

# *Beethoven Club History*

## *Celebrating 100 Years, 1921-2021*

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Back in the 1920s, people drove their Model Ts to see silent movies at a speed of about 10 miles an hour. Women were introduced to new-fangled inventions like the hair dryer and electric blender, but more importantly, life for women took a dramatic turn in the 1920s as the long fight for women's suffrage culminated in a victory in September 1920. In October 1922, Rebecca L. Felton became the first woman to serve in the U.S. Senate, having been appointed by the Governor of Georgia. And in November of 1921, the Beethoven Club of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, came into existence.

The women's club movement in the United States unfolded alongside the suffrage movement in the late 19th century. Clubs were sometimes quasi-revolutionary destinations where women could gather, and sometimes, plot their next moves in the fight for equality. But most women's clubs were founded with a goal of improving the lives of bright, curious, ambitious women through education and community building. Women were encouraged to defy custom and undertake serious study of intellectual topics and current events as well as promote social reforms in their communities. These clubs became the major vehicle by which American women could exercise their developing talents to shape the world beyond their homes.



# *The Founders*

**Del Brockway Boegel** was born in Adel, Iowa, and studied harp at a Sisters School in Davenport and later with Henry Williams, of the Minneapolis Symphony. She lived all her adult life in Cedar Rapids and raised six children. Her home was the site of the new club's second meeting. She was active in civic affairs, was regent of Ashley Chapter D.A.R., and served five years as governor of the Iowa Society of Mayflower Descendants. She died in 1948.



**Edna Barrett Jackson** was born near Clinton, Iowa, in 1881. A soprano, she studied at the New England Conservatory, University of Minnesota, Bush Conservatory, and Whitney School of Music in Boston. She made Cedar Rapids her home for 50 years, teaching at the old C.R. Conservatory of Music, appearing as a soloist before many audiences, directing groups at four churches, including 25 years at First Christian Church, and directing a YWCA chorus. For a time she wrote a weekly column for the *C.R. Gazette* entitled, "Music Notes." She died in 1949.



**Mary Allen Woodward** was a native of Cleveland, Ohio. She graduated in music from Huron College in South Dakota, studying piano and organ. She taught piano at S. Dakota State University, and in 1914 joined the Coe College faculty. She continued her studies at American Conservatory in Chicago, then returned to Cedar Rapids in 1919. As organist, she was affiliated with the following churches: First Congregational, People's, First Christian, and St. Paul's Methodist. She and her family left the city in 1929 to live in North Dakota and Idaho. She died in 1979.



# *Charter Members*

Katherine Nolan Andrews  
Del Brockway Boegel  
Berna Brock Buser  
Louise Crawford  
Florence Avery Gage  
Eleanor Houts  
Edna Barrett Jackson  
Flora McKay Kitchin  
Maria Leonard  
Grace Burt McGowan  
Myra Jones McGregor  
Louise Mansfield

Ruth Ebling Massey  
Virginia Paul Moore  
Wilfarene Gamble Rogers  
Adah Kaupke Seeley  
Margaret Deacon Severa  
Belle Giberson Steele  
Flora Hromatko Taylor  
Retta Jenkins Taylor  
Grace Ives Toms  
Margaret West  
Onalese White  
Mary Allen Woodward

## *Purpose of the Group*

The purpose of this group shall be to foster and promote the art of music and music interests and to create a deeper desire for things musical among its members and in the community and to bring together socially the musicians of the city and visiting musicians.



# *The Club Organizes, 1921-22*

***Music is the harmonious voice of creation, an echo of the invisible world, one note of the divine concord which the entire universe is destined to one day sound.*** - Mazzini

While literature and history were often the focus of club curricula, some clubs specialized in the study of law, music, the sciences, and other fields. In Cedar Rapids that November day in 1921, three women gathered following a D.A.R. meeting to discuss the formation of a music club for local women with musical talent. Their aim: the study and performance of serious music of all periods, styles, and nations. Del Brockway Boegel, a harpist, Edna Barrett Jackson, a soprano, and Mary Allen Woodward, a pianist, were our founding members with a vision that laid the foundation which has carried this club through the decades to this, our 100th anniversary. Back in October 1917, Mrs. Jackson had been the catalyst for “studio teas” — musical circles in people’s homes, to include performances, readings, and informal talks.

Twelve active musical people were selected that day and asked to meet the following week to make further plans, and three committees were organized: Constitutional, Membership, and Program. A week later, the committees met again at which time a constitution was formally adopted and the plans of the membership and program committees were laid out. At a December meeting final plans were heard and adopted. The name Beethoven Club was accepted; the name was chosen to honor Beethoven because it was felt he was an all-around composer, one who wrote for voice and all instruments. Upcoming meetings and programs were announced. The new club was set to meet two evenings a month, in homes and occasionally in churches and music studios. Membership was by invitation, and post-program refreshments were served. 27 charter members and four associate members made up the club roster that first year. Active members were required to be residents of C.R., at least 21 and have successfully done public musical work of some kind. Associate members were defined as those eligible to be active but unable to assume active member responsibilities; they could not vote or hold office. The original constitution limited active membership to 35 and associates to 25. Active members’ dues were \$2 yearly and associates \$3.

