

Christmas Oratorio – Radiant Music Offered with Love and Passion by David Ruhf

AT A RECENT REHEARSAL, Greg Funfgeld asked the singers to characterize the joy that radiates through the movement “Ehre sei dir, Gott, gesungen,” (“Let honor to you, God, be sung”). Some answers included the following descriptors: *ebullient, transcendent, effervescent, irresistible*. Such is the rhythmic zest and compositional perfection of the movement that opens the fifth cantata of Bach’s mammoth *Christmas Oratorio*, BWV 248, that performers and listeners alike ride a wave of exultation. Last December, we performed the first three cantatas of the *Oratorio*, to considerable acclaim, including this appreciation from New York’s Lucid Culture Blog, “An unselfconscious joy and optimism radiated from the stage to the crowd: neither ensemble nor audience were the least bit blasé.”

At this year’s Christmas Concerts, we’ll survey the final three cantatas, composed for the Feast of the Circumcision, the First Sunday in the New Year, and the Feast of the Epiphany. The concert begins with an opening chorus of exceptional elegance and irresistible charm as horns, oboes, and strings combine with the singers to offer homage to the infant redeemer. The Biblical lessons for the day include a passage from Luke’s Gospel that shares the narrative of the naming of Jesus, and Bach’s librettist responds with 16 mentions of Jesus’ name in an outpouring of praise and devotion. Where some of the other cantatas of the *Oratorio* seem cosmic in their orientation, the fourth cantata is quite intimate in scope, with beautiful arias (including the famous *Echo Aria*, which has the soprano soloist in whimsical dialogue with a counterpart in the choir) and a closing chorale that somehow bridges the regal and the pastoral.

Contrasting the stately praise of the fourth cantata, the fifth begins with the opening chorus I mentioned earlier, a swift-moving and zesty movement that seems inexorable in its rhythmic

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The Nightingale Comes to Life for Family Concert and Festival Performances by Bridget George

THIS HAS BEEN AN EXCITING WEEK for the emerging *Nightingale*, a new work for The Bach Choir, Bach Festival Orchestra and Mock Turtle Marionette Theatre, based on Hans Christian Andersen’s enchanting fairy tale. The world premiere will be at our Family Concert on February 26 in Baker Hall at Zoellner Arts Center with additional performances as part of the Festival Saturday morning concerts.

I attended part of a rehearsal at Bethlehem’s Ice House, home of Mock Turtle Marionette Theatre and for the first time met the cast and witnessed the brilliant way in which director Doug Roysdon works with his puppeteers/actors to help them find the character of each beautifully carved, costumed, and articulated puppet.

Then back at Heckewelder House, Greg Funfgeld was immersed in choosing the music... strains of different Bach themes filtering up through our staff offices from the parlor piano. Virtuoso recorder player Tricia Van Oers will embody the voice of the nightingale and has sent three beautiful “nightingale” selections to Greg – *Engels Nachtgaltje* by Jacob van Eyck; *Le Rossignol en Amour* by Francois Couperin; and *The Bird Fancier’s Delight*. These selections capture the feel of the nightingale improvising and creating its charming song anew in every moment. This is perfect for the contrast between the living song of the little brown bird and the Emperor’s gold and ruby encrusted artificial nightingale, whose song never changes.

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DEAR FRIENDS:



AT OUR SECOND REHEARSAL of the new season, I took a few minutes to introduce our eleven talented new singers a second time. I wanted our “veterans” to get to know the “newbies” and help them feel welcome in our midst. In talking with The Choir – a group of people I dearly love – I encouraged them to look around the room and see the astonishing group of which they were a part. I felt compelled to say something like “not everyone is so lucky to have such wonderful, gifted friends and colleagues with whom to share such a rewarding commitment and mission!” It’s easy to take for granted the amazing people with whom we share life and love, joy and sorrow, and the music that means so much to us.

