



The Archbishop's Palace May 19, 2014:

From the organ history of Nidaros Cathedral

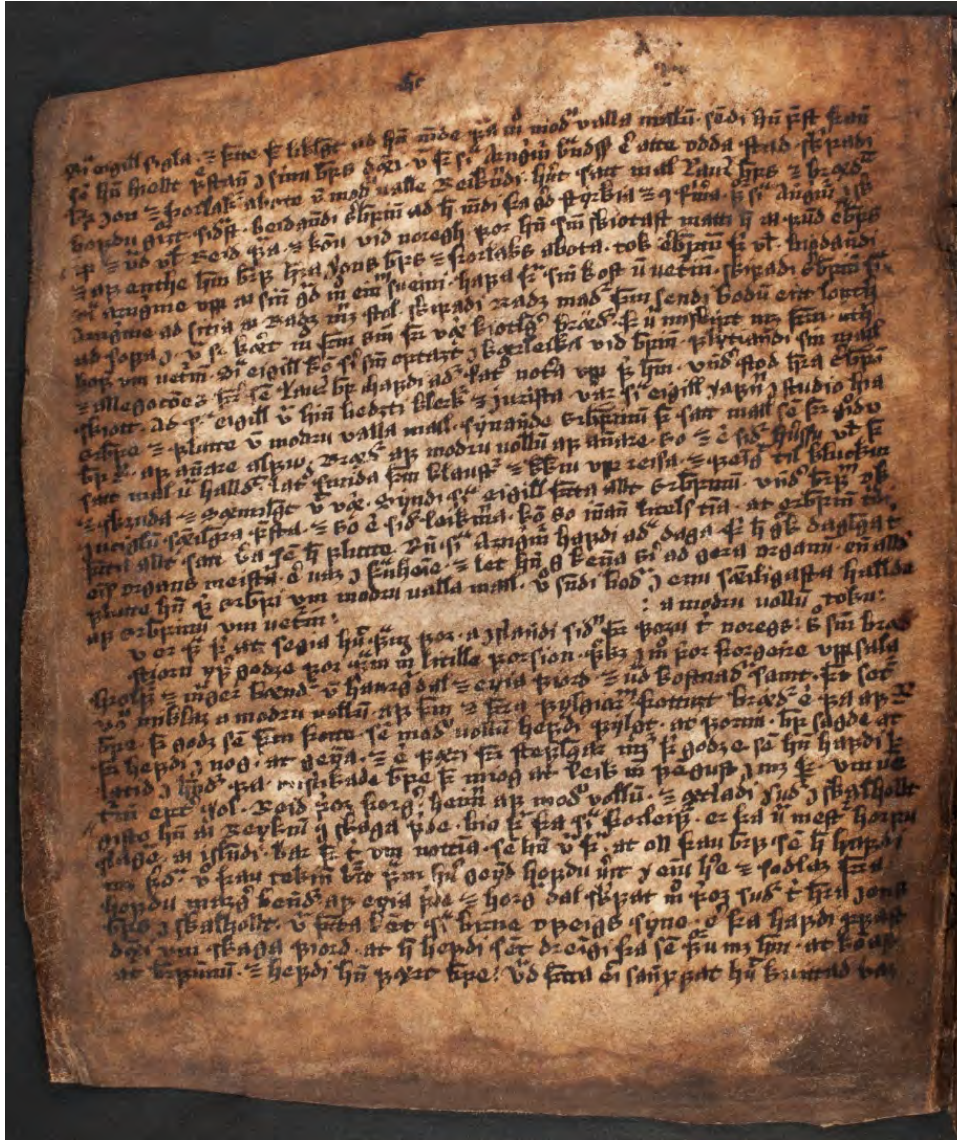
Per Fridtjov Bonsaksen

Earlier Cathedral Organist and Choir Master;
Now project leader for the organ restoration

St. Cecilia, patroness of music
(on the southern Westfront tower)

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Earliest written evidence of church organ in Trondheim and Norway: 1328



The monk Arngrim visited the archbishopric in Trondheim as messenger for the bishop of Iceland. He became so enthralled by the organ there that he neglected his business duties; - preferring to spend the time learning to master organ playing and building.



From "The Saga of Bishop Laurentius." (Arni Magnusson Collection, Reykjavik)

1328 – 1708

Written evidence of organs, but not what kind or where they were placed.
The church, with the interior incl. organs, repeatedly suffered damage from storms, lightning and fires.



