it is located in a suitable space. At this moment, the situation is still hopeful – there is an opportunity to correct not only a historical mistake but also to save and restore the sound of one of the most beautiful and valuable historical instruments in Latvia. Furthermore, with the return of the organ to Gulbene Church, its original interior component – the organ façade – would also return. Interestingly, but sadly, only three of the organs built by A. Martin, of which less than twenty remain in Latvia, are currently in somewhat decent condition. If the organ from Sweden is installed in Gulbene Church, experience shows that the historical instrument will not return there for a very long time, if ever.

At the January 18, 2001, meeting of the Organ Experts Council, the attendees (T. Deksnis, J. Kalniņš, A. Melbārdis, V. Ilsums, M. Dzenītis) unanimously supported the need to relocate the organ to its historical location. However, a solution can only be found together with the representatives of the Gulbene and Kaltene congregations, remembering that the Kaltene Church also needs an organ. Are we ready to show goodwill, look beyond the current situation, and find a compromise for the sake of our cultural and historical values? Whether we can resolve this historical challenge will be shown by time.

Stoplist/Disposition

I Manual	II Manual	Pedal
Bordun 16'	Principal 4'	Principalbass 16' (missing)
Principal 8'	Flöte 8'	Subbass 16'
Hohlflöte 8'	Gedackt 8'	Octavenbass 8'
Gambe 8'	Fugara 8' (missing)	
Flaute dolce 4'		
Mixtur 2'		
Octave 4' (missing)		
Octave 2' (missing)		

Additional: Pedalcoppel, Manualcoppel

Sources

https://orgcat.lv/kaltene_manual.htm

Dzērbene, Dzērbenes luterāņu baznīca

Dzērbene - Gaujmaļi, Krastaņas, LV-4118 Dzērbene, Latvia



Builder	A. Martin
Year	1843
Period/Style	Romantic
Stops	9
Keyboards	1+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical
Tuning	Equal at 435.8 Hz

Description

The Dzērbene organ, one of the earliest works by Augusts Martins in Latvia, was consecrated on August 30, 1843. An 1848 listing of Martins' instruments places the Dzērbene organ as his third creation. This is confirmed by a contemporary source, "Tas Latviešu Draugs," which praises the organ:

"..a new organ, which, when the church was consecrated last year, was not yet ready, but on this joyful day delighted everyone. This organ is the work of the same master who made the large organ in Gulbene's new church (now in Kaltene), and it costs 835 silver rubles; although a modest amount for such a grand organ - it is large and has such a powerful sound, rare to find in Vidzeme churches. With this organ's pleasant but also powerful sound.."

Another inscription notes that the organ was tuned on June 13, 1928, by A. Krāns, a representative of K. Skerstena's firm. German inscriptions on wooden pipes indicate missing pipes, likely due to damage from World War I.

The organ narrowly avoided replacement twice, as recounted by former pastor Alberts Birnbaums. The Dzērbene congregation twice collected enough funds for a new organ but lost them to wars. The last attempt was during the 1940-41 Soviet occupation of Latvia. The congregation had even placed an order in Germany and partially paid. However, the remaining payment was blocked by the occupying authorities, who dismissed the need for organs.

This organ is one of the few remaining early instruments built by Augusts Martins. The missing and non-original pipes currently obscure its true quality. Originally built with a pitch standard of

a1=465 Hz, it stands as an outstanding historical instrument, among the oldest in Vidzeme, in need of careful restoration.

Stoplist/Disposition

Manual

Hohlflöte 8 Fuss
Flöte 8 Fuss
Gambe 8 Fuss
Principal 4 Fuss
Flaute dolce 4 Fuss
Octave 2 Fuss
Mixture 1 Fuss

Pedal

Subbass 16 Fuss
Octavenbass 8 Fuss

Additional: Pedalcoppel

Sources

https://orgcat.lv/dzerbene_main.htm

Sabile, Sabiles evanģēliski luteriskā baznīca

Ventspils iela 4, LV-3294 Sabile, Latvia



Builder	A. Martin
Year	ca. 1850
Period/Style	Romantic
Stops	22
Keyboards	2+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical
Tuning	Equal at 447 Hz

Description

The organ initially built by C. Christien for the Riga Jesus Church was later rebuilt by A. Martin while still in Riga. After a new instrument was acquired, the old one was sold to the Sabile Church, where it was installed by the Jēkabpils master M. Kresling (M. Krēsliņš). The original visual appearance of the instrument can still be seen in the Jesus Church, where W. Sauer's organ is integrated into the C. Christien-designed prospect.