I’ve been thinking about these people who so beautifully enrich our lives and how very blessed we are by the associations we have with the ever-expanding group we lovingly refer to as our “Bach Choir Family.” Each of the dancers from TAYLOR 2 shared greetings in a card we received after the 2016 Festival. “Thank you so much for having us perform in the Bach Festival – it was such a treasure to perform with such amazing musicians and warm audiences! It’s a performance I won’t forget!” Anisa George’s beautiful video of the May Festival captures a lovely interaction between Daniel Taylor and Benjamin Butterfield – “this Festival has seen us through many changes in our lives...we’ve met many wonderful people and said goodbye to many wonderful people while we’ve been here...Each time we sing the *Mass* – it’s very different...it’s hard not to feel that each time we perform it, it’s an echo of the voices of everyone whose

sung it before...” And in that same video, Dr. Wendy Gillispie from Indiana University (Bloomington) says “Having heard the *B Minor Mass* yesterday, I said to someone, ‘I think the world is headed in the right direction’...it’s been an amazing thing to get a little glimpse of this society – it’s an incredible thing...absolutely incredible.” I learned that yesterday, a wonderful friend of The Choir, Cassard Kaesemeyer entered eternal life at the age of 102. His 100th birthday was on a Monday night and, using my cell phone, The Choir sang a rousing version of “Happy Birthday to You” for him – our oldest Guarantor! And I’m very proud to have enrolled our new granddaughter, Eleanor Ann Davis as our youngest Guarantor – to have her become part of such a family fills Nanci and me with pride and joy!

You – our dear Guarantors and audience members; the incredibly committed members of our Bach Choir and The Bach Festival Orchestra; our brilliant soloists; the devoted members of our Board of Managers and The Bach Choir Staff; the children who come to meet Bach for the first time at our *Bach to School* concerts; the thousands who attend *Bach at Noon*; and the amazing young artists who inspire us at Zimmerman’s Coffee House – each of you, and so many others, are part of something wonderful, venerable, of eternal value, cherished through more than a century of life! Thank you...and bless you...see you soon!

Yours ever,

Greg Funfgeld, Artistic Director and Conductor

DEAR FRIENDS:



AS WE PREPARE FOR THE 110TH FESTIVAL in May 2017, we are full of gratitude for the generous donors who have made possible the successful completion of our *Re-imagining the Bach Festival* campaign. We set a goal of \$1,000,000 to be raised in three years to help launch our new initiatives and fund them in perpetuity through gifts to our endowment. There was an outpouring of support from many of you who love the Festival and after the June “Finish with a Flourish” challenge gift from a generous board member, new gifts and pledges to the campaign enabled us to exceed the goal by more than \$4,000 in just two years.

Through our fruitful *Re-imagining* discussions, we knew that the “excellence, tradition and soul” of the Festival and our wonderful chorus and orchestra still resonated with our local and national community. We also understood the need to bring the success of our educational outreach programs into the Festival itself, including more youth involvement and interaction between audience and artists. In addition, we sought funds to support our distinguished guest artists and lecturers, enhance audience services, and expand our national exposure.

Guarantors and music critics affirm the special quality of what we have here in Bethlehem and we thought you’d enjoy these comments from 2016. Thank you again for your tremendous generosity. Greg Funfgeld, Bridget George, and the entire board and staff join me in looking forward to sharing our evolving plans for a vibrant future and greeting you at many of this season’s concerts.

Harold G. Black, President

From our Guarantors 2016

“The music of Bach has become firmly set in my DNA and becomes more so with the passage of time. I find it to be as much a spiritual/religious experience as a musical one.”

“In May 1955, my grandmother took me to hear the *B Minor Mass*. She was 91, I was 17. It was an experience that I shall never forget and treasure forever.”

“I think you folks are doing a magnificent job extending The Choir’s outreach in ways that I wouldn’t even have thought of.”

from the Huffington Post – California 2016

“The performance was one of integrity, movement, passion and weight. The effortless virtuosity and stylistic homogeneity of the combined forces in the chapel’s stone sanctity, allowed Bach’s music to sing out with infectious, exhilarating enthusiasm... Bethlehem may no longer have Bethlehem Steel, but it has in the cultural fuel of its Bethlehem Bach Festival, a generous helping of GPS for the soul.

– Laurence Vittes

Spring Concert – Bernstein & Bach by David Ruhf

I RECENTLY SAW A YOUTUBE VIDEO of Glenn Gould and Leonard Bernstein collaborating in a performance of Bach's *D-Minor Harpsichord Concerto* (Gould was, of course, playing a piano), and it was fascinating to see two musical geniuses making Bach's music in a style that is increasingly rare in our era of historically-informed performance. Bernstein's Baroque explorations were always as theatrical as they were devout, but he could not mask his awe and appreciation for the earlier masters. The Bach Choir performed and recorded his exuberant and reverent *Chichester Psalms* in 2011, and, at our Spring Concert on March 26th, 2017, will be focusing on one of his larger works, a concert setting of his *Mass*, written for the opening of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, in Washington DC, and given its first performance in 1971.

