

MUSIC FROM LANCASTER'S HISTORY

Music has been important in the social development of Lancaster, an Anglo-Germanic community, and its story is told by the Musical Art Society and Mrs. Clifford Huffman.

[Editor's Note] Musical Art Society presented a program illustrating the role of music throughout Lancaster's history — from 1730 to 1929 — at the 7 March 1961 meeting of the Lancaster County Historical Society. It was narrated by Mrs. Clifford B. Huffman.

Of the research and presentation Mrs. Huffman notes, "When this program was dreamed about, we had no idea that there was such a wealth of material available. Each discovery seemed to lead to another and another until it became necessary to pick out just the highlights. Certain events and names were not included because they have either not been recorded or else they were too numerous to list in one paper. Moreover, we felt the music in the churches of Lancaster County was a field in itself."

In conjunction with the program was an exhibit arranged by Mrs. John Hollinger which contained musical instruments, old programs, draughts of local compositions, and photographs of Lancaster musicians and composers.

At the time when Pennsylvania had only three counties, Philadelphia, Bucks and Chester, a section was separated from Chester county and given the name of Lancaster County. Also in that same year of 1729-1730, Trinity Lutheran Church was founded.

I mention this one church because Trinity Chapel was one of the early musical concert centers. Trinity Church was built in 1736, and in 1744 the church was furnished with a pipe organ, which was a rare instrument in those days. One of the programs given in Trinity Chapel was a GRAND INSTRUMENTAL CONCERT, given in 1889 by Thorbahn's Orchestral School. At a later cornerstone laying at Trinity Church, Baron Stiegel directed the choirs. He had an organ in his home and was known to have a talent for music.

In 1823 the first attempt to promote improvement in the rendering of church music was started through the forming of the Handelian Society. The Society, consisting of ladies in voice and gentlemen with instruments, presented some of their sacred concerts in Trinity Chapel. The group was under the direction of Samuel Dyer who gave lessons in vocal sacred music for \$2.00 a quarter of a year.

In the historical records of 1928 the following note appears pertaining to church music around 1823: "Every one must, at some period of life, have been shocked at the discordant notes which, although intended as praise to the most High, have had no other effect than to disturb the temper or shake the risible nerves of an audience, and we are satisfied that there is no one more competent than Mr. Dyer to render Psalmody what it should always be — an harmonious offering to the Deity, calculated to tranquilize the passions and inspire the veneration of man."

The first account of anything beyond hymnal music in the Moravian community of Lititz dates from 1765. In that year Adam Grube organized an orchestra among the brethren. Adam Grube may be considered a pioneer musician of Lancaster. He had sufficient skill on several instruments and knowledge of others to instruct the members on the various pieces of a full orchestra. The purpose of its organization was that it should supplement the music of the church and give many of the brethren useful and pleasant occupation between hours of work; for the principles of the community abhorred idleness and frowned upon all light pastime such as checkers and chess.

A Philharmonic Society existed between 1815-1845. And the recognition which the community of Lititz received in the musical circles of the country during this period is shown by the fact that when the **Creation** was sung for the first time in Philadelphia in the early part of the 19th century, three brethren from Lititz were asked to assist in the orchestra. It is rather remarkable that at that time Philadelphia could not raise enough good players for the purpose.

One of the earliest accounts of a musical program in Lancaster county appears in the **Travels in the United States of America** by William Priest, who was a musician and performer at a theater in Philadelphia in the summer of 1794. That year he wrote the following: "Having a few weeks vacation at the theater, we agreed upon a scheme to give three concerts at Lancaster, a town in Pennsylvania, about 70 miles west of this city. Our band was small, but select; and our singers — Darley and Miss Broadhurst. At our first concert, three clownish looking fellows came into the room, and after sitting a few minutes (the weather being warm, not to say hot) very composedly took off their coats — they were in the usual summer dress of farmers' servants in this part of the country; that is to say, without either stockings or breeches, a loose pair of trousers being the only succedaneum. As we fixed our admission at a dollar each, we expected this circumstance would be sufficient to exclude such characters; but on inquiry, I found (to my very great surprise) our three sans culottes were German gentlemen of considerable property in the neighborhood. They manage these matters better at Hanover (a settlement of Germans about 40 miles hence). One of the articles of their dancing assembly is in these

words: no gentleman is to enter the ball-room without breeches or to be allowed to dance without his coat. We returned to Philadelphia, not overloaded with cash, but with more than sufficient for our expenses."

