

Short History of Music at Christ Church Cathedral

Music has played a key role in the life of Christ Church Cathedral for well over 100 years. Music has enhanced the liturgical life of the parish, moved worshipers to deeper faith, and served as a form of outreach to the community. Excellence and quality have long been the goal of the many esteemed organists, choir directors, and assistant organists who have served the Cathedral. There are many in the parish who remember fondly the services of Parvin Titus (1927-62), Gerre Hancock (1962-71), Searle Wright (1971-75), Henry Lowe (1975-84), and Ernest Hoffman (1984-2006). Since 2007, the music program has been under the leadership of Interim Director of Music, Charles Hogan.

For many decades Christ Church Cathedral had only one adult choir composed of both dedicated volunteers and professional singers. This choir traditionally sang for Sunday morning worship services, evensongs and special programs throughout the year. Under the leadership of Ernie Hoffman, the choir served as choir-in-residence on four occasions in cathedrals in England; in August of 1993 at Durham Cathedral, August of 1999 at Winchester Cathedral, August of 2002 at Salisbury Cathedral, and in August of 2003 at Wells Cathedral. The current music program has expanded and now includes a cathedral choir comprised of volunteers and professionals, a parish choir made up of volunteers who sing two or three times each month, a Cathedral Choir of Boys & Girls comprised of young singers from Cincinnati area Episcopal Churches, and finally an *a capella* chamber choir known as ðFaburdenö which leads evensong services.

Two Christ Church musical traditions serve as a form of outreach to the community. In 1940 the Rev. Nelson Burroughs established the Boarø Head and Yule Log Festival at Christ Church. This colorful musical pageant involves the talents of the choir, soloists, a professional orchestra, and a cast of over 200, and has continued as an annual gift to the people of Cincinnati for 68 years. Additionally, Music Live at Lunch is offered on the first and third Tuesdays at 12:10 from October through May. These free concerts have for many years featured a wonderful mix of talented local musicians.

When the current church was completed in 1957 a new organ was installed. Built by Walter Holtkamp, Sr., the three manual, five division instrument contains 54 stops and 70 ranks of pipes. Christ Church Cathedral has hosted a number of fine organists over the years and has long been a place where organ students from the College-Conservatory of Music are encouraged to give degree recitals.

The music program at Christ Church Cathedral is currently enjoying a period of growth, experimentation, and transition. As the downtown area of Cincinnati continues to expand and flourish, the Cathedral's ministry through music will undoubtedly be a part of the greater mission of the Cathedral for years to come.