

LAUKHUFF CLOSES THE GATES



Aug. Laukhuff GmbH, the world's largest manufacturer and supplier of organ pipes and parts for pipe organs has closed after 198 years of world class business.

Weikersheim, central Germany, was the location that the company's founder Martin Andreas Laukhuff founded his own organ building workshop in 1823. His three sons August, Andreas and Adolf Laukhuff continued to run the business, with August specializing in organ parts, Andreas the commercial and Adolf the artistic side. Andreas Laukhuff catalogued and standardised all the necessary parts of an organ, and the catalogue published by Laukhuff has been considered the standard in organ building in the modern world.

In April 2014, Aug. Laukhuff GmbH & Co. KG applied for self-administered insolvency at the Crailsheim District Court. This enabled the company to be

reorganized and was released from the insolvency proceedings on November 20, 2014. Apparently, the financial squeeze was brought about with the surge in digital organ building attracting skilled tradesmen and reducing world-wide demand for pipe organ parts.

In 2017 Aug. Laukhuff GmbH & Co. KG expanded its piano and grand piano production by taking over the piano and grand piano production of the Otto Heuss company. However, in the second quarter of 2021 the company faced protective shield proceedings. An investor was unsuccessfully sought, and business activities will be discontinued on June 30, 2021.

The Laukhuff press release says: "For a long time it was clear that organ building, like many other arts and crafts, was not going to be easy. Laukhuff had to go through planned insolvency proceedings in self-administration as early as 2014. Since then, the company has been in a constant process of restructuring and optimization. Plans for a new building were drawn up, discussions with the city sought and the future planned. The family bore the additional costs incurred in order to



secure jobs and the future of the company.

However, nobody could foresee the year 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic. Churches and concert halls remained closed, entire countries were in lockdown and with it the organ builders worldwide.

Due to the combination of restructuring in recent years and the slump in sales in 2020 and 2021, all financial buffers were used up. On March 23, 2021, the company entered the protective shield proceedings and, in addition to restructuring plans, the search for investors was also started.

A future of the medium-sized craft business would only have been possible with a restructuring plan and a suitable investor. The protective shield proceedings will end on June 30, 2021, and with it the

era of Aug. Laukhuff GmbH & Co. KG, as despite all efforts no investor could be found.

In the organ building industry, Laukhuff was often seen as an institution.

Laukhuff was always there, always on hand with solutions to problems - this gap will remain and can hardly be compensated. The company whistle, which announced the start of work, meal breaks and the end of the day for decades will sound the end of work for the last time on June 30, 2021."

Bruce Duncan

