

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.