



Bethlehem Area Public Library

Local History Collections

Finding aid for The Bach Choir of Bethlehem Collection, 1900-2020

Creator: The Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Bethlehem, PA
Title: The Bach Choir of Bethlehem Collection
Dates: 1900-2020
Extent: 1.5 linear feet, 4 rolls of microfilm, 3 scrapbooks
Location: Bethlehem Room
Language: English

Abstract: The Bach Choir of Bethlehem Collection consists of annual festival programs; programs for special events dating between 1915 and 1951; and publicity items including newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, and articles.

Access to materials: This collection is open to research.

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Preferred Citation: [Item], The Bach Choir of Bethlehem Collection, 1900-2020. Bethlehem Area Public Library Local History Collections, Bethlehem, PA.

Historical Note:

The oldest American Bach Choir was formed in 1898 due to the creative passion of J. Fred Wolle and the organization efforts of Ruth Porter Doster. Growing up in the Moravian Church inspired in Wolle and appreciation for music, manifested through his first choral endeavor in 1882, the Bethlehem Choral Union, and his rigorous study in Munich under Joseph Rheinberger. Upon his return to the United States, he envisioned a performance of Bach's demanding "Mass in B Minor." His Choral Union lost enthusiasm for the arduous task, but Wolle persisted. Several years later, coupled with the work of Ruth Porter Doster, a new choir was organized and gave the performance of the first complete American "Mass in B Minor" in 1900. The Bach Choir grew steadily in recognition and popularity with its annual festival, held in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Performances at Carnegie Hall and in Washington, D.C., increased the Choir's following, attracting thousands of visitors to the festivals held every year in May.

Scope and Content:

The Bach Choir of Bethlehem Collection consists of annual festival programs between 1900-20xx, programs for several events between 1915 and 1951, and publicity items including newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, and articles. Please consult the Bach Choir of Bethlehem for information about their archival holdings.

The Collection is divided in two series: Programs, 1900-2000 and Publicity Files, 19901-1972. The Programs series consists of a complete run of annual festival programs between 1900-1981. The Library holds some later programs as well. Please see container list for additional details. Programs not only list the scheduled performances, but also provide the score and detailed information about the performed pieces. Names of all participants are also included. No festivals were held in 1902, 1906-1911, 1924, and 1933. A subseries contains programs for special events such as the 1917 Carnegie Hall performance and Dr. Wolle's memorial service in 1933. The Publicity Files series consists of articles and newspaper clippings about the Bach Choir. A list of the articles is provided in the container list. Microfilm copies of Bethlehem Bach Choir scrapbooks are available and three scrapbooks compiled by BAPL staff complete the series.

Arrangement:

The Collection is housed in the Bethlehem Room at the Bethlehem Area Public Library. Copies of festival programs, 1900-XXXX are available in 4 translucent shelf files in the Local History 783 locked shelves. The rest of the materials are shelved in the Local History Storage section.

1. Series: Programs 1900-2000
 - a) Subseries 1: Festival Programs 1900-2000
 - b) Subseries 2: Special Programs 1915-1951
2. Series: Publicity Files
 - a) Subseries 1: Articles 1903-1935
 - b) Subseries 2: Scrapbooks 1901-1972

Access Points

The Bach Choir of Bethlehem Collection is accessible under the following terms in the Bethlehem Area Public Library Catalog:

Subjects: Bach Choir of Bethlehem.
Names: Bach Choir of Bethlehem (Bethlehem, Pa.)

Container Listing

Folder Title	Date	Box	Folder
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Series 1: Festival Programs 1900-XXXX

Subseries 1: Festival Programs 1900-XXXX

Consists of a complete set of festival programs between 1900 and 1981, often in duplicate. Includes some subsequent programs. These list scheduled performances, the score, music details, and participant names. No festivals were held in 1902, 1906-1911, 1924, and 1933.

Local History 783

1-19 (missing 1902, 1906-1911, 1924)	1900-1925
20-43 (missing 1933, 1942)	1926-1950
44-58	1951-1965
59-74	1966-1981

Princeton files

1
2
3
4

Local History Storage

Folder Title	Date	Box	Folder
The Mass in B Minor (first complete American production)	1900	1	1
Second Bach Festival	1901	1	2
Third Bach Festival (2 copies)	1903	1	3
Bach Cycle -Christmas Festival (2 copies)	1904	1	4
Bach Cycle - Lenten Festival (2 copies)	1905	1	5
The Bach Cycle - Easter and Ascension Festival (2 copies)	1905	1	6
Seventh Bach Festival	1912	1	7
Eighth Bach Festival	1913	1	8
Ninth Bach Festival	1914	1	9
Tenth Bach Festival	1915	1	10
Eleventh Bach Festival	1916	1	11
Twelfth Bach Festival	1917	1	12
Thirteenth Bach Festival	1918	1	13
Fourteenth Bach Festival	1919	1	14
Fifteenth Bach Festival	1920	1	15
Sixteenth Bach Festival	1921	1	16
Seventeenth Bach Festival	1922	1	17
Eighteenth Bach Festival	1923	1	18
Nineteenth Bach Festival	1925	1	19
Twentieth Bach Festival	1926	1	20
Twenty-First Bach Festival	1927	1	21
Twenty-Second Bach Festival	1928	1	22
Twenty-Third Bach Festival	1929	1	23
Twenty-Fourth Bach Festival	1930	1	24
Twenty-Fifth Bach Festival	1931	1	25
Twenty-Sixth Bach Festival	1932	1	26
Twenty-Seventh Bach Festival	1934	1	27
Twenty-Eighth Bach Festival	1935	1	28
Twenty-Ninth Bach Festival	1936	1	29
Thirtieth Bach Festival	1937	1	30
Thirty-First Bach Festival	1938	1	31
Thirty-Second Bach Festival	1939	1	32
Thirty-Third Bach Festival	1940	1	33
Thirty-Fourth Bach Festival	1941	1	34

