

Music in Indianapolis, 1821-1900¹

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When Indianapolis was founded in 1821, it was scarcely more than a pioneer outpost. It covered one square mile, with a handful of inhabitants who battled with malaria and occasionally with Indians. Forty years later the population reached 18,611. Railroad expansion brought an increase of trade and new settlers. Steady growth continued, until in 1940 the citizenship numbered 455,357,² while its area covered more than fifty-four square miles. Business and industry have increased proportionally: factories, schools, hospitals, libraries, corporations, banking facilities, and welfare organizations also give evidence of steady growth.

Meanwhile, in this rich, progressive city, the arts have not been neglected; and, of all the arts music was first to claim the attention of the inhabitants. While they built the factories and established their shops, they took time to sing, to play the horn or melodeon, and to assemble their church choirs.

Roughly speaking, the musical growth of the city falls into three main divisions: first, the early period of untrained and generally unorganized effort, ending about 1854; second, nearly a half-century of choral unions, May festivals, and more or less spontaneous expression; and third, since 1900, an extraordinary expansion in every department under exacting professional standards.

¹ Facts have been gathered from a variety of sources, some of which have been noted in the text. Personal interviews brought interesting events to light, and questionnaires submitted to club and church officials were answered in many cases with fullness and accuracy. Several of the more permanent organizations, such as the Matinee Musicale, the Indianapolis Maennerchor, and the Roberts Park Choral Union, put at my disposal their secretarial records and earlier historical sketches. The inception and growth of the existing State Symphony Society has been well publicized, but the history of earlier heroic attempts at founding a permanent local orchestra has had a tendency to escape the eye even of the specialist. The whole story is assuredly not here, but antennae have been stretched, as it were, into the past, in an effort to catch as much of the melody as possible. The occasional programs given in the text have an importance, not on account of any singularity, but because they tell us what the old-time directors chose for study, what the choristers liked to sing, and what the citizens liked to hear, in short, what standards were in their mind.

² *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Statistics of Population*, I, Table 3, p. 121; *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Population*, II, *Characteristics of the Population*, part 2, Table B-51, p. 836.

Most of the people who made the music during the first period made their living by carpentering, shop-keeping, or some other utilitarian pursuit rather than by following music as a profession. Nevertheless, the music teacher made an early appearance, as is shown by an advertisement stating that instruction in church music could be had at reasonable terms.³ An "Indianapolis Handelian Society" was in existence in 1828.⁴ In 1831 James Blake brought his new wife, Eliza Sproule of Baltimore, to the city and with her a piano, the first in Indianapolis.⁵ The choir of the First Baptist Church dates from 1822; and other churches, as fast as they were organized, gave special attention to the choir loft. At the Second Presbyterian Church, whose pastor from 1839 to 1847 was Henry Ward Beecher, the choir numbered from forty to fifty. It gave public concerts and gained a state-wide celebrity. A. G. Willard, owner of one of the earliest music stores, was at one time the director.⁶ As a theme song or "signature," the choir at their public concerts used *Man the Lifeboat, Brother*. Charles Beecher, a brother of the pastor, was one of the men who helped train the choir, and also at times played the violin. He ordered "a new and magnificent organ," which was pumped by hand, and which was placed at the back of the church.⁷

Among the early teachers was William H. Currie, who offered lessons on the melodeon, organ or piano, in voice, thorough bass, and harmony, and who would, on certain occasions, tune the piano. There were, also Abraham Protzmann, who organized a band in 1841; George B. Downie; and Peter R. Pearsall, who gathered the children together

³ Jacob P. Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis* (2 vols., Chicago, 1910), I, 521.

⁴ Indianapolis, Indiana, *Gazette*, July 10, 1828.

⁵ Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 525; Berry R. Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis and Marion County* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1884), 86-87.

⁶ Among the members of the choir were A. G. Willard's son and three daughters; Mrs. Ackley, daughter of Professor Baldwin, first president of Wabash College; John L. Ketcham; Alexander Davidson, son-in-law of Governor Noah Noble; Lawrence Vance; William H. Currie; the Misses Bassett; Love Jameson; Edwin Coburn; Dr. Newcomer; Mr. Bowes; and Mrs. S. L. Hall, who was Sarah Mears; Mrs. Merrill; Mrs. Graydon; and Daniel L. Wood. Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 526-527; Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis and Marion County*, 264.

