

# DENTON BACH SOCIETY:

## THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS - 1976-1996

### CONTENTS

	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND LIMITATIONS	PREFACE
I	GENESIS	
II	VENUES	
III	THE MUSIC	
IV	DIRECTORS AND CONDUCTORS	
V	THE CONCERTS	
VI	THE CHOIR AND SOLOISTS	
VII	THE ORCHESTRA AND INSTRUMENTALISTS	
VIII	ORGANIZATION	
IX	FINANCES	
X	A GLANCE INTO THE FUTURE	

### APPENDIXES

A	LETTER ANNOUNCING THE FORMATION OF THE DENTON BACH SOCIETY
B	DENTON BACH SOCIETY CONCERTS
C	CENSUS OF CHOIR MEMBERS
D	GUEST SOLOISTS
E	CENSUS OF DENTON BACH SOCIETY ORCHESTRA MEMBERS
F	INSTRUMENTALISTS: SOLOISTS, ACCOMPANISTS, AND SMALL ENSEMBLE PLAYERS
G	DENTON BACH SOCIETY OFFICERS, BOARDS OF DIRECTORS, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS
H	FREQUENT CONTRIBUTORS TO THE DENTON BACH SOCIETY
I	DBS 100
J	BACHFESTS

**DENTON BACH SOCIETY:**  
**THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS - 1976-1996**

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND LIMITATIONS**

This document is not intended as a professional research report, or as a definitive history of the Denton Bach Society. Our objective was more modest. It was to write an extensive but informal and reliable story about the origin, growth, and maturity of the Denton Bach Society during its first twenty years of existence, one that would be of interest to the Society's members, performers and patrons alike, and to other persons in the Denton community who are interested in the cultural and artistic life of the community.

No all-out attempt was made to unearth all the facts or to fill in every blank in the story. However, we made reasonable efforts, within the existing constraints of time and resources, to be accurate, to resolve discrepancies, and to develop a balanced and reasonably complete narrative.

We relied on three main sources of information: interviews and conversations, concert programs and program notes, and organization newsletters. Other data included fliers, posters, minutes of meetings, bylaws, newspaper clippings, and letters.

We are especially indebted and wish to extend special thanks to Hildegard Froehlich Rainbow, Billy J. Ham, and Henry Gibbons. All gave extensive interviews during the early phases of the project and served as resource persons along the way. Hildegard and Director Gibbons also served as readers of early versions of our story and provided helpful and supportive commentary. Others who provided information on a personal conversational basis were Charles Brown, Richard Edyvean, Susan Ferre, Marsha Henderson, Hugh Kirkpatrick, and Sue Smith.

Billy Ham provided a treasure trove of documents dating back to the Society's beginning: program notes, newsletters, clippings, posters, and various other papers. Without the availability of his store of memorabilia this story could

not have been written. Others who supplied program notes or other documents were Julian Long, Sue Smith, Mary Ann Barnhart, and Henry Gibbons.

Even so, we encountered significant gaps of information. Concert programs turned out to be the richest and most official source of desired information, but unfortunately several of these, for early season concerts, were unavailable to us (and may be permanently missing). Some of the limitations incurred by these missing documents are alluded to in this report.

While expressing our gratitude to those persons mentioned above, we wish to absolve them of all responsibility for any shortcomings or errors of fact or judgment in this story.

## **PREFACE**

Voluntary associations in any community represent the efforts of uncounted persons who give freely of their time, talents, and money, with little or no expectation of recognition or recompense. Typically, a core of devoted and often over-worked individuals is found at the center, surrounded by a fluid network of contributing members, supported by a diffuse aggregate of citizens in the larger community.

Such has been the nature of the Bach Society of Denton, Texas.

Although individuals may be variously motivated as they function in these organizations, their cooperative but largely anonymous efforts ultimately redound to the benefit of the larger community. The history and the character of any community, in fact, is derived in no small measure from the devotion of such people, and the contributions of such organizations.

The Denton Bach Society was an immediate success, it is safe to say, as it sprang two decades ago from the imagination, the talent, and the hard work of a cadre of musicians in Denton. It experienced its share of challenges, but it has survived and has grown into a stalwart musical institution in Denton, Texas.

The success of a musical institution is not monetary or in material terms, nor even in community services, health, or welfare. It is more abstract. It is found in the sheer pleasure of individual musical experience, by both performer and listener. It lies in the connection of the soul to great and lasting musical works of the past, and in the satisfaction of preserving and promoting such musical traditions.

Such sentiments seem to have been the basic motivations of the organization's early performers and supporters. Marsha Henderson, a veteran choir member, has expressed her sentiments thus: "Lina and Hugh Kirkpatrick

[Bach Choir members] said you must come and sing this wonderful music with us! It was indeed, 'this wonderful music' that kept me coming for eighteen years. There were other attractions, too: the opportunity to learn more about vocal music of the 18th century from two gifted conductors, Charles Brown and Hal Gibbons; and the pleasure of being with congenial people who also admired the music of Bach and his contemporaries."

Billy Ham, another active member and singer, summarized it most eloquently when he said simply, "I need Bach." So does Denton--and the world.

During this twentieth anniversary season of the Denton Bach Society, it is appropriate to pause and look back. It is time to give recognition to the Society's founders, to its leaders, its officers, and its many members. It is time to express appreciation to the myriad financial supporters and patrons in the community; to recognize past challenges as well as to celebrate the many accomplishments of the Society; and in so doing, to light a beacon that may help point the way to an even brighter future.

## I - GENESIS

The Denton Bach Society had a remarkably sudden beginning, and it seems to have fairly "hit the ground running." From a rather fixed point of origin in late August, 1976, it performed its inaugural program in October of that year, and offered five full concerts in its first season!

Charles S. Brown began it all. It was he who had the germinal idea and took the decisive first steps to form the organization. Dr. Brown, then a faculty member in the School of Music at North Texas State University (now University of North Texas), approached Hildegard Froehlich, also a member of the music faculty at NTSU, with the notion of starting a Bach Society in Denton, Texas. Dr. Froehlich, a new arrival on campus and steeped in the Bach tradition since childhood in her native Germany, was an enthusiastic collaborator. (These co-founders served as co-directors of the organization in its early years.)

By September 8, scarcely a fortnight later, a letter was mailed to "Friends of Music in Denton," over the signature of Dr. Charles Brown and representing an ad hoc group of ten "persons who are involved in community music projects of one kind or another." This letter announced the formation of the Denton Bach Society (Appendix A).

The group, the letter asserted, had "adopted a name, worked out an organization structure, and proposed a series of programs for the coming year." Included was a schedule detailing rehearsal times, and specific dates and program titles for a full season of five concerts.

Charles Brown's enthusiasm and skill were translated into immediate action. Some early members of the Society have commented on the aggressiveness with which Professor Brown recruited them and moved the group forward. Billy Ham, a charter member of the choir, has recalled that during an organ lesson with Professor Brown, "He grabbed me by the arm, and said, 'I am getting a group together to sing Bach. You are a tenor, and you will sing with us.'"

Although no specific statement of purpose was articulated, the title of the Society, perforce, basically defined its intentions. Director Brown, in this initial letter, foresaw "a place in Denton for the kind of music-making- that a Bach Society would encourage." He referred also to "other ways in which the Society could encourage the study and performance of music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in our community."

There were related, but more personal and practical, motives for the organization's genesis. Dr. Froehlich has recalled that, at that time, there were many music professionals and paraprofessionals in the Denton community who had no opportunity to perform this type of music, i.e. of Bach and the Baroque

period. And church choirs and other community musical organizations did not provide sufficient outlet for their musical interests and talents.

Many of the founding committee members had ties to the two universities in Denton--Texas Woman's University and North Texas State University. However, it was the group's intention that the Denton Bach Society be a community-based enterprise, that it not be "university-dominated." Moreover, it was to be composed of musicians performing for pleasure, as volunteers, but with serious musical interest and intent.

Identified as a Bach society (one of numerous such societies around the world), the group also understood that it was committed, centrally, to music that was not of a common or popular variety, but music which nevertheless would have wide and increasing appeal in the community. It was, in Hildegard Froehlich's words, frankly to be "high brow, but not elite."

This letter also sounded a call for help, to "publicize among your students, church and choir members, or organizational members our need for singers and instrumentalists ...who have a special interest and enthusiasm for performing the music of J. S. Bach..."

Despite this auspicious beginning, the Denton Bach Society did not immediately spring into mature existence. Inevitably, it experienced severe challenges and growing pains. But its continuous history and steady growth over the next two decades offer evidence of the industry, imagination, and organizational talents, of Director Charles Brown, co-founder Hildegard Froehlich, and this original group of Denton musicians.

