

Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra Papers 1939-2009

Founded in 1938, the Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra (PVSO) is one of the oldest community symphonies in the United States. The PVSO had its beginnings during the Great Depression, when a group of friends would meet in Shep Raymond's cabin to make music together. Informal weekly music sessions by the Greenfield Civic Orchestra—as they called themselves—turned in to occasional public appearances. Harold Leslie, a violinist, joined the group and had a profound impact on the amateur performers. Upon returning from a trip to hear the Albany Symphony Orchestra, Leslie—along with another performer, Harold Livingstone—decided to form their own orchestra in Greenfield. The idea for the Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra was thus born.

The first rehearsal occurred on May 23, 1939, and consisted of 22 players; by the time of the first concert, in December 1939, the group had ballooned to nearly fifty musicians. A concert in the second season was reviewed by Virgil Thompson, a critic for the *New York Herald Tribune* and respected musician. He wrote in his column on April 29, 1941, “The program was distinguished, the playing admirable. Rarely have I heard an amateur orchestral concert so glowing with musical life. It even played in tune.” While the orchestra has not been reviewed in a New York paper since, reviews in local papers have been favorable, and have indicated that the orchestra has improved tremendously since its early days. “Ringers” (professionals brought in to strengthen a section of the orchestra) once comprised one-third or more of the orchestra were, by the 1980s, employed far less frequently.

The Pioneer Valley Symphony Chorus, founded in 1962, also contributed to the success of the symphony. The chorus, like the symphony, attracted an enthusiastic group of volunteers. The PVSO enjoyed an enormous 50th anniversary celebration in 1988. The 50th season saw between 80 and 85 volunteers, mostly amateurs, but also some professionals, who all came together in celebration of the orchestra.

One of the key reasons for the success of the PVSO was the dedication of Nathan Gottschalk, who became the orchestra's Music Director in 1956, and who would go on to serve for thirty-six years. Over the years, he—and the orchestra—attracted a wide range of soloists, including renowned musicians like Claude Monteux in 1942, and Rudolf Serkin in 1953, while also providing young soloists the opportunity to launch their careers.

As of 2015, the Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra has operated for 76 seasons, now under the direction of Musical Director Paul Philips, who joined the orchestra in 1994 upon Gottschalk's retirement. There are more than 200 hundred volunteer musicians with the symphony. Approximately 95 instrumentalists and more than 120 singers participate annually in six symphonic concerts, as well as family, educational, and choral programs.

Scope of the collection:

The Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra Papers provide a comprehensive view of the organization's history, ranging from record keeping to newspaper clippings to internal committees. The materials in this collection span the period 1939 to 2009, and include concert programs, newspaper clippings, publicity materials, correspondence, financial records, board meeting minutes, and fundraising efforts. The bulk of the collection falls between the 1970s and the 1990s. The records of PVSO shed light not only on financial aspects, but also on the musicians and people (e.g., Women's Auxiliary and committees) that championed the orchestra, and kept it in operation for more than 70 years. Researchers will find information on PVSO—a non-profit—and its financial struggles, and see how, in spite of challenges, they were able to raise funds for three endowments, one bearing Nathan Gottschalk's name. They will also, through viewing the collection, witness how a ground-roots organization could have such a vast impact on its community.

Items of note in the collection include the original draft of the PVSO's bylaws; photographs from the 1940s; programs from the 1930s and 1940s (including the very first program); and a few pieces of Nathan Gottschalk's correspondence, as well as his obituary.

Container List

Box	Folder	Description
1	1	Articles – 1939, 1941-1947, 1950-1959
	2	Articles – 1960-1969
	3	Articles – 1970-1979
	4	Articles – 1980-1082
	5	Articles – 1983-1986
	6	Articles – 1987-1988
	7	Articles – 1989-1990
	8	Articles – 1991-1992
	9	Articles – 1993-1994
	10	Articles – 1995-1996
	11	Articles – 1997-1998
	12	Articles – 1999-2000
	13	Articles – 2001-2003
	14	Articles – 2004-2005
	15	Articles – 2006-2008
2	1	Board of Directors – Bylaws
	2	Board of Directors – Committees (Ad Hoc, Finance, Nominating, Search)
	3	Board of Directors – Committees (Long-Range Planning)
	4	Board of Directors – Correspondence (1976-1987, some undated)
	5	Board of Directors – Minutes (1940s-1950s, mostly undated)