That half year, from January to June 1922, 12 meetings were held, with one open, or guest, meeting in Coe Sinclair Memorial Chapel. Several social affairs for visiting artists were held in Voorhees Hall. Membership numbered 30 actives and 10 associates. Members were almost all singers and pianists, with the exception of one harpist and one violinist, Flora Hromatko Taylor. The average attendance for the year was 20, and the total attendance was 201. Auditions were held three times a year. The programs, consisting of performances and papers by members and a few visiting local guests, included these: a review of Schools of Music, The Story of the Harp, Russian Music, Music of Paris in 1921, Modern French Music, Modern German Music, Organ Music, and The Ballet.

# *The Decade of the 1920s*

## *Traditions are Formed*

### **Musical Programs**

(see Addendum for full list of all year's programs)

In **1923** violinist Nellie Smith Richardson became a member, soloist, and chamber music participant. She and Flora Taylor joined forces in guest night performances with Dr. Freeman McClelland, violinist, and Flora's husband, James Taylor, cellist. They called themselves The Schubert String Quartet. Beginning in **1924**, and with rare exceptions during the next two decades, Beethoven Club observed National Music Week with a special program every May. **1924** was the year that several meetings began with 15 minute current events reports, a practice which was dropped the following year but revived in the late 1930s for a time. Guest night in **1924** welcomed the Harmonic Club from Clinton, Iowa. For the third guest night program in **1925**, an evening of chamber music in the art room of the Public Library was performed by a group known as the Haydn String Quartet: Joseph Kitchin and Everett Foster, violinists, Chester Houser, violist, and Dr. J. Lynn Crawford, cellist. The group had organized in 1909 with original members Norman Ballheim, Ernest Wiley, F. McClelland and J. Lynn Crawford. "An Evening of Opera" drew a capacity crowd at Peoples Church in April **1925**, the first of its kind attempted. It was called an unqualified success. In **1929-30**, the first Composers Program included music by local composers Grace Watson, John Mokrejs, Ralph Leo, Ernest Leo, Louise Crawford, and Amy Worth.

### **Honorary Members**

Honorary members were first elected in 1924, and the initial list included four men: John Mokrejs, E. A. Leo, Will Myers, and Jacob Schmidt. Frederick Schauwecker's name was added in 1927 and Dr. G. E. Crawford in 1928.

### **Patron Plan**

The Patron Plan began in 1925, with a list of 87 patrons and patronesses. These supporters contributed \$1 a year for the privilege, a fee which lasted for 50 years. In 1931-2, 365 patrons were listed in the yearbook. Patrons were a dependable and greatly appreciated source of revenue and remain so to this day. The annual Patron Tea began in 1930, the first occurring at Bruce more, hosted by Mrs. George Douglas, an "honorary guest" who often opened her home to the club for special occasions. The tea traditionally features musical performances by new members.

## **Beethoven Room and the Autograph Book**

In those early years one enduring tradition for the club was established, the celebrity autograph book, kept in the Beethoven Room, a space used and maintained in the old Coe College chapel. Sometimes used for meetings, the chief intent was to provide a place where visiting artists, there to perform, could rest and receive visitors. This tradition came to an end when, several years later, the room was needed as a practice room. The Beethoven Room guest book contains the autographs of several well-known greats: cellists Pablo Casals and Gregor Piatigorsky, composer Percy Grainger, singers Tito Schipa, Amelita Galli-Curci, Louise Homer, and Florence Macbeth, conductor Rudolph Ganz, pianist Alfred Cortot, and pianist-teacher Arthur Loesser. This book passed into the hands of one of the club's founders and was reportedly placed in the archives. What became of those archives is unknown. Many club scrapbooks are held by our Historian, but the autograph book is not among them.

## **Guest Nights**

Another lasting tradition which had a positive impact in the community were the guest nights, which began the very first year. These consisted of members performing for the public or hosting visiting ensembles or soloists from the area or some other city in Iowa. In 1924, four Beethoven Club performers were guests of the Harmonic Club in Clinton. The guest night in 1926, held at the Presbyterian Church, featured organist Marshall Bidwell, for which 500 invitations were issued. The following year, when the program consisted of highlights from the year's study of German composers, the *Gazette* reported attendance of several hundred.

In March 1929, guest night featured for the first time a performance of a work by a local composer. Honored was charter member of the club, Miss Louise Crawford, a member of the Coe music faculty. That evening she joined forces with Marshall Bidwell to perform her *Suite for Piano and Organ*. This piece had been almost fully composed during a six week stay by Miss Crawford in 1926 at the famed MacDowell Colony, a mecca for creative artists in New Hampshire. Miss Crawford was also honored with the publication of her article, "Autumnal Piano Music" in the November, 1926, edition of *The Musical Observer*.