⁷ Paxton Hibben, *Henry Ward Beecher: An American Portrait* (New York, 1927), 104.

for a "grand vocal and instrumental concert."⁸ Pearsall was a veteran of the War of 1812, and from 1848 to 1854 he was the organist at the Beecher church and later at Christ Church. His last concert was given in 1878, and it was marked by special ceremonies in recognition of his thirty years of faithful service in the cause of music.⁹

In 1843 a man named R. Parmelee set up a plant for the manufacture of pianos, but it soon failed, as did another firm a few years later. Instruments, however, came into the state. According to Mrs. Elizabeth E. Gunn Seebirt, Herman T. Spain of the Starr Piano Company was owner of one of the oldest instruments in the city. It was built in Cincinnati by Reuss with a walnut case and had six octaves.¹⁰ Lovers of antiques would be interested in an historic piano now in the possession of the School of Music of Indiana University. It was made about 1820 and brought to Bloomington in 1823 by Professor Baynard R. Hall, the first teacher in Indiana Seminary, which opened in 1824. The instrument came by wagon from Philadelphia over the mountains, down the Ohio River in a flatboat, then overland from Louisville to Indiana. It was acquired by Joshua O. Howe in 1832 and remained in the Howe family for eighty-nine years. In 1902 it was shipped to Vicksburg, Mississippi, where it was in the possession of Mrs. George Roberts, who bequeathed it to Indiana University. It has one pedal, and the handmade case is of rosewood, decorated in gold, and inscribed "New Patent, Gelb & Walker, No. 23, Maiden Lane, N.Y."¹¹

In the late forties and early fifties several brass bands came into existence—the German Military, the Saxe Horn, and the Henry Hahn bands among them—with varying degrees of longevity. For the fourth of July celebration, 1851, the Saxe Horn Band charged fifty dollars for its services, a sum grudgingly paid by the city; and two years later

⁸ Indianapolis, Indiana, *Daily Indiana State Journal*, July 1, 1851, June 12, 15, 18, 21, 1852; Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 521.

⁹ Indianapolis, Indiana, *Journal*, February 11, 1878; Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 529.

¹⁰ Indianapolis, Indiana, *Indiana State Sentinel*, October 3, 1843; Elizabeth E. Gunn Seebirt, *Music in Indiana* (n.p., n.d.), 24.

¹¹ A second piano of a much later date, 1860, was purchased by the father of Mrs. James A. Woodburn. It is an old-style square, Steinway and Sons makers, and it was given to Indiana University by Professor Woodburn in 1912.

there was a state assembly of twelve bands, with prize banners for the winning contestants. In 1857 there was the Dodsworth Band of ninety pieces, and the National Guard Band, with John Philips as leader.¹² About 1846-1847 a flute and string "orchestra" was used as an assistance to the choir of the First Presbyterian Church. It continued in existence for approximately five years.¹³

Towards the end of this period, stars from the outside world began to make their appearance. Madame Ablamovicz's program of March 16-18, 1852, included the now-unfamiliar titles of *Rory O'More*, *Lass O' Gowrie*, and *Vale of Avoca*. Among the other stars who appeared were Miss Greenfield, known as the "Black Swan"; Ole Bull with Maurice Strakosch as pianist and Adelina Patti, ten years of age, who sang *Comin' Thru' the Rye*; and Madame Anna Bishop, the wife of the composer of *Home Sweet Home*.¹⁴ Musical taste was only in the making, and such songs as *Hell on the Wabash* and *Leather Breeches* were as popular then as is a Cole Porter record of today; but the seeds of genuine musical culture had been planted.

The second half of the century was to build upon these early foundations and to go on to greater achievements. One of the minor but interesting indications of a desire for good music was a Music Convention which took place in 1856. A committee of seven businessmen engaged George F. Root, then one of the leading musicians of New York, to come to Indianapolis for a four-day period of instruction and discussion with a final grand concert. The cost of the course was one dollar for ladies, and two dollars for men, which included books.¹⁵ Whatever immediate results were

¹² Indianapolis, Indiana, *Daily Indiana State Journal*, July 1, 1851, February 24, 1853; Indianapolis, Indiana, *Daily Journal*, June 27, 1857, July 1, 1857; Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 524.

¹³ Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 522.

¹⁴ Indianapolis, Indiana, *Daily Indiana State Journal*, November 26, 1851, March 18, 1852; Indianapolis, Indiana, *Morning Journal*, December 7, 1853; Indianapolis, Indiana, *Daily Journal*, May 4, 1855. A recent book of reminiscences reports that Madame Bishop served Du Maurier as the prototype of Trilby, that she was shipwrecked on Wake Island in 1866 and lived to be the first singer ever to perform in the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City by express invitation of Brigham Young. Edward B. Marks, *They All Had Glamour . . .* (New York, 1944), 112-118.

¹⁵ The citizens composing the committee were L. H. Jameson, A. G. Willard, J. L. Ketcham, G. S. Braun, Charles N. Todd, H. F. Smith, and J. J. Drum. Indianapolis, Indiana, *Daily Journal*, November 18, 19, 20, 1856; Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 530. Dunn gives May as the month of the convention.

obtained the convention was a practical and enterprising idea, remarkable for its time and place.