In the 1920s-1930s, the instrument was likely rebuilt by J. Jauģietis, as evidenced by the presence of his pipes. This organ is one of the most unique in the Latvian organ landscape, containing pipes from at least six different builders: C. Christien, an unknown master, A. Martin, W. Sauer, M. Kresling, and J. Jauģietis.

Notably, it is the only known organ that possibly retains the wind chest and pipes built by the Katlakalns organ builder C. Christien, specifically the Posaune 16' register in the pedal. The organ was installed in Sabile by M. Kresling, retaining the modifications made while it was still in Riga. The origin of W. Sauer's pipes in the Sabile organ remains unclear. The instrument is currently seriously threatened by water leaking through the ceiling during rain.

Stoplist/Disposition

I Hauptwerk	II Oberwerk	Pedal
Bordun 16'	Gedeckt 16'	Principalbass 16'
Principal 8'	Geigenprincipal 8'	Subbass 16'
Hohlflöte 8'	Traversflöte 8'	Octavbass 8'
Gamba 8'	Dolce 8'	Posaune 16'
Gedeckt 8'	Hohlflöte 8'	
Octav 4'	Principal 4'	
Flöte 4'	Flöte 4'	
Quint 2 2/3'	Doublette 2u3'	
Octav 2'		
Progressiv 2-3f.		

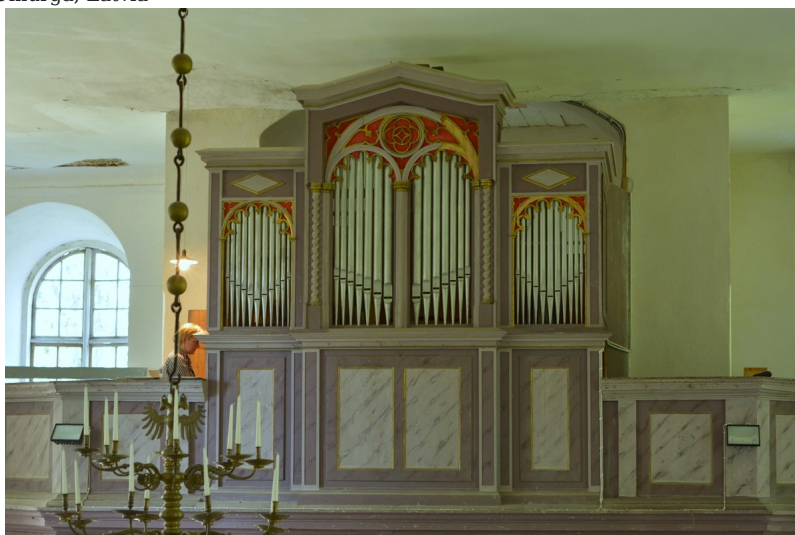
Additional: Pedal Coppel, Manual Coppel, Kalkanten Ruf

Sources

https://orgcat.lv/sabile_main.htm

Umurga, Umurgas evaņģēliski luteriskā baznīca

Ulda Sproģa iela 3, LV-4004 Umurga, Latvia



Builder	A. Martin
Year	1850
Period/Style	Romantic
Stops	8
Keyboards	1+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical
Tuning	Equal at 446.1 Hz

Description

The organ in Umurga was originally built by the Riga organ builder Augusts Martins in 1850. The instrument featured 5 registers in the manual and one in the pedal (Subbass 16'), all situated on a single wind chest. Repairs to the bellows were documented in 1862 by A. Martins due to damage from improper use. Another note by E. Martin from 1894 indicated the organ was in poor condition at that time. In 1924, H. Kolbe and E. Martin expanded the organ, adding new registers and a pneumatic wind chest while preserving the older parts of the organ.

A significant restoration was performed around 1990 by Jānis Kalniņš from Jelgava, who cleaned the organ, made many new pipes, and added an air supply motor. Further restoration work was carried out by Alvis Melbārdis between 2006 and 2007, which included installing a new organ motor, repairing and cleaning various parts of the instrument, and addressing issues with the wind supply system. The organ is notable for the inscriptions left by Augusts Martins, detailing his built instruments and family members, making it a historically significant piece in Latvian organ building.