## II - VENUES

Early on, the Denton Bach Society found a congenial home. The St. Paul Lutheran Church in Denton welcomed the group to use its sanctuary, for rehearsals as well as for concerts. At that time, Director Charles S. Brown was organist at the church, and the pastor, Alton Donsbach, was enthusiastic about the development of this group. For the next nineteen years, St. Paul would be the Society's home base.

St. Paul Lutheran Church is a unique architectural landmark on North Elm Street near downtown Denton. While this church is certainly not a Baroque style structure, its nontraditional interior and subdued lighting lent an appropriate ambience for performing early period music. And the sanctuary provided a favorable acoustical environment for the choir and orchestra.

Richard Edyvean, long-time choir member and former president of the Society, praised the church as an auditorium in a statement in Vivace!, the Society's newsletter. Said Edyvean, "It is one of the finest performance spaces in

Denton. The live quality of the room and the almost perfect reverberation makes the combination of small orchestra and vocals a perfect concert experience." Although space was rather cramped, the close proximity of performers and audience provided an intimate setting that fostered musical rapport between the two groups. It was a sympathetic venue for experiencing this early classical music, for confirmed devotees as well as for patrons still developing their appreciation of Bach.

The Denton Bach Choir moved about in the Denton community and beyond, however, performing in other churches and in various secular settings. While fifty-one of the Society's eighty-seven concerts were held at St. Paul Lutheran Church, thirty-six were presented elsewhere. Eighteen concerts took place in other Denton churches, and seven were held in churches in Fort Worth and Dallas, and one was in St. Peter Episcopal Church, McKinney.

Two programs were given at the De Golyer Estate in Dallas, and the program with The Arlington Choral Society was presented in Irons Recital Hall on the campus of the University of Texas at Arlington.

The Woman's Club Building, the Center for Visual Arts, and several auditoriums on the University of North Texas campus in Denton also have served as performance sites.

In the last two decades, the City of Denton has made considerable progress in the adding of facilities for various artistic endeavors. Renovation of the Campus Theatre, on West Hickory Street, by the Greater Denton Arts Council was one such enterprise, and it was completed just in time for the Denton Bach Society to open its twentieth anniversary season there on October 15, 1995.

This new auditorium accommodates approximately two hundred persons. While larger than St. Paul Lutheran Church, this new hall is small and appropriately designed as to retain a sense of intimacy for future musical concerts.

The Campus Theatre will furnish much needed space for various Denton community organizations and functions. For the Denton Bach Society, it will provide, for the first time, an office for a physical location of its headquarters. This in turn will lend the Society a stronger sense of stability and expansion in the community.

### III - THE MUSIC

The namesake of its title naturally determined the type of music that the Denton Bach Society would perform and promote. But the name "Bach" is a rich and complex musical concept.

Most obviously the word refers to the man: Johann Sebastian Bach, composer, who was born in Germany in 1685 and who died sixty-five years later in 1750. Even to the lay musician, or to any literate citizen, the name conjures up a singularly important figure in the world's musical history--unfamiliar, perhaps, to many, but truly a superstar. To classical music lovers and performers, his supremacy is taken for granted.

Or, the name may refer to the Bach family of musicians and composers, extending over several generations, and numbering by some persons' count to around twenty! Johann Sebastian Bach was prolific both as father and as composer. He sired twenty children in two marriages. Several of his sons gained prominence as composers in their own right, thereby introducing a happy but substantial complexity into the nomenclature of the world of classical music.

The name Bach can also be associated with a type of music which defines a period of musical tradition. This is known as the Baroque style, or era, which has counterparts in architecture, furniture, and painting.

The Denton Bach Society incorporated all three of these meanings for establishing its musical fare. It was understood from the outset that its repertoire would not be limited to J. S. Bach, or to the Bach family, but it would also include Bach's contemporaries, and some of his antecedents and successors.

Early on, the Society adopted a programming schedule that was to include three types of music in its regular season. The first concert, usually in October, would feature an all-Bach program. This would be followed by a Christmas program, of various possible traditions, and the season would close with a major, Baroque-style work in the late Spring. Works of various composers could be woven into the latter two concerts, or added to the seasonal offerings.

And this has generally been the pattern the Society has followed.

During the first two seasons, 1976-77 and 1977-78, the Denton Bach Society restricted itself entirely to Johann Sebastian Bach in its selections. The next season, however, it included several of Bach's predecessors. In the program notes for the April 29, 1979, concert we read as follows: "Bach's debt to the music of Buxtehude, Couperin, and Vivaldi, and his interaction with the life and work of Telemann...[are] well documented. In today's program we present several of these models together with Bach works having a more or less precise

connection with them." From that point, the intent clearly was to branch out and to sample the vast, and often unfamiliar, works of the early classical period.

Altogether, over its twenty-year history, the Denton Bach Society has performed approximately 400 works by perhaps a hundred composers. While it is impossible to be precise, since program notes for several concerts were unavailable, 377 works by 86 different composers can specifically be identified.

One hundred forty-four of these 377 pieces were works by J. S. Bach (38 percent, for the statistically minded). Twelve works were written by seven other members of the Bach family, including two each by three sons--Karl Philipp Emanuel, Johann Christoph Frederick, and Wilhelm Friedmann--and one by a fourth son, Johann Christian. One was written by Heinrich Bach, brother of J. S. Bach's grandfather, and three were by Johann Michael Bach, Heinrich's son. One was composed by yet another Bach, distinguished in part by being listed simply as Johann. He was born in 1604 and died in 1673, twelve years prior to J. S. Bach's birth.

Some J. S. Bach music has been sung every season. The number of Bach pieces performed declined significantly after the Society's first eight seasons, but it has held steady thereafter. One hundred five (73 percent) of the 144 J. S. Bach compositions were performed during the first ten years, as against 39 (27 percent) in the second ten.

Allowing that several program notes from the first years are missing (when more emphasis was given to singing Bach compositions than in later years), it nevertheless is evident that more than one-half of the choir's offerings have actually been by composers other than Johann Sebastian Bach, or by other members of the Bach family. Of the 377 pieces identified in the programs, 221, about 59 percent, were composed by seventy-eight persons other than Bach family members.

Even so, the Denton Bach Choir has sung over forty Bach Cantatas, and, according to a recent publicity brochure, "all of the major choral works of Bach except the *Mass in B Minor*..."

Obviously, a numerical approach does not lend itself well to musical description or analysis, given the great variety of types of works that fall under the rubric of "musical composition." A few concrete examples can provide a better, even if inadequate, sense of the sweep of musical offerings and accomplishments by the Denton Bach Choir and Bach Orchestra. Three paragraphs from a recent note about the Denton Bach Society, anonymous and undated, will illustrate the point:

"In the past the Christmas programs have consisted of such pieces as Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* performed in a three year cycle, the traditional

German Christmas program, an unusual but extremely successful Hispanic Christmas featuring...Dave Brubeck's *La Fiesta de la Posada* in December of 1991. A French Christmas program was offered in December of 1993.

"The May concerts have featured such works as Mozart's *Coronation Mass* (May 2, 1982), Bach's *The Passion According to St. John* in 1983, followed two years later by Bach's masterwork *The Passion According to Matthew* in 1985. Other notable May concerts have been George Frederic Handel's *Jephtha* in May of 1986, and in 1987 the Society performed Mozart's *Requiem* for their May concert. Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde* was performed in May of 1993...

"The traditional October concert of Bach Cantatas was sometimes alternated with other programs, such as in 1986 when the Chorus and Soloists performed Giacomo Carissimi's *Historia Divitis* and Johannes Brahms' *Liebeslieder Walzer, OP. 52.*"

But the name of the game is still Bach. The musical universe of Johann Sebastian Bach is vast, and that of his era inexhaustible. The Denton Bach Society in its first twenty years has already offered a significant slice of this musical heritage to Denton and the North Texas area. According to Henry Gibbons, current Musical Director, we can expect the Society to continue to expand the variety of its offerings, perhaps even to include some works from the more recent Romantic period. But we can also be assured of a continued flow of works by the Master.

## IV - DIRECTORS AND CONDUCTORS

The positions of "Director" and "Conductor" of the Denton Bach Society have, for most of its history, been occupied by the same person. Indeed, it is common to regard them as two names for the same role, and the terms are sometimes used interchangeably. However, this is not accurate; the two are different, but intertwined and closely related.

In general, the role of the Conductor is subsumed under that of the Music Director. The nature of the Conductor's role is more precisely defined--and more obvious; his or her performance at concert, if not in rehearsals, can be observed, and he or she is expected to be in complete charge. The duties of the Musical Director are broader and more diffuse.