The great popularity of choral unions was another sign of the abundance of talent, and the desire to participate in the rendition of the more important musical compositions. As early as 1851, the Handel and Haydn Society was flourishing with nearly a hundred members largely drawn from church choirs. It was probably founded by Currie and Downie some years earlier. It reached the climax of its career with the performance of *The Creation* and *The Seasons* in 1871.¹⁶

In 1867, James S. Black, an excellent musician born in Vermont and educated in Boston, settled in Indianapolis and began teaching music and training choruses. He founded the Choral Union in 1870 and has the distinction of having given the first Indianapolis performance of *The Messiah* in 1874. The soloists on that occasion were Mrs. H. M. Smith, Flora E. Barry, J. Nelson Varley, and Myron W. Whitney. In 1877 the Choral Union gave *Elijah*, and *The Creation* in 1879, and the Harmonic Society produced *St. Cecilia's Day* in the same year. During Black's absence from the city, the Choral Union was conducted successively by Emil Wulschner, Alexander Ernestinoff, and Henry Beissenherz.¹⁷

In the meantime, other organizations similar to the Choral Union but of shorter life, had their hour of glory. R. W. Seager assembled a group of singers, seventy adults and fifty children, in 1870 to produce the oratorio of *Esther*; while the Harmonic Society founded in 1875, an offshoot of the Choral Union, was directed by W. H. Clarke.¹⁸ Professors Pearsall, Wegmann, and Leckner each led a troupe of singers; and in 1874 the first Musical Festival held on June 2, 3 and 4, was organized jointly by the Choral Union and the Philharmonic Society, with the Boston Quartet assisting.¹⁹ The festival was a striking success; but the

¹⁶ Indianapolis, Indiana, *Daily Indiana State Journal*, December 5, 1851.

¹⁷ Indianapolis, Indiana, *Daily Sentinel*, June 4, 1874, June 13, 1877, June 3, 4, 1879; Will Cumbach and J. B. Maynard (eds.), *Men of Progress, Indiana* (Indianapolis, Indiana, 1899), 153-155; Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 530.

¹⁸ Indianapolis, Indiana, *Journal*, October 20, 21, 22, 1870; Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 530-531.

¹⁹ Indianapolis, Indiana, *Daily Sentinel*, June 4, 1874.

second, held on May 17, 18, and 19, in 1875 when *The Messiah* and *The Seasons* were again given, resulted in considerable financial loss to the guarantors.²⁰ The festivals were allowed to lapse until 1886, when a Community Chorus and a Children's chorus, assisted by many of the German singers, participated in the third Music Festival which opened on June 2, under the direction of Carl Barus, then a resident of Cincinnati. The great Lilli Lehmann was the soloist. Although she received eight hundred dollars, the sum of five thousand dollars was cleared for the building of the Soldiers' Monument.²¹ Inspired by this success, music lovers of the city organized in January, 1889, the May Music Festival Association which was responsible for a series of annual festivals until 1898 with one year's lapse, thus giving ten periods of exceptional programs. In 1890 Zelda Seguin-Wallace and Charles Holman Black, son of James S. Black, were the soloists. It was the heyday of great singers, and in the following decade most of them came to the city. Local choruses were on hand and in training for participation in the larger works, but their appearance suddenly ceased. Emphasis was shifted to the star solo performances, and local talent gave place to outside celebrities.²² The Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Frederick Stock, and the New York Symphony under Walter Damrosch, and many distinguished pianists and violinists also were on the programs. At the last festival in 1898 choral works were given in which eight hundred children took part.²³

It was a brilliant series of events, and the city owes much to the organizers and guarantors who made the festivals possible. Enjoyment of music was accompanied by social fanfare, publicity campaigns and also, no doubt, by some anxiety on the part of the guarantors, as the finances were always hazardous. The deficit at the last festival was three thousand dollars.²⁴

²⁰ Indianapolis, Indiana, *Journal*, May 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 1875.

²¹ Indianapolis, Indiana, *Daily Sentinel*, June 2, 3, 4, 5, 1886; Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 533.

²² Among the visiting artists were Emma Juch, Margaret Reid, Campanari, Emil Fischer, Clementine de Vere, Melba, Nordica, Gertrude Stein, Calve, Gadske, and David Bispham. Indianapolis, Indiana, *Daily Sentinel*, May 14, 15, 16, 17, 1890.

²³ Indianapolis, Indiana, *News*, May 5, 6, 7, 9, 1898.

²⁴ Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 533-534.

Not long after the cessation of the annual May festivals, the role of impresario was taken over by Mrs. Ona B. Talbot, who managed star concerts for a number of years. Mrs. Talbot brought to the city the Chicago, Boston, New York, and Pittsburgh Symphony orchestras, the Kneisel Quartet, the Heermann Quartet, and many outstanding soloists.²⁵ Since Mrs. Talbot's departure from the city, the star concerts have been carried on by Mrs. Maartens and Gladys Alwes.

The German singing societies from the first had an organization and occupied a position somewhat different from the other choral unions. Many of the men who came to the states following the Revolution of 1848 were good singers, some of them well-trained musicians, familiar with classic traditions. Wherever half a dozen Germans found themselves together, there was a Maennerchor—male chorus—established as a matter of course. These small societies struggled at first, as all amateur organizations must struggle with financial difficulties and primitive conditions, but by the last quarter of the century, they had adopted a self-supporting system asking for no guarantees outside of their own membership.

