



BACH CHOIR NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE BACH CHOIR OF BETHLEHEM, INC.

VOLUME XL, NUMBER 2, FALL 2015

Jewels in the Crown of Bach & The Bach Choir's Legacy by David Ruhf

THE TIMPANIST OFFERS A BRIEF FANFARE, followed by a response of trilling flutes. Another fanfare from the drums, and trilling oboes, then the trumpets take over as the strings begin a descending avalanche of exuberance. The whimsy and excitement of the orchestral introduction prepares our ears for the choral entrance that follows, with singers mimicking the fanfares at first, and then casting off on their own contrapuntal journeys, the entire enterprise brimming over with infectious joy. So begins Bach's epic *Christmas Oratorio*, and so will begin the Bach Choir's exploration of some of the staples of Bach's oeuvre in a season featuring several of Bach's large works, including three that have a very special connection to Bethlehem. In addition to the first three cantatas of the *Christmas Oratorio*, which we'll offer at the 2015 Christmas Concerts, The Choir will be singing Bach's enormously affecting *St. John Passion* for our Spring Concert and will return, as ever, to the *Mass in B Minor*, at the 109th Bethlehem Bach Festival, in May (The Choir will also offer one of Bach's more modestly scaled oratorios at Festival, his joyful *Easter Oratorio*). After a few seasons of explorations of some of his smaller works, and works composed by composers clearly demonstrating the Kapellmeister's influence, this season allows us to return to some of the central works of our legacy.

To my mind, two threads connect these works, beyond their authorship. The first: they offer some of Bach's most tremendously evocative music. The animation and zest of the *Christmas Oratorio's* introduction eventually gives way to delicate arias of reverence, as well as sonorous and majestic praise. With the beginning of the second cantata in the cycle, we hear one of Bach's most famous sinfonias, a rhapsodic pastorale that seems, at once, to evoke the idyll of the fields of

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Heart & Soul – Voices of the Future by Bridget George

"A LIVELY LABORATORY" was how Geoff Gehman described The Bach Choir's Family Concert in a recent issue of the *Lehigh University Alumni Bulletin*. This annual concert has had the participation of young artists – singers, instrumentalists, dancers, actors, composers, visual artists, and poets – at its center since its inception as part of the Centennial Celebration of The Bach Choir in 2000.

In recent years, The Choir has been focusing even more strongly on its relationship to the training of young singers – the voices of the future – not only through its choral scholars program in which talented high school seniors sing with The Choir for one year, but through collaboration with youth choruses. Recent examples were the participation of the Bel Canto Children's Chorus in Benjamin Britten's *Saint Nicolas* and in our most recent CD on the Analekta label *A Child's Christmas in Bethlehem*.

The Youth Choirs Festival for the Family Concert on February 28th is the next step in our exploration. Four fabulous youth choirs join The Bach Choir and Bach Festival Orchestra in a program of favorite choruses. When Greg and I met with the choir directors this past June, there was tremendous excitement about the project. The choirs have already started

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In today's reality, the art of personal communication is ever-dwindling. Choral singing gives us back a small piece of this, a vital element of the human experience – unity of thought and action for the sole purpose of making our little corner of the world a more beautiful place. My singers of the Charter Arts Touring Choir have greatly enjoyed the challenge of preparing the Gloria from the Mass in B Minor. We can't wait to hear the final product!

– David Macbeth, director Charter Arts Touring Choir



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DEAR FRIENDS:



WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE COMPOSITION by Johann Sebastian Bach? For many of our Guarantors and Festival attendees, it may be his immortal *Mass in B Minor*. For some, it might be the *Sanctus* or the *Agnus Dei* from that iconic work. Others might say one (or more) of the *Brandenburg Concerti*, or perhaps a movement from one of the *Orchestral Suites* – the famous *Air* from the *Third Suite in D*, or the effervescent *Badinerie* from the *B Minor Suite for Flute and Strings*. For some of our choir members, it’s the motet *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* or the exquisite and intimate Cantata 106, *Gottes Zeit ist der allerbeste Zeit* or the exuberant brilliance of Cantata 34, *O ewiges Feuer*. The list goes on and on and the works I’ve mentioned are barely the proverbial “tip of the iceberg!”


Many of you have expressed your appreciation for the works we are performing this year in a season we’re calling “Bach at the Heart” – including three of Bach’s larger works that were heard for the first time in The United States here in our “little town of Bethlehem” – the *Christmas Oratorio*, *Saint John Passion*, and *Mass in B Minor*. We look forward to sharing the timeless beauty and profound spirituality of these works – and much more.