At first blush, the contrast between Bernstein's *Mass*, and the Bach Choir's signature piece, the *Mass in B Minor*, couldn't be greater – Lenny's piece is an exploration of doubt and frustration, and Bach's great *Mass* is the *summa* of his musical abilities and theological beliefs. But, both composers frequently made the journey from doubt to redemption: Bach's cantatas are full of the range of human emotions, including a healthy dose of wavering and disbelief, and some of Bernstein's most famous interpretations were of works that explored those waters, only to end in redemption or more (his incomparable



surveys of Mahler's Second Symphony, the *Resurrection*, come to mind). Both Bach and Bernstein end their respective masses with poignant pleas for peace, as timely in 1740s Germany or 1971 in the midst of widespread turmoil as they are today. Greg Funfgeld is pairing the Bernstein work with Bach's colossal motet, *Jesu Meine Freunde*, BWV 227, which is, in the strictures of the choral motet form, an exceptionally kaleidoscopic exploration of colors, textures, and expression.

Since Bernstein's *Mass* calls for a children's choir, we're delighted to be celebrating our burgeoning partnership with the Bel Canto Children's Chorus of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem by featuring the young singers in both the Bernstein, and, since Bach was no stranger to young voices (as the renowned choir trainer of the *Tomanerchor*, or the boys choir at St. Thomas), in the motet, as well. They'll join the ensemble for the larger movements, and they'll also offer a trebles-only movement by themselves. Those who saw our 2012 performances of Britten's *Saint Nicolas*, have our *Child's Christmas in Bethlehem* recording, or attended last year's Family Concert know that Bel Canto is an excellent ensemble, full of polish and poise, and we're thrilled to mark a new and fruitful degree of collaboration in what promises to be a powerful and moving Spring Concert.

Bel Canto Children's Chorus 2016–17 Season

A Flourishing Affiliation with The Bach Choir by Bridget George

THE LAUNCHING OF THE BACH CHOIR'S AFFILIATION with the Bel Canto Children's Chorus last January produced much enthusiastic response from the Lehigh Valley community and beyond. This exciting partnership is flourishing as Bel Canto begins its first season based in Bethlehem.

Wendy Lega is the new Bel Canto administrator (see Board and Staff News Page 6) and she and artistic director Joy Hirokawa are both delighted that the number of new singers auditioning this season tripled compared with 2015–16 and the number accepted and registered doubled. So in spite of losing some members in the far south of Bel Canto's geographic range we have an expanded chorus – 27 choristers in the Concert Choir and 16 in the Prep/Intermediate choir directed by Heidi New and Neil-Dominic Chaban.

In August, Greg Funfgeld and I stopped by the Bel Canto Summer Camp, which every season is the beginning of the wonderful year-long teaching relationship between Dr. Hirokawa and her choristers. We were both most impressed with the quality of the students and their singing. This season Greg has involved Bel Canto not only in our March 26 Spring Concert, as described by David Ruhf in his article above, but in both Saturday morning concerts at the May Festival. So our national as well as local audience will have a chance to hear Bel Canto's fine young singers perform with the Bach Festival Orchestra. If you are in town, I also encourage you to attend Bel Canto's Winter Concert on December 3 at the Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts featuring Benjamin Britten's *Missa Brevis*; and their Spring



Concert on May 6 featuring samplings from Bach, Britten and works from the British Isles.

The Bach Choir is very excited about all the opportunities Bel Canto is bringing to its young choristers and for the many ways this program expands The Bach Choir's impact on the next generation of choral singers. For a full description of Bel Canto's 2016–17 activities, go to belcantochildren.com.

Winners of the Bach Vocal Competition for Young American Singers *by Renée James*

FOR MORE THAN FORTY YEARS, the American Bach Society has promoted the study and performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's music. In 2000, in collaboration with The Bach Choir, the Society established a biennial competition to recognize and award excellence in vocal performance. The competition takes place at the Bach Festival, where finalists perform before a panel of judges, competing for prizes of more than \$3,000.

