Historic Ephrata Cloister

One of America’s earliest communal societies, the Ephrata Cloister was founded in 1732 by German sectarian 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. The lifestyle of the celibate members were characterized by strict discipline and self-denial. The community members became known for their music, calligraphy, and printing.

Music of the Ephrata Cloister

Music played an important role in life at the Ephrata Cloister. In 1747, Conrad Beissel published one of the nation’s earliest treatises on harmony in the preface to his hymnal 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. The texts of these hymns often describe difficulties on earth and the promise of entrance to heaven. The sound of Ephrata’s music, performed with heads bowed and mouths almost closed, seems to have made the strongest impression on early visitors.

Ephrata Cloister is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
Tom Wolf, Governor, Nance Moses, Chair
Andres Lowery, Executive Director.

With generous support from the Ephrata Cloister Associates, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of this National Historic Landmark.

---

The music had little or no air or melody, but consisted of simple, long notes, combined with the riches 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
**Support Ephrata Cloister Chorus**

YOU can help keep the historic music of Ephrata Cloister alive by becoming a sponsor today!

The annual budget of the Ephrata Cloister Chorus is approximately $10,000. Unfortunately, as with most group of this nature, performance fees and ticket sales do not cover all the expenses.

You can make a difference! Simply complete the attached form and return it with our contribution to support the Ephrata Cloister Chorus.

**Levels of Giving**

**$2000+ : Sponsor**
Donors at this level receive:
- Name listed in all programs
- Tax Deductible donation
- Ephrata Cloister Associates newsletter
- Invitation to special Ephrata Cloister events
- If a business, a full-page ad in every program and 4 special tickets for employees

**$751 - $1999 : Paton**
Donor benefits at the level are the same as above, however business receive a half-page ad in every program and 2 special tickets for employees.

**$251 - $750 : Friend**
Donor benefits at this level are the same as above, except without advertisements.

**$50 - $250 : Contribute to Individual Concert**
Name will be listed in the program for the concert of our choice. Please be sure to indicate which of the following you would like to support on the adjacent form.
- Christmas at the Cloister
- Charter Day
- Spring Concerts

**$49 and below : Donor**
Name listed on program

---

**The Ephrata Cloister Chorus**

In the 1950s Dr. Russell Getz began transcribing a selection of early Cloister chorales into a readable modern notation. Under his direction in 1959, a group of volunteers set out to revive Ephrata’s musical heritage by forming the Ephrata Cloister Chorus. In recent years, continued research continues to add more pieces to the modern repertoire. This continued research 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. Mr. Martin Hinkley serves as the choral director, and Mrs. Becky Degan is the accompanist.

---

**Performance Schedule**

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 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.