

Jānis Bētiņš

Founded/Born

1830 - 1912

Closed/Death

Still active?

no

Description

Jānis Bētiņš (1830–1912) was a prominent conductor, educator, organist, arranger, and master organ builder who played a crucial role in shaping the Latvian music scene in the Kurzeme Province during the latter half of the 19th century. Born on April 29, 1830, at the Bētiņi homestead in Bērzmuiža, he received his early education at the Bērzmuiža Parish School and the Dobeles Church School before advancing his studies at the Irlava Teachers' Seminary. His long and influential teaching career at this seminary spanned from 1848 to 1893, during which he also established the Irlava mixed choir in 1868, demonstrating his commitment to fostering musical talent and appreciation in the region.

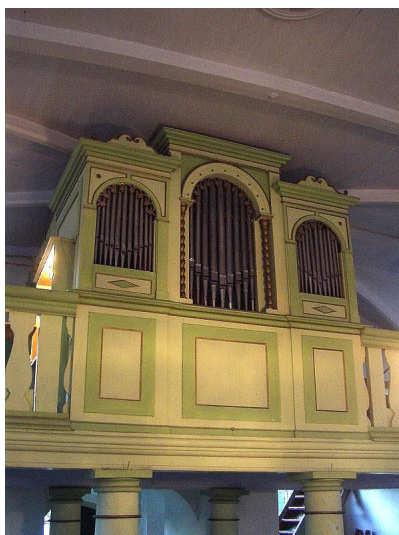
In addition to his teaching and choral work, Bētiņš served as the organist for the Sāti congregation from 1860 to 1905, showcasing his versatility as a musician. His contributions as an organist and organ builder were integral to the musical landscape of his time, and his multifaceted involvement in music education and performance left a lasting legacy on Latvian cultural heritage. Bētiņš's dedication to music and education helped lay the foundation for future generations of Latvian musicians and educators.

Sources

<https://dziesmusvetki.lndb.lv/en/person/?id=1>

Skulte, Skultes Svētā Matīsa evaņģēliski luteriskā baznīca

Strautu iela 2, LV-4025 Skulte, Latvia



Builder	J. Bētiņš
Year	ca. 1904
Period/Style	Romantic
Stops	14
Keyboards	2+P
Keyaction	pneumatic
Tuning	Equal at 419 Hz

Description

The Skulte church organ was originally built by August Martin in Riga in 1857, as indicated by an inscription that partially survived on the organ's case. This one-manual instrument without pedals, featuring four stops, was consecrated on November 10, 1857, Martin's Day. The instrument was rebuilt in 1902, making it difficult to determine its original opus number. It is likely that the initial construction included the use of all four original registers, which were partially retained in the 1902 rebuild.

In 1904, Jānis Bētiņš further modified the organ by applying the Multiplex system, adding pneumatic action to the first manual and pedal, and constructing a new console. The organ underwent another significant repair after World War I in 1925, carried out by the Martin-Kolbe organ building firm, costing 1067.20 Latvian rubles. However, the instrument suffered severe damage in 1989 when it was vandalized by three teenagers, causing extensive harm to 340 pipes and other parts of the organ. A restoration attempt was made in 1991 by Ilmārs Lāms, but the pneumatic components of the first manual are still not fully functional.

Initially built as a mechanical organ with four stops on one manual and no pedals, the 1904 additions and subsequent modifications have not maintained the original quality and functionality. The 1989 vandalism and subsequent repairs have further compromised the organ's condition. The original pitch was altered when the first manual and pedal were added, lowering it by half a tone. Despite the challenges, the second manual wind chest, built in a traditionally solid manner by August Martin, remains intact, especially the completely preserved Traversflöte 8' stop.

Stoplist/Disposition

I. Manual (1902)	II. Manual (1857)	Pedal (1902)
Bordun 16'	Salicional 8'	Subbass 16'
Principal 8'	Hohlflöte 8'	Gedacktbass 8'
Gedackt 8'	Flöte 8'	
Gamba 8'	Flöte 4'	
Octave 4' *		
Viola 4'		
Cornett 2 fach		
Mixtur 3-4 fach		

Additional: Octavcoppel, Manualcoppel II/I, Pedalcoppel, Tutti, Pedalcoppel

Sources

https://orgcat.lv/skulte_main.htm