

MORAVIAN MUSIC FOUNDATION

Finding aid for

Ernst Immanuel Erbe Collection

Date range: 1870-1954

Bulk dates: 1880-1954

Finding Aid created by Nola Reed Knouse, April 10, 2019

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Summary Information:

Creator: Moravian Music Foundation, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Extent: 6 boxes, 8.5 linear feet

Abstract: The Ernst Immanuel Erbe Collection includes printed and manuscript music by American Moravian composer Ernst Immanuel Erbe (1854-1927), music sketch books, four diaries, and several commonplace books. The collection was given to the Moravian Music Foundation by his daughter, Louise Erbe, in 1978.

Call number: Erbe – Moravian Music Foundation, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Language: The material is in English, with some German, with about half of the works with no linguistic content.

Access and Use:

Acquisition Information: These materials are in the custody of the Moravian Music Foundation, Winston-Salem, NC

Access Restrictions: The record group is open to research.

Copyright: Copyright is with the Moravian Music Foundation

Cite as: [item], Erbe [number], Moravian Music Foundation.

Background Information:

History:

Ernst Immanuel Erbe (Dec. 30, 1854, in Bern, Switzerland – March 6, 1927, in St. Louis, MO) was an organist, composer, linguist, and accountant, the son of a Moravian pastor (Carl Immanuel Erbe). Educated largely at Herrnhut, Saxony, Erbe began to play as a substitute organist when only nine, becoming a regular organist at the age of 14. His ability as a composer came to light in his 17th year, when, in a competition conducted by the violinist Joachim in Berlin, Erbe's work was returned to him with the comment that the school had asked for compositions by students, not teachers. Later in life he wrote a book on harmony in English, French, and German, but it was not published.

Erbe came to America at age 35, following his brother. He settled in Lincoln, Nebraska, and married Marie Schiffer. He was in charge of the music at an Evangelical Synod church in Louisville, KY, for a brief period, then moved to St. Louis, MO, where he served as organist and choir director at several churches of the Evangelical Synod. In addition, he taught piano and string music, and worked as a bookkeeper at Eden Publishing House.

Scope and Content:

Erbe's compositions include sacred and secular vocal works, organ works, piano works, and instrumental chamber pieces, some of them the same music as some of the keyboard works. His music is neither trite nor difficult but accessible to amateurs and professionals alike. He accomplishes variety through the use of chord inversions and modulations to closely related keys. His music was a direct message of the text that was not obfuscated by musical complexity, homophonic settings or works with limited use of imitation, and a simplicity and directness of expression. In an era, where the giants of music (Dudley Buck and Amy Beach) overshadowed people like Erbe, his compositional practice perhaps represents what the rest of America may have been singing.

Also included in the collection are manuscripts of his *Harmonielehre* and *Kontrapunkt* and materials related to these, manuscript sketchbooks materials relating to the *Evangelical Hymnal*, a journal and teaching materials, manuscript and printed articles, and correspondence.

Searchable Terms:

Title:

- Erbe Collection

Corporate Names:

- Moravian Music Foundation

Subjects:

- Cantatas, Sacred
- Christmas music
- Choruses, Sacred (Mixed voices)
- Duets (of various kinds)
- Easter music
- Music copybooks
- Organ music
- Piano music
- Psalms (Music)--103rd Psalm (for example)
- Sacred songs (High voice)
- Sacred songs (Low voice)
- Songs with piano
- String quartets

Contents List:

Erbe 1-30 are vocal compositions mostly accompanied by keyboard; items 31-43 are piano works, some piano four hand; items 44-50 are organ works; and 51-60 are instrumental chamber music.

Erbe Box 1

1. *Aus tiefer Not*, Opus 8/2, 2 copies
2. *Christmas Anthem*, 2 versions
3. *Easter Cantata*, two versions, one English in manuscript; one in German, published 1893 by Pilger-Buchhandlung, Reading, PA.
4. *Ein Kindelein so löblich*
5. *Frühlingsglaube*, poem by L. Ulhand. Two versions exist: one SATB with no accompaniment noted; the other, accompanied by piano throughout, begins with tenor and soprano solos and continues with chorus.
6. *Fürwahr, er trug unseres Krankheit*, published by Blätter für Haus-und Kirchenmusic, 1911.