From the start, the Music Director has been given formal status as an officer of the Denton Bach Society in the organization's bylaws (the terms "Musical Director" and simply "Director" have also been employed). This person has also been designated as an ex officio member of the organization's governing body, called the Executive Committee in earlier program notes, and more recently referred to as the Board of Directors--although in the current bylaws Executive Board is the term of choice.

"The Director...shall be the musical and artistic leader of the Society's musical programs," say the bylaws. And that is basically all that they say. But these few words place a lot of responsibility, and trust, in the hands of the Director. (The term Conductor, by the way, is nowhere mentioned in the bylaws.)

During the first five years, Dr. Charles S. Brown served in the dual capacities of Director and Conductor. Although Dr. Brown was in charge of the programs, and conducted most of them, his co-founder and co-director, Dr. Hildegard Froehlich, as has been previously mentioned, shared these responsibilities with him in considerable measure. The bylaws of the organization in fact were tailored to reflect this relationship by including the office of Associate Director, who "shall aid the Director in the performance of all duties of the office, and shall act as Director in case of the latter's absence." The Associate Director was also a member of the Board of Directors. (Later versions of the bylaws do not include this office.)

Drs. Brown and Froehlich were very versatile in their contributions to the Society's programs. In addition to carrying out these leadership duties, they also performed with the ensemble from time to time. Either one might sing in the choir while the other directed. Froehlich occasionally sang solo passages in numbers performed and she played the alto recorder. Dr. Brown frequently appeared as organist and harpsichordist.

After five years, Dr. Brown submitted his resignation to the members. "The press of other personal and professional commitments has made it necessary for me to relinquish my duties as director of the Bach Society with this final program of the 1980-81 season," wrote Brown in the April, 1981, newsletter. Dr. Froehlich became Acting Music Director.

The following season, the Society's sixth, was a year of transition. Several musicians, in addition to Dr. Froehlich, served as conductors for rehearsals and performances. The previous season, in March of 1981, Dr. Susan Ferre, then conductor of the Texas Baroque Ensemble, in Dallas, Texas, had been guest conductor with the Denton Bach Society in a concert honoring the 300th anniversary of the birth of Georg Philipp Telemann. In September of that year, Dr. Ferre was asked to return, together with the Texas Baroque Ensemble, to conduct a collaborative concert with the Denton Bach Society for the Society's first concert of the sixth (1981-82) season. She agreed. Dr. Ferre was in fact auditioning for the Director's position, albeit, apparently, not under the most convenient conditions for her; Marsha Henderson, a member of the Bach Choir then, has recalled, "I remember Susan sitting on the organ bench (at St. Paul Lutheran Church) and conducting us in rehearsal while cradling her baby in her lap."

Hildegard Froehlich conducted the Christmas Concert that season, and Charles Brown returned to conduct a series of Bach Cantata numbers for the February, 1982, concert. By this time, Henry Gibbons had arrived on the musical scene in Denton.

In the summer of 1980, Henry Gibbons had moved to Denton from Stuttgart, Germany, with his wife Jacqueline, and their two sons, Jonathan and Henry Sanford. In Stuttgart, Mr. Gibbons had served as conductor of the Figuralchor of the Gedaechtniskirche since 1978, and he was assuming the position of director of choral activities at the North Texas State University School of Music.

Mr. Gibbons was invited by the Denton Bach Society to conduct Mozart's *Coronation Mass* in the last concert of this sixth season. He did so. Thus began a relationship between the Denton Bach Society and Henry Gibbons which continues to the present, one which has brought to the Denton community, and the members of the Denton Bach Society, fourteen years of glorious music.

## V - THE CONCERTS

As has been noted earlier, the first season of concerts was an ambitious one. Five different concerts were given, on four days. The last two programs were presented on the same day: the first was in the afternoon, on Sunday, March 27, 1977, at the Woman's Club Building, and the second was given in the evening at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Both were in Denton.

The most typical season has consisted of four concerts. Repeat performances have occurred, but only infrequently. On one occasion, however, the Bach Choir managed to give two performances on the same day in separate cities. It happened on December 7, 1980, when the choir, together with the North Texas State University Collegium Musicum, presented "A Continental Christmas" program at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Denton at 4:00 PM, and immediately thereafter rushed to St. John Episcopal Church in Dallas for a 7:30 PM performance of the same program.

There have been eighty-seven concerts in the twenty seasons, and the Denton Bach Choir has performed in all but two of these. The Denton Bach Orchestra has played in thirty-nine.

The Denton Bach Society has sponsored two additional, special programs of solo performances, featuring early classical music, but not involving the Denton Bach Choir or Orchestra. In the first of these two concerts, in April, 1978, Stephan Bardas, artist-in-residence at the North Texas State University School of Music, played the *Well-Tempered Clavier, Part I*, in Recital Hall at NTSU. And, the penultimate program of the 20th season, March, 1996, featured tenor Bruce Fithian, a specialist in early vocal music, and harpsichordist Lenora McCrosky. Mr. Fithian was accompanied by Lenora McCrosky, and by Ty Young, cello, Kristin Van Cleve, violin, and David Heywood, recorder.

A complete list of Denton Bach Society concerts can be found in Appendix B.

A substantial number of the eighty-seven concerts have been collaborative enterprises with various musical groups in Denton and in the Metropolitan area. These programs reflect the established status of the Bach Society in Denton and the Metroplex, and the extent to which the Society has been integrated into the musical and cultural fabric of the community. These co-operative endeavors merit some detailed reference.

One of the first of these ventures was in October, 1978. The Children's Choirs from St. Andrew Presbyterian and First Christian church under the direction of Dr. Froehlich joined with the Bach Choir in the presentation of the *Chorale Motet* (BWV 231). One year later, the Denton County Music Association and the Denton Bach Society performed portions of Mozart's *Solemn Vespers*

with orchestra. The 30-member Denton Community Band with conductor Carol Lynn Mizell, one of the charter members of the Executive Board of the Bach Society, played a five-movement Suite arranged from Handel's *Water Music*. And in May, 1991, the Denton Chamber Orchestra joined the Bach Society in the first collaboration of these two Denton ensembles, in a performance of Mozart's *Requiem*, KV. 626.

A program, An Hispanic Christmas Festival, was presented in December, 1991, in collaboration with Ballet Folklorico de Denton, Mariachi Ensemble and Children's Chorus, all of Denton. And the Denton Bach Choir joined with the Denton Light Opera Company and the Denton Community Orchestra to put on two performances of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in January, 1993.

There have been numerous collaborations with groups from the School of Music, at the University of North Texas. The Collegium Musicum under the direction of Dr. Cecil Adkins has performed with the Bach Society in three Christmas programs, and in April, 1992, the two groups joined in presenting Haydn's *Missa in Tempore Belli*.

Another group under Dr. Adkins' direction at UNT, Les Petites Violons, also has performed with the Denton Bach Choir in four Christmas programs. On another occasion, in October, 1989, the two combined in an all-Bach program to "address the question of authenticity of Baroque instruments"--a lively controversy in the field.

Other groups from the University of North Texas School of Music that have performed in association with the Bach organization include: the A Cappella Choir; the Women's Chorus, Debbie Simpkin King, Director, (this was a concert celebrating the 300th anniversary of Johann Sebastian Bach's birth); and Director Gibbons' group at North Texas, Canticum Novum.

On April 4 and 6, 1987, *Verdi's Requiem* was presented at NTSU Concert Hall. The North Texas State University Symphony Orchestra, directed by Serge Zehnacker, the NTSU Grand Chorus, and the Denton Bach Choir, under the direction of Henry Gibbons, combined for this occasion.

In November, 1983, Mr. Gibbons presented a program in the afternoon at NTSU, entitled "Luther and Music: A Pre-Concert Discussion." This was part of a six-day celebration of the Quincentennial Commemoration of Martin Luther's birth. That evening the Denton Bach Choir sang two sacred cantatas (BWV 125 and BWV 80) by Johann Sebastian Bach based on chorales by Martin Luther.

Yet another Bach musical program given in collaboration with NTSU took place on March 27, 1987. According to the Society's newsletter, Vivace!, "the third program of our season is being presented under the auspices of South Central Society for 18th-Century Studies, which is holding its annual meeting this

year at NTSU. Accordingly we have decided to let the eminent eighteenth-century British music historian, Charles Burney, choose the repertoire for this concert, and provide commentary on the music and the composers..." The program was presented in Recital Hall, NTSU School of Music, with Mr. Gibbons taking the role of Charles Burney.

