

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Music Department

**Title: Carl Retter Collection**

Overview of the Collection

**Reference Code:** Pittsburgh Music Archive #42

**Creator:** Carl Retter (1850-1921)

**Dates:** 1854-1921

**Extent:** 1 box, 4 music score manuscripts (bound), 1 volume of published songs

**Language:** English

**Repository:**

Music Department, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh-Main, 4400 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

**Acquisition Information:** This collection was donated to Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

**Copyright:**

**Restrictions:**

**Requested Citation:** Carl Retter Collection, Pittsburgh Music Archive #42, Music Department, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

**Finding Aid Created by:** Joelle Killebrew

**Related Finding Aids:**

- [Charles C. Mellor Collection](#)
- [Adolph M. Foerster Collection](#)

Notes on the Collection

**Historical Note**

Carl Retter arrived in Pittsburgh in 1871 from Munich, Germany. He was a pupil of Hans von Bulow. Retter was a leading figure in Pittsburgh music circles as a conductor, composer, pianist, organist, and teacher. He organized the Symphony Society in 1877 and was one of the founders of the Art Society of Pittsburgh. He was a main conductor at the May Music Festivals in Pittsburgh 1883, 1884, and 1885.

**Scope and Content Note**

- Photograph of Retter
- Promotional flyers
- Personal documents
- Correspondence
- Article about the origin of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
- Scrapbook of music programs and newspaper clippings, 1874-1886
- Music score manuscripts
- 1 volume of published songs, bound

## Container List

### **BOX 1**

#### **1. Retter biography, obituary, booklets, and photograph**

- Promotional flyers for music lessons (piano, organ, singing), 1906.
- Promotional flyer, 1907.
- Booklet explaining Retter's teaching methods and texts used for lessons.
- Photograph of Carl Retter.
- Obituary of Carl Retter, July 9, 1921.
- Bio of Retter from Musical Courier, 1895.

#### **2. Personal documents**

- 15 personal documents, diplomas, and certificates, in German (1854-1874; originals).

#### **3. German school documents**

- 3 undated German school documents

#### **4. Manuscript music**

- Special Responses Nr. 2 & 3
- Booklet "1776"
- Scenes for "1776" - 3 sheets

#### **5. Letter and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra history**

- Letter from Edith Taylor Thomson, press agent for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, asking Retter for his account of the history and origin of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, dated October 4, 1910.
- Retter's 3-page written account on the founding of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

#### **6. Scrapbook - Music programs and newspaper clippings, 1874-1886**

- Newspaper clippings mentioning Carl Retter, previewing or reviewing his piano or organ recitals, or as an accompanist or conductor. Some articles from German language newspapers, most from Pittsburgh region.
- Concert program: Tableaux Vivants and vocal concert in aid of the Ladies Relief Society of Allegheny, March 18, 1875, Library Hall.

- Concert program: Wm., H. Sherwood, piano recital, July 28, 1886, Pittsburgh Female College.
- Concert program: Pupils of Carl Retter, no date.

### **Manuscripts and Published Songs**

1. Volume 1: Te Deum in C, by Carl Retter. Score and parts, bound separately. 7 volumes total.
2. Volume 2: Te Deum in C (Festival), by Carl Retter, in a binder, not bound. Score and parts for orchestra.
3. Volume 3: Scene, Act I aus der oper "1776" by Carl Retter
4. Volume 4: Te Deum, no. 2, by Carl Retter. Score and parts, bound separately. 5 volumes total.
5. Volume 5: Songs (published) - vocal and piano
  - The night has a thousand eyes
  - When I am gazing in thine eyes
  - Oh! Thou art like a flower
  - When thou art nigh!

### See also

- Baynham, Edward G. [A History of Pittsburgh Music, 1758-1958](#) - rqML200.8 .P6 B39 1970x
- [Biographical Musical Directory of Western Pennsylvania](#) - qr780.2 B48 v.1
- [Pittsburgh Music Information File](#)
- [Pittsburgh Concert Programs](#) vols. 11-14