

"Bennington...In the Beginning" Opens in Jennings

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Bennington...In the Beginning, a collection of photographs and scores by Bennington's first Music Chair Kurt Schindler, curated by Susan Reiss '79, is on display in the Jennings

lobby now until the end of March.

Bennington College is now in its 85th year, but you can see exactly how it looked during its first, thanks to **Kurt Schindler** (1882-1935).

Schindler taught music at the College from 1932-33 and took over 400 photographs during that time. In true Bennington fashion, he also worked across disciplines, combining his work as the College's first ever Music Chair, with composing, photography, and a study of cultural anthropology that took him all across Europe and Russia.

A selection of what **Susan Reiss** '79, who heads the Jennings Music Library and organized the exhibit, called his "incredible body of work," is currently on display in the lobby of Jennings. For the exhibit, Reiss has curated a selection of his photographs, which show the first Bennington College students and professors, both candid and posed, as they explore and make use of the campus as a space for learning and recreation. The 400 negatives were given to Bennington in the 1950s, and shed a unique light onto Bennington's earliest history. On display as well is a selection of his choral and folk music scores, including a book of over 900 Spanish and Portuguese songs, which he collected and translated.

Outside of his work with the College, Schindler founded the MacDowell Chorus, which became the Schola Cantorum of New York. As a composer, he worked with the best in his field.

“The more I researched the tremendous contributions of Kurt Schindler, the more intriguing I found the life of this musician, folklorist, conductor, linguist, and musicologist,” writes Reiss, in her introduction to the exhibit.

Reiss compares his work collecting, recording, and transcribing Russian, Spanish, Portuguese and Catalan folk songs to “what Alan Lomax did for the American folk song.” Posthumously, a book of over 900 folk songs that Schindler collected, called *Folk Music and Poetry of Spain and Portugal*, was published by the Hispanic Institute in the United States.

The show is open now and will run until March 31, 2017. In addition to the photographs and choral works, there is also an audio station where you can listen to some of his recordings.