7. *Gott ist unsre Zuversicht*, published by Pilger-Buchhandlung, Reading, PA. Three movements.
8. *Hosianna!*, published 1893 by Pilger-Buchhandlung, Reading, PA. Three movements, in German.
9. *How Amiable*, orchestra score, keyboard score with vocal cues, string parts. No vocal parts or score.
10. *Jubilate, Psalm 100*
11. *Jubilate, Psalm 100*
12. *Komm, heil'ger Geist, Kantate auf das heil. Pfingstfest*. Three movements, SATB, organ. Published 1893 by Pilger-Buchhandlung, Reading, PA.
13. *Kyrie and Agnus Dei*
14. *Motetten*, opus 8: 5 motets for SATB choir: *Selig sind die Toten/Out of the Depths; Frolocket mit Händen/Sei getreu; Herr, neige ...; Unsre Seele; Mach' dich auf/Herr, neige ...*
15. *Nunc dimittis*
16. *O Behold*

Erbe Box 2

17. *Our Passover*. Title page for "Our Passover: A Sacred Cantata for Chorus and Six Solo Voices with Organ or Piano Accompaniment". Words by F. W. Herzberger. Dedicated to Trinity Choral Society, Edmund Seuel, Choirmaster, St. Louis. Published for the author by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. Copyrighted 1918 by F. W. Herzberger.
18. *Psalm 97 (The Lord Reigneth)*, one printed copy and two manuscript copies. Printed by Concordia, no date.
19. *Sei getreu (Be Thou Faithful)*: one copy, manuscript, English only, no organ; one printed and photocopy extracted from unidentified source; two copies in German, printed in *Blätter für Haus-und Kirchenmusik*, February 1910, pp.38-40; German text only.
20. *Selig sind die Toten*, opus 8/2, two versions: one printed in *Blätter für Haus-und Kirchenmusik*, November 1910, pp. 14-16. Another version English "Blessed Are the Dead", photocopy from unidentified source.
21. *Siehe da, eine Hütte Gottes bei den Menschen*, noted "Festgesang auf das heilige Weihnachtsfest für gemischten Chor mit Orgelbegleitung". Published by German Evangelical Synod of North America; ink inscription on cover indicates "Eden Publishing House, St. Louis". May also be part of the "Weinachts-Cantate" (item 22 below).
22. *Weinachts-Cantate*, title page, published 1892 by the German Evangelical Synod of North America. Two movements; *Siehe da...* begins on page 13.
23. *Evening and Welcome Song*. Published C. W. Thompson & Co., Boston. Four printed copies, one signed by Erbe.
24. *He will not suffer thy foot ...*
25. *Hark! from the Woods* (Marching)

26. *Abendfeier*, published as Heft 23 of *Völkstümliche Lieder für Männerchor* by Hermann Beyer & Söhne, no date. Poem by C. P. Ph. Spitze. Also in this folder: *Er ist's*, Heft 24, with poem by E. Mörike; *Wanderlust*, Heft 24.
27. Three English songs: *O let me only...*; *Dear Affection* (poem by Burns); *Remembrance* ("Why ask me if I think of thee").
28. Psalm 42 (*As the hart panteth*), several copies, one with both German and English.
29. Two German songs, in both the original German and English versions. *Auf blauen Wassern* (poem by Anna Elisabeth John; English version by Erbe, *On Sky-Blue waters*); *Einkehr* (poem by Franz Walden); English version by Erbe, *The Guest*.
30. *Wer an Ihn glaubet*
31. Etudes (5): 2 copies, both manuscript.
32. March in F major; two versions, both in manuscript. One for piano, the other arranged for four hands. Also arranged for strings.
33. Menuett (from Sonata, Erbe see 34 below). Two copies.
34. Sonata, two copies. Four movements: Allegro moderato (c minor); Adagio (C major, missing in one copy); Menuetto – Allegretto (G major), Finale – Allegretto (c minor). Same music in string quartet version, Erbe 60 below.
35. Waltzes and Polkas. Two waltzes, two polkas. Opus 12. Complete version for piano; miscellaneous instrumental parts for polkas, and the first bars of polka in G survive in an orchestral score (flute, A clarinet, 2 cornetti in A, 2 horns in F, trombone/bassoon, strings).