Another interesting account of poor etiquette appears in an old newspaper — the Lancaster Journal of 1809.

In that year a Mr. Gaetano Carusi, Master of Italian music, came to Lancaster with his three sons to give a concert. They gave their concert in Masonic Hall over the market house on West King Street with the admission at only half a dollar a ticket. Mr. Carusi also intended to perform some of his best Italian tunes in the steeple of Trinity, providing the weather permitted. Records are not sufficient to tell us whether this performance came off; perhaps the paper was too busy playing politics, as you shall soon see.

Shortly after Carusi's arrival in Lancaster, he and his three sons played before the home of Simon Snyder who at that time was Governor of Pennsylvania. Lancaster Borough was the capital. The Lancaster Journal contained this interesting description of the incident, and as you will note, the Journal was politically opposed to Governor Snyder.

"A few days ago an Italian musician of the first eminence and of genteel deportment with an excellent band, composed of his own family, arrived in Lancaster. Hearing that His Excellency the Governor resided here, and supposing, as might have been the case, that the chief magistrate of Pennsylvania was a man of taste, politeness and munificence, he most respectfully determined on paying to His Excellency the civility of a serenade.

"It was in the early part of a fine, still evening, while the Governor and his family were sitting in the hall of the Palace, that Signor Carusi and his three sons, halted before the door and swelled the glowing breeze with the sweetest notes of Italian composition. Such superior music was indeed a novelty in Lancaster and its dulcet reverberations delighted the ears of the wondering populace.

"Its effects upon His Excellency and his family must have been truly astonishing. In an instant the little candle that glimmered on the casement was extinguished and it seems that the avenue to every sense but that of hearing was completely closed. To have offered them a glass of currant wine, or in short, to have offered them anything whatever, might have made a momentary chasm in the delightful enjoyment.

"His Excellency the Governor, on this interesting occasion, had all his noble feelings absorbed in the highest ecstasy. No idle thought of courtesy could reach his polished mind, and it is altogether attributed to this circumstance that neither himself nor his manservant, nor his maid servant was seen to move during the whole performance, nor ever after to greet the hand or ear of Signor Carusi with any kind of compliment."

It is most interesting to note that Stephen Foster played a part in Lancaster County's musical history. Stephen's older sister was married to the Rev. Mr. Edward Young Buchanan, who was rector of the Episcopal church in Paradise. He was a brother of James Buchanan. It is believed that Stephen, who was then around 19 years of age, visited his sister often in Lancaster and that he tried out some of his new songs on the melodeon and the harpsichord which his musical sister kept there.

A portable melodeon on which Foster played many of his songs for friends in Pittsburgh turned up some years ago in a Lancaster County

barn. Today it has a honored place in the Stephen Foster memorial building on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh.

Among the 200 songs that Stephen Foster wrote were two campaign songs he obligingly wrote for James Buchanan. Stephen's family was loyal to the Democrats, and so with the relationship to Buchanan, Stephen became enthusiastic and formed the BUCHANAN GLEE CLUB, which was to sponsor Buchanan. The Democratic singing society was established in Allegheny City in 1856 with Stephen as musical director of the Glee Club, his brother Morrison as treasurer; one of the members was Stephen's sister's son, James Buchanan, Jr., who was at that time living in Pittsburgh with the Fosters while studying law.

The curator of the Foster Hall Collection in Pittsburgh has furnished a most complete description of Foster's connections in Lancaster, and with it he included copies of the original campaign manuscripts which the Musical Art Society is pleased to present to the Historical Society.

A quartet composed of Mrs. Helen Leggett (soprano), Mrs. Burtis M. Hackett (contralto), Robert Broome (tenor) and Harry L. Peiffer (baritone) then presented two of the campaign songs written for the Buchanan Glee Club:

"The Great Baby Show," a satire on a Republican parade at Pittsburgh.