## **Iowa Composers Program**

Beginning in 1929-30, the club began honoring Cedar Rapids composers with one program dedicated to such individuals and their music, held in the spring. In the 1950s this was expanded to include composers from all over Iowa.

## **Mozart Club**

Mozart Club, a junior musical club in Cedar Rapids, was organized in 1926, sponsored jointly by Beethoven Club and The Music Department of the Cedar Rapids Woman's Club, which furnished meeting space. Beethoven Club helped financially by contributing to a summer music

camp scholarship. After that time, Mozart Club programs were offered at Beethoven Club meetings from time to time. The first Phoebe Sherman Haman scholarship was awarded to a Mozart Club boy.

### **Atwater Kent Radio Contest**

In 1929 Beethoven Club sponsored the first local Atwater Kent auditions. This competition was begun in 1927 by the Atwater Kent Foundation, an institution established for scientific and educational purposes, named after Kent, a Philadelphia radio manufacturer. This was a nation-wide competition open to amateur singers between the ages of 18-25. Local auditions took place around the country, with each city's winner sent to a state contest. Winners there proceeded to one of five districts in the country, where one male and one female were chosen from each district to sing on the radio in a coast-to-coast network. Selection of the winners was largely by popular vote, counting for 60%. In 1928 over 60,000 singers auditioned. The ten finalists received cash prizes and some received paid tuition to a leading musical conservatory. The Cedar Rapids winners were Margaret Pratt, mezzo-soprano, and Gerald Pringle, bass.

### **Membership Growth and Changes in 1929**

By 1929, the year Herbert Hoover was inaugurated President, membership in Beethoven Club had grown to its stated limit of 35 actives and 29 associates. More violinists had joined, as well as several organists. One new member, Miss Maxine Boegel, was the daughter of one of our founders. This was also the year the club initiated some changes to the Constitution.

Originally, membership had been by invitation only, with members voted upon by the membership committee; it took only one blackball to keep an applicant out. By 1927-28, three nays were required. 1929 was the last year membership was by invitation. The new Constitution removed the limitation on the number of members and specified the number and type of selections to be performed by auditioners in voice, piano, organ, and strings. At the time, it wasn't anticipated that any "proper" lady would take up a blowing instrument!

1929 marked two other significant changes. Meetings had traditionally been held in the evening, with refreshments afterwards. Much discussion was held, with the outcome being that although a small group continued as a mostly social luncheon group, the majority shifted to morning meetings in a public place rather than in members' homes. Instead, rental space was procured, first at the Chamber of Commerce building on May's Island for seven years, then the Terrace Room at the Montrose Hotel from 1936 until February, 1938, when the club began meeting in the art room at the public library. Beginning in 1939 meetings were held at the YWCA until management there informed the club that due to renovations, our program dates might be compromised. The board voted to move from the YWCA. In the fall of 1990 meetings began being held in rooms at McKinley Middle School, an arrangement which lasted until 2000-2001, when only a few meetings were held there, with others occurring at various locations, including

the Fawcett Bldg. at 199 3rd Ave. SE. It wasn't until 2004-05 that Beethoven Club found its new permanent home at the Scottish Rite Temple on A Avenue NE. The club's two pianos moved along with us from the Montrose, to the YWCA, to McKinley, to the Fawcett Bldg. and currently (2021) the Scottish Rite Temple.

## *The Decade of the 1930s*

### **Musical Programs in the 1930s**

In November **1930** Beethoven Club held its annual Patrons Tea at Bruce more, hosted by Mrs. Howard Hall. In addition to members' performances, Marshall Bidwell played the pipe organ. In April **1932**, Beethoven Club presented an "Evening of Opera" at Bruce more. Parts of five operas were presented by members and guest artists including John Metcalf of Boston. Following the annual supper in May of that year, a burlesque was held. The term was used to mean a variety show with comical imitations and exaggerations. This became an annual tradition which continued for many years until it was changed to inviting talented students to perform. The tradition changed yet again to inviting the year's award winners to perform. In the **early 30s** a composition category was added, and in **1935** at the annual guest program, the entire concert was music composed by Louise Crawford, a pianist and founding member. In the **1935-36** year, a ten minute period in theory study conducted by Eleanor Taylor preceded each program. For the guest program that year, Ralph Leo directed the First Presbyterian Church choir. In the spring, "The Peasant Cantata" by J.S. Bach was presented by members, augmented by a men's chorus and dancers directed by Edna Dieman. **1936-37** saw the entire year's programs devoted to 20th century music, a year of serious study complete with a bibliography for members' private study and current events discussions. The Oberlin Woodwind Ensemble gave a program for the club in **1937**. The **1937-38** year concluded with a burlesque of "Faust" presented at the annual spring banquet at the Roosevelt Hotel, dinner for only 85 cents! The ladies loved the tradition of wearing floor-length formal gowns to their banquets. In the April **1938** guest program, Dr. Kitchin, who also conducted the C.R. Symphony, gave his services as conductor of a string ensemble. Cedar Rapids held a five-day celebration of national music in May, **1938**. The 5th day included programs by Beethoven Club, the Czech Fine Arts Society, and Mt. Mercy Junior College and Academy and an operetta "The Gypsy Trail" by Franklin Jr. High students.