In addition to the monetary prize, first place winners are given the opportunity for a solo performance with The Bach Choir and Greg Funfgeld. The judges may also choose to give three cash awards of \$500 each.

The Bach Choir continues to welcome many of these singers to performances. Past winners include **Dashon Burton**, bass-baritone and founding member of *Roomful of Teeth*, who will perform at this year's Gala concert. **Laura Atkinson**, mezzo-soprano, and winner of the award in 2012, performs with The Choir in our upcoming *Christmas Oratorio*, Parts 4, 5 and 6. Laura has also been awarded a prestigious Fulbright Grant, which led to a year of study at the Mendelssohn Conservatory of Music in Leipzig, Germany.



We're delighted to feature her in our performances regularly.

At this year's competition, first prize winners were soprano **Nola Richardson**, and **Christopher Edwards**, baritone. We anticipate both these young performers will enjoy long and successful careers, sharing their talent around the world.

Praised by both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, Nola made her major symphony debut with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Additional recent performances include *Acis and Galatea* with the American Bach Soloists, Bach's *Magnificat* and Cantata 51 with The Baltimore Choral Arts, and *Mass in B Minor* with Bach in Baltimore.

Christopher Edwards is studying under William Sharp at the Peabody Institute. He

has performed with the Charleston Symphony and will perform the title role in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Papageno in *The Magic Flute* at Peabody Opera Outreach this season.

Reflecting on the competition, Christopher terms it "an entirely positive experience." While he recognizes the musical challenges, he appreciates the "vote of confidence and encouragement" the award represents. "Bach is daunting for singers (it certainly is for me) and I know I will never learn all there is to learn about singing Bach, but I feel emboldened in the knowledge that I have something to offer in the transmission of this unparalleled music."

The next competition is in 2018! We look forward to meeting the impressive and gifted musicians who will share their gifts with us.

Choir Spotlight — Katherine Kaiser *by Andrea Fritchey*



THE PATH TO DISCOVERING CHORAL MUSIC is certainly a varied one, though perhaps one of the roads most traveled is that of discovering music making at a young age. Katherine Kaiser, a second soprano in The Bach Choir traveled just that path, singing as a child at church and in the Ohio Lyric Theatre youth chorus. Her love of singing was cemented in high school

during a study abroad program in Germany – the place where her love of the "masterworks" truly began. When she returned to Germany in college, Katherine sang Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, a memory that she cites as one of her favorites.

Today, Katherine is a musicologist, writing articles and program notes, and giving lectures on various musical topics. She joined The Bach Choir in September of 2015, after moving to the Lehigh Valley with her wife, a professor at Muhlenberg College, and their two cats. Katherine serves as section leader at the Church of the Mediator, and recently started a concert series of chamber music at Grace Episcopal Church in Allentown.

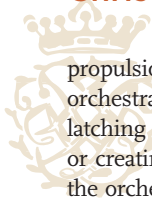
Outside of musical activities, Katherine teaches English to adults at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Allentown and to refugees from Syria, Sudan, Eritrea, and Burma. She also leads activities for refugees at the Community Refugee Center in Allentown. Her hobbies include walking and bird-

watching, and she loves to cook. Currently, Katherine is working her way through the *Four & Twenty Blackbirds Pie Cookbook*.

Though still among the newest members of The Choir, Katherine has quickly embraced all that The Choir has to offer, participating in *Bach at Noon*, *Bach to School*, *Bach at 4* at the Festival, and performing as one of the stepsisters in Warren Martin's *The True Story of Cinderella* at the August *Bach at Noon* and Finger Lakes Salon (2016).

Reflecting on her favorite experiences from the past year, Katherine cites great joy in learning the *Mass in B Minor* for the first time. "There is something magical about being in the middle of such a large group singing a movement as complex as the *Kyrie* and realizing that the majority of the group has sung it so many times that they practically have it memorized." In due time, Katherine too will have the *Kyrie* all but memorized, and we look forward to hearing her voice in the ranks of The Choir for many years to come.