In 1981, two joint concerts were given with the Texas Baroque Ensemble under the direction of gambist Charles Lang and harpsichordist Susan Ferre. One of these was in March of the 1980-81 season, and the other in November of the 1981-82 season.

Three more collaborations worthy of note with groups in the metroplex were Benjamin Britten's *Nove's Fludde* with the Texas Boys Choir of Fort Worth; Handel's *Messiah, Parts II and III* in collaboration with Fort Worth Early Music; and Haydn's *The Creation* performed with the Arlington Choral Society.

The Denton Bach Choir (or contingents thereof) has also sung in several informal programs in Denton, quite from the formal, seasonal engagements. They have sung at weddings, the Denton Arts Festival, Christmas on the Square Festival of Lights, private parties, and on other occasions. These performances are not included in this historical discussion of the Denton Bach Society.

## VI - THE CHOIR AND SOLOISTS

From the Denton Bach Society's inception, the choir, with its conductors, has been the backbone of the organization. Other persons clearly have been essential--instrumentalists, soloists, officers, donors--but it has been the singers who have been the organization's mainstay.

As described in the previous section, the choir has been featured in virtually all of the Denton Bach Society's regular season concerts. In 1992, the Board of Directors voted to "distinguish the choral component from the Society as a whole by giving the chorus its own name: 'the Denton Bach Choir'." Thereafter it was accorded separate billing in program notes.

Singing at or near a professional level at concert is the choir members' chief contribution. The choir sings "new" pieces at nearly every performance of every season, and in preparation the members are expected to spend virtually all of their late Sunday afternoons, from September to May, in rehearsals. They must attend additional rehearsals prior to a concert, including the dress rehearsal, at which time the instrumentalists join the group. Unlike the instrumentalists, the choristers work without compensation.

The choir members have also performed various tasks for the organization, and have done much of the behind-the-scenes- work. They have served as stage-hands, setting up risers and moving instruments, chairs, and music stands. They have written, edited, and mailed the organization's newsletter; solicited advertising from businesses; distributed posters in churches and other community focal points announcing their programs.

Many have done heavy duty in the Society's organizational structure, having served on the Board of Directors and as officers. Indeed, until recent changes were effected in the bylaws, it was mandated that board members and officers be "performers."

Withal, the choir members have contributed financially, in a variety of ways. Singers pay for their own copy of the music performed. They provide their own transportation to out-of-town concerts. And a substantial number of them have made financial pledges to the Society.

Then there has been the Bachfest, an annual event which was the Society's primary fund-raising enterprise until 1993. For twelve years, the Denton Bach Society brought this event of feasting, fun, and frolic to the Denton community in October. Not surprisingly, it was the choir members who were called upon to supply the bulk of the manpower.

Who are these people, who have given so generously of their time and talents, many of them for years on end--and who have produced such wonderful music?

Choir membership is open to the public. Word-of-mouth has always been an important recruiting device, and every year a call is sounded by the organization for additional volunteers to sing in the choir. Auditions are sometimes held, where singers are invited to "sing an aria or song of their own choosing," but "extensive musical or vocal training" is not required. "If you can read music, you are welcome in the Bach Society Chorus!" says one recent invitation.

A substantial number of the members have professional training or background, but the majority, according to Director Henry Gibbons, "are in fact amateurs in the best sense of the word, persons of many different backgrounds using their natural ability and uniting through their love of music" (Vivace!, Vol. XIV, No. 1).

There are some self-selecting factors, however. The type of music that the Bach Choir sings is complex, somewhat more demanding than much church choral music to which many singers are accustomed. Mastering it involves hard work and a serious commitment to excellence. Moreover, the music of Bach, like many other great works of art, is somewhat of an acquired taste; not many people have sufficient exposure to it to develop the special appreciation which singing in a Bach choir involves.

Hence the Denton Bach Choir has never been very large. The average size of the choir over the years has been thirty-two, and there has been some waxing and waning by season. At times, choir size has dipped below twenty, and it has risen above forty.

Information on choir membership can only be drawn from program notes, and, as has already been mentioned, programs for some of the concerts during the early years could not be obtained. This resulted in some undercount, but at least one choir listing was available for each of the twenty seasons. Since singers tended to participate on a seasonal basis, this undercount is somewhat minimized. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to develop a census based on the 78 choir listings available of choir members, and to devise a summary of each member's participation. This listing is found in Appendix C.

The program for the very first performance on October 24, 1976, listed the following thirty-seven singers:

**Sopranos**

Elaine Briceland  
Jane Brough  
Lorri Carlson  
Phyllis Eccleston  
Hildegard Froehlich  
Sylvia Grier  
Mary Kay Little  
Carolyn Smith

**Tenors**

Billy J. Ham  
Hartmut Kahlert  
Lloyd Smith  
Michael Weden  
Steve Wottrich

**Altos**

Nancy Brown  
Sallie Bynum  
Emily Crocker  
Lurline DuPree  
Lina Kirkpatrick  
Barbara Pettit  
Jo Schwegler  
Peg Bie Shauck  
Ange Singleton  
Sue Smith  
Nancy Stephenson  
Linda Walter  
Winifred Wilson

**Basses**

William L. Adams  
George Basbas  
David Carlson  
Richard DuPree  
Chuck Gatlin  
Hugh Kirkpatrick  
Donald Little  
Barton Robinson  
Mike Rush  
Herbert Schaake  
Jay Trimble

Nine more people joined the choir during the first season. Their names are as follows:

**Sopranos**

Mary Ann Barnhart  
Rebecca King  
Clare Rappole

**Altos**

Sandra Gilbert  
Marcia Henderson  
Lynn Yakes

**Tenors**

John Hepner  
Coralie Key  
Raul Mattei

Three persons who sang in the first concert of the inaugural season also sang in the last concert of the twentieth season: Hildegard Froehlich, Billy J. Ham, and Sue Smith. Hildegard has already been mentioned as a co-founder and co-director in the early years, and has served the organization in various capacities. Billy, a tenor, participated in 19 seasons. And Sue surely deserves some medal for loyalty. By her own reckoning, she has missed only one concert in which the Denton Bach Choir performed, and only one rehearsal, in twenty years!

Following is a list of the number of singers, by section, whose names have appeared on available programs:

Sopranos	103
Altos	107
Tenors	62
Basses	80

These numbers represent some overlap, however, since eleven women sang soprano or alto, in different concerts, and two men sang tenor or bass in separate concerts. After deducting this overlap, we find that 339 different persons are on record as having sung in the Bach Choir at least once.

A tally of the numbers of singers in the four main sections of the choir on a concert-by-concert bases yields the following average profile: eight sopranos, nine altos, six tenors, and nine basses. This imbalance is not extreme, but it bears out anecdotal evidence that the Choir has experienced some personnel shortages. Three women have sung in the tenor section: Sue Fairbrother, Coralie Key, and Carey White. This is testimony to the overlap in ranges of alto and tenor voices--and to the shortage of tenors in the Denton Bach Choir during the early years.

A season-by-season tally reveals a paradox: a constant and sizeable turnover of choir members, and a small group of loyal and dependable participants as well. Well over one-half (62 percent) of the 339 persons who have sung in the Bach Choir did so only for one season, and more than three-fourths (77 percent) sang in only one or two seasons. Still, there seems to have been a "moving core" of committed members that has carried over from year to year, which has given the choir a remarkable stability.

It would be impossible to identify the members of this moving core, but special mention can at least be given to a few of the longtime and frequent singers.

## Ranking the Denton Bach Society Singers

Seasons Performed		Number of performances	
Hildegard Froehlich	20	Sue Smith	75
Sue Smith	20	Hildegard Froehlich	67
Billy J. Ham	19	Billy J. Ham	65
William L. Adams, Jr.	18	William L. Adams, Jr.	65
Marcia Henderson	17	Lina Kirkpatrick	59
Lina Kirkpatrick	16	Hugh Kirkpatrick	58
Hugh Kirkpatrick	16	Marcia Henderson	58
Deanna D. Bush	15	Mary Ann Barnhart	45
Mary Ann Barnhart	14	Deanna D. Bush	41
Richard Edyvean	13	Richard Edyvean	40
Frank Feigert	12	Frank Feigert	39
Patricia Barton	11	Jeff Peters	38
Dianne Penney	11	Patricia Peters	37
Jeff Peters	11	Dianne Penney	36
Patricia Peters	11	John C. Hepner	32
John C. Hepner	10	Patricia Barton	30
Pat Morey	10	Julian Long	30
		Coralie Key	29
		P. Martin Sarvis	28
		Susan Treacy	28
		Paul Dutka	26
		Carol Kernek	26
		Pat Morey	26
		Agnes Rogers	25
		Mary Kay Little	23
		Therese de St. Aubin	23
		Diane Follet	23
		Donald Little	22
		Victoria F. Jones	21

The cutoff points or these overlapping honor rolls is arbitrary, and hence unfair to many additional persons whose devotion and contributions have also been substantial.