The set-up of the German societies was practically the same all over the country. Good singers (at first only men) formed the heart and core of the society; whatever else was added was secondary and relatively unimportant, though many of the groups expanded until they embraced athletic contests, mixed choruses and school facilities. Besides the active singers, the membership included associates who were assessed yearly dues and in return were entitled to free admission to the concerts and, when opportunity offered, to the use of the club quarters. In the very early years tickets for the concerts were sold, but the custom was soon abolished. Their entertainments became a membership or invitation privilege, independent of the box office. Each concert was followed by a dance and supper. Four or five concerts a season was the rule, with New Year and Easter balls, Christmas festivities, and summer picnics. Until the World War the conducting and singing were in German,

²⁵ Some of the outstanding soloists were Alice Nielsen, Melba, Calve, Schumann-Heink, Gadske, Busoni, and Paderewski. Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 535-536.

with well-paid, professional directors. Frequently an outside soloist was engaged, but the pride of the club was in its own male chorus, or less important, its mixed chorus. While the singers were mostly German or of German descent, the associate membership included hundreds from every section of the city. The number of these societies, in Indiana and in the neighboring states, was so large that annual three-day Saengerfests were held in Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Louisville, Columbus, and other cities, when the various clubs competed for the laurel wreath. Today the Saengerfests are seldom celebrated, and the singing, at least in Indianapolis, is in English.

Eight German singing societies have existed in the city: the Maennerchor founded in 1854; the Concordia, 1862; the Lyra, 1870; the Liederkranz; Harmonie; Frohsinn; Druid Maennerchor; and the Musikverein, organized as a part of the German House in 1897.²⁶

The Indianapolis Maennerchor, founded when the city had a population of about nine thousand, is among the earliest male singing societies in the country. It was started by seven men,²⁷ who had been in America only a few months, in the candle-lighted room of Eduard Longerich, and they sang to the accompaniment of a guitar. In 1858 Longerich, and presumably his guitar, went back to Germany, and A. Despa then directed the group with the help of a flute and a melodeon. Adolph Schellschmidt soon came to their assistance with his violin. The name "Indianapolis Maennerchor" and a constitution were adopted in 1854, and the first concert and dance was given on May 28, 1855, in Washington Hall at the northeast corner of Washington and Alabama streets. The following year the society sent twelve singers to take part in a Saengerfest at Cincinnati. In 1859 a Schiller Festival was staged. From the proceeds of this festival the society bought a new melodeon for fifty-seven dollars. Garibaldi was honored with a special concert in 1861. The society purchased a new Knabe piano in 1865 for four hundred and fifty dollars and gave a concert for

²⁶ Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis and Marion County*, 264-265.

²⁷ The founders were Eduard Longerich, Gottfried Recker, Nicolaus Jose, H. Krebs, George Bauer, Wenzel Schindler, and Friederich Rush. Josef Keller, *Festschrift zur Feier des Goldenen Jubiläums des Indianapolis Männerchor am 23, 24, und 25 Juni, 1904* (Indianapolis, Indiana, 1904), 3, 5.

the poor which netted them \$232. The Maennerchor Ladies Club was organized on October 17, 1897.²⁸ In the meantime, the Saengerfest had been held in the city, with Carl Barus of Cincinnati conducting.

During the Civil War, the Maennerchor continued to exist, although many of its members served in the army. Two years after the end of the war, it brought to the city the North American Saengerbund Festival, in which thirty-six choruses, with a thousand singers, participated. For this occasion the city council appropriated fifteen hundred dollars towards the building of a special hall. This amount was supplemented by contributions from the members amounting to eight hundred dollars, and six hundred and thirty dollars raised by concerts which were given. The festival was a success, showing a surplus of twenty-four hundred dollars, which sum was divided among the welfare agencies of the city. In 1878 the Maennerchor rented and renovated the old City Hall at 337 East Washington Street, where it remained for twenty-nine years.²⁹

For its high musical standards the Maennerchor deserves praise. For its programs it drew from the rich resources of German *Lieder* and the compositions of the masters. Max Leckner, director from 1873 to 1880, and Alexander Ernestinoff, from 1880 to 1882 and 1896 to 1897, raised the singing well out of the amateur grade. With the coming of Carl Barus in 1882, its performances took on not only added excellence, but they were widened in scope and popularity. Since Barus had had wide experience as an opera director, and the Maennerchor had the singers, the result was obvious. They undertook light operas and operettas, *Martha*, *Stradella*, and *The Beggar Student*, with such success that invitations came from neighboring towns for a repetition. The society gave Haydn's *The Creation* in 1883 for the benefit of the Ohio flood sufferers, clearing the sum of \$389. Each season their programs offered compositions from Beethoven, Wagner, Mendelssohn, Schubert, and Schumann, interspersed with shorter lovely lyrical selections for the male chorus.³⁰

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4-11, 15, 70.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 15-21; Indianapolis, Indiana, *Journal*, September 4, 5, 6, 7, 1867; Indianapolis, Indiana, *News*, May 23, 1908; Indianapolis, Indiana, *Star*, June 7, 1908.

