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ORGANS IN TRANSYLVANIA – PART 2. TRANSYLVANIAN ORGANS DURING THE 19TH CENTURY

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SUMMARY. The following study is the second chapter of a series, which is intended to shed light on the development of the Transylvanian organ landscape throughout the centuries. It offers information regarding the organs and organ builders of the early romantic period up to the turn of the 20th century, when pneumatic and electro pneumatic organs have started to take over.

Keywords: Transylvania, organ, romantic period, organ builders, stops, restoration.

During recent decades, local researchers have devoted their time and effort to create an accurate inventory of Transylvanian organs. Several books and internet databases have seen the light of day, which are of great help for organ builders and organist alike. These researches have shed light on the fact that Transylvania had been up to date with the mainstream organ building techniques and styles from the very beginning. Even if the majority of the instruments were small and offered limited possibilities to their users, they were nonetheless valuable and, in most cases, very well built and enduring. In their books, researchers like Dávid István[2], Erich Türk[3] and Hermann Binder[4] have even uncovered the authors of several instruments

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[2] Dávid, István, *Műemlék orgonák Erdélyben (Monument Organs in Transylvania)*, Editura Polis Balassi, Cluj Napoca, Budapest, 1996

[3] Türk, Erich, *Die Orgellandschaft dreier Nordsiebenbürgischer Landkreise: Cluj, Sălaj und Bistrița-Năsăud (The Organ Landscape of Three Transylvanian Counties: Cluj, Sălaj and Bistrița-Năsăud)*, Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, Kolozsvár, 2014

[4] Binder, Hermann, *Orgeln in Siebenbürgen (Organs in Transylvania)*, Gehann Musik Verlag, Kludenbach, 2000

which until recently were of unknown origins. They have also shed light on the work of lesser-known local organ builders who have not only constructed many instruments in different remote locations but have also carried out maintenance and restoration work. The newest addition to the list of treteases regarding Transylvanian organ building is the first volume of three edited by Pál Enyedi and Attila Márk[5], which offers detailed descriptions regarding the organs of the Unitarian Church in the Háromszék-Felsőfehér and Székerudvarhely regions. This first volume will be completed by another two volumes to be edited soon. The work in question sheds light on the lesser-known work of organ builders from the Szekler region.

As shown in the previous chapter, the information transfer between Transylvania and the rest of Europe took place with a certain amount of delay. During the centuries, organ builders from Transylvania travelled to the western parts of Europe, to get acquainted with the latest techniques in organ building. Also, during the 17th and 18th centuries, organ builders form the region of Upper Hungary (today part of Slovakia) have settled down in the southern parts of Transylvania, which were mostly inhabited by the Saxons. The expertise of these organ builders had eventually contributed to the spreading of high-quality instruments throughout Transylvania.

During the early romantic period, Transylvanian organ builders have continued to build mechanical organs with slider chests, which from the technical point of view, are the most reliable instruments even today. Still, most of the instruments built were relatively small, with one or two manuals and 12-14 stops, and were first suitable for playing church music. Of course, during those days, it was not accustomed to use the organ for other purposes. Another factor which contributed to the spreading of smaller organs was the fact that the congregations did not have the funds necessary to build instruments with three of four manuals and tens of different stops. Their main purpose was to purchase instruments which were not too expensive, were suitable for church music, were easy to maintain and long lasting.

The first organ builder whose instruments present early romantic features was Samuel Joseph Maetz (1760-1826). According to Hermann Binder, in the beginning Maetz was an apprentice of Johannes Hahn, after which he had travelled abroad to perfect his organ building skills[6]. The instruments built by him are larger than most of the instruments built during the second part of the 18th century. Almost all of them have two manuals

[5] Pál Enyedi and Attila Márk, *A Magyar unitárius egyház orgonái. A Háromszék-Felsőfehéri és a Székelyudvarhelyi egyházkör (Organs of the Hungarian Unitarian Church. The organs of the Háromszék-Felsőfehér, and Székerudvarhely Regions)*, Liszt Ferenc Zeneművészeti Egyetem Egyházzenei Kutatócsoportja, Budapest, 2021