Soloists. Many professional vocal soloists have performed with the Denton Bach Choir concerts. While some have been recruited from around the country, a substantial number have come from the north central Texas area and, more specifically, from Denton's two universities, Texas Woman's University and

the University of North Texas. And, numerous soloists have been drawn from the choir itself.

Altogether, one hundred and fifty-three different persons have been listed in the programs as doing solo work. Eighty-five of these were guest soloists, and 68 were choir members. Names of guest soloists are listed in Appendix D. They include 16 sopranos, 12 altos, 23 tenors (including 4 countertenors), and 20 basses. Fourteen others are listed without voice identification.

Names of choir members who performed as soloists are identified in Appendix C. It is another measure of the level of professionalism of the Bach Choir that a fifth of its members have sung solo parts.

One soprano, Patricia Barton, is deserving of special mention. Ms. Barton, a graduate of Texas Woman's University, first sang with the choir in May, 1982, as the soloist in the *Coronation Mass* (K 317) by Mozart. With the exception of four seasons following this first appearance, Ms. Barton has been the featured guest soloist twenty-three times in major compositions presented by the Bach Society, including Bach's *Christmas Oratorio, Parts V and VI*, and Handel's *Messiah, Parts II and III*. She was the Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, the soloist in Haydn's *The Creation*, and in the last concert of the 20th season, she sang the demanding role of Tocher Zion in Handel's *Brockes Passion*.

Mary Kay Little, soprano, has been soloist at least 16 times, Susan Treacy, alto, 13 times, and Don Little, bass, 11 times. Alan Davis, Barbara Prince, Randal Rushing, Kevin Sutton, and Janel Woodruff have sung at least five times, while some two dozen others have sung at least twice.

## VII - THE ORCHESTRA AND INSTRUMENTALISTS

At first they were called Instrumental Ensemble. Sometimes they were listed in the concert programs simply as The Orchestra. By the seventh season, in 1983, they were formally identified as the Denton Bach Society Orchestra. These were the instrumental musicians of the Denton Bach Society, who have accompanied the Denton Bach Society Choir in 39 of their 87 concerts during the Society's twenty-year history.

Typically, the number of players in the Denton Bach Society Orchestra has been from fifteen to twenty members, although the numbers have run as low as ten and as high as 22. On a few special occasions a substantially larger number has played: Bach's *The Passion According to St. Matthew*, (1985) 29 members; *Noye's Fludde*, (1993) 44 members; Haydn's *The Creation*, (1995) 35 members.

Naturally, the composition of the orchestra may change with the dictates of the music, but the following is a typical lineup of instruments that have been used:

- 5 or 6 violins
- 2 violas
- 1 cello or violoncello
- 1 bass
- 1 bassoon
- 1 horn
- 1 or 2 oboes
- 1 or 2 flutes
- 2 trumpets
- 1 timpani
- 1 continuo
- 1 organ or harpsichord

Some 263 persons can be identified, on the basis of available concert programs, as having played in the Denton Bach Orchestra at least once. Their names, with the instruments they played (a few persons played more than one instrument), appear in Appendix E.

The various instruments used, and the number of persons who played them, are as follows:

Violins (I & II)78			
Viola	30	English Horn	7
Cello	12	French Horn	5
Violoncello	13	Horn	8
Viola da Gamba	4	Basset Horn	2
Viola d'amore	1	Trombone	11
Violone	2	Saxaphone	4
Bass	14	Trumpet	18
Recorder	7	Timpani	6
Flute	17	Percussion	3
Oboe/Oboe d' more	17	Organ	5
Oboe d'amore	8	Continuo	1
Bassoon	11	Harpsichord	2
Clarinet	2	Piano	2
Lute	2		

This list totals 283, and includes the duplicate listings.

Even a casual perusal of Appendix E shows that, although there are a significant number of frequent performers, the vast majority of the players have been only occasional players. Fifty percent of the players have performed in only one concert over the years, and more than four out of five have been recruited for no more than three performances. And only a small portion, roughly ten percent, have performed in more than five concerts.

Some individuals have played in the Bach Orchestra for many years. They have close professional and interpersonal relationships amongst themselves and with Bach Society officers and members, and they are personally loyal to the ideals and objectives of the Bach Society.

As was the case with the Bach Choir, there seems to have been some carry-over of instrumentalists from one year to the next so as to provide the Bach Orchestra with some degree of continuity. But clearly, the turnover rate has been higher for the Bach Orchestra than for the Bach Choir, and there have been fewer veteran, long-term participants among orchestra personnel than among choir members.

The two groups are, in fact, rather different creatures. The choir consists of volunteers who get together to experience the pleasures of singing the music--and for the sociability that ordinarily results from the rehearsals, performances, and other occasions for interaction. They may be skilled and, in many cases, highly-trained musicians, but they are nevertheless amateurs.

For orchestra players, the situation is somewhat different. Although they may not all be highly paid, they do receive remuneration, and they view themselves as professionals. Like choir members, they may also thrill to the music, but the opportunities for socialization are not as great. They are recruited for a specific musical purpose and performance, and they may show up for only one or two dress rehearsals and for the concert. For most of them, the concert may be just another gig. They are understandably not involved in the many volunteer duties which occupy much of the choir members' time, and hence they have less opportunity to develop strong ties of identity with the Bach Society per se.

Other Musical Groups. The collaborative endeavors of the Denton Bach Society with other musical organizations have previously been alluded to. In sixteen instances instrumental groups outside the Denton Bach Society have performed in concert with the Bach Society Choir. These groups, with their number of appearances, can be summarized as follows:

- Denton Community Band (1)
- Denton Community Orchestra (2)
- Denton Chamber Orchestra (1)
- North Texas State University Orchestra (2)
- Texas Baroque Ensemble (2)
- Les Petit Violons (5)
- University of North Texas Collegium Musicum (3)

This represents a rather varied group of musical organizations which has helped provide Denton audiences with a rich variety of musical experiences.

The last three groups are of special significance for the Bach Society's musical style and tradition. The Texas Baroque Ensemble is located in Dallas and is directed by Susan Ferre, and Les Petits Violons and Collegium Musicum are from the University of North Texas and are under the direction of Dr. Cecil Adkins. These groups specialize not only in early classical music but also in the use of Baroque style instruments. These rare and delicate instruments require special care and skills, and some of them bear strange and exotic names such as violone, theorbo, cittern, and archlute, as well as sackbutte, krumhorn, and clarino. The appearance of these ensembles with the Denton Bach Society Choir has lent special interest and authenticity to the Society's musical performances.

Soloists and Other Instrumentalists. Individual instrumentalists have always been an integral part of the Society's programming. It was customary, in fact, in the early years to open every concert with a Bach organ number. By the fourth season, however, in December of 1979, Director Charles Brown broke with this "tradition" when he opened the program with Frescobaldi's *Toccata Prima (11 Secondo Libro Di Toccate)*. And after the opening concert of the sixth season, in November, 1981, the organ solo opening was abandoned altogether.

In 23 concerts, in which no orchestra or large ensemble played, instrumentalists have performed in various ways: as soloists, in duets or small ensembles, or in conjunction with the choir or other singers.

The harpsichord has been a solo instrument of choice, for Charles Brown in the early period, and for Lenora McCroskey who started playing with the Denton Bach Society in 1983. Two instruments frequently used for solo works were the organ and the violin, while the flute and oboe have also been featured. The music of Johann Sebastian Bach and Girolamo Frescobaldi were selected most often in these solo works.

In a special instrumental number, in February, 1980, John Dowland's *Lachrimae* was played on the lute by Michael Craddock. Dowland, who was born in 1563, was an Irish composer who was known for his excellent lute playing.

In a quite different setting from the traditional music of the Baroque period, Leslie Enlow played the guitar in a program that featured Catalonian folk songs during The Hispanic Christmas Festival presented in December, 1991.

The versatility of Bach's genius as a composer was demonstrated well by his use of various instruments and the human voice, in a wide variety of combinations and juxtapositions. And other Baroque composers showed similar interest. Appendix F represents a brief summary of these instrumental performances that have laced Denton Bach Society concerts.

This diversified instrumental programming, it can be noted, was more pronounced during the first decade of the Society's history; the second decade witnessed a somewhat more frequent inclusion of the orchestra, whether it be the Bach Society Orchestra or a guest ensemble, and adhering somewhat closer to choral programs.