³⁰ Keller, *Festschrift zur Feier des Goldenen Jubiläums des Indianapolis Männerchor*, 34-36.

The Concordia, organized by Eduard Longerich on his return from Germany in 1862, lived only about a year, after which a friendly combination was made with the Maennerchor.³¹

The Lyra had a much longer life. It began in 1870 as a zither club with a double quartet, which in time developed into a mixed chorus and orchestra. "The Lyra is an old and well-established musical society of large membership and means, and has a fine hall in the building which has replaced the old Washington Hall, opposite the Masonic Hall. It is rather a rival of the Maennerchor."³² The orchestra of the Lyra was organized by Emil Wulschner.³³ Under the direction of Alexander Ernestinoff, the society gave some of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas with success and assisted in the preparation for the May festivals.³⁴

There was a consolidation in 1897-1898 of several of the local German activities into a club called the German House, with a fine building on East Michigan Street. Alexander Ernestinoff was installed as director of the musical section, called the Musikverein, consisting of a sixty-piece orchestra, a male and a mixed chorus.³⁵

No account of the German singing societies would be complete without special mention of the two leading directors, Carl Barus and Alexander Ernestinoff, whose combined services covered a period of more than forty years. Both men were scholarly musicians with a heartfelt devotion to their art.

Carl Barus was born in Schurgast, Silesia, on October 12, 1823, educated in Breslau and Berlin, with early training in piano and organ, supplemented by theory and direct-

³¹ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

³² Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis and Marion County*, 265.

³³ The first director was Christian Bopp. Others that served in this capacity were Carl Haas, Carl Wegmann, Emil Wulschner, R. Miller, W. L. Blumenscheine of Dayton, and Alexander Ernestinoff. *Indianapolis, Indiana, News*, May 23, 1908.

³⁴ The names of Charles Frese, as president, Franz Mummenhoff, treasurer, and Clement Vonnegut, Jr., secretary, appeared in the rather confused records. *Indianapolis City Directory*, 1877, p. 576. Twelve programs from 1885 to 1888 are in the Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana. Badges of the membership are among the treasured possessions of Franklin Vonnegut and Guy Montani. Many of its members must have been recruited later into the Musikverein or other choruses.

³⁵ Interview with Miss Antoinette Ernestinoff.

ing under Hans Richter and Adolph Hesse. The Revolution of 1848 drove him out of Europe. He came to Michigan and later settled in Cincinnati, where he was head of the German Theater, organist at St. Patrick's Church and Temple Jeschurun, and also principal of the Music School in Wesleyan College. The Cincinnati Maennerchor and other choral organizations came under his baton, and for several years he was director of the Saengerfests of the North American Saengerbund. He took over the leadership of the Indianapolis Maennerchor in 1882, and he was one of the most important local figures in the May festivals. He conducted the ceremonies when Tomlinson Hall was dedicated,³⁶ and at the benefit for the Soldiers' Monument in 1886, when General Sherman was a guest of the city. In 1896 he retired from active life.³⁷

Alexander Ernestinoff was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, on January 14, 1853. At the age of sixteen he was an accomplished singer and pianist and was conducting an orchestra. Among his teachers was the celebrated Anton Rubinstein. In America, Ernestinoff first settled in St. Louis, where he conducted what is said to have been the first performance of *Rienzi* in this country. He came to Indianapolis as director of the Maennerchor in 1880, and he was prominent in some of the May festivals. From 1883 to 1888 he led the Lyra singers and orchestra, and by 1890 he had established another orchestra and had produced several operas. The Amphion Club, which he organized and directed, lasted only a few years, but the younger musicians whom he had been training were spread throughout the city in other groups. In 1898 he became director of the German House orchestra and Musikverein, which provided fine concerts and operas. In October, 1922, a benefit concert was given for him by loyal pupils and friends, preceding a proposed journey to California for his health, but

³⁶ Tomlinson Hall is located on the corner of Market and Delaware Streets. The Hall was erected "In Memory of Stephen D. Tomlinson, whose generous bequest to the city was used in the erection of this building, A.D., 1886." Indianapolis, Indiana, *Journal*, May 30, 31, June 1, 2, 1886."