[6] Binder, Hermann, in: *Orgeln in Siebenbürgen*, p. 87-88

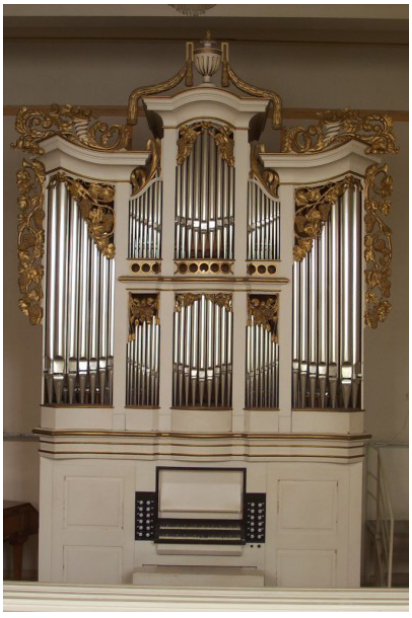
and an 8' Principal basis. The overall sound of his instruments is soft, and the romantic stops like Gamba, Salicional, Violino, Traversflöte contribute to their particularly pleasant sound.

A typical instrument of Maetz is the one built for the evangelical church in Hoghilag in 1819, which had been moved to the Gheorghe Dima Academy of Music in Cluj in 1994, after a two-year restoration work (Image no. 1). This instrument has two manuals and pedals, and an 8' Principal basis. The stoplist is the following:

Manual I C-f3:
Bourdon 16', Principal 8', Gedeckt 8', Octave 4', Flauta 4', Quinte 2 2/3, Superoctave 2', Hohlflöte 2', Mixtura 3-5 fach, Trompete 8' (bas/discant)

Manual II C-f3:
Traversflöte 8', Octave 4', Gamba 4', Gemshorn 2', Krummhorn 8' (bas/discant)
Pedals C-d1:
Subbass 16', Cello 8', Principal 4', Basson 16'
Pedalkoppel/Manualkoppel/Tremulant

Image 1



Prospect of the Samuel Joseph Maetz organ at the Gheorghe Dima Music Academy in Cluj[7]

[7] http://orgeldatei.evang.ro/organ/view/472

The reed stops are divided on both manuals into bas and discant, which makes it possible to play a solo line either with the left or the right hand, accompanied by another combination of stops. The sound of the full organ is not too harsh, since the Mixtur stop is not very high pitched. The organ is particularly suitable for playing early romantic works by Mendelssohn, Rheinberger or Schumann, but it is also appropriate for playing baroque music. This is because stylistically the Maetz organs are transition instruments between the baroque and early romantic organ building styles. Regarding the strength and quality of sound, there is a significant difference between the two manuals, which makes it difficult to obtain proper terraced dynamics. Whilst the first manual provides a bright plenum, the second manual has a smoother sound. The Krummhorn is a reminiscence of the baroque style, which makes it possible to play beautiful solo lines. Generally, the organ is in a very good condition[8], and it is used for teaching, and during organ and chamber music concerts.

Samuel Joseph Maetz had built many instruments in the area of Cluj, one of which was particularly interesting. The organ of the Unitarian church of Cluj, which had been the very first instrument to be built in a Unitarian church in Transylvania[9], had a twin case, a construction form which is atypical for Maetz organs[10]. This construction form had later on influenced several organ builders from the Szekler region, who had built many instruments of this kind[11].

Although not in all cases, Maetz organs are typically recognisable by a signature element, which consists of a single pipe set on both sides of the organ case, as seen on the picture below (Image no. 2).

[8] The latest restoration works had been carried out by the COT company from Hărman, in 2009.

[9] Enyedi, Pál and Márk, Attila, in: *A Magyar unitárius egyház orgonái. A Háromszék-Felsőfehéri és a Székelyudvarhelyi egyházkör (Organs of the Hungarian Unitarian Church. The organs of the Háromszék-Felsőfehér, and Székerudvarhely Regions)*, page 45.

[10] Today only the front of the Metz organ exists, behind it there is a pneumatic organ built by Ferenc Szeidl in 1930.

[11] Türk, Erich, in: *Aufschwung des Klausenburger Musiklebens in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts, in: Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Theologia Reformata Transylvanica, 64/2 (2019)*, page 117-118.

Image 2

Signature side pipe of the Maetz organ at the Calvaria Church in Cluj[12]

Maetz's craftsmanship was inherited by his two sons, Friedrich Wilhelm and Wilhelm Samuel, who had carried on building organs with the same techniques and of similar quality.