In either case, Denton audiences have been privileged to have heard a rich and diversified repertoire of classical music performed, or sponsored, by the Denton Bach Society.

## VIII - ORGANIZATION

Voluntary associations, to be successful, require some formal structure. Typically, a constitution and/or bylaws are adopted to provide an organizational framework. This framework can be too elaborate or too slavishly followed, in which case the organization becomes rigid. Or, the framework can be too vaguely defined, or it can be ignored, in which case chaos can result. Either extreme can create inefficiency, tension, and low morale.

The Denton Bach Society appears to have struck a reasonable balance between these two extremes. The organization appears to have functioned systematically according to its formal rules and guidelines, but it has also made changes and adjustments when necessary. And it has survived, and matured.

The need for formal incorporation of the Denton Bach Society, for tax and other purposes, was recognized early on, and in 1977, with the assistance of Mr. Miller Davidge, an attorney in Denton, the organization was registered as a 501 (c) (3) corporation under Texas Law.

Three versions of the Bylaws of the Denton Bach Society are in existence. In what appear to be the earliest Bylaws (date unknown), the organizational structure was outlined, and, basically, that structure has continued to the present. In May of 1988, a revised draft of the bylaws was printed, and a formal, revised version based upon that draft was issued in Spring, 1989. A third, and somewhat more substantial revision, was adopted in April, 1991.

In the original document, the statement of mission was defined thus: "The Denton Bach Society (the Society) shall function as a non-profit organization, as outlined in its articles of incorporation, for the performance and promotion of the music of J. S. Bach and other composers."

The 1989 version takes a somewhat different tack, citing the mission as "the performance and promotion of secular and sacred choral music," and adds somewhat cryptically that, "[I]ts name stands for the organization's commitment of highlighting the music of J. S. Bach as much as artistically and financially feasible." The 1991 edition states that the Society "exists to perform and promote secular and sacred choral and instrumental music in general, but with a particular commitment to the performance of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach."

Membership in the organization has always been quite open and informal. Originally, membership was accorded to "anyone who donates time, talent, or money to the Society. This includes all performers and patrons of the Society." The simple beauty of this statement has since been vitiated by more technical terminology, but without altering its fundamental meaning.

The organization is, and has been, governed by a Board of Directors. There appears to be some harmless confusion about the title of this body, however. The original Bylaws specify the election of a "Board of Directors," but these persons were referred to in concert programs as the "Board" (of the Denton Bach Society), or as the "Executive Committee." The 1989 Bylaws also refer to the governing body as the "Executive Committee," while the 1991 Bylaws declare the formal name to be "Executive Board of Directors"--and then go on to refer to it as the "Executive Board". Meanwhile, in newsletters and concert programs the title "Board of Directors" became, and is still, the preferred title.

The original Bylaws stated that, "The Board of Directors shall be made up of the officers of the Society...", and the number of officers "shall be fixed by the Board of Directors, and shall be not less than eight." The officers, in turn, were to be "chosen from those members who have been active in the performance, or in support of the performance of the past season."

On the first Board of Directors were three instrumentalists: Charles Brown (Director), Alis Dickinson Adkins, and Carol Lynn Mizell; and six choir members: Hildegard Froehlich, Martha Range, Herb Schaaque, Jane Brough, Lester Brothers, and David Carlson.

Drawing officers for the organization from the list of performers seemed like a reasonable idea. This policy effectively kept control of the organization in the hands of performers, but it also placed many duties and responsibilities on their shoulders. During the first few seasons, the work was spread around fairly equitably between instrumentalists and singers. In time, however, the instrumentalists, having less frequent appearances in concert and fewer practice sessions than the choir members, had less interaction with one another and with other Society members. They were less involved with the on-going affairs of the Society. Hence, choir members were increasingly depended upon to fill the officer--and board member--roles. By the seventh season, only choir members--no instrumentalists--were elected as officers and Board members. The burden of responsibilities placed on a small core of choir members would eventually take its toll.

The first Bylaws actually allowed for "other members," i.e. non-officers, to be elected as members of the Board at the annual meeting, and from time to time several non-officers were placed on the Board. But these persons were still drawn from the ranks of musical performers or former performers.

Eventually, the requirements for Board membership were changed to allow non-performer members to serve as officers and as Board members. And at the beginning of the 16th season, one such person was elected. This number increased by one member per season, and by the twentieth (1995-96) season, five such Society members were, or had previously served, on the Board.

Interestingly, during the first four seasons, the Society functioned without a president or vice-president.

Presumably, the Director, Charles Brown, and the Associate Director, Hildegard Froehlich, were elected to fill their directorship roles and the presidential and vice-presidential offices simultaneously. In 1989, the office of Associate Directorship was eliminated, and in 1991, it was stipulated that "the Presidency, Vice-Presidency and Musical Directorship...shall be combined with no other Office..." In 1980 the first president was elected, and this was Hugh Kirkpatrick. Following is a list of those persons who have served as President of the Denton Bach Society, together with their years of service:

1976-80	(No president is listed)
1980-86	Hugh Kirkpatrick
1986-87	Richard Edyvean & Hildegard Froehlich
1987-88	Hildegard Froehlich
1988-91	Richard Edyvean
1991-93	Carol Kernek
1993-94	Don Rosen
1994-96	Ed Glick

The first Bylaws said that the "Board of Directors will appoint an Advisory Council of no more than fifteen members...to provide artistic counsel to the Board of Directors concerning the performance and educational objectives of the Society." This option apparently was never exercised. More recent Bylaws say that the Board of Directors may appoint an Advisory Council to provide "financial, legal, promotional, and in certain instances, artistic advice." Concert programs for the 13th and 14th seasons list an Advisory Council of eight people, and an Advisory Council of eleven persons was appointed for the 20th season.

Names of Denton Bach Society Officers, Boards of Directors, and Advisory Council members for the twenty seasons are listed in Appendix G.

Communication is the basis for the structure and function of any social organization. And next to personal, word-of-mouth interaction, the newsletter has been the chief medium of communication of the Denton Bach Society. Much of the history of the organization is reflected in its announcements and reports of the group's activities over the years. It is the dominant means by which vital information is transmitted throughout the Society, and thus is crucial in helping the organization to carry out its intended functions. Additionally, the newsletter serves as a medium through which the Society's members are tied to one another and are keyed into the ethos of the organization.

February 1, 1979, is the date of the first newsletter sent by the Denton Bach Society to its membership. Jo Schwegler, a charter member of the Denton Bach Choir, was the editor. Some early issues of the newsletter, which for

several years was unnamed, are missing, and the editor of the newsletter from the fall of 1980 to the fall of 1983 is unknown. However, members who recall this period of time say that it was Hugh and Lina Kirkpatrick who were the faithful ones who wrote and sent out the newsletter.

The February, 1983, issue introduced the Denton Bach Society logo which was designed by Susan Treacy, a choir member for many years during the 1980s. During the eighth season, Marcia Henderson, another charter member of the choir, assumed the editorship, and she held this position for six years. During this time, distribution of the newsletter reached as high as 1,400.

The present newsletter, Vivace!, was in large part the creation of Therese de St Aubin. She named the newsletter, designed its logo and its format, and held the editorship until the Spring of 1994. Therese sang in the choir for eight seasons. At her wedding to Wayne Adamiec, a bass singer for five seasons, the Denton Bach Society Choir sang. Julian Long, another choir member of long tenure, assumed editorship of Vivace! in August, 1994. Julian also is on the Board of Directors, serving as the Membership Director, and was also appointed to the Advisory Board for the twentieth season.

## IX - FINANCES

Garnering financial support is commonly a daunting challenge for voluntary, non-profit community organizations. In the absence of a special source of funds or an affluent sponsor, such groups must depend heavily on smaller contributions from many individuals in the community. So it has been with the Denton Bach Society.

But while it has never had a guardian angel, the Denton Bach Society has had some exceptionally devoted individual donors, and it has had several other important sources of funds. In general, support, while limited, has been adequate for the organization's basic needs, and sufficiently stable to assure continuity of function.

The Society's annual budget has fluctuated considerably, depending upon incoming funds--which shape the number and types of concerts that can be presented. In recent years the budget has edged upward to well above the \$10,000 level. This still seems like a modest sum in today's world of soaring salary and budgetary figures, but it is a formidable amount for an organization that stands as one among many in the community competing for funds. In any case, the Bach Society surely represents a cultural and artistic bargain for the Denton community.

### Sources of Revenues

Complete financial records of the Denton Bach Society do not exist, but sufficient data are available from which a general picture of the organization's financial status and operations can be drawn.

