



The Dresdner Philharmonie North American Tour, 1909

cluding Gottfried August Homilius, Christian Ehregott Weinlig, Ernst Julius Otto, Oskar Wermann, Otto Richter and Rudolf Mauersberger, and has led the choir to great artistic maturity.

Today, the Dresden Kreuzchor consists of 150 singers of school age between 10 and 18 years old comprising soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices. Thus it is possible for the choir to sing as a purely boys' choir, as a purely men's choir or as a mixed boys'/men's choir.

The young Kruzianers are selected from schools from all over Germany at the age of seven. The boys who are gifted with a beautiful voice are prepared for the admission to the choir by the music schools of the country in most cases, in compliance with a special artistic and musical programme. At the beginning of their fourth year at school the boys are admitted to the Kreuzschule and to the Kreuzchor and are prepared for their first performance from this date on.

As a rule, the Kruzianers attend this school and are members of the choir until they are 18 years old. During their membership in the choir they undergo a 10 years' compulsory education. After that the best pupils take the university entrance examination.

Apart from school classes, instrumental lessons and voice training are compulsory, too, with 10 music teachers being responsible for the specialized musical training of each individual pupil.

On average the choir performs 140 times every year with the traditional annual performances of the *Christmas Oratory* by Bach, the *St. Matthew Passion* by Bach, the *High Mass in B minor* by Bach, and the *German Requiem* by Brahms, as well as performances when the Dresden Music Festival is opened and during the Festival, including premieres. In the symphonic choral music it is mostly accompanied by the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra of the Staats-

kapelle. The Kreuzchor tours have taken them to the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Italy, Finland, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Austria, Sweden, Spain and Japan.

THE DRESDNER PHILHARMONIE

The Dresdner Philharmonie (Dresden Philharmonic), as it is currently known, began as the orchestra of the city of Dresden. It was not until after the First World War that the old orchestra was given the title Dresdner Philharmonie by the newly-arrived J.G. Maczek, artistic manager, in 1923. It was under the leadership of Maczek that the orchestra became popular in Germany and the rest of Europe.

In 1934 Maczek was succeeded by Paul van Kempen, who continued to mold the orchestra into a world-class ensemble. Under the guidance and leadership of van Kempen the orchestra became world-famous through foreign tours and appearances at a number of festivals begun by van Kempen between the years 1935 and 1942, the main festival being the annual "Dresden Musiksommer."

The orchestra disbanded in 1944 upon the declaration of total war, and began concerts again June 8, 1945 within one month of the war being over.

During the immediate period after the war the orchestra performed in available performance spaces until the new Staatsoper was constructed in 1947. With the orchestra's move into the new theatre (sharing it with the opera), a new artistic manager, Heinz Bongartz, secured the financial future of the orchestra in 1950 when the Dresdner Philharmonie became a state institution. Under his leadership the orchestra increased its foreign tours, including return visits to North America and western Europe. In 1961 Bongartz was instrumental in having the philharmonic ap-

pointed as a founder-member of the Prague Dvořák Society.

Bongartz's successor was H. Forster who continued the fine traditions set by Maczek, van Kempen and Bongartz. Forster continued the song cycles which the orchestra had become famous for performing, and in honour of their Mahler cycles the philharmonic won the Gold Medal for Services from the International Gustav Mahler Society of Vienna in 1966.

Kurt Masur was appointed artistic manager in 1967, and in 1969 moved the orchestra to their new home at the Palace of Culture. In 1972 Masur left the orchestra, and Gunther Herbig became its principal conductor until 1977, followed by Herbert Kegel.

The minnesingers of medieval times in Germany did not just sing love poetry, but made political statements and may have played a role to smooth over the sometimes bitter rivalry among dukes and kings. Today, the Dresdner Kreuzchor and Dresdner Philharmonie would like to make a small contribution towards their tradition by celebrating with you the first anniversary of German unity; and, at the same time, a call for Judeo-Christian co-operation in Europe and the Americas.