A very important event took place between the years 1836-1839, when German organ builder Carl August Buchholz[13] from Berlin (1796-1884) had built the four manual organ of the Black Church in Brașov (Image no. 3). Since most of the Transylvanian organs were positive organs or three manual organs at best, this instrument was an exception to the rule. The event attracted many local builders, who wanted to participate in the building process of this monumental organ.

[12] http://orgeldatei.evang.ro/organ/view/397

[13] Carl August Buchholz was one of the most important german organ builders of the first half of the 19th century. He had built mechanical organs with slider chests and wedge shaped sliders, and introduced several technical innovations, such as the swell box and Barker levers.

As previously mentioned, the organ of the Black Church has four manuals and pedals, and is equipped with rudimentary swell pedals, which must be fixed when closed. The organ has the following stoplist:

Manual I - C–g3 (Hauptmanual):
Principal 16’, Quintatön 16’, Principal 8’, Viola da Gamba 8’, Rohrflöte 8’, Gemshorn 8’, Nasard 5 1/3’, Octave 4’, Waldflöte 4’, Spitzflöte 4’,
Quinte 2 2 /3’, Superoctava 2’, Cimbel 3 fach, Scharff 5 fach, Cornett 5 fach

Manual II - C–g3 (Oberwerk):
Bourdon 16’, Principal 8’, Salicional 8’, Hohlflöte 8’, Gedackt 8’,
Quintatön 8’, Octava 4’, Fugara 4’, Rohrflöte 4’, Nasard 2 2/3’,
Superoctava 2’, Mixtur 5 fach’, Hautbois 8’

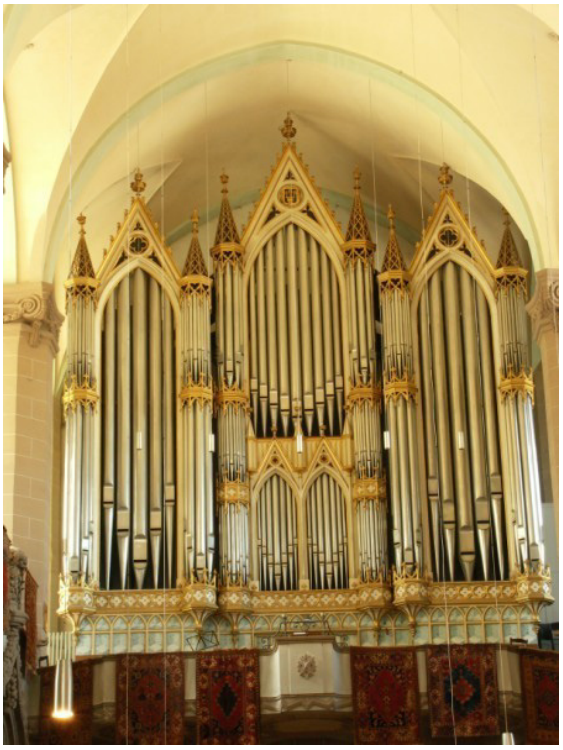
Manual III - C–g3 (Rohrwerk):
Fagott 16', Rohrflöte 8', Vox angelica 8', Trompete 8',
Clarinette 8, Principal 4'.

Manual IV - C–g3 (Unterwerk):
Salicional 16', Principal 8', Flauto traverso 8', Viola da gamba 8', Gedackt 8', Octava 4', Flauto dolce 4', Viola d'amore 4', Gemshorn 2 2/3', Decimaquinta 2', Progr. harmonica 3-5 fach.

Pedals C–f1:
Principal 32’, Principal 16’, Untersatz 32’, Subbass 16’, Violone 16’, Principal 8’, Gemshorn 8’, Violone 8’, Bassflöte 8', Nasard 10 2/3’,
Quinte 5 1/3’, Octava 4’, Mixtur 4 fach, Contraposaune 32’, Posaune 16’, Trompete 8’, Cornetta 4’

Couplers: I/II, IV/III, III/II, III/P
Swell pedals for the third and fourth manuals.