Examples of "swallow nest organs"



Johan Daniel Berlin (1714-87)

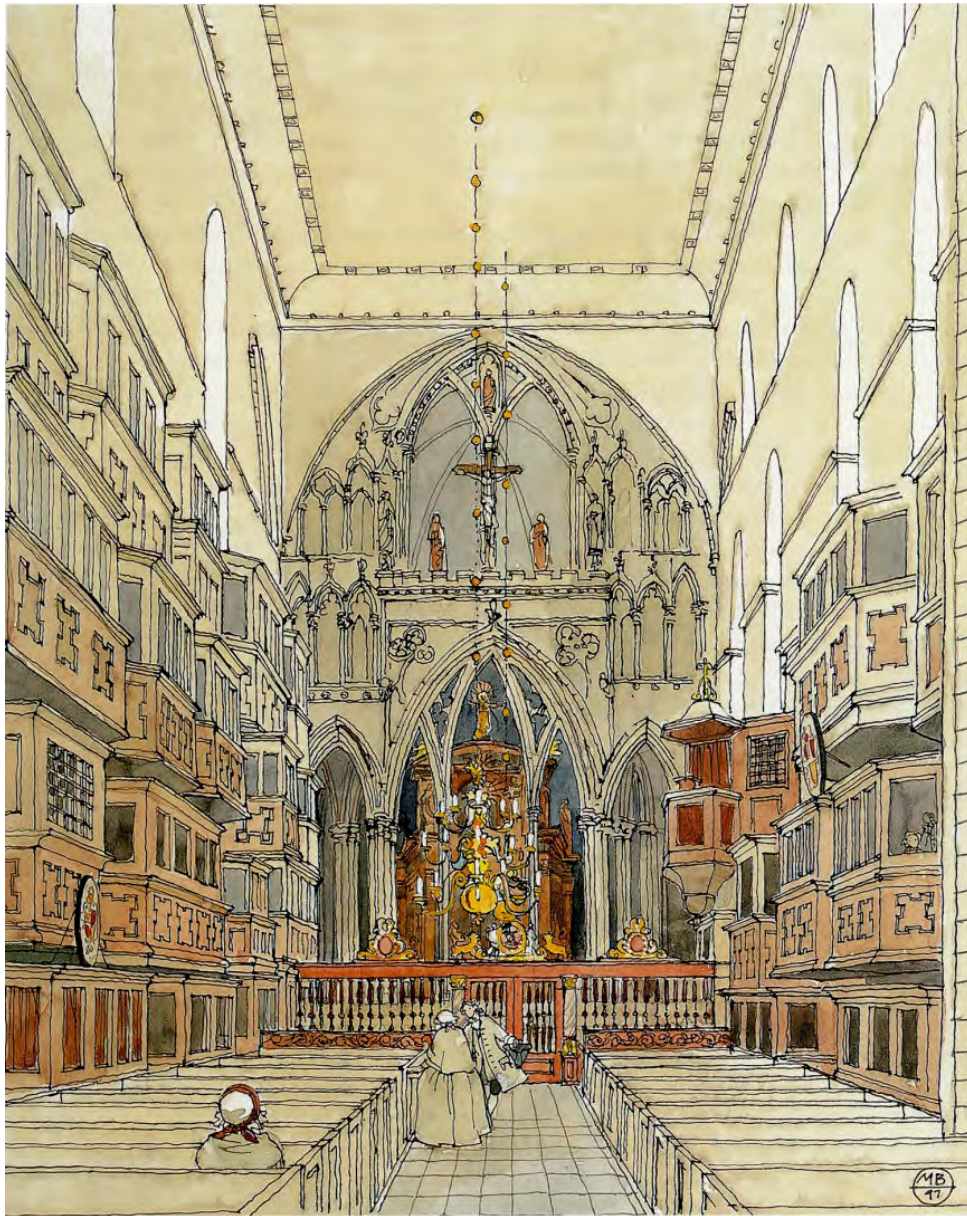
In 1737, this German (Preussian) musician and all-round genius was appointed to Trondheim. He seems to have been the one who had a new organ ordered from the reknown organ builder Wagner in Brandenburg. This procedure was very unusual, as Copenhagen had monopoly on organs in the Danish/Norwegian kingdom



The cathedral at the time of Johan Daniel Berlin

After the fire in 1531, the nave was not rebuilt, but was an open-air ruin





The interior in the 18th century

In J.D. Berlin's time
only the choir and part of the
transept was in use.
The interior was baroque with
wooden pulpitums and galleries, and
the ceiling was flat.