Erbe Box 3

36. Allegro: full score, first and 2nd parts.
37. Marsch, piano four hands.
38. *Tanzende Schneeflocken* (Scherzo). Four versions or copies, including one for string quartet in open score.
39. *Humoreske*, two versions.
40. *Jolly Birds*, German title *Lustige Vögel*, published by Thiebes Piano Company, St. Louis.
41. *Der Bach*. Printed version published in October 1912, in *Blätter für Haus-und Kirchenmusik* as opus 11.
42. *Bootfahrt*, two versions: opus 11/5, opus 18/4.
43. *Im Walde* (In the Woods)
44. Organ book: small manuscript book containing a number of short voluntary-type pieces and a setting of *Schmücke dich*
45. Organ chorales: 13 organ chorale settings.
46. Manuscript book, an octavo-size book, some with loose pages. About a dozen keyboard works, some found in other folders as well.
47. Preludes (organ): 25 pieces
48. Organ Studies: 25 pieces
49. Orgel Ms.: various short preludes, fugues, studies, chorale preludes, fragments; some are not organ music.
50. *Harmonium*, 8 short preludes
51. *Autumn Flowers*: full score and separate parts for string quartet.

52. *Cantabile* for violin and piano. One full score, one complete violin part, one incomplete score.
53. *Humoreske*, arranged for string quartet from Op. 11/2 (Erbe 39). Also another manuscript for keyboard version of the piece.
54. Instrumental piece: scored for treble C instrument, 2 treble B-flat instruments, 2 more B-flat treble instruments, bass C instrument, strings. Incomplete. Written on the backs of programs printed for a recital given by Erbe's School of Music, Jan. 31, 1903.
55. *Klavierquintet* (or "Kl. quartet") – an arrangement of the Allegro for 2 pianos. Present are finished string parts, incomplete piano part, and score complete for strings but not piano.
56. *Marsch* in F major, same as Erbe 32, arranged for strings.
57. *Moderato for Violine und Piano*. Published violin part (inscribed "Elisabeth G. Erbe") and unfinished ms. of violin part with piano bass line. Published as Heft 40 of "Für's Haus" by Hermann Beyer & Söhne, Langensalz, no date given.
58. *Scherzo*, for strings (violin 1, violin 2, viola), one full score in ink.
59. *Sonate für Horn und Klavier*. One full score with keyboard labeled "Orgel"; one solo instrument part in E (i.e., not transposed). Also a version for B-flat cornet and keyboard.
60. *Streichquartett*, four movements; music the same as that of the Sonata for Piano, Erbe 34.

Erbe Box 4

Harmonielehre manuscript
 Kontrapunkt manuscript
 Translations of both

Erbe Box 5

Correspondence
 Letter copy book (with opus list inside back cover)

Erbe Box 6

Evangelical Hymnal materials
 Violin School
 Keyboard and cello exercises
 Journal and notes
 Teaching materials
 Manuscript for article "The Origin of Music"
 Published article: "Anständige Kirchenmusik", in *Evangelisch-Lutheranisches Schulblatt*,
 54. Jahrgang (July 1919)
 Manuscripts fragments
 March by Carl Erbe

Related Materials:

Researchers interested in this archive may also wish to consult the following resources:

The Music of the Moravian Church in America, edited by Nola Reed Knouse. Rochester, New York, The University of Rochester Press, © 2008.

The Unpublished Choral Music of Ernst Immanuel Erbe (1854-1927), by Ian B. Aipperspach. Ph.D. Dissertation, Texas Tech University, 2013.

Seventeen Organ Chorales, by Ernet Erbe, edited by James Boeringer. Charlotte, NC: Brodt Music Company, 1983.

The Story of Our Hymns: The Handbook to the Hymnal of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, by Armin Haeussler. St. Louis, MO: Eden Publishing House, 1952.

Evangelical from the Beginning: A History of the Evanglical Congregational Church and its Predecessors-The Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church, by Oscar Handlin, edited by Terry M. Heisey. Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2006.

A Brief History of the Evangelical Synod of North America, by Scott Holl. St. Louis, MO: Eden Theological Seminary, 2008.

GemeinKat, online catalog of the Moravian Music Foundation.

<https://moravianmusic.on.worldcat.org/discovery>

Search for the collection by title: ti=Erbe Collection.

Other materials in the Archives and Foundation holdings may relate to the topics in this archive. See the archivist for further research assistance.