Image 3



The Buchholz organ of the Black Church in Brașov[14]

As shown in the stoplist above, all the manuals are provided with a 16' stop, whilst the pedals are equipped with no less than three 32' stops, and in addition, the Nasard 10 2/3 combined with a 16' stop can recreate an acoustic 32' stop. The organ is also provided with a Progressio harmonica 3-5 fach[15] stop, which was commonly found in romantic organs built across Germany during the 19th century. Except for the third manual, which is equipped almost exclusively with solo stops, all the other manuals are provided with 8', 4' and 2' Principal stops and a lot of Mixture stops, which makes it possible to achieve a very smooth crescendo and decrescendo just by changing manuals. However, the arrangement of the

[14] http://orgeldatei.evang.ro/organ/view/1230

[15] The *Progressio harmonica* is a mixture stop in which the ranks increase in number as the notes progress from bass to treble. Its invention is linked to the name of Georg Joseph Vogler (1749-1814) and its outspread is attributed to the work of Carl August Buchholz.

manuals is not very satisfying, since they are not arranged in a logical order, beginning with the Great organ as the lowest manual. Instead, the lower manuals are actually the Unterwerk and the Rohrwerk manuals, whilst the Hauptmanual and the Oberwerk are placed on top. This makes it especially uncomfortable to play on the instrument.

The organ is particularly suitable for playing German romantic music, for example works by Liszt, Mendelssohn, Reger, Brahms, Ritter, etc. Thanks to the many 8 foot stops and solo stops like the Hautbois 8', the Trompete 8' and the Clarinette 8', one can also perform French romantic music, but with certain shortcomings due to the lack of proper swell boxes. However, to obtain a stylistically appropriate performance, one must get very well acquainted with the instrument, and explore the endless possibilities of stop combinations for a long time.

The Buchholz organ of the Black Church had been restored once in 1966 by Carl Einschenk, followed by another general restoration process in 2001 by Ferdinand Stemmer and Barbara Dutli. The organ is in a very good condition, and it is used during religious services and in concerts. A very successful concert season with the title Organ Nights is organized during the summer months between June and September, with concert organists invited from all over the world.

As previously mentioned, many local organ builders have taken part in the construction process of the Buchholz organ. Such was the case of Carl Schneider (1817-1875) and Heinrich Maywald (1800-1853), whose name can be found on the largest pipe of the instrument. Both organ builders have opened their own organ building shops in the city of Brașov, from where they have provided high quality instruments for many churches throughout Transylvania.

One of the most important organs built by Heinrich Maywald is in the Piarist Church of Cluj. The disposition of the instrument built in 1849 was designed based on the conceptions of Ruzitska György[16], organist and conductor at the Piarist church during that time. The organ is a mechanical, two manual instrument with the following stoplist:

[16] Ruzitska György (1786-1869) was a highly respected personality in Cluj. He was the director of the Music Conservatory; he organised many cultural events and was asked to offer expert advice during the construction and restoration process of many organs in Cluj.

Manual I C-f3:
Principalino 8', Gyengén födött 8' (Soft stopped flute), Prestant 4', Csúcsfuvola 4' (Flute)

Manual II C-f3:
Quintatön 16', Principal 8', Födött 8' (Stopped flute), Salicional 8', Oktava 4', Csőfuvola 4' (Rohrflöte), Zergekürt 4' (Gemshorn), Quint 2 2/3', Superoctav 2', Mixtur 4 sor 1 1/3'

Pedals C-c1:
Harsona 16' (Posaune), Subbass 16', Violonbass 16', Octavbass 8', Csello 8' (Cello)

The organ has two cases, the right-side case containing the pipework for the first manual, while the left side case contains the pipework for the second manual and the pedals. The instrument has a coupler for the manuals, and no coupler for the pedals. As a result, when the Posaune is not in use, the sound of the pedals is relatively weak in comparison with the strength of the first manual plenum. The sound of the full organ is not too bright; however one can obtain very pleasant stop combinations for the interpretation of slow movements, especially with the Salicional. The key action of the organ is rather hard, especially if the manuals are coupled, which makes it difficult to play works which require the execution of fast passages and strain the hands of the player for a long time.

The organ works[17] composed by Ruzitska György in the early romantic style are particularly suitable for this instrument, but one can also play early romantic music which doesn't require a very large instrument. The organ is in a very good condition as it has been restored in 2013 by the COT company from Hărman. Since than it is used in concerts and church services.

Beside the organ of the Piarist church, Maywald had built another organ for the Evangelical Church in Cluj, which in 1913 had been moved to the Reformed Theological Institute. However, this instrument is smaller than the one in the Piarist church, and the pipework of two of its pedal stops have been removed when the moving process took place, allegedly due to lack of space at its new location[18].