### **Piano Purchases**

The club entered into a contract to purchase a Baldwin Grand in November 1929, but with Depression conditions, making the \$25 monthly payments became difficult. In 1932 the club requested a reduction in monthly payments to \$15. In 1934 a grand jamboree was held at the

First Congregational Church which culminated with the burning of the piano "mortgage." Finally, the piano was paid for. Down payment on a second grand piano, a Steinway, was made in 1936.

### **The Beethoven Club Chorus**

The 30s was also the heyday for the Beethoven Club Chorus. The first director was Edna Barrett Jackson, followed by Helen Kacena Stark. Accompanist was Lucy Bushnell Ambroz. The group represented Iowa at the National Convention of the Federated Music Clubs in 1933 in Minneapolis and again in Philadelphia in 1935, when the 14 members were one of 5,000 organizations represented. Money was raised for this event by holding a fete for 500 at the Cedar Rapids Country Club and solicited from donors and businesses. In April 1938 a massed chorus consisting of the Beethoven Club chorus, the Cedar Rapids Woman's Club chorus, and others from around the state combined to perform at the state convention of the Federated Music Clubs in Davenport. Money for this group was raised in a variety of ways: card parties, dances, performances out of town and in town at luncheons and department stores.

### **Mother-Daughter Pairs**

The 30s saw performances by two mother-daughter duos, vocalists Helen Kacena Stark and her daughter Lenore and organist Eleanor Taylor, daughter of charter member and soprano, Rette Jenkins Taylor. Both duos were active members for decades. Helen directed an evening of opera at Bruce more in 1932 with scenes from five Italian operas presented. Another mother-daughter pair was founder Del Brockway Boegel, a harpist, and her daughter Maxine, the first cellist in the club.

### **Another Duo**

In January 1938, Lucy Bushnell Ambroz and Helen Little Hickman first played together in a four-hand Sibelius number. So well did they collaborate, they were teamed up over many years, often for club programs, at the Iowa State Fair, on the radio, and with the Cedar Rapids Symphony.

### **Music Matinee**

In late 1936, Mrs. Edna Barrett Jackson and Mrs. Del Brockway Boegel were charter members of a new group called "Music Matinee." It was designed to be a music study club and had 13 members.

### **The End of the Decade**

1936-37 was also the year that a music library for students was built up at the public library. By 1937-38, the club was financially stable enough to be able to give support to the Community Concert Series, purchasing concert tickets for students, as well as for the Cedar Rapids

Symphony, purchasing a score and providing season tickets for students. In 1937 the club created two new membership divisions: one for performers on orchestral instruments and one for musicians between 18-21. The Mozart Club age limit was 18 and age 21 was required to be a regular member, hence the new age group. In 1938, Virginia Ohmann, a student of Flora Taylor and Coe Professor Joseph Kitchin, became a member, and was an active soloist and chamber music participant for many years. Bibliographies and current events discussions continued in 1938. In 1939, articles of incorporation were taken out, the same year the club moved from the Montrose Hotel.

### **The Tradition of a Year-End Breakfast**

No one can remember exactly when this tradition began, but this event did occur as early as 1939. These pleasant events took place in members' homes or gardens. To quote the writer of the first history of the club, Elisabeth Young, "If the always delightful May banquet is as satisfying as a tonic chord after a dominant seventh, the equally delightful June breakfast has come to be a joyful "Amen."

