



Brown County Civic Music Association - Nearly 100 Years of History

Brown County Civic Music, as part of a nationwide grassroots “civic music” co-op movement, began its long and enduring history in January **1927**, bringing the world’s greatest artists and famous musical attractions to Green Bay. Membership was \$5 per person. Nearly 1000 joined!



On **March 23, 1927** Edith Mason, prima donna of the Chicago Opera opened the season at the Columbus Club Auditorium (currently WBAY studios). In years 2 and 3, **1927-28**, there were 1204 members and the season expanded to 5 concerts.



By **1947-48** season, membership grew to 1,750 with the appearance of violinist Isaac Stern.


1954 marked further formalization, with incorporation as a non-profit organization officially dedicated to pursuing “educational work in the field of music, to foster and coordinate civic interest in music “.



The **1960s** ushered in the “Glory Years” for Brown County Civic Music as well as the Packers. In **1961** Brown County Civic Music’s season brought in Metropolitan Opera tenor, Richard Tucker, with additional performances. The season pass was \$7 per person and \$4 for students.

In **1962** The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra did their first out-of-town engagement with BCCMA.

In the **1980s**, BCCMA became its own booking agent. With the fall of the Iron Curtain, excellent ensembles and soloists previously unknown to the West entered the market, and with cheaper air fares and a strong dollar, European and Asian groups became more accessible.

 Civic Music’s low-overhead model, special niche and fervent support base give it an ongoing presence. With a minimum number of canceled performances, BCCMA kept its mission going through Covid 19 and has emerged on the other side to continue its commitment to world class classical performances and education for the community including its youngest members.



Today: With a bold new brand and a dynamic partnership with the Weidner Center, we’ve ushered in a new era of exceptional live concerts. With carefully chosen concerts, and the support of community members and corporate sponsors, **VIRTUOSI LIVE!** will continue the tradition of providing the enduring gift of classical music to all generations into the future.