[17] Ruzitska György had dedicated the following works to the organ: *7 Fuga, Fantaisie o Prelude, Prelude pathetique*, *Prelude*, *Fughetta*, *Introduction et Fughe*, *Troisième Fantasie pour l'orgue avec Pedal*, *Adagio samt fugierten Nachspiele nach L. van Beethoven's 27-ten Werke.*

[18] Dávid István, in: *Műemlék orgonák Erdélyben*, p. 164

As a descendant of a family of organ builders and musicians, Carl Schneider (1817-1875) continued the tradition established by his father, Petrus Gottlieb Schneider. From his shop in Brașov, he had provided many churches with organs considered to be some of the best examples of 19th century Transylvanian organ building. Most of his organs have been built with one or two manuals and pedals, but sadly most of them are in a very poor condition, or even unplayable.

An exception is the organ from Agnita, with two manuals and pedals, built in 1850. The instrument presents many similarities with the Bucholz organ from Brașov. The organ front and the stop knobs have an almost identical appearance (Image no. 4).

With its 25 stops, the instruments disposition also presents many similarities with the Buchholz organ in Brașov. The stoplist is the following:

Manual I C-f3:
Bourdon 8', Principal 8', Viola di Gamba 8', Gedackt 4', Octav 4', Spitzflöt 4', Flauto 4', Quinta 2 2/3', Superoctav 2', Mixtur 4f, Cymbel 3f, Trompete 8'

Manual II C-f3:
Praestant 8', Piffaro 8', Flauto traverso 8', Octav 4', Rohrflöte 4', Fugara 4', Superoctav 2', Scharff 5f

Pedals C-c1:
Violon 16', Violon 8', Quinta 5 1/3', Octav 4', Posaune 16'
Pedalkoppel, Manualkoppel

It is interesting to see, that just like Buchholz, Schneider had endeavoured to obtain balance within the stop palette of the two manuals, as well as between them. If we observe the two manuals separately, we can establish that both could function as separate organs. Just like in case of the Buchholz organ, the possibility of creating a smooth crescendo and decrescendo by changing manuals, or even terraced dynamics, makes this instrument suitable for romantic and baroque repertoire alike.

Image 4

The Carl Schneider organ in the Evangelical church of Agnita[19]

Another similar, but smaller instrument built by Schneider is the one found in the Church on the hill in Sighișoara, which is in a very good condition and well-liked by local organists. The instrument built in 1858 has one manual and pedals, and the following stoplist:

Manual C-g3:
Bourdon 16', Principal 8', Gedackt 8', Octave 4', Flauto 4', Fugara 4',
Quint 2 2/3', Waldflöte 2', Mixtur 4f

Pedals C-d1:
Subbass 16'
Pedalkoppel

Although the instrument is relatively small, its disposition is very balanced, which makes it suitable for baroque music and romantic music as well.

[19] http://orgeldatei.evang.ro/organ/view/1003

The Viennese organ builder Carl Hesse (1808-1882) had also built approximately fifteen instruments in Transylvania. Some of these were smaller instruments, whilst others were rather large two manual organs, such as the one built in 1869 in the evangelical church of Biertan. It has a mechanical tracker action and the following disposition:

Manual I C-f3:
Bourdon 16', Principal 8', Hohlflöte 8', Salicional 8', Oktave 4', Flauto 4', Flauto 2 2/3', Superoktav 2', Waldflöte 2', Quinte 1 1/3', Oktavin 1',
Quinte 2/3', Trompete 8'

Manual II C-f3:
Principal 8', Flauto bass 8', Flauto diskant 8', Viola 8', Unda maris 8', Oktave 4', Fugara 4', Flauto 4', Violini 2', Fagott 16'

Pedals C-c1:
Violon 16', Subbass 16', Principalbass 8', Cello 8', Oktavbass 4',
Posaune 16'

Couplers: OW/HW, HW/Ped.

The disposition of this instrument reminds one of the Italian organs building techniques, where the ranks of the mixtures are divided into separate stops. Today this instrument is in a good condition, however, sadly it is not very well known by local organists, and it is used almost exclusively for church services. It would be really beneficial if it could be included in the list of Transylvanian concert organs to make it more popular amongst local concert organists, who would most certainly find it very satisfying.

