

April 19, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Photos provided by request.

**THE BACH CHOIR OF BETHLEHEM HOLDS 109<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL BACH FESTIVAL  
MAY 13-14 & May 20-22, 2016**

The picturesque and historic town of Bethlehem Pennsylvania and its famous Bach Choir of Bethlehem will once again attract Bach lovers from around the world to the **109<sup>th</sup> Annual Bethlehem Bach Festival** for two weekends in May –**May 13-14 and 20-22, 2016**. The Bach Choir, Bach Festival Orchestra, and distinguished soloists perform under the direction of Greg Funfgeld, artistic director and conductor, now in his 33rd season.

**The complete schedule is listed on pages 2-4 of this release. Tickets are available online at [www.bach.org](http://www.bach.org) or by calling 610-866-4382 Ext. 110 or 115.**

The centerpiece of the Festival continues to be the **annual performances of Bach's *Mass in B Minor* given its American premiere by The Bach Choir of Bethlehem in 1900**. Soloists for the *Mass* and other concerts include Festival favorites Rosa Lamoreaux and Agnes Zsigovics, sopranos; Daniel Taylor, countertenor; Benjamin Butterfield, tenor; William Sharp, baritone; and Daniel Lichti, bass. The Festival also welcomes **world renowned Bach scholar Christoph Wolff** author of "Johann Sebastian Bach the Learned Musician" to give the Distinguished Scholar Lecture – "*Never ending News about Bach's Life and Works.*"

National and international reviews gave high praise to the **re-imagined Bach Festival** in 2015:

*"A glorious friendship between a great composer and the orchestra, conductor and choir at the heart of an extraordinary town"* – David Perlman, [The Whole Note](#), Toronto.

*"Their choral sonority is so rich you can feel it in your bones."* – Barrymore Laurence Scherer, [Wall Street Journal](#).

*"The Bach Choir of Bethlehem must surely be one of the most extraordinary musical institutions in the world"* – Michael Miller, [New York Arts](#).

The 109<sup>th</sup> Festival builds on this success by combining the traditional large choral works by Bach with such offerings as ***Brandenburg Concerto No. 2* with internationally renowned trumpet soloist Terry Everson and Paul Taylor 2 Dance Company performing with the Bach Festival Orchestra** in a program of Bach and Handel—"*one of the most exciting, innovative, and delightful dance companies in the entire world*" – [New York Times](#). Bach is also performed in more intimate settings such as Incarnation of Our Lord Church and the Saal of the Moravian Museum – delightful sacred and secular concoctions of Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, and Corelli featuring the Festival's instrumental and vocal virtuosi; and there are opportunities to sing Bach Chorales with Greg Funfgeld and members of The Choir.

In addition to the annual playing of Bach chorales by the Festival Brass Choir outside on Lehigh University's beautiful campus; there is **continued involvement of young musicians** in pre-concert youth ensemble performances by the Lehigh Valley Suzuki Violin Program, Young People's Philharmonic Brass Ensemble, and the Bel Canto Children's Chorus of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem. **Festival artist-in-residence** Paul Taylor 2 Dance Company offers lecture demonstrations at William Allen High School and Northeast Middle School. Young talent is also featured in **Zimmermann's Coffee House**, a late night informal event held café style in the charming Peter Hall, Moravian College. The audience listens to Baroque chamber music performed by young musicians while enjoying German fare, wine and beer. Surprise appearances by Greg Funfgeld and friends add to the festivities.

**109<sup>th</sup> Bethlehem Bach Festival May 13-14 and 20-22, 2016**  
**The Bach Choir of Bethlehem and Bach Festival Orchestra**  
**Greg Funfgeld, Artistic Director and Conductor**

**Soloists**

Agnes Zsigovics, soprano  
Rosa Lamoreaux, soprano  
Daniel Taylor, countertenor  
Benjamin Butterfield, tenor  
William Sharp, baritone  
Daniel Lichti, bass

**Guest artists**

Terry Everson, trumpet  
Paul Taylor 2 Dance Company  
Christoph Wolff- Distinguished Scholar Lecture

**Pre-concert performances:** The Festival Brass Choir, the Young People's Philharmonic brass ensemble, the Lehigh Valley Suzuki violin program, and the Bel Canto Children's Chorus.