Christmas Oratorio cont.



propulsion. The choir dips in and out of the orchestra's perpetual motion, occasionally latching on to the sixteenth note figurations, or creating fleet dialogues with the oboes in the orchestra, or among the various sections of the choir itself. Bach superimposes fiendishly challenging and exuberant fugal writing over the swirling of the orchestra, creating a complex synchronicity that is utterly infectious in its sense of joy.

After the opening chorus, Bach and his librettist (thought by many scholars to be Picander, a frequent collaborator) swiftly move the narrative to the machinations of Herod and the wanderings of the Magi, who are represented by the choir in a *turba* chorus, in which the choir sheds their role of commentary and become actors in the drama, dialoguing with the alto soloist. The orchestration for this cantata includes the cheerfully rustic-sounding oboes d'amore, which serve as obligato instruments in several of the arias and chorales.

In the concluding cantata, Bach pulls out all of the stops for festal music for the Feast of the Epiphany, including trumpets and drums for an opening chorus that expresses confidence in God's providence in the face

of enemies that "snort with rage" (composer and librettist both are quite clear in their feelings about Herod and the source of his motivations). This cantata includes significant yet subtle foreshadowing of the eventual crucifixion of Jesus in a fascinating juxtaposition. In a concluding chorus that is equal parts trumpet concerto and chorale fantasia, Bach sets the familiar *Passion Chorale* in a blazing major-key celebration. Listeners who haven't yet experienced this movement are in for a surprise – the festive music is wrapped around one of the most poignant chorales in the German Lutheran tradition, one that we are accustomed to hearing as a sorrowful lament. Bach links Christ's birth to his suffering and death, demonstrating not only complex skills as a composer, but an uncommon theological sophistication.

In a way, these performances of the last three cantatas of the Christmas Oratorio conclude a year-long exploration of some of Bach's largest works (last year's performance of the first three cantatas of the *Oratorio* inaugurated our survey, which continued with the *St. John Passion* in the spring, and the *Easter Oratorio* and the *Mass in B Minor* at Festival). You may recall from last year that the Bach

Choir gave the first American performance of the *Christmas Oratorio*, in 1901. The Choir recorded the piece to critical acclaim in 1999, and we're now concluding our second series of performances since then. Our history with the piece is deep, though we continue to strive for freshness and vivacity in one of Bach's greatest and most colorful works.

Greg has assembled an excellent quartet of soloists for these performances, including the ascendant and ravishing Canadian soprano, Ellen McAteer, Laura Atkinson, a winner of our joint competition for young American singers with the American Bach Society (her singing at our Spring Concert was absolutely stunning), longtime favorite, the Canadian tenor, Benjamin Butterfield, and the baritone David Newman, who was last heard in a powerful performance of the role of Pilate in our Spring Concert. As always, the concerts will conclude with the singing of carols with the audience. The *Christmas Oratorio* includes many kinds of joy and devotion, from ecstatic rhapsody to hushed bliss. I can think of no better way to begin December's festivities than to encounter this radiant music, offered with love and passion in an atmosphere of celebratory and appreciative engagement.

The Nightingale cont.

As for Bach – Hans Christian Andersen's original tale is set in Japan but this version set in 17th century Germany is a perfect vehicle for Bach's transcendent choral and instrumental music to contribute to the central theme of story. What unfolds is a triumph of the spirit as the real nightingale lifts sickness and death from the heart of the Emperor through its loyalty and the beauty of its song.

This first collaboration between The Bach Choir and Mock Turtle Marionette Theatre is particularly thrilling for me because I have worked with Doug Roysdon many times in my pre-Bach theater life and know the power of his inventive mind and craftsmanship. I remember seeing a much earlier version of his "Nightingale" back in 1985 written for tiny marionettes. Now Doug is working with the much larger puppets he has recently perfected – each about 4ft high with arms, hands, legs, feet, and mouths articulated by the actors as they participate in the amazing dance of the story's characters. The actors all talked about how fun and challenging it is to work with puppets. Jamil Joseph compared it to having an avatar in a video game except this is hands-on and you literally displace

your emotions into the inanimate object, giving it life.