³⁷ Keller, *Festschrift zur Feier des Goldenen Jubiläums des Indianapolis Männerchor*, 55-57; Cumback and Maynard (eds.), *Men of Progress, Indiana*, 437-439.

his death occurred on the way. His admirable services to the city have left their mark.³⁸

The first musical organization for women is said to have been the Rossini Club of Portland, Maine; the second, the Matinee Musicale of Indianapolis. The enterprise dates from October 29, 1877, when a few women gathered at the home of Mrs. A. G. Cox "for the purpose of mutual assistance in perfecting themselves . . . in the history of music." At the third meeting the attendance had increased to twelve, and the ladies decided to study the fifteenth century. Mrs. Fred W. Baggs and Mrs. Cox read aloud from *A General History of Music from the Earliest Times*, and the secretary recorded that "the listeners soon became almost bewildered" in trying to imagine the effect of madrigals, motets, and masses as produced in that age. The bewilderment must have increased when, at the same meeting, the members took a hasty look at Palestrina, Giovanni, Morenzio, Adrian, and Henry Isaacs, not forgetting to mention that pedals were invented in the fourteenth century.³⁹

From that very human and ambitious beginning has grown one of the city's most beneficent institutions. The members soon organized, elected officers, adopted their name, and appointed a committee to lay out a program of study.⁴⁰ The meetings, at first held in private homes, soon moved to the Denison Hotel, from there to Plymouth Church, and then in 1891 into their own quarters in the newly built Propylaeum. A constitution adopted in 1879 has since been revised to incorporate the wider purposes of the club.

While the first object, the study of the history of music, has not been neglected, yet, as the club increased in numbers, the emphasis in the programs has shifted from the

³⁸ A collection of orchestral scores from his library, some of which are hand-copied manuscripts, are now in the Music Department of the Indianapolis Public Library, Indianapolis, Indiana. Indianapolis, Indiana, *News*, October 12, 24, 1922; Indianapolis, Indiana, *Star*, October 24, 25, 1922.

³⁹ The Minutes of the Secretary of the Indianapolis Matinee Musicale are in the Manuscript Collection of the Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

⁴⁰ Mrs. Fred W. Baggs was elected president and the other charter members were Mrs. Clara H. Eddy, Mrs. U. J. Hammond, Mrs. O. H. Hasselmann, Mrs. W. C. Lynn, Mrs. S. L. Morrison, Mrs. M. H. Spades, Mrs. A. G. Cox, Miss Marcia Willard, and Miss Emma Ridenour. Indianapolis, Indiana, *Star*, October 5, 1913; Indianapolis, Indiana, *News*, November 12, 1927.

annals of the past to the rendition of interesting music of any age, including the present. Informal recitals by talented members soon took the place of readings from history. So successful was this procedure that by the early 1890's the membership of the club was divided into active and associate groups, the active members presenting the programs. Then came the formation of choral classes. Student members were welcomed, men were admitted as associate members, and a musical library was started.

In its years of honorable achievement, the club has sponsored many worthy causes, talent has been uncovered, an appreciative and discriminating audience has been created, and young artists have been given the inestimable opportunity of testing their quality before a friendly, intelligent public.

The city's first pipe organ, built in Springfield, Massachusetts, was installed in the First Baptist Church in 1863. In 1876 Horatio W. Clark began the manufacture of organs, supplying the Roberts Park and Plymouth churches, and in a few years the pipe organ was a regular feature of the choir loft.⁴¹ Nearly all the good singers starred in one church or another, besides belonging to some one of the various choral unions. The names of most of the teachers and orchestral directors, as well as the singers, are associated with the church choirs, whose performances attained a high degree of excellence.

During the early years of this period, the Beecher choir seems to have set the standard, and its popularity continued. At the First Baptist Church, William C. Smock became "chorister" in 1870, and was prominent in the musical life of the city for twenty-five years or more. The earliest anthems were taken from the *Carmina-Sacra*, *The Shawn*, or *Jubilate*. Denominational hymnbooks came into use about 1876, one of the best being *The Chorus Choir* compiled by Eben Tourjee. Three such books were compiled by Smock for his own choir.⁴²

In the Fourth Presbyterian Church, J. K. Sharpe, a tenor, was choir leader, and John L. Ketcham sang bass. E. C. Mayhew, boot and shoe merchant, led the Second Presbyterian choir, and Dr. D. L. Wood officiated at the

⁴¹ Indianapolis, Indiana, *News*, July 15, 1904.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Meridian Street Methodist Church, followed by Charles W. Stagg, first shorthand reporter in the city and secretary to Governor Oliver P. Morton.

One of the oddities of history lies in the fact that the trustees of Roberts Chapel (which stood on the site of the present Lemcke Building and was the forerunner of the Roberts Park Church), passed a set of resolutions forever barring instrumental or "choir music" from its services and calling upon their successors to continue the prohibition. It was not until 1870 that the Quarterly Conference gave its consent to the introduction of this important element in its church ceremonies. The first director of music was W. L. Heiskell, but the organ was not installed until 1876, and Heiskell made use of a tuning fork—an article now treasured in the church office. An elaborate musical entertainment was given in the church in June, 1875, with George Springsteen as leader, and numbers on the program ranged from a quartet number entitled *Come Holy Spirit* to excerpts from *Martha* and a song by Pinsuti called *I Love Thine Eyes*. The accompaniment was supplied by an orchestra consisting of first and second violin, viola, bass, flute, clarinet, and cornet. There was also on the program an overture by Auber called *Die Stumme von Portici* played by Professor Schellschmidt and little Alfred. Presumably, the proceeds of this entertainment were to be used for the purchase of an organ. A contract was at once given to William H. Clark and Company for an instrument costing \$10,500, to be delivered and ready for use by May, 1876. At the dedication of the organ in June, 1876, the pastor Reverend J. W. Bayliss, sat in the balcony the better to judge the effect. In May, 1879, the choir members contributed five hundred dollars towards the final payment for the organ. In the meantime, the church officers had granted the use of the church and organ to the members of the Harmonic Society for rehearsals, provided the members of the Roberts Park Choir were admitted free of charge.