The major sources of funds for the organization historically can be categorized as follows: membership donations, ticket sales, grants, and Bachfest proceeds. A few miscellaneous sources also deserve mention.

Membership. Individual membership contributions have provided the financial foundation for the Denton Bach Society. Traditionally, membership in the Society has been defined rather loosely to include anyone who "donates time, talent or money." The concept of "contributing member" as here defined is more precise, however. It refers to persons who have made a specific monetary donation. Their names are listed on concert programs.

For the first twelve seasons, there were only two categories for giving: Member up to \$24) and Patron (\$25 or more). Since the 1988-89 season, the membership categories have changed several times. For the twentieth season, these categories have been defined as follows:

Friend (up to \$24)  
Member (\$25-\$74)  
Benefactor (\$75-\$124)  
DBS 100 (\$125 or more)  
Angel (\$500 or more)

Inasmuch as program notes for several concerts are no longer available, it is not possible to specify precisely how many people have given money to the Denton Bach Society. However, contributing members' names are listed cumulatively during a given season, with the final concert program providing a complete list of that season's contributors. Hence, it is feasible to calculate quite closely the numbers of persons who have contributed during any given season (so long as at least one program is available), without incurring a serious undercount or egregious inaccuracies.

On the basis of data available for this study, 562 different contributors have appeared on concert programs.

"Contributor" here refers to any name or names in a separate listing. Typically, only one individual's name is listed, but frequently there are two (e.g., married couples). In fact, double entries account for forty percent of the total number of listings. And when these are taken into account, a grand total of 796 individual persons have been recognized as making a financial contribution to the Denton Bach Society since its origin in 1976.

In the last program of the inaugural season, Sunday, March 27, 1977, the following persons were listed as Patrons of the Society:

George J. Basbas  
Bruce & Jane Brough  
Charles & Nancy Brown  
Mr. & Mrs. Cecil Dickinson  
Dr. & Mrs. J. Wilgus Eberly  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Estes  
Hildegard Froehlich  
Harold Heiberg  
Hugh & Lina Kirkpatrick  
Robert & Carol Lynn Mizell  
Herb & Jean Schaake  
Peg Bie Shauck  
Erwin & Kate Schwegler  
Mr. & Mrs. Wesley Smith

Nine of these contributors' names appear also on the last program of the twentieth anniversary season: Robert Estes, Hildegard Froehlich, Harold and Eva Heiberg, Hugh and Lina Kirkpatrick, Herb and Jean Schaake, and Sue Smith.

Nine contributors (single or double) are known to have given during 15 or more seasons. An additional 21 are listed for at least ten seasons, while 43 more have contributed during at least five seasons. Hence, 73 of the 562 donors have given during five or more of the twenty seasons.

For the twentieth anniversary season a new and special support group was established. Membership in this group, called DBS 100, was accorded to any individual or business or professional organization in the Denton area that supported the Society at the Patron level of \$125 or more per year. Thirty-five charter members of DBS 100 were listed in the March 31, 1996, program. Their names are found in Appendix I.

Clearly, there are many people who attend the Denton Bach Society concerts who care enough to make additional financial sacrifices. What has motivated so many of them over the years?

Harold and Eva Heiberg have the distinction of being the only ones to have contributed to the Society for each of its twenty seasons. Says Harold: "A Denton Bach Society? We felt this was something that absolutely should be supported...we are great admirers of Bach and his music, and this was a very worthwhile endeavor." Alton Donsbach has said: "Roberta and I support the Denton Bach Society because [it] has made a real contribution to the Denton cultural scene...and, because we enjoy the music." Other frequent contributors have expressed similar sentiments, and always, it seems, the crucial factor has been "the music."

Admission Fees. The Denton Bach Society has been of two minds about charging admission to concerts. In its beginning, the Society charged nominal admission fees. Single concert tickets were \$2.50 each for the general public, \$1.00 for students and retired persons. Season tickets sold for \$7.50 and \$3.00, respectively.

After the Denton Bach Society's first season, however, and at its first annual meeting in May of 1977, the organization decided to abandon this practice. The issue was that instrumentalists were paid by union trust fund money which prohibited the Society from charging admission to the concerts. This was not an easy financial decision apparently, and a plea for increased member support was soon forthcoming.

In its first newsletter, published in February of 1979, the Society stated as follows:

Two years ago the Denton Bach Society decided to present its programs to the Denton community free of charge, a gift of words and music to enrich our lives. We have been aided in this endeavor by many generous people; you, with your donations and your presence at our concerts...

But:

Still, we find ourselves in need of additional funds to meet the expenses of our next two concerts. Printing, organ tuning, postage, music purchase, and instrumentalists' fees have a way of adding up.

Indeed! But for the next fourteen seasons, there would still be no admission fee.

Then, in 1991, the policy was changed again to bring back ticket sales. In its August issue of Vivace!, the Society stated that the organization's original practice of charging admission "is being reintroduced as a package of financial measures designed to ensure the financial health of the Society, to underwrite its expanding musical program, and to make it eligible for new sources of incomes from trusts and grant-providing bodies."

Tickets were to be \$5 per concert, and \$10 for a season of three concerts. The price was raised to \$7 per concert and \$15 for a season subscription during the 1993-94 season. In the twentieth, 1995-96, season, the price for a season subscription was increased again, to \$21, while individual concert tickets remained at \$7, or \$5 for seniors and students.

Grants. Grants have also been an important source of funds from the beginning. A distinguishing feature of these monies is that they are not offered to the Society's general fund, but are earmarked for specific concerts. Hence, it is essential to assess the cost for each concert individually.

In October, 1977, at the first concert of the second season, the program notes indicate that the "music for this occasion is provided by a grant from the Music Performance Trust Funds, a public service organization created and financed by the Recording Industries under agreements with the American Federation of Musicians. The grant was obtained with the cooperation of Local 72 AFM (Fort Worth Musicians Union)." Dr. Clyde Miller was listed as the Contractor.

One stricture on this particular source of funds was that they could be given only if and when organizations do not charge admission. Eventually, this source of funding was discontinued.

February 22, 1981, marked the beginning of support from a grant from the Greater Denton Arts Council (GDAC). This agency, in turn, is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and The Arts Guild of Denton.

Several other, special grants have been given to the Society for specific concerts. In November, 1983, the Texas Committee for the Humanities, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, funded part of the cost of the Concert in Celebration of Martin Luther and Johann Sebastian Bach. Also, a program presented on December 12, 1984, at St. Andrew Episcopal Church, Fort Worth, was "under the auspices of the Fort Worth Chapter of the American Guild of Organists." More recently, the Society has received matching grants from GTE and from Mobil Oil.

Bachfest Proceeds. Bachfest, a community festival in Denton, was presented each October by the Denton Bach Society for twelve years. It was the primary fund-raising event for the Bach Society.

Voluntary organizations commonly sponsor such events as a means of getting financial support and of increasing the community's awareness of the organization. The theory seems to be that people are apt to contribute more, and find their contribution less onerous, if they are offered something in return, rather than being asked outright for money.

Bachfest was an elaborate evening of fun, food and drink; of entertainment and socializing for many Dentonites. The theme was German. Food was of the German variety--sausage and sauerkraut, certainly--and libations featured German beer. Entertainment included German folk dancing, Dale Peters and his German Band, Das Froehliche Sing-along, guest performances by the UNT Brass Choir, Dancing with Ron Fink and the Fortnight Five, William Scharnberg and his Alpenhorn, slide and sound shows, raffles, and many other entertainers and novelties. And yes, the Bach Choir sang sometimes.

The first of these galas took place in October, 1982, at the beginning of the Bach Society's seventh season. The first few Bachfests were held in the Woman's Club Building near the Denton Public Library and Civic Center, and then, for most of its history they were held in Denton's Center for Visual Arts on East Hickory Street. Tickets in the beginning were \$8.50 each, but they graduated to the \$15 level during the 1990s. (See Appendix J.)

At its height of success, as many as 255 patrons were served meals at the Bachfest, and hundreds of dollars profits were realized. Dozens of dinner tickets, donated by Denton restaurants, were raffled off, and an incalculable amount of publicity and good will were generated.

However, planning, organizing, and carrying off these elaborate affairs was a major enterprise of varied activity and detailed responsibilities--which fell into the laps of choir members and board members. In the early years, the food was prepared by the members in their homes, brought to the party, and served warm to customers. Eventually, meals were catered, but this still left myriad chores for the volunteers--and reduced the profits.