"The White House Chair"

The Roof Garden atop the old Woolworth building was a center for many shows and much musical entertainment. The Woolworth building in those days was known as a tower skyscraper with elevators and a mail chute. From its two gold-domed towers you could get your first thrilling view of the city and surrounding countryside. The opening of the Roof Garden took place in 1900. It was described as the coolest spot in town with beautiful colonnade and peristyle, colored lights and tables where ice cream and lemonade could be served. Hundreds of famous musicians and actors appeared on its stage. An ad which appeared in the newspaper in 1900, advertised the Roof Garden in this manner:

"Open daily, except Sun., from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.
Concerts from 2:00 to 3:30 by Bogars Hungarian orchestra
Concerts and Edison Moving Pictures from 8:00 to 10:30"

In 1903, Charles M. Howell, who then was Assistant Manager of Captain People's Woolworth Roof Garden, later a theatrical owner and producer, and also Commissioner of Public Works, collaborated with two others and wrote an operetta whose libretto was the first representation of the Amish people on the American stage. The operetta was called LOVE WILL FIND A WAY." Two of the songs which came from it were:

Love Will Find A Way, Dear Heart **My Amish Maid**

The operetta went from the Roof Garden to New York and then toured two vaudeville seasons. After that it must have become shelved, for unfortunately we were not able to locate the music.

The old Court House, erected around 1786 on the square where the monument now stands, also was where many musical programs were held.

**WOOLWORTH
BUILDING
1900 - 1949**



The Woolworth Building was erected in Lancaster in 1900, and a large addition was built to the rear in 1911. A roof garden surmounted the store and office building for some years until it was removed and another floor added. The structure was razed in 1949, and a new Woolworth store erected.

A replica of this building now stands in Buchanan Park.

A GRAND PIANO RECITAL of Thorbahn's Orchestral School was held there in 1889. Also that same year AUNT POLLY BASSET'S YANKEE SINGIN SKEWL was given in the Court House. This program is also on display.

In 1911, a program entitled YE TEACHING PERSONS YOUNG AND OLDE AND THEIR FRIENDS was given in the Martin Audience Rooms on West Orange Street. At this program they sang some of the old familiar tunes such as **Old Folks At Home** and **Old Dog Tray**. It is believed that this type of 'old' English wording may have appeared on some of the earlier programs.

"ye entrance doores shall be open at early candle-lyte, which is seven-thirty ye towne clocke. Ye beater of time will starte ye synggers 5 and 40 minutes later by ye same clocke.

certayne well-favored young maydens will show ye people to comfortable syttyngs.

Inasmuch as ye lyst of pieces is long, be so kinde as to be springe of ye encores if ye want to gette home in time for ye early morning meale."

CONSIDERATION

"Forasmuch as manie of ye younge women who singe have never sunge before so manie folke and are therefore shamefaced, ye young menne present will be so goode as to look away from them when they singe.

N.B. (note below) Parson Hifalutin will have a front seate, where he will observe ye maydens. Undue levity and sparking will be mentioned from ye pulpit on ye coming Sabbath.

N.B. Ye younge menne who desire to walk home with ye young women are prayed to ask them before going from ye halle and not stande in a line on ye walke in fronte of ye halle as ye younge menne of ye village are wont to do on Sabbath evenings before ye meeting house doors.

Several piano compositions with Lancaster in their title and written by John Muller appear in an old Harriet E. Burrowes book of music compositions of 1846. Mrs. Earl W. Donley, played several of these:

Lancaster Gallop Waltz
Lancaster German Waltz
Lancaster Favourite Waltz

Operas were performed by itinerate groups in Lancaster as early as the 1770's, and were usually given in the largest room of the hotels. One hotel on South Queen Street known as the Fountain Inn and now the Lincoln Hotel, was such a place. Other theater spots were on the present Y.M.C.A. gym site (near N. Market Street) and one on West Chestnut Street. However, no other building in Lancaster has been the scene of so much musical entertainment as the Fulton Opera House.

On Oct. 14, 1852, The Fulton Hall, standing on the site of the old Lancaster jail, formally opened with imposing ceremonies. 1500 tickets were distributed gratuitously by the promoter and owner, Christopher Hager. The Philharmonic Society and the Lancaster Brass Band were present and played in superior style. A new composition called **Fulton Polka** arranged expressly for the occasion brought much applause.