Stoplist/Disposition

Manual

Pedal

Principal 4 Fuss

Subbass 16'

Hohlflöte 8 Fuss

Octave 8 Fuss

Gambe 8 Fuss

Octave 2 Fuss

Bordun 8'

Salicional 8'

Additional: Pedalcoppel

Sources

https://orgcat.lv/umurga_main.htm

Limbaži, Limbažu Svētā Jāņa evaņģēliski luteriskā baznīca

Libiešu iela 2, LV-4001 Limbaži, Latvia



Builder	A. Martin
Year	1852
Period/Style	Romantic
Stops	14
Keyboards	2+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical
Tuning	Equal at 441.6 Hz

Description

The existing organ in Limbaži Church was built by the Riga organ builder August Martin in 1852 and was inaugurated on August 10th. According to a report on the organ's consecration, a positive organ had served the Limbaži congregation for 50 years prior and was last used during the service for the new organ's consecration. It was noted that by 1849, the positive organ was completely worn out. The new organ was funded with 100 rubles donated by the district court secretary Engelhards, 150 rubles from donations, and 600 rubles from Riga. The main initiator of these efforts was G. Schmit, who served as the organist in Limbaži for over 50 years.

The instrument built by A. Martin had 9-10 registers, with 7 or 8 in the manual and two in the pedal. The northern side of the organ's casing bears an inscription in German, detailing its construction by August Martin in July and August of 1852, and noting its consecration on August 10th by Pastor Neuendrichen. Subsequent tuning and minor repairs were carried out regularly by Martin and later by his son, Emils Martin, as evidenced by various inscriptions on the casing, indicating work done in the years following its construction. In 1898, the organ was expanded with a second manual by the Liepaja master Carl Alexander Herrmann. Despite some modifications, including the replacement of several original registers with German factory pipes, the organ remains largely in its original state. It underwent significant restoration in 2004 by A. Melbārdis, addressing various structural and functional issues while preserving its historical integrity.

Stoplist/Disposition

I. Manual	II. Manual	Pedal
Bourdon 16'	Salicional 8'	Subbass 16'
Prinzipal 8'	Flöte 8'	Violon 8'
Hohlflöte 8'	Liebl. Gedeckt 8'	
Viola di Gamba 8'	Flöte 4'	
Octave 4'		
Flöte 4'		
Octave 2'		
Mixtur 3 fach		

Additional: Manual-Coppel, Pedal-Coppel, Octav-Coppel

Sources

https://orgcat.lv/limbazi_main.htm

Subate, Subates luterāņu baznīca

Baznīcas iela 30, LV-5471 Subate, Latvia



Builder	A. Martin
Year	1853
Period/Style	Romantic
Stops	5
Keyboards	1+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical
Tuning	Equal at 440 Hz

Description

The existing inscriptions on various accessible and less accessible parts inside the organ could reveal significant details about the fate of this instrument and the organ builder A. Martin. For instance, the base of the keyboard lists not only the master's works up to the creation of this instrument but also his children. It also mentions the cost of the instrument and other details.

This is one of the few A. Martin-built instruments that has remained almost intact, preserving its historical and cultural significance.

Stoplist/Disposition

Manual	Pedal
Prinzipal 4'	Subbass 16'
Hohlflöte 8'	
Flauto travers. 8'	
Viola di Gamba 8'	

Additional: Pedalcoppel

Sources

https://orgcat.lv/subate_apraksts.htm

Trikāta, Trikātas baznīca

Baznīcas ceļš, LV-4731 Trikāta, Latvia



Builder	A. Martin
Year	1867
Period/Style	Romantic
Stops	12
Keyboards	1+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical
Tuning	Equal at 450 Hz

Description

The organ at Trikāta was built in 1867 by Riga organ builder August Martin, as evidenced by various inscriptions on the instrument. This was Martin's 62nd instrument, costing 1900 Roubles. The organ was consecrated on May 21, 1867, and put into use on May 29, 1867.

From 1869 to 1897, the organ was maintained by Estonian master W. Müllverstedt, although his initials W.M. indicate he had already visited in September 1868. After Müllverstedt, Emil Martin took over maintenance, as noted by his inscription. In 1924, Herbert Kolbe made significant modifications, replacing the Quinte 2 2/3' stop with a Salicional 8' made by A. Laukhuff and adding a mechanical Tutti stop at the organist's request. The organ remains mostly in its original condition with a powerful intonation, preserving the craftsmanship of August Martin.