# *The Decade of the 1940s*

## **Programs of the 1940s**

An all-Bach program opened the Club year for **1939-40**, just two weeks after German planes attacked Poland, signaling the beginning of World War II. Without knowing war was imminent, the program committee had already planned to emphasize the universality of musical art, including an in-depth study of three German greats (the three Bs) plus studies of Hebrew music, Catholic church music, and American music. Sometimes recordings were used in order to fill out the study outline during the **1943-44** year's study of The Effect of War on Music. In September **1945** club members saw the choreography of a composition entitled "Ballet Fantasy." The musical score was composed by Miss Louise Crawford and the choreography by Miss Edna Dieman. This was the first time choreography had been presented in Cedar Rapids, as well as the first time a choreographer and composer had worked jointly on such a performance. Miss Dieman's dance students performed. **1945** also saw the club sponsor a benefit concert by Hendrik de Boer, a Dutch tenor, with proceeds used to carry on a musical therapy program for wounded war veterans. Another program that year was a memorable chamber orchestra program conducted by Jacques Jolas with C.R. and Mt. Vernon musicians playing 18th century music. Mr. Jolas was a professor at Cornell and a nationally known pianist. **1948-49** was the beginning of a tradition of devoting one entire program to Beethoven Club composers. For the Patron Tea that year, Edward Turechek, of Carroll, Iowa, (uncle of Alma Turechek) presented his compositions: a variety of chamber works, songs, and a piano duo in which he joined his niece. In the final year of the decade, **1949-50**, Beethoven Club joined with the music department at Coe College in entertaining American contemporary composer Henry Cowell on March 5, 1950. He appeared on the college's lecture circuit, and was noted for using his fists and elbows on the keyboard to sound his famous tone clusters. The club's chorus performed two of his pieces, "Lily's Lament" and "American Muse." The club's famed piano duo of Lucy Ambroz and Helen Hickman presented a benefit concert at St. Paul's Church as part of National Music Week in May 1950 and were featured in a March *Gazette* article detailing their 10 years of performing together.

## **New Member**

In November 1942 a new member was welcomed in the composition department. Mrs. Ronald Courson studied at Cornell College and Drake University. She won first place in the 1942 Iowa Composition Contest of the Iowa Federation of National Music clubs with a modern suite for the piano.

### **Precedents Shattered**

In 1946, an oboist, Helen Van Dyke Price, was voted into membership. Other wind players followed in 1948, 1949, and 1950. Meanwhile, the roster of Club composers was growing, and Miss Edna Dieman's name appeared under "Dance."

### **The Silver Jubilee Celebration, 1946-47**

Reflecting back on the 25 years since its inception, the programs for the 1946-47 year included a host of numbers revived from past programs, sometimes even performed by the original performer. A Centennial of Music in Iowa was also a highlight.

# *The Decade of the 1950s*

## **Programs of the 1950s**

In **1951**, the Baldwin Family Orchestra played during the annual dinner. The group consisted of Bernice, piano, Lester, violin, Nathan, trumpet, and Stephen, drums. Guest night in March of that year was held at the YMCA auditorium and featured a solo dance program by Edna Dieman, in the East Indian dance idiom of Schumann's "Frauen Leben und Lieben." Julia Bennett sang the cycle, with Alma Turecek at the piano. The auditorium was filled to its capacity of 250. In **1952** Beethoven Club members presented Humperdinck's 3-act opera "Hansel and Gretl," including one performance at Kenwood School. Also in April of that year the Beethoven Club Chorus and soloists joined with the Cedar Rapids Symphony in presenting Debussy's "Blessed Damsel" at Coe College. In January 1953 "Hansel and Gretl" was featured again. In November **1953** club member Mrs. James Skinner was featured as "Woman of the Week" in the *Gazette* which related her fundraising efforts for the Symphony. Guest night in February **1954** featured Mrs. William King, formerly a soprano soloist with Phil Spitalny's All-Girl Orchestra. Some highlights of programs in the 1950s were, numbers by a string orchestra under the baton of Henry Denecke, the C.R. Symphony conductor, music for every mood, a year in which each program's music related to a particular color, and a performance of the "Toy Symphony" of Haydn in December **1958**.

# *The Decade of the 1960s*

## **Programs of the 1960s**

In keeping with societal changes of the 60s, the theme for **1968-69** was Woman: Influence and Interpreter in the Art of Music. Festivals of music celebrated throughout the world was the focus of the **1969-70** season. In February, **1970**, a benefit concert for the club's Tribute Music Award was held at Coe College and featured cellist Douglas Moore, and pianist Professor Julian Bern of Cornell College.

## **A New Piano**

A committee was formed in 1964 to investigate the feasibility of overhauling, rebuilding, or replacing one of the pianos. After due consideration, the committee recommended to the club the purchase of a new Steinway from Hiltbrunner Music Co. With a 10% discount combined with an allowance of \$850 for the Baldwin piano, the final purchase price was \$2,884.50. That included a bench, delivery, six tunings, a three-year payment program without interest, and a

five-year guarantee. Delivered in April, 1965, the piano was first used by Mozart Club, and it was dedicated by Max Daehler at the annual banquet in May.

Because the club had initiated a piano fund in 1941-42, anticipating future need, payments on the new Steinway were completed in the three years non-interest period, with money from the fund, individual donations, and \$400 raised in 1965 with a Baroque and Elizabethan music and dance program. The outstanding affair was performed twice in the Daehler-Kitchin auditorium at Coe and featured harpsichord, string orchestra, and recorder and madrigal music complete with dancers and singers in period costume. The orchestra was conducted by Mr. John Duckwall, from the C.R. school system, and other participants included Mr. and Mrs. Denecke in the recorder group, Edna Dieman and Julia Bennett as directors of the dancers, and Torrence Carlson as director of the madrigal group.