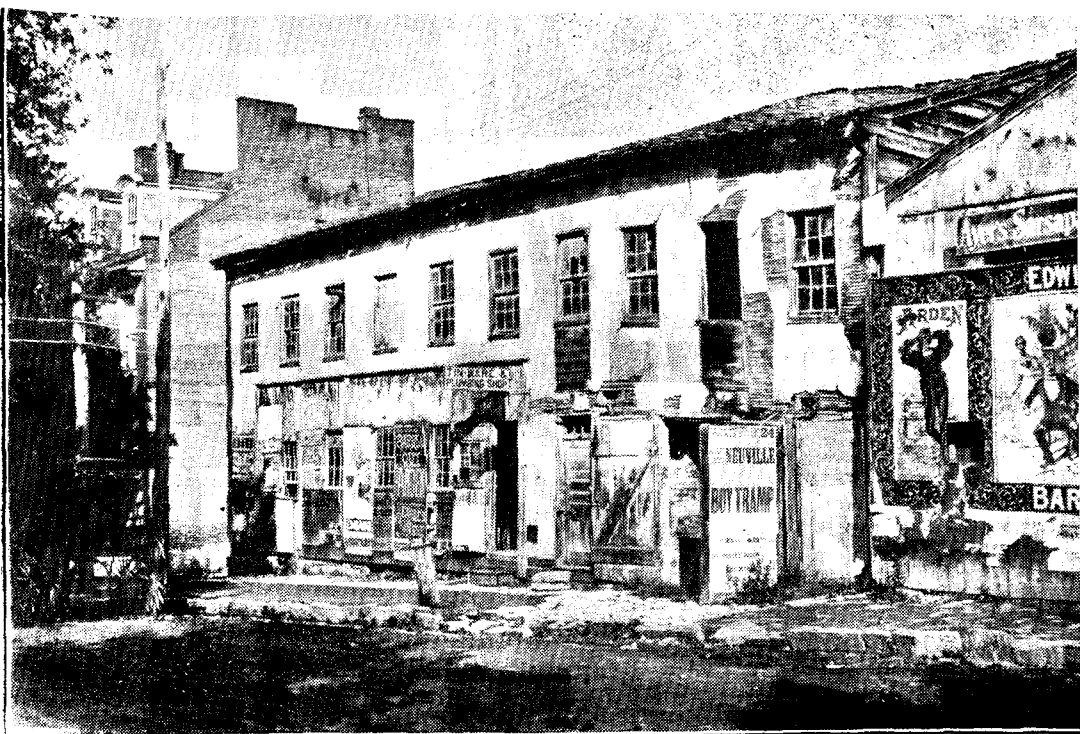
A week later the first professional performance featured the internationally famous violinist, Ole Bull (who had a reputation of being the best violin performer in the world). He was assisted by Maurice Strakosch at the piano and a nine year old girl named Adelina Patti. The audience went wild over Patti who later became one of the most celebrated operatic stars of all times. Tickets were sold at \$1.00 each.

Many great artists and musical programs followed in the next years at Fulton Hall. The most persistent performers were the long-haired gentlemen of the Philharmonic Society.

It is believed that the programs for some of the concerts may have been circulated in advance of the performances, because this interesting invitation appeared on a program in 1895. The program was A GRAND CONCERT OF CLARENCE DE VAUX ROYERS held in the Fulton and the price of the tickets was fifty cents to all parts of the house.

The following appeared on the same program as the numbers to be played that evening:

"Knowing that you are a lover and patron of art and music, I beg to call your kind attention to my concert to be given in Fulton Opera House, Tuesday evening, Dec. 10th., at 8 o'clock.



Reitzel's Hall was located at the northeast corner of West Orange and North Market Streets, now the site of the Y.M.C.A. swimming pool and gymnasium.

"Having the assistance of four of the finest artists from abroad, I feel assured that the concert will be a grand musical success.

Hoping you will kindly honor me by your presence Tues. evening,

I am yours,
Very Respectfully,

Clarence deVaux Royer

In 1886 an **OLDE FOLKES SINGYNGE SKOOLE** was held at the Fulton Hall. Silk and satin gowns were there in a plenty with men in knee breeches and continental dress. Powdered hair and old time bonnets also helped to make a very colorful scene. Harmonica and guitar were a part of the evening and the very unique program which was printed on what was at that time called brown butcher's paper, read like this:

"Greate concerte of goode olde hymns and tunes and likewise worldlye songs to be sunge by menny faire ladyes and goodlie menne, inne y Fulton opprey house Feb. 25, 1886.

Ye pryce will be 25 centes to gette inne and ye sittings can be gotten beforehand withoute extry moneye.

N.B. Ye door shall be open at early candle light wh is $7\frac{1}{4}$ bye ye towne clock.