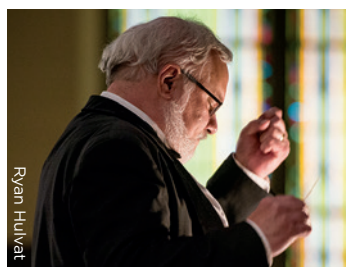
The narrative has also evolved. Cast member Anna Russell, who worked with Doug on editing and expanding the script for this performance with live choir and orchestra, talks about how *The Nightingale* is a metaphoric story exploring the relationship between life and death. The taunting, silly ghosts and the false beauty of the artificial bird are Death's children but the character of Death itself is treated with dignity – neither good nor bad – and the nightingale is a messenger carrying the force of life and expressing it with the power of music.

Tickets for *The Nightingale* make a wonderful holiday gift for your friends and family of all ages so call now 610-866-4382 Ext. 115 or 110 or purchase on-line BACH.org. Sunday February 26, 3pm at Baker Hall, Zoellner Arts Center.



Doug Roysdon (center) director with the cast *The Nightingale* L to R: Anna Russell, Willow Reichard-Flynn, Jamil Joseph, Theo Timothy. Not pictured is Choir member Grace Spruiell Hochella, the storyteller.

Board & Staff News by Bridget George



Greg Funfgeld – The Bach Choir's first full-time artistic director and conductor

The board of managers, led by President Hal Black, approved the milestone decision to offer Greg full-time employment at its June board meeting, in anticipation of his retirement from First Presbyterian Church in August, 2016. Greg is now able to devote additional attention to The Bach Choir as warranted by the tremendous expansion of Bach Choir programming under his tenure. Now in his 33rd season, he has expanded the programs of The Bach Choir beyond the annual Bach Festival to become a year-round season of 31 concerts and educational programs for an audience of more than 20,000. We look forward to the continued growth of The Choir's artistic excellence, educational outreach, community engagement, and national recognition under his consummate direction.

Jack Payne joins the board of managers.



We are very pleased to welcome Jack Payne to our Board of Managers. Jack is currently Senior Vice President of Finance & Operations at Ambassador Financial Group. Previously he spent 15 years as Chief Investment Officer for JoycePayne Partners with offices in Bethlehem, PA and Richmond, VA. Jack also spent nearly a decade with Air Products & Chemicals in Allentown, PA., serving in a variety of corporate finance functions ending with the title of Financial Risk Manager. Jack holds a BS in Finance from the Pennsylvania State University and an MBA from the University of Rochester. Away from the office, Jack enjoys golf, swimming, skiing, volleyball and being involved with music. He serves as Treasurer and Board of Director member for Youth Education in the Arts, an Allentown, PA. Jack is an active trumpet and mellophone player who marched with the Penn State Blue Band and Cadets during his college career. Jack especially cherishes his time with his wife Kelly and three sons. Jack and Kelly enjoy attending Bach Choir events.

New Staff join the administrative team at Heckewelder House

Many of you know that in June, we said farewell to Karen Glose, deputy executive director, and Bonnie Lindsey, accounting manager, after many years of excellent and devoted service to The Bach Choir. We are tremendously grateful for all they contributed to advancing the mission and administration of The Choir. We are now pleased to welcome two wonderful new staff members, Renee James and David Strain, in the newly structured positions of marketing director and finance & business manager. We also give a warm welcome to Wendy Lega, the new administrator of the Bel Canto Children's Chorus of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem.

Renee James, marketing director, comes



from a senior level marketing position at Rodale Press, where she worked for 27 years. She offers us many years of experience in strategizing and executing marketing programs both for Rodale and the many Fortune 500 clients she has managed over the years. She has a BA in English/Communications from Moravian College and her columns have been published in the *Morning Call*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Baltimore Sun*, and *Chicago Tribune*. Her personal life has included supporting and "giving back" to many non-profit organizations. She is currently on the Board of the State Theatre in Easton and has chaired the Freddy Awards Committee. She also recently concluded a nine-year term as a member of the Forum for Ethics in the Workplace at DeSales University. Classical music has been and remains an integral part of Renee's life. She is an instrumentalist and pianist, and performed with ensembles while a student at Moravian College. Her three sons have all been vocalists in District and Regional Chorus and her oldest son studied classical voice at Boyer College of Music, Temple University and earned his MA in vocal performance and pedagogy from Steinhardt School at New York University.