### **Miss Crawford Featured**

Beethoven Club charter member Miss Louise Crawford, a pianist and composer, was featured in an April 17, 1966, *Cedar Rapids Gazette* article about her life. She taught history and music theory at Coe College from 1916 to 1941, composed hundreds of pieces, and wrote articles on pianistic subjects.

### **The Golden Anniversary - 50 Years in 1970-71**

Beethoven Club Celebrated its 50-year anniversary in this year, with an entire year's worth of program dedicated to its namesake, Ludwig von Beethoven. The history of the club to this point was completed and shared with members. A *Gazette* feature on January 17, 1971, detailed the history of the club, its fine chorus, service projects, student awards, and highlights of some of its events.

### **Death of Composer John Mocrejs**

John Mocrejs was born in Cedar Rapids in 1875. He was of Czech ancestry. He attended Coe College and then moved to Chicago where he studied and taught in the American Conservatory of Music. Later he moved to New York where he taught at the Virgil School of Music. He served as Music Chairman of the MacDowell Art and Music Club and for many years maintained a studio in Carnegie Hall. In 1945 Mocrejs moved to Los Angeles where he taught and judged recitals along the coast. He was Dean of the National Guild of Piano Teachers. He moved back to Cedar Rapids in 1966 and died November 22, 1968.

# MISCELLANEOUS

## *Awards*

### **The Phoebe Sherman Haman Award**

In 1947, 20-year member Phoebe Sherman Haman died. She was an organist and church choir director. She was also the first chairman of the National Music Week celebration in Cedar Rapids, serving in that capacity from its beginning in 1931 for several years. At the suggestion of Cora Capes Fisher, Beethoven Club established a scholarship in her memory. Initially the award was for \$100 and was to be applied to tuition for a music major at Coe College. The first winner was Rockwell Daehler in 1948, who was a guest on Beethoven Club's Guest Night in March 1950. Although the scholarship was initially limited to Mozart Club members, by 1958 it was opened to all high school seniors in Linn County planning on a music major or minor at Coe. On May 9, 1949, a benefit concert for the Haman scholarship was held at St. Paul's Church during National Music Week. It featured the club's duo pianists, Lucy Ambroz and Helen Hickman, and raised \$500 for the scholarship. Currently it is open to any student from the state of Iowa who plans to enroll or is currently enrolled at Coe College and will be earning credits in applied music.

### **The Edna Barrett Jackson Award**

Our second founder, Edna Barrett Jackson, passed away on December 25, 1949. Her estate left 30,000 in a trust fund to be used for vocal music scholarships for students at Coe, Drake, or similar institutions. The trust paid for tuition and all expenses. Beethoven Club assisted the trustee in setting up annual auditions. At the club's annual dinner in 1951, a new Beethoven Club award of \$125 named for her was announced. The recipient was to have a full year's study in voice at Coe, Cornell, or Drake, and the applicants were to be selected from a wider scope but were to be students who needed financial aid. Currently the award is open to any high school senior in Linn County who is accepted at any accredited college, university, or conservatory and will be earning credits in voice.

### **The Beethoven Club Tribute Award**

Established in 1963, the Tribute Award honors charter members and deceased members. It is open to any high school senior attending school in Linn County, who is accepted at any accredited college, university, or conservatory and will be earning credits in applied instrumental music.

### **The Flora Hromatko Taylor Award**

In 1971, Beethoven Club established this award in honor of charter member Mrs. Taylor, who died in 1969. She left a generous bequest of \$2000 for this award. It covered full tuition to the Interlochen Summer Music Camp for students of violin, viola, or cello and was to continue until it was awarded three times. The first, and for a long time the only, violinist in the club, Mrs. Taylor was largely responsible for the inclusion of string ensemble numbers on many programs. Flora often played as many as seven or eight solos annually, in addition to trios and quartets. She was a charter member of the symphony and taught privately and at the Vinton School for the Blind. The first award was given in 1971 to violinist Christy Moore, daughter of Beethoven Club member Mrs. Harold Moore. The highlight of her experience at Interlochen was playing with world-renowned pianist Van Cliburn. The 1972 award winner was violinist Kevin Kosek, and in 1973 it was cellist Bud Zenzen.

### **The Lucy Bushnell Ambroz Award**

The award was established in 1980 to honor long-time member Lucy Bushnell Ambroz. It is currently open to any high school senior attending school in Linn County, who is accepted at any accredited college, university, or conservatory and will be earning credits in the keyboard field (piano, harpsichord, organ).

Per the club's current by-laws, the amount of each award shall be determined annually by the Treasurer and the Awards Committee, so the amounts can vary depending on financial circumstances.

## *Special Programs and Artists*

Over the decades many talented guest musicians, soloists, choral groups, and instrumental groups have been featured by Beethoven Club. Most of these were listed within the year/decade in which they appeared.. Some were mentioned in the original history of the club or found in club programs in various scrapbooks without specific years, thus they are included here.