N. B. Ye men and ye women will be suffered to sit together but ye maiden syngers will forbear looking over ye tops of ye books at ye lads in ye assemblee. Undue levity and sparkings will be mentioned by ye beater of tyme to ye whole meeting.

After several numbers on the program which were not English, such as:

L'usignuola Messicano and Valse Espagnolle

there is printed in parenthesis (Thys is forayne) spelled f-o-r-a-y-n-e.

You might be interested in looking at these programs for the tortured spelling of words.

The success of the concerts led to the issuing of an invitation to all the ladies and gentlemen who took part, to meet for the purpose of organizing a choral society which was to be known as the Cecilian Society of Lancaster, and was under the direction and inspiration of Professor William B. Hall who conducted the twelve piece orchestra. Prof. Frederick W. Haas conducted the chorus. He later was a conductor of the Leiderskranz.

In 1886 the Cecilian Society gave a concert on the third floor of the Watt and Shand store — in the hall which had just been newly equipped with a new piano and benches.

The Fulton Hall was not only a center for cultural entertainment but was used for many purposes. Political clambakes were held in the basement. The cellar was used for storing tobacco and other odoriferous material, including fertilizer in vast quantities. For a time a shooting gallery was conducted on the top floor of the building. All this, together with inadequate ventilation, caused audiences to sneeze and gasp, alternately fanning themselves desperately as wisps of black powder smoke blended with the indescribable vapors from the cellar.

It was decided to improve the calibre of the programs and to rebuild and modernize the stage, so 21 years after the first opening the new FULTON OPERA HOUSE was dedicated. Some of the great musical and theatrical events followed, such as in 1906, Victor Herbert's new musical **Babes in Toyland**.

Professor Raymond L. Myers was a musical director of the Fulton Opera House Orchestra around 1900. He was also founder of the first Lancaster Symphony Orchestra founded in 1907. Y.M.C.A. director of boys work, Gilbert Roehrig, started a small boys orchestra which later grew into the symphony of 50 professional musicians of this city, mostly all of whom were pupils of Professor Myers.

Professor Myers was also known as the original promoter of ensemble or chamber music in Lancaster, conductor of the Burger's Military Band and an instructor in instrumental music in the city schools.

In 1920 the Lancaster Municipal Orchestra, under the direction of John G. Brubaker, gave their first concert in the Martin Auditorium.

One of the personalities remembered with gratitude by music lovers in Lancaster is Mary Warfel. Miss Warfel was an excellent harpist and teacher. One of her pupils, Marian Blankenship, gained quite a reputation as a harpist and later joined the St. Louis Symphony as harpist.

It was because of Mary Warfel's love for good music that she started the Mary Warfel Series at the Fulton Opera House around 1917. As Impresario she brought such famous names as: Mme Schumann-Heink (contralto), Frieda Hempel (coloratura soprano of the Met), Marian Anderson, Paderewski and French Italian Opera Co. (in Carmen).

Mary Warfel started her series with a small group of friends, and often paid some of the expenses out of her own pocket. Due to rising costs and tremendous salaries of the artists, the Mary Warfel Series grew into

the now well known Community Concerts, which have continued the high calibre programs started by her.

Miss Frances Nissley played two harp selections which were favorites of Mary Warfel.

Handel's Largo

Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms

In 1844 the school board of Lancaster city entertained a petition for music in the schools and after considerable deliberation they agreed that music might be taught, providing that each child so desiring, pay one penny for one hour of instruction. A Mr. Layman agreed to teach this subject and relieved the board from all financial responsibility.

In the year 1860, Dr. John Piersol McCaskey had a special music teacher appointed and vocal music introduced into the high schools. Later it was introduced into all the schools in the city. In the same way, he had instrumental music introduced and organized a high school orchestra.

Lancaster county was really the pioneer in introducing music to the public schools in Pennsylvania.

June of 1882, the Secondary School of Lancaster presented a musical evening at the Fulton Opera House.

Professor John B. Kevinski was a vocal music instructor in the public schools at \$500.00 per year.

In 1850 his family moved to Lebanon, but he and his father who was also musically talented often walked from Lebanon to Lancaster to give instruction to bands and individuals. When they moved back to Lancaster Kevinski's father opened a store for the sale of musical instruments and music in the Fulton Hall row on N. Prince Street.