David Strain, finance & business manager,



comes to us from St. Luke's Hospital where he had worked as a Financial Analyst in the Finance Department since 2008. He has a B.S. in Management Engineering from Grove City College and an Associate's Degree in Accounting from DeSales University. Prior to St. Lukes, he worked in the Membership Department of the National Association of Colleges and Employers, Bethlehem Pa (2006–2008) and in the Finance and Editorial Departments of the *Express Times*, Easton PA (1992–2006.) He was the

business manager of the Bethlehem Area Chamber of Commerce from 1995–1998 under President Bob Episcopo, and is the son of former Executive Director of the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce, Richard Strain. David is passionate about all kinds of music and even sang along with his two brothers in the First Presbyterian Church Youth Choir under the direction of Greg Funfgeld. Personal interests and activities include songwriting, guitar, keyboard, ballroom dancing, and being a Friendly Visitor Volunteer at Kirkland Village. He is delighted to return to a small office environment where he can make a larger impact on a worthy not-for-profit organization.

Wendy Lega, Bel Canto administrator has



served as a volunteer, board member, and Parent Auxiliary Chair for The Bel Canto Children's Chorus for over ten years. She spent the majority of her professional career at Sun Microsystems, Inc., an innovative computer manufacturer and software company. She was responsible for evangelizing and selling Sun's groundbreaking, internet enabling technologies: As a Sales Technologist, and subsequently the Northeast Area Technology Manager, she impacted approximately \$1 billion in sales per year through customer interactions and contributions to the territory's annual strategic plan. During her later years at Sun, she held local, national and global Program Management roles and rolled out major Sales Operations initiatives and Global Partner Sales programs. Since leaving the workforce to raise her children, Wendy has served as a Vestry member at Trinity Episcopal Church, Bethlehem, led the Strategic Development committee for The Saucon Valley Foundation for Educational Innovation (SVFEI), Hellertown, and currently serves on Moravian College's Leadership Council.



Guarantor Spotlight by Cheryl Dungan

Meet Tom and Judy Hall

TOM AND JUDY HALL met while they were students at The University of Arizona in the early 1960s. They could not have known that half a century later they'd be retired in Northeastern Pennsylvania enjoying the music of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem and become Guarantors and strong supporters of the arts in the region. Tom went to Rutgers University after graduation from Arizona, and stayed to earn a Ph.D and a law degree. After giving birth to four children, Judy returned to college, got her BSN at Trenton State and her MSN at Rutgers-Newark and worked in a variety of challenging nursing positions, retiring from the New Jersey Department of Health in 2008. Tom practiced law in northern and central New Jersey.

While they loved the mountains, lakes and people of Northeastern Pennsylvania, they were worried about leaving the cultural opportunities afforded by living near New York and Philadelphia. That was one needless concern! Judy puts it this way: "With the Northeast Pennsylvania Philharmonic, The Bach Choir, and the many community theater and chamber groups in the region, we have a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the performing arts nearly every week."

With their children spread throughout the world, the Halls enjoy a lot of travel. Tom described one trip through the Baltic region which featured splendid concerts every night for two weeks as "a smorgasbord of creativity."

The Halls thank long time Bach Choir Guarantor Peggy Fulmer for introducing



them to The Choir, and reinforcing the need to support the arts, not only by coming to performances but also financially.

"The days of dukes and princes supporting the arts are long gone," said Tom, "and governmental support for the arts – which we regard as essential for a complete life – is a small fraction of what is needed." Judy noted, "If we don't support the arts, our lives are poorer – and the chances for our children and grandchildren to hear this music are diminished."

Fond Farewell to Our Oldest Guarantor and Warm Welcome to our Youngest by Bridget George



Singing at the 2015 Festival

Charles Cassard Kaesemeyer (1914–2016), who at the age of 102 was The Bach Choir's oldest Guarantor, died on October 4, 2016. The whole Bach Choir family fondly remember his faithful presence at the Festival for decades with his beloved wife Marjorie and daughter Bobbi. We also remember Cassard's surprise and enjoyment when The Choir sang *Happy Birthday* to him over the phone for his 100th birthday. Cassard also regularly attended *Bach at Noon* at Central Moravian Church, of which he was a devoted member. It was lovely to

see Bobbi and sister Polly in attendance on October 11 for Cantata 100 that ends with the image of God holding the wayfarer upon "the rugged path" of this life "like a father in his arms."