- From Coe College, Professor Ray's a capella choir
- University of Iowa Chamber Singers
- Washington and Kennedy H.S. groups
- Ruth Ray from Cornell College
- The Chamber Music Ensemble of Mt. Vernon
- Stuart Canin and Charles Treger from the University of Iowa
- Professor Max Daehler and son Rockwell Daehler, pianists

- Rose Ann Kubovec, pianist, Coe grad studying in N.Y.
- Jose Mariscal and Professor Julian Bern (Cornell College)
- Martha Lipton, contralto, Kenneth Spencer, bass-baritone, Harold Barlow, tenor
- Dr. A.M. Lippisch, lutenist, playing a Christmas carol program from a 15th c. lutebook
- Louise Crawford's "Ballet Suite" choreographed by Edna Dieman, accompanied by Louise
- Edna Dieman doing a pantomime "A Kiss in Xanadu" and another devoted to the historical development of medieval dance
- Cornell Orchestral Society (dance)

## *Federation Activities*

Beginning in 1924, Beethoven club became affiliated with the Iowa Federation of Music Clubs, which was organized in Davenport in December, 1917, with 13 charter member clubs. For several years, exchange programs with other Iowa music clubs were featured. The first of these "reciprocity" programs was with Clinton. By 1920 there were 94 affiliated clubs.

Connections with the Iowa Federation of Music Clubs were strong during the 1930s. In 1934 Mrs. Ruth Ebling Massey sang three compositions of Professor Louise Crawford at the Iowa Federation Convention in Des Moines, and the chorus sang at the banquet. Member Mrs. Stark directed the massed choruses of all the member organizations at the 1936 convention. Eleanor Houts was State President from 1938-40. Other Federation Presidents drawn from Beethoven Club were Emily Sanborn, 1944-46 and Margaret Heinrich, 1954-58. Holding other offices in the Federation at various times were Opalee Barnard, Ruth Burrill, Elizabeth Manz, Edna Mae Sila, Julia Talbot, Eleanor Taylor, and Alma Turechek. Our affiliation with the Iowa Federation lasted for 36 years.

Beethoven Club joined the National Federation in 1926. That affiliation ended in 1960 because the club's by-laws had a qualification (added in 1958) that excluded instruments "not traditionally associated with the symphony group but which are usually found in dance orchestras and similar groups of a popular nature." Because the National Federation had admitted the accordion to its approved solo instrument list in 1960, the Beethoven Club board decided to withdraw because of the incompatibility with its own by-laws.

Beethoven Club received an Award of Merit from the National Federation in 1955 for its All-Iowa Composers program, then two more awards in 1957 after the convention in Columbus, Ohio. One was for outstanding achievement in a "Crusade for Strings" program (to stimulate interest in strings and chamber music) and a second for "Parade of American Music." We also received a State Award in the yearbook contest.

In 1957 Beethoven Club received an Award of Merit from the Iowa Federation. The Federation had come to the aid of Ottumwa Heights College, which had been completely destroyed by fire. Instruments and music suitable for teaching were collected and presented to the college through

the combined efforts of Ruth Burrill and Marion Orr, plus committee members Marlis Windus, Ruth Carlson, and Ruth Schwartz.

### **Community Service**

Beethoven Club participated in many events throughout the community and the state in a variety of ways. Members entertained soldiers at Schick General Hospital in Clinton. The club also sponsored the music memory contests of 4-H girls for several years under the auspices of the Linn County Farm Bureau. In 1931 the first prize was a portable Victrola, presented by the Killian Co.

In 1934 Beethoven Club soloists and the chorus gave a concert before the Czech Fine Arts Society at Franklin School, to an audience of 225.

Programs of musical significance were encouraged on radio stations WMT and KCRG. Through the efforts of Margaret Heinrich, who served as Radio Chairman from 1948-1955, several fine programs were developed: "Listening with a Purpose," "Listening to the United Nations," "Concert Echoes," and the Mozart Club Hour, Beethoven Club Hour, and Iowa Federation Hour. Club members provided the entertainment for many programs. Largely through our members' participation and Margaret's efforts, the Iowa Federation received the National Radio Award at the 1949 Biennial Convention.

Beethoven Club maintained membership on the Cedar Rapids Children's Theater Board for six years (1952-1958) and in 1952 gave for them a repeat performance of the Beethoven Club production of Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel." Patricia Key sang Hansel, Helen DeWees, Gretel, Roberta Berry, the father, Margaret Pratt, the mother, Merrie Edmunds, the sandman, and Joan Orr and Eleanore Termohlen, the witch. Members of the club provided the orchestra and Edna Dieman directed the dancers.

In 1955 we manned the "Fish Pond" at the Czech Festival, a fair sponsored by the Women's Committee for the benefit of the Cedar Rapids Symphony. Our booth contributed \$140.25. We continued assisting the Women's Committee in subsequent fairs with the "Fish Pond" as well as the "Candy Booth," raising \$200.22 one year.