Stoplist/Disposition

Manual

Bordun 16 Fuss

Principal 8 Fuss

Hohlflöte 8 Fuss

Flaute traverse 8 Fuss

Viola di Gamba 8 Fuss

Flöte 4 Fuss

Salicional 8 Fuss

Octave 2 Fuss

Mixtur 2 Fuss (4chörig)

Pedal

Subbass 16 Fuss

Octavenbass 8 Fuss

Posaunbass 16 Fuss

Additional: Pedalcoppel

Sources

https://orgcat.lv/trikata_main.htm

Vilķene, Vilķenes evaņģēliski luteriskā baznīca

V140 4, LV-4050 Vilķene, Latvia



Builder	A. Martin
Year	1868
Period/Style	Romantic
Stops	12
Keyboards	1+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical
Tuning	Equal at 441.5 Hz

Description

The organ was built by August Martin in 1868 and was fully completed and handed over for the congregation's use on October 6th, after some registers had already been installed earlier. The organ cost 1600 rubles and has remained unaltered since its construction.

Marks on the casing indicate the instrument was tuned in the years 1870, 1883, 1887, 1894 (by E. Martin), 1902, and 1920. In 2005, the organ was restored by SIA "Ilsuma ērģeļu restaurācija". This organ is one of the most authentically preserved instruments built by August Martin, featuring a single manual with a robustly arranged pedal typical of Martins' work during this period. Apart from minor losses in the Mixtur register pipes, the instrument has not undergone any other changes.

Stoplist/Disposition

Manual

Principal 8 Fuss

Bordun 16 Fuss

Hohlflöte 8 Fuss

Flaute traverse 8 Fuss

Viola di Gamba 8 Fuss

Flauto dolce 4 Fuss

Octave 4 Fuss

Octave 2 Fuss

Mixtur 2 Fuss (4chörig)

Pedal

Subbass 16 Fuss

Octavenbass 8 Fuss

Posaunbass 16 Fuss

Additional: Pedalcoppel, Calcantenruf

Sources

https://orgcat.lv/vilkene_main.htm

Ārlava, Ārlavas evaņģēliski luteriskā baznīca



Builder	A. Martin
Year	ca. 1870
Period/Style	Romantic
Stops	12
Keyboards	2+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical
Tuning	Equal at 444 Hz

Description

The organ at the Ārlava church was built by Riga organ builder August Martin in two phases, with the first phase dating back to around 1848 and the second approximately 20 years later, around 1870. An inscription on the case indicates that it was rebuilt by August Martin from Riga. There is also mention that around 1866, F. Weißenborn worked on the instrument, although the exact nature of his involvement is unclear.

Initially, the organ was a single-manual instrument with 6 manual registers and 1 pedal register. Later, a second manual was added while retaining the first manual unchanged. The instrument underwent further modifications over the years, including the addition of new stops and changes to the layout of the pipes inside the case.

In 1939, the organ was cleaned, tuned, and received new pipes from the A. Krans company in Riga. Additional adjustments were made to the organ, including the relocation of the windchests away from the facade. The restoration work in 1999, led by J. Kalniņš from the Ugāle organ workshop, included cleaning, electrical rewiring, and the installation of a new blower and air regulation valve.

Stoplist/Disposition

I Manual	II Manual	Pedal
Principal 8´	Salicional 8´	Subbass 16´
Hohlflöte 8´	Traversflöte 8´	
Gamba 8´	Hohlflöte 4´	
Oktave 2´	Flauta piano 4´	
Oktave 4´	Flautino 2´	
Mixtur 3f		

Additional: Pedalcoppel, Manualkoppel

Sources

https://www.orgcat.lv/arlava_apraksts.htm

Ziedonis, Katlakalna evaņģēliski luteriskā baznīca

Lavandu iela, LV-2111 Ziedonis, Latvia



Builder	A. Martin
Year	1870
Period/Style	Romantic
Stops	11
Keyboards	2+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical
Tuning	Equal at 435 Hz

Description

Katlakalna Church, built in 1794 according to a design by Kr. Haberland, is historically connected to the organ builder and teacher Johann Christoph Christien. In 1813, Christien succeeded his deceased father, David Christien, as the teacher and organist. The earliest records of the church's organs date back to 1818, noting that on December 26, the repaired organs, overseen by Christien, were played by a young man named Niclas, trained by Christien himself.