Thirty-Fifth Bach Festival	1942	1	35
Thirty-Sixth Bach Festival	1943	1	36
Thirty-Seventh Bach Festival	1944	1	37
Thirty-Eighth Bach Festival	1945	1	38
Thirty-Ninth Bach Festival	1946	1	39
Fortieth Bach Festival	1947	1	40
Forty-First Bach Festival	1948	1	41
Forty-Second Bach Festival (labeled Fiftieth)	1949	1	42
Forty-Third Bach Festival	1950	1	43
Forty-Fourth Bach Festival	1951	1	44
Forty-Fifth Bach Festival	1952	1	45
Forty-Sixth Bach Festival	1953	1	46
Forty-Seventh Bach Festival	1954	1	47
Forty-Eighth Bach Festival	1955	1	48
Forty-Ninth Bach Festival	1956	1	49
Fiftieth Bach Festival	1957	1	50
Fifty-First Festival	1958	1	51
Fifty-Second Festival	1959	1	52
Fifty-Third Festival	1960	1	53
Fifty-Fourth Festival and A Brief History of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem	1961	1	54
Fifty-Fifth Festival	1962	1	55
Fifty-Sixth Festival	1963	1	56
Fifty-Seventh Festival	1964	1	57
Fifty-Eighth Festival	1965	1	58
Fifty-Ninth Festival	1966	1	59
Sixtieth Festival	1967	1	60
Sixty-First Festival	1968	1	61
Sixty-Second Festival	1969	1	62
Sixty-Third Festival	1970	1	63
Sixty-Fourth Festival	1971	1	64
Sixty-Fifth Festival	1972	1	65
Sixty-Sixth Festival	1973	1	66
Sixty-Seventh Festival (2 copies)	1974	1	67
Sixty-Eighth Festival	1975	1	68
Sixty-Ninth Festival	1976	1	69
Seventieth Festival	1977	1	70
Seventy-First Festival	1978	1	71
Seventy-Second Festival	1979	1	72
Seventy-Third Festival	1980	1	73
Seventy-Fourth Festival	1981	1	74
Seventy-Fifth Festival	1982	2	75
Seventy-Sixth Festival	1983	2	76
Seventy-Seventh Festival	1984	2	77
Seventy-Eighth Festival	1985	2	78
Seventy-Ninth Festival	1986	2	79

Eightieth Festival	1987	2	80
Eighty-First Festival	1988	2	81
Eighty-Second Festival	1989	2	82
Eighty-Third Festival	1990	2	83
The 89th Bach Festival	1996	2	84
The 90th Bach Festival	1997	2	85
The 91st Bach Festival	1998	2	86
92nd Annual Bach Festival	1999	2	87
93rd Annual Bach Festival	2000	2	88

Subseries 2: Special Programs

Festival booklets	1915-1917	2	2.1
Festival flyers	1915-1923	2	2.2
Festival flyers	1924-1929	2	2.3
Festival flyers	1932-1940	2	2.4
Carnegie Hall program (2 copies)	1917	2	2.5
Second Public Rehearsal of the Bach Choir and Orchestra	1921	2	2.6
“The Passion” According to St. Matthew	1926	2	2.7
Princeton University Dedication of the Chapel Mass in B Minor	1928	2	2.8
The College Club presents the Bach Choir	1930	2	2.9
Memorial Service for Dr. J. Fred. Wolle programs	1933	2	2.10
Haydn’s Oratorio “The Creation”	1942	2	2.11
Music booklet (2 copies)	1943	2	2.12
Dinner Meeting and Showing of “The Life of A Choir” (photostat)	1951	2	2.13

Series 2: Publicity, 1901-1972

Subseries 1: Articles, 1903-1935

Articles	1903-1935, undated	2	2.14
Bach in Bethlehem	undated		Oversize
Craven, H.T. “The Bach Festival in Bethlehem.” <i>Musical America</i> , 19 May 1928.			
Long, J.C. “Bach in Bethlehem.” Scribner, May 1935.			
Myers, Elizabeth L. “The Story of the Bach Festival.” <i>American-German Review</i> , June 1935, 14.			
Times (Bethlehem) 12 May 1903.			
Times (Bethlehem) 18 May 1903			Oversize
Walters, Raymond. “The Bethlehem Bach Festivals: A Community Enterprise.” <i>The Playground</i> , May 1917.			
Bach Choir history	1928, undated	2	2.15

“Going to Bethlehem” Address by Charles Osgood, 30th Anniversary (2 copies)	1928	2	2.16
“Twentieth Bach Festival,” Fragments of a history Of the Bach Choir by C.F. Abby Williams	undated	2	2.17

Subseries 2: Scrapbooks, 1901-1972

BAPL Bach Choir Publicity Scrapbooks	1901-1939	3	
BAPL Bach Choir Publicity Scrapbooks	1939-1946	4	
BAPL Bach Choir Publicity Scrapbooks	1963-1972	5	
Bach Choir of Bethlehem Scrapbooks			
Scrapbook 1 - Scrapbook 16	1913-1925		Microfilm Roll 1
Scrapbook 17- Scrapbook 35	1926-1943		Microfilm Roll 2
Scrapbook 36-Scrapbook 53	1944-1961		Microfilm Roll 3
Scrapbook 54-Scrapbook 63	1962-1971		Microfilm Roll 4