

Christian Vater

Founded/Born

1679 - 1756

Closed/Death

Still active?

no

Description

Christian Vater (1679-1756) was a prominent German organ builder from Hanover. He initially trained under his father Martin and later as an organist before joining the workshop of the renowned organ builder Arp Schnitger in Hamburg from 1697 to 1702. After gaining valuable experience, Vater established his own workshop in Hanover in 1702. He delivered his first organ to Langenhagen in 1703. Vater's expertise and connections, particularly through his role as an organist at the Neustädter Hof- und Stadtkirche St. Johannis in Hanover, helped him build a reputable career. Over his lifetime, he constructed 36 organs, with notable projects in Darmstadt's Schlosskirche and Amsterdam's Oude Kerk.

Vater's works, characterized by their adherence to Schnitger's style, were known for their well-thought-out and refined construction. His organs were highly regarded for their quality, durability, and similarity in design. The organ he built in Bockhorn in 1722, for example, was noted for its excellent condition and considered one of the best in the region even many years after its construction. Vater also built stringed keyboard instruments, including a well-preserved single-manual harpsichord from 1738, now housed in the German National Museum. His legacy continued through his son, also named Christian Vater, and extended to other prominent organ builders like Wilhelm Heinrich Bethmann. Archival records related to Vater's work and his descendants can be found in the City Archives of Hanover.

Sources

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Vater_\(Orgelbauer\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Vater_(Orgelbauer))

Bockhorn, St.-Cosmas-und-Damian-Kirche

Lauwstraße, 26345 Bockhorn, Germany



Builder	C. Vater
Year	1722
Period/Style	Baroque
Stops	19
Keyboards	2+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical
Tuning	Werckmeister III at 466 Hz

Description

The St. Cosmas and Damian Church in Bockhorn, constructed around 1200 on an artificial mound, is a quintessential Frisian church built from boulders. By the early 18th century, the church did not have an organ. In 1720, the renowned organ builder Christian Vater, a student of Arp Schnitger, was commissioned to build an organ for the church. The organ underwent several modifications over the years, leading to a significant restoration by the Alfred Führer company in 1983, which aimed to restore the original disposition using ten of the old registers.

The organ, as restored, features 19 stops distributed across the Hauptwerk (main work), Brustwerk (breastwork), and Pedal divisions. Notable elements include the original stops like Principahl, Gedackt, Octav, Quint, Mixtur, and Tromet. The restoration in 1983 involved the reconstruction of the original mechanical action, the installation of three new wedge bellows, and tuning adjustments to achieve a historically accurate sound, closely resembling the original instrument built by Vater in 1722.

Stoplist/Disposition

Hauptwerk	Brustwerk	Pedal
Principahl 8'	Floite douce 8'	Untersatz 16'
Gedackt 8'	Gedackt 4'	Principahl 8'
Octav 4'	Waldflöit 2'	Octav 4'
Quint 3'	Quint 1 1/2'	Rauschpfeiff 2f
Octav 2'	Sexquialt 2f	Posaun 16'
Mixtur 4f		Tromet 8'
Tromet 8'		
Vox humana 8'		

Additional: BW/HW, HW/P, Bocktremulant

Sources

<https://nomine.net/orgel/bockhorn-st-cosmas-und-damian/>

Wiefelstede, St. Johannes

Kirchstraße, 26215 Wiefelstede, Germany



Builder	C. Vater
Year	ca. 1730
Period/Style	Baroque
Stops	18
Keyboards	2+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical
Tuning	Kellner/Bach at 458.5 Hz

Description

In the historical town of Wiefelstede, the St. Johannes church, built in 1057 by Archbishop Adalbert of Bremen, is one of the oldest stone churches in the Ammerland region. This church, central to the early district-sized parish, houses an organ built in 1730 by Christian Vater, financed through a donation from Major Wolf von Böselager zur Lehe, who sought a burial fitting his status, memorialized by his coat of arms placed on the church's south wall. The organ still contains eight original registers from the time of its construction, marking it as a significant piece of musical heritage.

Over the centuries, the organ has seen several phases of modification and restoration. In 2011-2014, it underwent a comprehensive restoration by Dutch organ builder Henk van Eeken, who focused on reconstructing replaced parts authentically. This restoration effort aimed to restore the organ's original sound and mechanical functions as envisioned by Christian Vater, removing later additions that did not align with the historical design. The organ, embodying a rich blend of history and craftsmanship, remains a centerpiece of the church's musical tradition, reflecting both its past and the ongoing commitment to preserving its cultural and historical integrity.

Stoplist/Disposition

Manual	Brust	Pedal
Principal 8'	Gedact Liebl. 8'	Principal 8'
Rohrflöit 8'	Gedact 4'	Octav 4'
Octav 4'	Waldflöit 2'	Posaun 16'
Quinta 3'	Sesquialt II	Trompet 8'
Octav 2'	Dulcian 8'	Trompet 4'
Mixtur IV		
Trompet 8'		
Vox humana 8'		

Additional: II/I (shove coupler), Tremulant

Sources

<https://nomine.net/orgel/wiefelstede-st-johannes-orgel-von-christian-vater-1730/>

Gifhorn, St. Nicolai

Marktplatz, 38518 Gifhorn, Germany



Builder	C. Vater
Year	1748
Period/Style	Baroque
Stops	24
Keyboards	2+P
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical

Description

The St. Nicolai Church in Gifhorn is home to a historic organ built by the Hanoverian court organ builder Christian Vater in 1748. Despite initial difficulties during its construction, which led to significant repairs just 12 years later, the organ has a long and storied history. Over time, the instrument has undergone various modifications, particularly in the late 19th century when original registers were altered to suit modern tastes. However, multiple attempts to replace the organ or significantly change its tuning were ultimately halted due to financial constraints.

In 1935, the organ was restored by Furtwängler & Hammer during the "Organ Reform Movement," which aimed to revive Baroque principles in organ building, though this approach is now viewed as misguided. A significant restoration took place in 1961 by the Dutch firm Flentrop, which involved relocating the organ to a lower gallery and repainting its case to match the church's altar. The most recent restoration, completed in 2000 by the Gebr. Hillebrand company, focused on returning the organ to its historical state, with special attention to the paintwork by Ochsenfarth. The organ, known for its rich and varied sound, remains a central feature of the church's musical life and is featured in recordings and concerts, particularly during the church's organ summer events.

Stoplist/Disposition

Werck	Brust	Pedal
Quintadena 16 fuß	Gedackt 8 fuß	Subbas 16 fuß
Principal 8 fuß	Hohflöt 4 fuß	Principal 8 fuß
Rohrflöte 8 fuß	Octava 2 fuß	Octava 4 fuß
Octave 4 fuß	Waldpfeif 2 fuß	Rauschpfeif 2fach
Gemshorn 4 fuß	Sesquialtera 2fach	Posaune 16 fuß
Quinta 3 fuß	Scharff 3fach	Trommet 8 fuß
Rauschpfiff 2fach	Hautbois 8 fuß	Cornet 2 fuß
Mixtur 4fach		
Trommeta 8 fuß		
Vox Humana 8 fuß		

Additional: II/I (shove-coupler), Tremulant, Cimbeglocken

Sources

<https://nomine.net/orgel/gifhorn-st-nicolai/>