That the Bachfest was a major part of the Society's financial base for numerous years seems clear, although detailed financial records are not available. That the responsibility for putting on the gala event became an increasing burden to the members also became evident. And hiring out responsibility for this task did not prove to be the answer. Eventually, the margin of profit narrowed, and the enthusiasm and energies of the choir and board members waned, to the point that carrying on the tradition seemed no longer feasible. The last Bachfest (whose name was changed in the last season to Germanfest) was held on October 16, 1993.

Other. Another source of revenues has been corporate and business sponsorship. These include advertisers listed in the programs and the corporate sponsors who donated food, drinks, merchandise, and other amenities to the Bachfests. It was in connection with the Bachfest that T-shirts, mugs, posters, and bumper stickers were sold, but the receipts from these items were minimal.

Altogether, corporate and business contributions have accounted for an irregular, and usually small, portion of the organization's revenues in recent years: less than seven percent in 1993-94, for example, and less than one percent the year before.

Most of the business advertising thus far has occurred in connection with the Bachfest event. Forty eating establishments have contributed to the restaurant raffles held at the Bachfests. Three "major sponsors" of the Bachfests have included Ben E. Keith Co., Metzler's Food & Beverage, and Davis Bakery, while more than a dozen other business "sponsors" have also been listed.

Advertising in concert programs has not been employed as a strategy until quite recently. Eighteen Denton business establishments placed ads in two programs in 1993. By the spring of 1995 and the 1995-96 season, however, program advertising was more extensive. During this time, forty-three advertisements were placed by sixteen establishments in five programs.

This is not to imply that the Bach Society does not have the support of the Denton business community; it is more a reflection on the nature of volunteer organizations. In order for business enterprises to contribute, someone has to solicit their support, and, as has already been noted, this effort has had to come largely from choir members and board members. Because of their love for the music and their desire to share this music with the community, many members

have contributed far more than their musical talents to the Society. Not surprisingly, burnout has sometimes been the result.

All of this brings us back to the basic reality: it is the individual contributor--and the individual volunteer--who are the life-sustaining forces of this organization.

## Expenditures

Broadly speaking, the expenditures of the Denton Bach Society have been of two major types: general operating expenses and concert costs. A third category of cost, which developed over the years, has been fund-raising. And for much of the Society's lifetime, fund-raising costs have been associated almost exclusively with the Bachfest enterprise.

Far and away, the largest expenditures have been for the concerts. In recent years, about two-thirds of the total expenses of the Society have been devoted to the production of the programs. In the 1992-93 season, for example, three concerts were presented. The first was the "traditional" concert of Bach Cantatas; this concert was budgeted for \$2,860. The Christmas program cost \$1,120. *Noyes' Fludde* the Chester Miracle Play with music by Benjamin Britten, was presented with The Texas Boys Choir. The budget for this concert was \$4,350. One-half of this last amount covered the expenses of the vocalists and instrumentalists. Another \$660 was for music copies. Fourteen hundred dollars was used for music and artistic directors, and for technical assistance.

This illustration reflects the variation in costs of concerts, and it demonstrates the enormity of putting on certain types of concert. Any misjudgments or unforeseen misfortunes in the revenue-raising plans can create problems; hence, the advantage of dependable, long-range sources of funds is obvious.

At the outset, the founders of the Denton Bach Society envisioned a group of musicians who would sing and play Bach's music as volunteers, for their own and other people's pleasure. This was not to be the case, however, as the organization immediately ran into the reality of musicians' union requirements.

Talented and experienced amateur choral singers have not been especially hard for the Bach Choir to come by. As for vocal soloists, the Choir has been sufficiently blessed with talent to be able frequently to draw upon its own members. And when needed, professional vocalists could be paid nominal fees for special numbers or concerts. But the use of instrumentalists was more of a financial challenge.

Instrumentalists who are union members must be paid, for rehearsal time as well as for performances. To assemble an orchestra, or even a small group of instrumentalists, capable of performing the early classical music at a professional level, often on special Baroque style instruments, immediately involved significant costs for the Denton Bach Society.

The Denton Bach Orchestra has performed in nearly one-half of the Society's 87 concerts. In the others, individual instrumentalists have performed as soloists or in small ensembles. (This is not counting the orchestras or musical groups with which the Denton Bach Society has had collaborative concert arrangements.)

Other concert costs are incurred. The music director is paid. Baroque instruments must be moved to the site of the performance. Fees for rehearsal space are sometimes charged. Advertising, printing of programs, and other, special costs (such as child care) must also be met.

General expenses have included the usual and the mundane: clerical supplies, postal permit, post office box rental, and other incidentals. Publishing the newsletter, Vivace! has been a substantial item, running to well over five hundred dollars a year. A special type of cost for the Society, amounting to several hundred dollars, has been paying the dues to Chorus America and to the Greater Denton Arts Council.

Finally, an adage says it takes money to raise money. However, it is also obvious that fund-raising costs can easily offset much or most of revenues raised. When this happens budgetary distortion can result.

So it was with the Bachfest events. These galas remained profitable largely in proportion to the amount of food, drink, materials, and labor that were donated; any catering or contracting out of services obviously reduced the profit margin. When costs tended to cancel out revenues, the Bachfests were abandoned.

## X - A GLANCE INTO THE FUTURE

At the close of its second decade the Denton Bach Society is a firmly established institution in the city of Denton and in the larger metropolitan area. A robust musical creature even in its infancy, it is moving steadily toward adulthood.

This has not come about without some severe economic and other challenges, but these have always been overcome by dint of hard work on the part of its choir members and officers, and by imaginative leadership.

At the beginning of its third decade, the Denton Bach Society is poised at the cusp of a new phase of musical and organizational expansion. Music Director Henry Gibbons has pointed out two major challenges in the Denton Bach Society's upcoming years: the development of financial stability and the recruitment of singers.

The Bach Choir has always been, and will continue to be, the core of the Denton Bach Society, both as the major contributor of music and as a source of talented and committed workers. But its voice and volunteerism are not to be taken for granted. The Bach Choir has had dozens of veteran singers, and many of them are still going strong. But in the future, additional young, devoted singers will need to be recruited to replace old-timers. Fortunately, the two major universities in Denton provide a rich lode of talent and enthusiasm among their students and their faculty members. In any case, it will be important for the choir to continue to develop another moving core of veteran performers.

Adequate funding has always been, and surely will continue to be, a major challenge. But here, too, there is cause for optimism. "Denton is a city that has a commitment to the Arts," says Richard Edyvean, long-time choir member and officer of the Bach Society. Edyvean was president of the organization during the years when financial support was waning and the Society's future was precarious, and he knows well the city of Denton's role in supporting the Arts. Says Edyvean, "[Denton] people do attend musical events, they actively participate in the theatre group, and they go to the art galleries. And there is a solid base of many individuals who contribute their talents and time to the business of fund raising for the Greater Denton Arts Council, the umbrella organization under which all the arts groups operate." As the Denton Bach Society has become increasingly visible, the prospects for more donors and for greater support from the business community are enhanced.

The formation of the DBS 100 during the organization's twentieth anniversary season has had a good start, with the recruitment of thirty-five charter members. This body, which is open to any person or organization that will contribute \$125 dollars or more each year, should go a long way toward

providing the Society with a firmer financial base. This, in turn, should make possible the expansion of its musical offerings, and generally provide for longer range programming and innovative planning.

The Bach Society's newfound home in the Campus Theatre in Denton, as a performance center and as a location for its organizational headquarters, will be very helpful. It will, for the first time, provide space for the Society to keep its records and to carry out its day-to-day functions. To this end, the Board of Directors has established a new, paid position of Executive Director. Julian Long, veteran singer and officer of the Society, has been appointed to fill this post.

"I'm very excited about having this opportunity," said Mr. Long in the *Denton Record-Chronicle* after his appointment. "We would like to be more professional in the way we do business as well as in the way we perform," he said.

The Denton Bach Society has one other major asset that bodes well for its future; it has Mr. Henry Gibbons. His credentials as musician and as organizational leader have been well established. Mr. Gibbons' stature was further enhanced in the spring of 1996 when he was appointed to the post of Music Director of the Arlington Choral Society (a group which joined with the Denton Bach Society, under Mr. Gibbon's direction, to present Haydn's *The Creation* at the close of the 1994-95 season).

Mr. Edyvean says that..."singing for Hal Gibbons is more than just singing for Hal Gibbons. It is the level of expectation he has for amateur singers. He sets high standards and the choir senses that. Mr. Gibbons is so knowledgeable about composers and the music...every rehearsal of every piece is an education."

All together, for the Denton Bach Society there is much to be excited about as it begins its 21st season--and looks ahead to the 21st century.