John Kevinski first started giving music lessons at the age of fifteen. In 1855 he organized an orchestra of 15 young boys and gave concerts in the Court House, and these were always followed by a lecture and discussion. On one occasion, after the orchestra had played and the lecturer concluded, the subject was opened for discussion. There followed a lengthy pause with no one eager to enter the discussion. This caused the moderator to arise and remark "Did you all come here only to hear a lot of boys running horsehair over catgut?"

Musical Art Society was also a pioneer in giving musicians an opportunity to improve through performing and to also promote musical interests in Lancaster.

The Society was organized 45 years ago in 1916 by Miss Esther Kendig Rhodes, a voice teacher. The group was first composed of just Miss Rhodes' pupils and they met in her studio. Realizing they needed accompanists, they branched out and included others and it then became a part of the Pennsylvania Federation of Music Clubs.

Today Musical Art and Student Musical Art members include many of Lancaster's fine musicians and others who do not perform but appreciate good music.

Over the years Musical Art Society has succeeded in arousing interest-

in many of the fine arts. We hope to continue that policy through this joint meeting with the Historical Society.

In June of 1929 on the 200th anniversary of Lancaster County 3,000 citizens volunteered service to make up a stupendous spectacle. This event, entitled PAGEANT OF GRATITUDE, re-enacted in vivid drama the acts of the past 200 years that best typified and revealed the progress of American citizenry from the day of the pioneer and early settlers.

The pageant was given at Williamson's Field and the music for the occasion was written by Dr. Harry A. Sykes. Dr. Sykes was a former organist of Trinity Lutheran Church and director of the Lancaster Chorus. He has composed numerous religious anthems. The quartet sang several of Dr. Sykes' compositions.

Of the old bands of our country we know little. There were many, for almost every small town had its band. Perhaps the one most worthy of note was the Hessian Band which played for the Military Ball held at the Black Horse Tavern in 1778. This band was captured from the British and held prisoner by the American forces until the cessation of hostilities. When freed, these men settled for the most part in the northern end of the country where their musical influence was felt. In fact, most of the musicians of those days came from Europe where the facilities for training them were much farther advanced than in our own country, for we had few schools of music at that time.

The band instruments were crude; and many types are obsolete now. The music was often written by the bandmaster and copied by the men.

The first band of later years to gain prominence was called the City Fencibles Band. They were in existence before the Civil War and took part in that conflict.

Lancaster County and city had innumerable bands. Lancaster Military Band was organized in 1829 at the home of Jacob Rathfon.

It is interesting to note that while bands play in harmony, they do not always exist in harmony. An estimation would place the turnover of personnel at 10-15 years, due to many causes. So from this we see bands form, split up and form anew.

A few names such as McGrann, Eckenrode and the outstanding conductor Streaker have been associated with Lancaster Bands. In 1912, Rocky Springs Park Theater presented Sousa and his Band.

Some of the bands were Erman Trout's Band, Keystone Band, Utopian Band, Liberty Band, Democratic Band and Cast Iron Band — a colored band which made up in rhythm what it lacked in harmony.

The well known Ad. Stork, an early band master, turned out many fine musicians for the city.

At this point in the program The RED ROSE GERMAN BAND, under the direction of Ira Fickes, played music popular a century ago.

Lancaster county has always been a favorite place for German settlement, due to the scientific methods of agriculture as well as skilled trades.

Aside from their occupations, the Germans have never neglected their characteristics of music as they entered American citizenship, whether it be hymns or more jovial songs.

Several German Singing Societies were formed to sing the cherished songs which had their origin in legends. Today the last surviving German-American Singing Society of Lancaster is the Leiderkranz.

Some of the early members of the Leiderkranz sang with the old Lancaster Maennerchor, which was the first German Singing Society in Lancaster. The Maennerchor was organized in 1858, in the Maenner Hotel on West King Street, with the proprietor of the hotel as an early leader.

In 1873, the Leiderkranz was formed because it was felt that Lancaster was fertile ground for a second German Singing Society.

In 1909 the Lancaster Maennerchor and the Arbeiter Mannerchor agreed to consolidate with the Leiderkranz and in 1910 the new Leiderkranz moved to its present home at the corner of Prince and Farnum Streets.

Musical Art Society proudly presented the Leiderkranz chorus as a finale to Lancaster's musical history.

May groups such as the Leiderkranz and the others we have been reminiscing about tonite, continue to prosper and produce the men and women who will always defend fine music and never let this culture be submerged.

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