When I’m asked the question about my favorite Bach work, I sometimes say “it’s the one I’m working on right now”. For me, there was great joy in discovering Cantata 152 at last year’s

Festival – *Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn* sung so magnificently by Agnes Zsigovics and Bill Sharp, with it’s unusual juxtaposition of “old” instruments – recorder, viola d’amore, viola da gamba – and “new” – oboe, cello, string bass. At our 75th *Bach at Noon* in September, we encountered again the particular charms of the *A Minor Violin Concerto* – played so beautifully by our concert-master, Elizabeth Field – a work we had not done for almost a decade. Two days ago, at our October *Bach at Noon*, we sang and played Bach’s first solo cantata, *Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut* and journeyed with Bach as our guide from desolation to hope and, finally, to joy – Rosa Lamoreaux was sovereign in her performance, and the sense of hope leading to joy was palpable.

Whatever your favorite composition is, I’m happy that it’s yours and hope you will love and enjoy it forever. If we’re singing and playing some of your favorites this year, I couldn’t be happier. Be open to the possibility of new works and the joy of *discovery* – new “chart-toppers” in your catalogue of beloved works. It is a rare privilege and precious opportunity that is ours to share.

Yours ever,


Greg Funfgeld
Artistic Director and Conductor

DEAR FRIENDS:



EVERY THREE YEARS the board of managers updates The Choir’s strategic plan. During this exercise we take a long look at The Choir from various perspectives. We try to determine if what we do and how we do it has served us well. We discuss changes in our environment and what they might mean to us, and we select areas of focus for the next three years. Over the past year a committee made up of board members, staff, and choir members has conducted this process once again. At our first meeting of the new season the Board adopted the committee’s recommendations for the new strategic plan.


The Choir exists today in a much different world than in the recent past. We have seen funding sources change, many new performance venues open, and increased challenges in reaching new audiences with an interest in classical music. However, The Choir believes that our basic mission and approach remains not only relevant, but also vibrant and transformative. Our objective will remain the performance of the music of J.S. Bach and the music of composers who influenced him or were influenced by him through performance and education. At our core will be a volunteer choir of around 90 members under the direction of an inspired artistic director dedicated to performing this music to the highest level of excellence we can achieve. This choir will be supported by a professional orchestra that is itself extraordinary in its dedication and excellence, and by distinguished guest artists many of whom

have become part of The Bach Choir family through their long relationship with us. A catch phrase used by the planning committee was “Tradition, Excellence, and Soul”.

We want to continue to find ways to embrace our audience. Our goal is to make anyone who is touched by The Choir as a patron, a guarantor, a sponsor, an artist, a student, or an educator, feel that they have encountered, invested in and became creatively involved with an organization dedicated to excellence in all that we do.

You will see us focusing our resources in a select few areas in the next years. We will continue to emphasize the Bach Festival as the centerpiece of our season and will build on the success of our 2014–15 re-imagining efforts. We will strive to establish the *Bach at Noon* series introduced in Allentown as an on-going program, and we will explore options to address a long-standing desire to develop further educational opportunities for young choral singers. You will see us expand our presence on the worldwide web to help our educational programming reach a little farther. In the longer term, look for us to produce new recordings and publications, produce imaginative new collaborations with other arts organizations, and launch another tour, perhaps this time through the US and Canada.

We are excited by the prospects and look forward to the future!


Harold G. Black
President

Voices of the Future cont.

rehearsing Handel’s spine-tingling *Zadok the Priest* written in 1727 for the coronation of George II in England; the “Gloria” from the *Mass in B Minor*, one of Bach’s masterpieces of choral architecture; and Randall Thompson’s *Ye Shall have a Song* with its grace and gladness of heart building to a joyful dance as we approach the mountain of the Lord.

Each choir is also performing a piece on its own and the directors have chosen a tapestry of world music from the evocative *Only in Sleep* by Latvian composer Eriks Esenvalds with text by Sara Teasdale (Charter Arts), to the jazzy Haitian *Peze Kafé* arranged by Sten Kallman (Berks Youth Chorus); *Magnificent Horses*, a fantasy on a Mongolian folktale arranged by Jin-ling Tam (Nazareth High School Chorale) and *It Takes a Village* by Joan Szymko based on the Nigerian proverb “It takes a whole village to raise a child” (Bel Canto).