Cassard came to Bethlehem as a student of industrial engineering at Lehigh University (class of 1935). He was employed by the Fuller Company in Catasauqua in 1935 and worked for the company until his retirement. His children Bobbi, Polly, and Tom write beautifully in his obituary: "From his father Cassard inherited a sense of adventure and mechanical ability and from his mother a caretaking nature. From both he imbibed courtesy, honesty, and a lack of pretension. His writing ability and quiet humor were all his own; his wilder sense of fun came from Marjorie." Some of us have treasured memories of our last visits with Cassard – his mind sharp, wit brilliant and fun, and spirit luminous to the end. How lovely that in his last days, he got to meet his 13th great grandchild for the first time.

Eleanor Ann Davis, our youngest Guarantor,



was sponsored by proud grandparents Greg and Nanci Funfgeld. Eleanor was born to their daughter Craley and husband Michael (Chip) Davis on July 12, 2016 in Chevy Chase, Maryland. The joy and blessing of Eleanor was celebrated with

a special gift from Rosa Lamoreaux. One month after the birth, she sang Leonard Bernstein's *Greeting* during the fifth annual Bach Choir musical salon at the Hermann J. Wiemer Vineyard in the Finger Lakes:

*When a boy is born, the world is born again,
and takes its first breath with him.
When a girl is born,
the world stops turning round.
and keeps a moment's hushed wonder.
Every time a child is born, for the space of that
brief instant, the world is pure.*

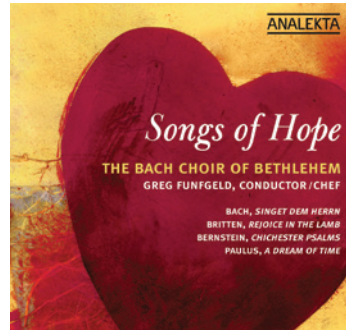
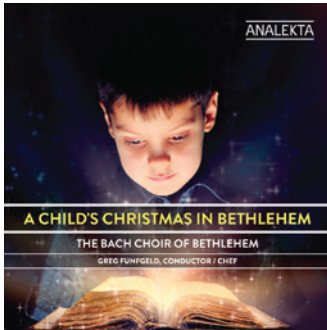


Pass the Guarantor tradition on to the next generation!

Do you have a child or grandchild to whom you would like to give the gift of Associate Guarantor membership? Many of our sustaining members first joined us through a gift from parents or grandparents, who sponsored their membership. Associate level membership (pledge of \$50–\$124 a year) is reserved for young people up to age 35. Contact us to help set up your gift of membership.



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For questions or more information, please contact, Andrea Fritchey at andrea@bach.org, 610.866.4382 ext. 110



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News from the Archives and History Committee *by Renée James*



Choir rehearsal, 1985 | Bernhard J. Suess

AFTER MANY YEARS DEVOTED SERVICE, Priscilla Wolle has retired as the chair of the Archives and History Committee and we welcome Dr. Janet Loengard as the new chair. Dr. Loengard is professor Emeritus of History at Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, holds a law degree from Harvard Law School and a Ph.D. from Columbia University. As a historian and member of the board of The Bach Choir, she is dedicated to honoring and preserving history. Dr. Loengard has visited the archives in the Moravian Museum with Choir archivist Mary Dawson and says, “I realize what a treasure they are. You could almost say they are a capsule reflection of the history of Bethlehem over the

last 100-plus years!” She calls them “a window into Bethlehem’s culture and community spirit.”

As the Archives and History committee continues to develop ways to share our treasure with a wider audience, including a more significant presence on our website (BACH.org), we invite the community to explore the archival materials and step back in time, to our remarkable history. Founded in 1898, The Bach Choir has maintained a presence in Bethlehem for almost 120 years. The archives contain well over a century of performances, personnel records, manuscripts and history about The Choir. Starting in 1900, Choir archivists preserved materials from many of The Choir’s seasons in detailed scrapbooks, which contain programs, photos, news clips and music representative of that year’s performances and events. In addition to paging through the scrapbooks, visitors can examine The Choir’s discography; compiled and annotated programs; vocal and orchestral scores and correspondence of J. Fred Wolle and Ifor Jones; short histories of The Choir; and images and archival photos.

We invite you to contact archivist Mary Dawson (marydawson@bach.org) to arrange an appointment. *Bach Choir News*, and our website, will offer more updates about the Archives online presence in the months to come.



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