Original placement of the organ built by Joachim Wagner:

In front of the walled-off ruins of the nave.
The cathedral was in poor condition, and J.D.
Berlin arranged a makeshift roof construction
and curtains over the instrument as
protection against draft as well as falling
plaster and rubble.

The Wagner organ (cont.)



- The Wagner organ served as the cathedral's instrument for 189 years.
- Extensive modifications and renovations were made by Claus Jensen between 1860 –1891. During the restoration and reconstruction of the cathedral, the instrument was moved several times, - on rail!

- rebuilt by Claus Jensen, and moved forward from the transept to the west end of the choir.



The Steinmeyer organ 1930

placed in the northern transept and
with the Wagner organ's facade

In 1930 the new Steinmeyer organ was placed in the northern transept behind the facade of the Wagner organ. The rest of the baroque instrument was stored away.

The new instrument occupied nearly the whole transept, and the entrance was through a tunnel into the church.

The newly appointed cathedral architect Helge Thiis described this as a scandal, and wanted to have the organ removed.

The Steinmeyer organ after being moved into the nave (1962 ff.)



In 1962, the Steinmeyer organ was significantly reduced in size. The main part was placed on the western wall of the nave, some in the northern and southern triforia, and some was rebuilt as a choir organ .

The plan was to place the baroque organ in *front* of the Steinmeyer organ, in a gap behind the facade, – but luckily this was never carried out.

Restoration of the Wagner organ 1994



Jürgen Ahrend voicing the instrument (the reeds in the pedal)



The restored Wagner organ in its new position on the wall of the northern transept (1995)



The Steinmeyer organ in the nave

1962-94



Reduced organ behind the baroque facade, which was truncated so as not to cover even more of the windows.

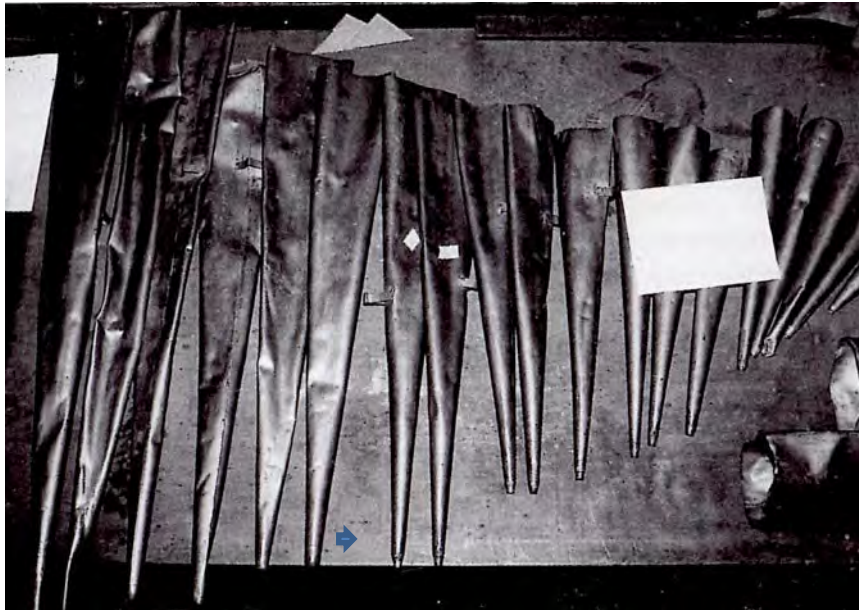
1994-2012



Reduced organ, without any facade: "The factory"



Good news: The pipes were not thrown away!
Bad news: The storage was not perfect...



The Wagner organ,
when unpacked 1994

Pipes from the Steinmeyer
organ after storage, 2012



The Steinmeyer restoration project



Wolfgang Rehn from Orgelbau Kuhn;
Involved in the process since 1990

- Evaluation and identification/measurements of all parts
- Feasibility study (to see if it was at all possible to "fit in" the organ on the rose window wall)
- Restoration /reconstruction

Herr Rehn with a 3-D model of the organ and the nave



2014!

Full size organ, with its own,
new facade (Orgelbau Kuhn)