Another significant organ builder of the 19th century was István Kolonics (1826-1892), who came from Szabadka (Subotica, Serbia) and settled down in the Szekler region in the town of Kézdivásárhely (Târgu-Secuiesc). He was the most prolific local organ builder of his time, constructing 199 instruments throughout Transylvania and abroad. Aside building new organs, he had also carried-out restoration works on many organs. His instruments were built mostly in churches of Hungarian congregations. Most of the organs were small one manual instruments with or without pedals, but he had also built larger instruments with two or even three manuals. His instruments were all mechanical organs with slider chests. Many of his organs are provided with a so-called Harmonium stop, which was intended to make up for the absence of reed stops, which were more expensive to make, and not many congregations could afford them.

The largest organ built by Kolonics was his op. 134, built in 1877 for St. Michaels Cathedral in Alba-Iulia (Image no. 5). It is actually a two manual instrument which is completed by a Positive manual which can be played separately, like a distinct organ.

Image 5

The Kolonics organ at St. Michaels Cathedral in Alba-Iulia[20]

The original stoplist of the organ is the following:

Manual I C-g3:
Flöte 16', Gedackt 16', Principal 8', Waldflöte 8', Weichflöte 8', Flöte 8', Vox celestis 8'+4', Octav 4', Flöte 4', Fugara 4', Quint 2 2/3', Super octav 2', Mixtur 5x 2', Mixtur 3x 1 1/3

Manual II C-g3:
Geigenprincipal 8', Flauto dolce 8', Traversflöte 8', Salicional 8', Rohrflöte 4', Gemshorn 4', Flöte 2', Waldflöte 2'

[20] https://orgona.ro/gyulafehervar-szekesegyhaz-2009/

Separate Positive manual C-g3:
Nagydugott 8' (Stopped flute), Portunal 8', Principal 4', Csúcsfuvola 4' (Spitzflöte), Quintfuvola 3' (Quintflöte), Octav 2'

Pedals C-c1:
Violon 16', Subbass 16', Quint 10', Violonbass 8', Principal 8', Octavbass 8'

In line with the stylistic tendencies of the era, this instrument has a romantic sound world with many 16' and 8' stops which add to the gravity of its sound. Stops like the Vox celestis, the Geigenprincipal, the Salicional and the Protunal confer a veiled, velvety sound to the organ. It is interesting to see that Kolonics did not build any reed stops into this organ, due to the fact that in his opinion the maintenance and tuning of reed stops was too complicated: „ […] In case of the reed stops, the situation is a little bit different, since in their case one has to tune the instrument sometimes even after playing it just one time, which is due to the structure of the pipes. Therefore, in many cases the tuning and maintenance is neglected, perhaps out of convenience or ignorance […], in light of these facts, during the construction of this organ, I have decided to omit the reed stops entirely."[21]

An interesting element of the organ is the Positive manual placed on a separate console, which makes it possible to play works for two organs. Studying the organs built by Kolonics, one can observe that the disposition of this manual can be found in many of his smaller instruments. It was probably a combination which he particularly liked.

During the 1970s, some rather questionable restoration works have been carried-out on the organ, during which it had been provided with a crescendo roller and two free combinations. At the same time, two reed stops have been added to the first manual and the pedals, namely a Trumpet 8' and a Posaune 16' to replace the Gedackt 16' and the Violonbass 8'. The original console had been removed, and a new console with electrical stop action had been installed. In 2009, during the latest restoration works carried-out by Papp Zoltán[22], the old console had been reinstalled.

In addition to the previously mentioned organ builders, during the 19th century there were several other craftsmen who have enriched the Transylvanian organ landscape with smaller, but well-built instruments. Such were Andreas Eitel, Wilhelm Hörbiger, Michael Kesstner, Thomas Boltres, Johann Thois, Lajos Blahunka, Mihály Magyar, Johann Kremer, Friedrich and Samuel Binder, Ignác Takácsy, Carl Einschenk, Anton Dangl, József Nagy and many others.

[21] Csíky, Csaba, in: *Kolonics. Orgonaépítészet a 19. századi Erdélyben*, p. 33
[22] https://orgona.ro/gyulafehervar-szekesegyhaz-2009/

Up to the end of the 19th century Transylvanian organ builders have been faithful to the mechanical tracker action with slider chests, which during the first decades of the 20th century has gradually been replaced by pneumatic and electro pneumatic actions.

Around the turn of the century local organ builders have been slowly overshadowed by the advancement of foreign organ building factories which could build instruments with lower costs. The effects of these circumstances and the appearance and outspread of pneumatic and electropneumatic organs shall be the topic of the next chapter of the series.

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