This interesting organization flourished, and in 1897 the Roberts Park Choral Society was formally organized with a constitution and by-laws, with Emil Wulschner as director and Mrs. Jennie Suffriens as organist.⁴³

⁴³ Upon the death of Wulschner in 1900, the task of director went into the hands of George Eckert, who was succeeded by Edward Taylor

At the Central Christian Church, Ora Pearson was the leader for some years, with Mrs. John C. New and Mrs. John R. Wilson among the singers. There was only one woman among the choir directors, Mrs. Jeffrey Christian, at Plymouth. Vested choirs were introduced into the Episcopal churches fairly early, but in other Protestant denominations the first appearance of the vested choir was under Franz Bellinger at the Tabernacle when J. Cumming Smith was the pastor.

In the Second Presbyterian Church, to whose choir Beecher had devoted much attention, volunteer choruses and paid quartets alternated. The first organ in the old building was pumped by hand and stood in the rear of the church, and the same arrangement was made when the present church was erected.⁴⁴

The struggle to obtain systematic instruction in music in the public schools of the nation was fought out in the East, notably in Boston in the 1820's and was no longer an experiment open to suspicion when the idea was adopted in Indianapolis. Nevertheless, the event marked an important step in the local development of the art. George B. Loomis inaugurated the movement in 1866. Loomis' *Progressive Music Lessons* were used not only in Indiana, but also in many neighboring states. The scheme of the books was to lead the pupil step by step through the scales and at the same time develop the sense of rhythm. The exercises were simple, with careful instructions for the help of the teacher.⁴⁵ Loomis was followed by Henry M. Butler and a Mrs. Wilkinson. Toward the end of the century, the aim of the teaching began to shift from technique and the alphabet of music to the enjoyment of music itself—the idea being that children could learn to love it by making it themselves.

At about the same time that music was making its way into the curriculum of the public school system, professional schools began to appear. The first of these was

in 1904. In 1911 Hugh McGibney became the leader, remaining at the post for twenty years. McGibney was followed by Jane Johnson Burroughs, Dale Young, Lucille Pritchard, and Frank M. Watkins, the present director. The first members of the Roberts Park Choral Society were Mrs. Fred W. Baggs, the first president of the Matinee Musicale, and Grace Danforth, later Mrs. Frank Levering, a pupil of James S. Black. Belle Krettron, *Music for 121 Years*, unpublished manuscript.

⁴⁴ Interview with Charles Hansen and Josephine Robinson.

⁴⁵ Edward B. Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States* (New York, 1928), 91.

established in 1890 by Clarence Forsythe, who opened the Indianapolis School of Music on the Circle, later moving to the Surrey Apartments on Meridian Street.⁴⁶ Later this school was merged with another group to form the Indianapolis College of Fine Arts. In 1895 came the Metropolitan School of Music.⁴⁷

The Indiana State Music Teachers' Association, made up of both private and public school teachers, was organized in 1877, one year after the National Association came into existence. It was modeled after the parent organization and had for its purpose the encouragement of the study of music and the establishment of higher standards. At one time the membership numbered as many as three hundred, and undoubtedly the society did much towards arousing favorable public interest at a time when such interest was valuable. The association continued to exist until some time in the twenties.⁴⁸

Instrumental music was not lacking in Indianapolis even in the very early days, and many good players were trained in the small orchestral groups which took part in the oratorio renditions and in the early festivals. When the Handel and Haydn Society gave *The Creation* in 1851, with William H. Currie as organist and probably as director, there was an orchestra consisting of the following pieces: two violins, three guitars, one double bass viol, one cello, two flutes, and one saxe horn.⁴⁹

In 1862 the Philharmonic Society, which included both singers and instrumentalists, was under the leadership of Max Leckner. In 1871 Bernard Vogt conducted an orchestra made up entirely of German players.⁵⁰ This group gave a benefit for the Chicago fire sufferers and netted six hundred dollars. It continued to give concerts in Washington Hall on Sunday afternoons. One of its visiting artists was the then-famous tenor Tagliapetro, who received six hundred dollars for his performance. The Handel and Haydn ora-

⁴⁶ James Thrasher, "The Symphony Comes of Age," Indianapolis, Indiana, *Times*, November 15, 1938; Seebirt, *Music in Indiana*, 17.

⁴⁷ The staff consisted of Mrs. Flora Hunter, Hugh McGibney, Leslie Peck, Edward Nell, and Karl Schneider.