**Festival Tickets: Adults \$15-\$58, Students \$9-\$20**

**Fridays May 13 & 20, 2016**

**2pm Distinguished Scholar Lecture – Dr. Christoph Wolff**

Dr. Wolff, formerly Adams University Professor at Harvard University and Director of the Bach Archive in Leipzig.  
Room 145, Zoellner Arts Center

**4pm - Bach performed in intimate and historic settings**

**Choice A) Bach at 4 – How Brightly Shines**

Incarnation of our Lord Church  
Thomas & Buchanan St. **Close to Zoellner Arts Center – an easy walk or shuttle bus ride.**

Greg Funfgeld hosts an intimate concert in the beautiful Incarnation of Our Lord Church and introduces works performed by members of The Bach Choir and Bach Festival Orchestra including the Festival premiere of Cantata 96 *Herr Christ, der eige Gottessohn* (Lord Christ, only son of God). Tricia Van Oers, soprano recorder, paints a wonderful image of Christ as the Morning Star. A Handel group features the "Entrance of the Queen of Sheba" and Agnes Zsigovics, Daniel Taylor, and Benjamin Butterfield reveling in Handel arias and duets. Principal cellist Loretta O'Sullivan plays Vivaldi's Sonata No. 2 in B-flat major.

**Bach Chorale Sing Part 1** Arrive early for **Bach at 4** and sing Bach chorales with Greg Funfgeld and members of The Choir before the concert. Singers of all levels are welcome and sheet music is provided.

**Choice B) Chamber Music in the Saal – Treacherous Love**

Saal of the Moravian Museum, Church St. Bethlehem

This year's concert in the Saal of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Moravian Museum explores Bach and the Italians. Charlotte Mattax-Moersch, harpsichord, performs Bach's virtuosic *Italian Concerto*, Elizabeth Field, performs Corelli's Violin Sonata, Op. 5, no. 3 in C Major. Rosa Lamoreaux, soprano, William Sharp, baritone and Robin Kani, flute, perform Italian works by Handel and two of Bach's secular cantatas on themes of treacherous love with texts in Italian - BWV 203 *Amore traditore* and 209 *Non sa che delore*.

Please note: The Saal is on the second floor of the museum and is not handicapped accessible.

### **5:45pm – Buffet Dinner with informal talk – Dr. Larry Lipkis**

Butz Lobby Zoellner Arts Center, Lehigh University

Dr. Lipkis is Professor of Music and Composer-in-residence at Moravian College

### **8:00pm – Easter Oratorio - SONGS OF JOY**

Packer Memorial Church, Lehigh University

The Choir's season-long series of Bach's major works for the great festivals of the church year concludes with the *Easter Oratorio* –“Our hearts once awash in sadness and adrift, transcend the pain and envision songs of joy” The program also includes Cantata BWV 100 *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan* (God's actions are considered well) and Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2* with Boston based and internationally renowned trumpet soloist Terry Everson.

### **Saturdays, May 14 and 21, 2016**

#### **10:30am – Brimming Over – Paul Taylor 2 Dance Company & Bach Festival Orchestra**

Baker Hall, Zoellner Arts Center

Paul Taylor 2 Dance Company returns to perform with the Bach Festival Orchestra for the first time since 2009. They bring us two Festival premieres—the luminosity and incredible romance of *Aureole* performed to movements of Handel's Concert Grossi and the glittering beauty and emotional detail of *Cascade* performed to movements from Bach's harpsichord concertos with soloist Charlotte Mattax-Moersch. The program ends with Bach Festival favorite *Esplanade* performed to Bach's double violin concerto with soloists Elizabeth Field and Claire Bright and “brimming over with Taylor's signature youthful exuberance.”

“One of the most exciting, innovative, and delightful dance companies in the entire world”

- **New York Times**

#### **12:30pm Festival Lunch**

Butz Lobby, Zoellner Arts Center May 14

Rauch Business Center Atrium May 21

This special event, open to the public, includes a conversation with one of the Festival soloists

#### **2:00pm Bach Chorale Sing Part 2**

Another chance to sing Bach chorales for 20 minutes with Greg Funfgeld and members of the choir. Gather by the flag pole close to Packer Church, and you will be accompanied by The Festival Brass Choir.

