Calendar of Events

December 2016
Wed. Dec. 14  Konversationsabend: Music and Poems, 6:00pm

January 2017
Sat. Jan. 7  Women’s Auxiliary Appreciation Party, 10:00am
Wed. Jan. 11 Trip to St. Joseph’s University for the St. John’s Bible, 10:30am
Fri. Jan. 13 Friday FilmFest: Die Wahlverwandtschaften|Elective Affinities, 6:30pm
Sat. Jan. 14 Buchclub: Johannes Bobrowski’s Levins Mühle/Levin’s Mill

February 2017
Sat. Feb. 4 Women’s Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10:00am
Wed. Feb. 8 Konversationsabend, 6:00pm
Fri. Feb. 17 Friday FilmFest: Victoria, 6:30pm
Sat. Feb. 25 6th Annual Bierfest, 1:00pm

March 2017
Sat. Mar. 4 Women’s Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10.00am
Wed. Mar. 8 Konversationsabend, 6:00pm
Fri. Mar. 17 Friday FilmFest: A Coffee in Berlin, 6:30pm

...Save the dates for our next “Wister and More!” concerts:

Sun. Jan. 8  Claire Huangci, piano
Selections include Scarlatti sonatas, variations on works by Brahms and Handel, and
Chopin polonaises

Sun. Jan. 29 “Wister and More” Concert

Sun. Feb. 19 EStrella Piano Duo
“Musical Travels through Europe”, featuring works by Debussy, Schubert, Busoni,
Grieg, Mussorgsky, and more

Sun. Mar. 19 The Casimir Trio
Variations on Beethoven’s “Ich bin der Schneider Kakadu,” Op. 121a; Brahms’s Sonata in
A Major, Op. 100 for violin and piano; and Smetana’s Piano Trio in G Major, Op. 15

All of our events are open to the public.
We welcome members and non-members alike.

Most events require tickets. Please call or email the office to inquire about purchasing:
215.627.2332 info@germansociety.org
Program

Music of Ephrata

O Tauben Einfalt!

Die Zeit ist aus, mein Leben ist

Jesu, rufe mich

Conrad Beissel (1691-1968)
Transcribed by Lucy Carroll

Music of the Shaker Community

I Have a Little Drum

This be De Way

Shirley, Massachusetts
New Lebanon, New York

Colonial Era Music

Happy in the Lord
Based on “Jesus My All to Heaven is Gone”

John Cennick (1718-1755)
Arranged by Alice Parker

Spiritual

Hold On!

Deo Gratias (1605)

A Chorale Celebration

Candlelight Carol

An Advent Processional

O Little Town of Bethlehem
   Sung to an alternate melody

What Sweeter Music

Traditional Spiritual
Arranged by Jester Hairston
William Byrd
Arranged by Daryl Hollinger
John Rutter
Donald Pearson
Joseph Barnaby
John Rutter
Angels, From the Realms of Glory
Arranged by Reginald Jacques

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Sung to an alternate melody
John B. Dykes

The First Noel
Arranged by David Willcocks

The Best of Rooms
Randall Thomson

Stille Nacht
Franz Gruber

There will be one 15-minute intermission.
We offer refreshments from our bar during that time.

Your ticket to our concert also invites you to a complimentary reception with the artists in the Ratskeller (downstairs) following the performance.

The Ephrata Cloister Chorus
Program Notes

The music had little or no air or melody, but consisted of simple, long notes, combined with the richest harmony. It is impossible to describe my feelings upon this occasion. I almost began to think myself in the world of spirits….

Reverend Jacob Duché, 1771

By the time Jacob Duché heard the Sisters of Ephrata singing, music and other elements of the once vibrant community were on a decline. Having lost their founder and teacher, Conrad Beissel, in 1768, discipline in the society was growing lax, and few new members were coming to join the monastic group. Even so, Reverend Duché spoke of the music in the most glowing of terms. The sound of Ephrata’s original compositions, however, remained silent for nearly two centuries until the formation of the Ephrata Cloister Chorus in 1959. This group of dedicated volunteers brings to life the music of the Ephrata Cloister as a special educational program sponsored by the Ephrata Cloister Associates. Wearing white robes patterned after those worn by the Brothers and Sisters of Ephrata in the mid-eighteenth century, the modern Chorus performs at the historic site and throughout the region. In addition to works from Ephrata’s past, the group performs composi-
tions from other early American communities, including works from the Shakers, the Moravians, the Harmonists, the Kelpius Community, the First New England School, and African American spirituals.

The Ephrata Cloister

One of America’s earliest communal societies, the Ephrata Cloister was founded in 1732 by German settlers seeking spiritual goals rather than earthly rewards. Gathered in unique European style buildings, the community consisted of celibate Brothers and Sisters, and a married congregation of families. At the zenith of the community in the 1740s and 1750s, about 300 members worked and worshipped at the Cloister.

The lifestyle of the celibate members was characterized by strict discipline and self-denial. The community members became known for their music, calligraphy, and printing. Following the death of the last celibate member in 1813, the married congregation formed the German Seventh-Day Baptist Church.

Members continued to live and worship at the Cloister until 1934. In 1941, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania acquired the historic site and began a program of restoration and interpretation. Today, nine original buildings are part of a 28-acre complex open for visitors.

Music of the Ephrata Cloister

Music played an important role in life at the Ephrata Cloister. In 1747, Conrad Beissel published the first American treatise on harmony in the preface to his hymnal Das Gesäng der einsamen und verlassen Turtle-Taube (Songs of the Lonely and Forsaken Turtledove). Beissel wrote music with his own rules for composition in which he used “master notes” and “servant notes” to create harmony. Using Beissel’s rules for composition, the members write over one thousand a cappella hymns and anthems. The texts of these hymns often describe difficulties on the earth and promise of entrance to Heaven. Many are filled with floral imagery or speak of the pilgrim’s life. The sound of Ephrata’s music, performed with heads bowed and mouths almost closed, seems to have made the strongest impression on early visitors. Special care was taken to preserve the voice for singing, including a diet prescribed by Beissel for singers devoid of meat and milk products. Rehearsals were conducted nightly, and singers were required to use two books simultaneously, one with words, the other with musical notation.

The Ephrata Cloister Chorus

The Ephrata Cloister Chorus was formed in 1959 under the leadership of Dr. Russell Getz, a professor at Lebanon Valley College. Dr. Getz worked to transcribe a selection
of early Cloister music into a modern notation that could be performed by the group. A dozen of Dr. Getz’s transcriptions were published in 1971, and his pioneering work continues to serve as the core of the Chorus’ repertoire. In recent years, scholars have continued to investigate Ephrata’s music, and more original Cloister music has been transcribed, which offers more insight into the rich musical heritage of the community. To place Ephrata’s music in context, the Chorus also performs works by other early American composers.

Today, the Ephrata Cloister Chorus operates on an annual schedule from September through late May. The performance year is divided into two seasons: Fall (September through December) and Spring (January through May or early June). The Chorus is part of a day-long presentation on the Sunday of Columbus Day weekend in October, and the Charter Day celebrations in mid-March. In December, the group presents the annual Christmas at the Cloister program on two evenings. In May, the Chorus offers an annual Spring Concert that features a major classical work. The group usually performs one or two additional concerts in the region in the fall and spring.
Benefactors of the 2016 / 2017 Classical Concert Series

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In Memoriam Gunda Hack

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We also wish to acknowledge with thanks the generous support received from The Arcadia Foundation and The Philadelphia Cultural Fund for this season of our music program.