Symphony and Community Concert tickets have been purchased and distributed for interested students recommended by Beethoven Club teachers. In addition Beethoven Club has given financial support over the years to Mozart Club, the Youth Symphony, the Coe Chamber Series, the Cedar Rapids Concert Chorale, and the 5 Seasons Chamber Music Festival.

While affiliated with the Federation, we made yearly contributions to Federation projects, such as the Edgar Stillman Kelly Fund, a national scholarship of up to \$1000 in applied music or composition awarded to students 16-22 years old. Patti Skar, a pupil of Eleanor Houts, won a

National Federation Composition Contest award for juniors aged 16-18. Other Federation projects which benefited from our contributions were Music Therapy for Veterans, National Federation for Advancement of Music (commissioned works), Music in Hospitals, "Music for the Wounded" fund, which provided musical equipment for hospital ships, trains, and veterans hospitals, Little Red House (a practice/study house in the Berkshires) and the MacDowell Colony.

Beethoven Club and Coe College co-sponsored the Coe Chamber Music Series beginning in 1976.

### **Changes in Rules and Regulations**

From 1927 on, an application for club membership had to be accompanied by a musical history of the applicant. In 1955, application forms were adopted, thus ensuring uniformity.

Until 1957, associate members did not have voting privileges and could function on committees but not as officers. A liberalization of the By-Laws in 1957 made associates eligible to vote and hold office.

The following year, memorization was made optional for applicants auditioning for membership, and rating sheets were dropped.

# *The Second Fifty Years, 1971-2021*

This telling of Beethoven Club's second 50 years is not as extensive as the first one, so ably researched and written by the members acknowledged on page 1. As women moved into the workforce and had less time to devote to clubs such as ours, less attention was given to keeping track of events. Beginning in October 1978, the *Gazette* published only very brief announcements of club meetings, giving date, time, and place. When the club began, yearly scrapbooks were created, but apparently some have gone missing or may have not been prepared. Separate yearly scrapbooks do not exist after 1949-50. One large one was compiled in 1971 to cover the years 1921-1971, in honor of the club's 50 year anniversary. A note in the front of that scrapbook indicates it was created to replace one lost in 1958. The last scrapbook is dated 2003-2014. Yearly program books were collected from every year since the club's inception and are archived at The History Center in Cedar Rapids.

## *Momentous Happenings*

### **Eleanor Taylor Honored**

Beethoven Club member Eleanor Taylor, a Coe College professor of music, retired from the faculty in May 1973 after 35 years. Eleanor was organist at First Presbyterian Church She was named professor emeritus of music and was honored by a dinner at Gage Memorial Union where she received a "Book of Letters" from colleagues, friends, and former students.

### **Louise Crawford Dies**

Charter member Louise Crawford died in December 1973 at the age of 83. She was a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music and Wellesley College and was a well-known composer and writer for musical publications. She performed for Beethoven Club frequently and her compositions were often featured by members.

### **Lucy Ambroz Dies**

Long-time Beethoven Club member Lucy Ambroz died in August, 1977, in Peoria, Az. She was 80 years old and lived in Cedar Rapids most of her life.

## **Linda Williams**

Linda Williams was a pianist, musicologist, composer and wife of the Cedar Rapids Symphony conductor Richard Williams. While they lived in Cedar Rapids she was a member of Beethoven Club. She graduated from Brigham Young University and received an MA degree from California State University, Long Beach. During her student days she won several prizes and awards and a national composition contest. She composed for practically every medium: piano, voice, orchestra, band, and chamber ensemble. In 1977 her composition "Triptych" was performed by the symphony, and in May, 1978, her work for orchestra and four soloists, "An American Song" written based on three poems of Iowan Paul Engle, was premiered by the Cedar Rapids Symphony. She was a part-time faculty member at Mt. Mercy College. The college choir performed her piece "Sketch Book" in March 1979 at the Fourth Annual Iowa Composers Concert co-sponsored by Coe College and Beethoven Club. Several other pieces by her were presented at other Iowa Composers Concerts as well.

## *Changes*

The By-Laws were updated and revised in 2019. Minor updates and changes were made:

- The board sought and enacted non-profit organization status with the assistance of an attorney.
- The purpose of the organization was changed to:
  - 1) To foster and promote the art of music and musical interests.
  - 2) To create a deeper desire for things musical among its members and in the community.
  - 3) To assist visiting musicians with their work in the community.
  - 4) To encourage interest in serious music among young people by whatever means seem appropriate and desirable, such as the sponsorship of incentives to further study through an awards program.

# *Conclusion*

There have been many unsung heroines in our ranks in the last 100 years. This history does not do justice to all who have contributed their talents, whether on committee work or in hours of practice, to bring programs of the highest musical quality to Beethoven Club and to the community. That we have lasted for 100 years is a testimony to the dedication to the mission of this club and the passion for music shared by all.