⁴⁸ About that time the secretary moved to Texas, took the records with him, and when his house burned down, the records were lost. By the nineteen twenties many of the purposes of the movement had been realized, and other agencies had sprung up to carry on its work. Unpublished diary of Edward B. Birge, Bloomington, Indiana.

⁴⁹ Indianapolis, Indiana, *News*, June 28, 1930.

⁵⁰ Among the players were Adolph Schellschmidt, Henry Beisenherz, and Emil Zumpfe.

torios, given by the Choral Union in the 1870's, were accompanied by a local orchestra. In 1878 Ora Pearson was leading his own group of instrumentalists.⁵¹

At the English Opera House good music was provided during the intermission by a small group of experienced players led by Hermann Arndt. The numerous opera performances by local talent naturally depended much upon competent orchestral assistance. During the period of the May festivals in the 1890's, the home players were naturally rather hard put to it in holding their own, with the great orchestras from Chicago and the East coming to the city each season. It was not until the present century that a full, modern orchestra was able to exist in Indianapolis.

The humble brass band is a colorful addition to the musical resources of any city. It was in great favor in the last century as it is today, not only for parades, but with boys as players as a means of keeping a lively youth out of mischief while giving him a good time.

The earlier bands, mentioned in a previous section, were dissolved or reformed at the outbreak of the Civil War, when each regiment had its own contingent of players. Near the end of the war the Dodsworth Band was merged into the National Guards Band under the leadership of John Philips, and it became the City Band of Indianapolis. The latter took part in the ceremonies when the body of Lincoln lay in state in the city Capitol.⁵²

An experiment in boys' bands, partly for the sake of business and partly for morale, was made about 1875 by Joseph Cameron of the When Clothing Store and sponsored by John T. Brush, a former resident of Indianapolis.⁵³ The band was outfitted and supported by the When Clothing Company, which had branch stores in neighboring towns to which the band made excursions for advertising special Saturday sales in Indianapolis. The rural shoppers came, did their errands, and thus were lured into the When Clothing Store because they had to get their return tickets punched.

Brush built a balcony in the main building on Pennsyl-

⁵¹ Thrasher, "The Symphony Comes of Age," Indianapolis, Indiana, *Times*, November 15, 1938.

⁵² Indianapolis, Indiana, *Daily Journal*, June 27, and July 1, 1857, April 29, 1865; Indianapolis, Indiana, *Daily State Sentinel*, May 1, 1865; Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 524.

⁵³ Brush married Elsie Lombard, a popular New York actress before her marriage. He moved to New York, where he became the owner of the New York, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis baseball teams.

vania Street from which the band gave Saturday night concerts during the summer. The uniforms consisted of gay orange-colored coats with gold braid, white trousers, patent leather leggings, and tall black hats with white plumes. The name WHEN was emblazoned on the front of the hats. Henry D. Beissenherz was the first director and led the players in concerts at state fairs, charity entertainments, picnics, Masonic conventions, weekly programs in the park (paid for by the city), and Sunday concerts in Tomlinson Hall. Among the members of the band was Herbert L. Clark, who at the age of nineteen, received as a prize a gold baby cornet from Henry Distant, a visiting Englishman. Afterwards Clark joined Sousa's Band, and later in California he became the director of the Long Beach Band. Ernest Clark, brother of Herbert and also a When-Band player, became the trombone soloist for Walter Damrosch. Ed Timmons, flutist, later played with the Boston, Minneapolis, and New York Symphony orchestras, and with the Chicago Civic Opera Company. Bromar Kryl founded a band under his own name.⁵⁴

Obviously, marked improvements had occurred in the Indianapolis world of music during the second half of the last century. These advances can best be appreciated perhaps by noting the following developments: a spectacular rise of choral societies, instrumental groups banded together in miniature orchestras, the founding of German singing societies, the founding of the Matinee Musicale, well-schooled musicians came to Indianapolis to live, theater orchestras and opera companies appeared, music study was introduced into the public schools, conservatories were established, music shops were opened, a factory for making pipe organs had a temporary existence, pipe organs were installed in churches, first renditions of *The Messiah* and other major works were made, and a series of May festivals were held. It is evident from this survey that Indianapolis music was emerging from its amateur status. Whether consciously or not, yet definitely, came a widespread desire to acquire stricter and more professional methods, as well as to bring music performances to a higher level.

⁵⁴ Other members of the Kryl Band were W. A. Sweetman, Frank Carlin, Sam Cooly, Leslie Peck, W. Pink Hall, and Ed. Clark. The Clark boys were sons of the organist at the Plymouth Church during the pastorate of the Reverend Oscar McCulloch. Indianapolis, Indiana, *Journal*, May 30, 1886; Indianapolis, Indiana, *Press*, April 9, 1900; Indianapolis, Indiana, *Times*, September 2, 1937, December 6, 1939; Indianapolis, Indiana, *Star*, March 10, 1940.