The current organ was consecrated on July 19, 1870, and is the 62nd instrument built by organ builder August Martin. The organ prospect was painted in 1889, and a note on the back of the organ indicates a repair by Pēteris Maļinovskis from May to September 1957, though details of the repairs are unknown. In the 1990s, Tālivaldis Deksnis repaired the organ, replacing many of the missing metal pipes with those from A. Laukhuff, W. Sauer, and Walcker, and with new pipes made in Lithuania. Some of the original A. Martin pipes, now severely damaged, are stored in a cupboard on the balcony, alongside older wooden pipes.

The church's domed ceiling creates a unique and beautiful acoustic environment. The original disposition of the instrument has been altered, with only the wooden registers Floete 8', Bourdon 16', and Subbass 16' authentically preserved. Parts of the wooden pipes in the Gedackt 8' and Gamba 8' registers also remain. Deformed remnants suggest the presence of a Salicional 8' register and a wooden Traversflöte 8', typical of A. Martin's work. A reconstruction of the instrument could be possible if the original disposition is determined.

Stoplist/Disposition

I. Manual	II. Manual	Pedal
Bordun 16'	Gedackt 8'	Subbass 16'
Principal 8'	Flöte 4'	
Gamba 8'	Octave 2'	
Flöte 8'		
Principal 4'		
Flöte 4'		
Mixtur		

Additional: II/I, I/P, Calcant

Sources

https://orgcat.lv/katlakalns_manual.htm

Alūksne, Alūksnes Evanģēliski luteriskā baznīca

25, Pils iela, LV-4301 Alūksne, Latvia



Builder	A. Martin
Year	1885
Period/Style	Romantic
Stops	23
Keyboards	2+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical

Description

The organ built by August Martin and Son in 1885 in Riga is a remarkable instrument, as indicated by the inscription: “Erbaut von Aug. Martin und Sohn im Jahre 1885. Riga”. This inscription reveals that it was the last instrument constructed by the distinguished Riga master before his son, Emīls Martin, took over the workshop in the same year. The organ, along with the reconstruction of the choir loft, cost 6000 rubles.

Another inscription within the instrument indicates that since 1887, it has been maintained by W. Müllverstedt, a master from Tērbata who also serviced other church organs in the Vidzeme region. Müllverstedt performed cleaning, regulation, and tuning of the organ in 1887 and reinforced the keyboards in 1891, although specific details of the reinforcement are not provided. In 1899 and 1901, he also repaired the bellows during his regular maintenance work. Following Müllverstedt's death in 1904, Emīls Martin took over the care of the organ, tuning it in 1906 with E. (likely K.) Skersten and in 1913 with A. Krāns. In 1908, the organ was tuned by O. and E. Ronis.

In 2005, the organ was comprehensively restored by the “Ugāle Organ Building Workshop”. These are the last organs built by A. Martin and one of the largest two-manual instruments he created, preserved close to its original condition.

Stoplist/Disposition

Hauptwerk	Oberwerk	Pedal
Bourdon 16 Fuss.	Geig.Principal 8 Fuss.	Violonbass 16 Fuss.
Principal 8 Fuss.	Liebl. Gedeckt 16 Fuss.	Subbass 16 Fuss.
Gambe 8 Fuss.	Liebl. Gedeck 8 Fuss.	Octavbass 8 Fuss.
Hohlflöte 8 Fuss.	Travers flöte 8 Fuss.	Quintbass 10 2/3 Fuss.
Octave 4 Fuss.	Dolce 8 Fuss.	Posaunbass 16 Fuss.
Gemshorn 8 Fuss.	Bifra 8 Fuss.	
Hohlflöte 4 Fuss.	Octave 4 Fuss.	
Octave 2 Fuss.		
Mixtur 2 2/3 Fuss 4 chörig.		
Cornett 2 2/3 Fuss 3 chörig.		
Trompete 8 Fuss.		

Additional: Manual-coppel, Pedal-coppel, Calcanten glocke

Sources

https://www.orgcat.lv/aluksne_manual.htm