	6	Board of Directors – Minutes (1960s)
	7	Board of Directors – Minutes (1970s)
3	1	Board of Directors – Minutes (1980s)
	2	Board of Directors – Minutes (1990-1991)
	3	Board of Directors – Minutes (1992-1995)
4	1	Budget – (1940-1941, 1951, 1974-76)
	2	Budget – (1982-1990)
	3	Budget – (1990-1994)
	4	Budget – (1995-1997)
	5	Budget – (1998)
	6	Budget – (1999-2000)
	7	Budget – Board Contributions
	8	Budget – Correspondence - record keeping
	9	Budget – Income Statements (1994-1997)
	10	Budget – Information, general
5	1	Budget – Miscellaneous Receipts
	2	Budget – State Funding for the Arts
	3	Budget – Ticket Information
	4	Chamber Players – General Information
	5	Chorus – Articles
5	6	Chorus – Balloon Fest (with photos)
	7	Chorus – Board of Directors & Annual Meeting 1983
	8	Chorus – Cantamus (1960s with photos)
6	1	Chorus – Correspondence
	2	Chorus – Members & Attendance
	3	Chorus – Programs
	4	Chorus – Trip to Italy, 1990
	5	Chorus – Résumés & Job Information
	6	Collaborations
	7	Community Groups
	8	Correspondence (1941-1998)
	9	Deposit of Materials to PVMA
	10	Endowment - Gottschalk
	11	Endowment – Jean Pitman Turner (Chorus)
	12	Endowment - Screening (1988) & Endowment for the Arts
7	1	Endowment – Solicitations & Responses
	2	Family Concert – Arts Lottery
	3	50 th Anniversary of the Orchestra
	4	Friends of the Symphony
	5	Fundraising (mostly 60 th & 61 st Anniversary)
	6	Fundraising – Endowment
	7	Fundraising – General (including Arts Funds)
	8	Fundraising – Kiwanis Club
	9	Fundraising – Sponsors
8	1	Gottschalk, Nathan - Correspondence, Articles, & Obituary

	2	History
	3	Insurance – Information (1992-1997)
	4	Investments - Correspondence (1996-2000)
	5	Investments – Fidelity Statements (1993-1997)
	6	Investments – Funds Yearly Statements (1990-1994)
	7	Investments – Edwards, A.G. (1994)
	8	Investments – Money Market Account (1989)
	9	Investments – New England Funds Statements (1989-1996)
	10	Investments (June 2000-2001)
9	1	Investments (2001-July 2002)
	2	Investments (2003-2005)
	3	Marketing (1940s-1970s)
	4	Marketing (1980s-1990s)
	5	Marketing (2000-2008)
	6	Membership Lists
	7	Personnel Lists
10	1	Press Releases (1944-1979)
	2	Press Releases (1983-1986)
	3	Press Releases (1987-1988)
	4	Press Releases (1989-1990)
10	5	Press Releases (1991-1992)
	6	Press Releases (1993-1994)
	7	Press Releases (1995-1996)
	8	Press Releases (1997-1998, 2007-2008)
	9	Press Releases – Art Council of Franklin County (1998-1999)
11		Programs (1938-1978)
12		Programs (1979-1995)
13		Programs (1995-2003)
14		Programs (2003-2009)
15	1	Reviews (1960-1964, 1970-1979, 1980-1989)
	2	Reviews (1990-1994)
	3	Reviews (1995-2000)
	4	Reviews (2003-2007)
	5	Schedule of Concerts (1939-1988)
	6	Symphony Week (1976)
	7	School Programs
	8	Tax Forms – State (1990s)
	9	Tax Forms – U.S. (1950-1980)
	10	Tax Forms – U.S. (1990-1996)
	11	Teachers’ Guide (Spring 1995)
	12	Women’s Auxiliary (File from Ann Aarons)
	13	Women’s Auxiliary – Member Lists
	14	Women’s Auxiliary – Financial Information
	15	Women’s Auxiliary - Correspondence

Other Media

Box 16: Photographs

Folder	Description
1	1940s – 1970s
2	1980s – 2000s
3	Chamber Players
4	Chorus – 1 st Performance 1962
5	Family Concert – March 26, 1994
6	Gottschalk, Nathan 1960s - 1970s
7	Gottschalk, Nathan 1980s – 1990s
8	Halloween – Northampton 1996
9	Orchestra Members
10	Perlman, Navah – Concert Feb. 1997
11	Philips, Paul
12	Rehearsal 1996
13	Soloists

Box 17: Cassette tapes, 1989-1996

Box 18: CDs, 1995-2007

Oversize Material

Two 50th anniversary resolutions from the United States House of Representatives, and the United States Senate.