#### **2:30pm THE MASS IN B MINOR (Part 1) and 4:30pm (Part 2) – Packer Memorial Church**

A glorious tradition treasured by thousands of people from throughout the United States and beyond since the American premiere of Bach's monumental Mass at the first Bethlehem Bach Festival in 1900.

## **8:30pm-10:30pm ZIMMERMANN'S COFFEE HOUSE**

### **Chamber Music, Food & Drink**

Peter Hall, Moravian College

Back by popular demand, this late night unbuttoned event is modeled after Zimmermann's Coffee House of Bach's time in Leipzig. This year the event is held café style in the charming Peter Hall at Moravian College with its famous 19<sup>th</sup> century stained glass windows. For a cover charge of \$15 you can listen to Baroque chamber music performed by young musicians (chosen by audition) and purchase German fare, wine and beer. There will also be surprise appearances by Greg Funfgeld and friends to add to the festivities.

**Sunday May 22, 2016**

## **1pm YOUNG AMERICAN SINGER COMPETITION FINALS**

Peter Hall, Moravian College – Free Admission, no tickets required

Sponsored by the American Bach Society and The Bach Choir of Bethlehem.

## **About The Bach Choir of Bethlehem**

The oldest American Bach Choir, The Bach Choir of Bethlehem gave the first complete American performances of Bach's *Mass in B Minor* in 1900 and *Christmas Oratorio* in 1901. Since its founding in 1898, the now-famous Choir has been attracting thousands of visitors from across the United States and beyond to the annual Bethlehem Bach Festival in Pennsylvania. Since 1983, under Greg Funfgeld's direction, the 100 dedicated volunteer singers of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem, performing with the Bach Festival Orchestra and distinguished soloists, have received international acclaim. Venues have included the Herkulessaal at Munich's Royal Residence and the Thomaskirche, Bach's church in Leipzig, as part of the 1995 Germany tour; The Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall as part of The Choir's Centennial Celebration in 1998–2000; the BBC Proms in London's Royal Albert Hall as part of an eight-concert tour of the United Kingdom in 2003; and Severance Hall, Cleveland for the 75th anniversary of the Baldwin-Wallace Bach Festival in 2007. In September 2011, The Bach Choir represented the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in a 10th anniversary musical observance of 9/11 in New York City, giving concerts in Saint Paul's Chapel and Trinity Church, Wall Street. In 2013, The Choir performed Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at Strathmore in the Washington D.C. area, and in 2014, the new opera *Young Meister Bach* for the 250th anniversary of the German Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The Choir has released nine recordings on the Dorian and Analekta labels including most recently *Saint John Passion* (2012) and *A Child's Christmas in Bethlehem* (2013). The Choir has been featured on National Public Radio's *Performance Today* and *Prairie Home Companion*, Deutsche Radio, the BBC World Service, CBS Sunday Morning, and the Emmy award-winning PBS documentary on The Choir, *Make a Joyful Noise*. The Choir has been recognized for its outstanding educational outreach programs (*Bach at Noon*, *Bach to School*, and interdisciplinary Family Concerts) by annual awards from the National Endowment for the Arts (2011-2015). The J.S. Bach Foundation in Switzerland named The Bach Choir of Bethlehem as the first American recipient of its annual award to a single Bach organization, recognizing The Bach Choir's outstanding work in Bach performance and education for young people (2012). *Mr. Bach Comes to Call*, a film based on the acclaimed Classical Kids CD, was co-produced by The Bach Choir of Bethlehem and is distributed internationally by The Children's Group. *In January 2016, The Bach Choir and Bel Canto Children's Chorus launched an historic alliance between the two organizations and Bel Canto moved its operational center to the Lehigh Valley with operational, administrative, and artistic support provided by The Bach Choir. Both organizations were looking to increase their impact in training the next generation of choral singers and encouraging a life-long commitment to the choral art.*

**For more information visit The Bach Choir's web site – BACH.org.**

**For tickets and further information: BACH.org, 610-866-4382 Ext. 110 or 115**