The Moravian Music Foundation announces the receipt of a significant gift facilitating the conversion to WorldCat of book and card-catalog records of early American Moravian musical treasures. In the early 1990s the Moravian Music Foundation (MMF) began planning for a retrospective conversion project for the catalogs of its approximately six-thousand-volume reference library, and ten thousand music manuscripts and early imprints. These collections were cataloged in the 1960s and 1970s, funded by grants from the NEH and various corporations and foundations. In the 1990s MMF raised funds for preservation microfilming of the archival music collections; with the Moravian Archives, designed, raised funds, and built a new archival facility; initiated a series of recordings of Moravian music; and, like many other nonprofits and music libraries, struggled for survival in a challenging economic climate. No funding was designated toward converting the card catalog to electronic records, but staff and board members together developed plans for the project for some time in the future.

Various preliminary tasks were undertaken as time and limited funding allowed, including the development of a library acquisition and retention policy; clarification and corrections of information on the catalog cards; and in-house cataloging of special collections. In the early years of the twenty-first century the plans were revised to reflect technological advancements, and several grants were submitted. In each case, MMF was the bridesmaid and never the bride. The economic stresses of the close of the first decade of the twenty-first century led us to believe this project would never happen.

With the close of 2012, however, MMF was greeted with news that would change our plans. We received notification of a significant bequest from someone with whom we had never corresponded; someone who had not been a supporter of MMF; someone of whom, frankly, we had never heard. Philanthropist Louise Dieterle Nippert (27 August 1911–23 July 2012) of Cincinnati remembered MMF in her will, leaving
the foundation a substantial bequest, which allowed MMF to move toward realizing these plans. The MMF board designated most of the bequest for investment, but also designated up to $500,000 to be used immediately for this project. We began by engaging two full-time staff members—Barbara Strauss as project manager and David Blum as project cataloger—and the project has been moving at a breathtaking pace ever since the last quarter of 2014.

How did Mrs. Nippert ever come to hear of MMF? The story goes back more than sixty years. In 1947 the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra hired Thor Johnson, son of a Moravian minister, as its first American-born conductor. Thor, a native of Wisconsin Rapids, attended Friedberg Moravian in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, as a youth. He completed his undergraduate work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, went to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor for graduate study, served in the U.S. Army, and then joined the faculty of the Juilliard School. While at Juilliard, at the age of just thirty-three, Thor was appointed musical director of the Cincinnati Symphony. A champion of Moravian music, Thor led the effort to begin both the Moravian Music Festival (conducting the first eleven festivals beginning in 1950 until his death in 1975) and the Peninsula Music Festival in Door County, Wisconsin.

While with the Cincinnati Symphony, Thor met and worked with Louise Nippert, a fourth-generation Cincinnatian and professionally-trained singer who was a soloist in Mahler’s Fourth Symphony under Thor’s conducting. Mrs. Nippert and her husband Louis (great-grandson of Proctor & Gamble founder James Gamble) were extremely generous philanthropists, quietly donating hundreds of millions of dollars to Cincinnati institutions in the areas of music, medicine, education, and even the zoo. Usually giving anonymously, Mrs. Nippert said, “Giving is enough—you see how it affects everything, and you don’t have to sit back and pat yourself on the back.” Thor Johnson’s passion for Moravian music must have inspired Mrs. Nippert; the fruits of her generosity are already evidenced in MMF’s growing online catalog.

The massive record-conversion project from card and book catalogs, databases, spreadsheets, and paper inventories is a team effort. The foundation’s collections are located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in Moravian Church archival facilities, each housing collections from associated congregations. There are twenty-three major collections and sixty-three smaller or personal collections. The immediate goal is to have records for the major collections online by winter 2016/17.

The foundation’s catalog, GemeinKat (https://moravianmusic.on.worldcat.org), is a WorldCat Discovery catalog. Working cooperatively
with Backstage Library Works, the record sources are scanned and converted to MARC records, with additions according to specifications for each collection. Records are loaded into WorldCat, with local holding records providing the collection title and shelf location of each manuscript or printed score/part and its preservation microfilm location. Catalogers Barbara Strauss, David Blum, and Donna Rothrock provide additional subject headings and information to provide a context for these musical works, such as music for the Moravian 13 August celebration, or music for Holy Saturday.

Collections for the collegia musica in Salem and Lititz, and the Philharmonic Society of Bethlehem include works by Haydn and Mozart, J. C. Bach, K. F. Abel, Johann Stamitz, and a host of lesser-known composers. A number of these are the only known copies in the world. Copies of published works and printed parts comprise the bulk of these orchestral collections. Published works bear labels from sellers in Lancaster and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and New York; a significant number of published works were also acquired in Europe. The Moravians performed oratorios, such as Handel’s *Messiah*, Rolle’s *Der Tod Abels*, Graun’s *Der Tod Jesu*, and Haydn’s *Die Schöpfung*.

The congregational collections date from the 1740s through about 1850s. They include original compositions by Moravian composers, copies of anthems from published works, such as Christian Latrobe’s *Selection of Sacred Music* (1806), and contrafacta using choral works from oratorios.

Manuscript records with encoded musical incipits will be loaded into RISM (Répertoire international des sources musicales). Holdings for early published music will be added to RISM as well.

Barbara Strauss
Moravian Music Foundation