The most challenging element of this exciting Youth Choirs Festival is the performance of Bach’s intricate motet *Lobet den Herrn* (Praise the Lord) performed by eight singers from each youth choir and 16 mentor singers from The Bach Choir. The youth choir singers are being prepared in a series of master classes by Greg Funfgeld for the joy of participating in this transcendent motet.

Please bring your families and help us encourage the young singers who will be the choral artists of the future. I know you won’t be disappointed!



This festival is allowing us to reach back to BYC’s roots in classical repertoire and it will afford us the chance to collaborate with other singers. In my experience, these moments enrich the students not only musically but also on a personal level.

– William Snelling, director Berks Youth Chorus Master Singers

Family Concert – Youth Choirs Festival – Sunday February 28, 3pm at Zoellner Arts Center, Lehigh University. Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$7 for students with a 10% discount for groups of 10 or more. Purchase on-line at BACH.org or call 610-866-4381 Ext. 10 or 15.

Jewels in the Crown of Bach cont.

Bach’s native Thuringia, as well as the hills of Palestine, where shepherds were keeping their watch in the Christmas narrative. This pastorate is united with Martin Luther’s beloved text from the chorale, *Vom Himmel hoch* (From Heaven above), in a glorious chorale fantasia with instrumental interpolations, as the concluding movement of this cantata. In the third cantata, we hasten with the shepherds to adore the Christ Child, beginning and ending with a sprightly dance for chorus, replete with trumpets and drums. We’ll perform the first three cantatas of the cycle for the Christmas Concerts, and conclude, as always, by inviting the audience to join us in carols. We’ll be joined at these concerts by some of our favorite young soloists, who will bring the arias and recitatives to life with great energy and panache.

Similarly evocative, the *St. John Passion*, which we’ll perform at the Spring Concert, was composed to create a splash in Bach’s first year as the Thomaskantor in Leipzig.

With great drama and incredible text-painting, Bach creates a stunning aural picture of the betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion, and burial of Christ. From the singularly powerful opening chorus, the brutal *turba* (crowd) choruses, and the multi-faceted chorales, to the tender and devotional arias, the *St. John* thrusts us deeply into the narrative of the passion with some of Bach’s most raw and exquisitely impactful music. Our performance will include a large and impressive band of soloists, including the Bethlehem debut of the ascendant tenor, Thomas Cooley, singing the role of the evangelist. The passionately ardent chorale that concludes the *St. John* ends a work that reliably bestows a rare and lasting grace upon performers and audience alike.

The second thread connecting these monumental works is that all three were heard in America for the first time here in Bethlehem. A precursor of The Bach Choir, the Bethlehem Choral Union, gave the first American performance of the



As a treble choir, this is a wonderful opportunity to sing with a full mixed voice choir. We are also excited because one of our alumni is now singing with The Bach Choir, and we will have the opportunity to sing with her!

– Joy Hirokawa, director Bel Canto Children’s Chorus



I am so thankful for this opportunity for me and my students. The music is quite challenging and my students are putting in many hours outside of rehearsal in learning their parts. They absolutely love singing the repertoire!

– Kelly Rocchi, director Nazareth Area High School Chorale

St. John Passion, under the baton of our founding conductor, J. Fred Wolle, in June of 1888. Twelve years later, The Bach Choir of Bethlehem gave the first performances of the *Mass in B Minor*, in 1900, and, a year later, in 1901, the *Christmas Oratorio*. Both were led by Wolle, whose visionary leadership made the Bethlehem Bach Festival a renowned destination in America’s musical life.

As our collective understanding of Bach performance practice has evolved, and as new generations of Bach Choir singers bring these works to life, we seek to render them with the freshness encountered in Bach’s lifetime as well as when they burst into the American musical consciousness over 100 years ago. As was written in a review of our 2012 recording of the *St. John Passion* in *Gramophone* magazine: “this new release confirms that The Bach Choir of Bethlehem doesn’t rest on anything resembling laurels.” Join us as we explore these jewels in the crown of Bach’s astounding corpus, and share with us in power and majesty of his craft.

Soloist Spotlight – Isaiah Bell by Karen Glose

To be a performer is to be the vessel for someone else’s art

HAILED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES AS “Hauntingly beautiful,...[with] glowing vocal skill”, Canadian-American tenor Isaiah Bell joins The Bach Choir for its December performances of Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio*. With a pure and breathtaking voice, one would assume that Mr. Bell was raised on a steady diet of classical music and lessons. His maternal grandfather is a musician, but acting, rather than music was his passion. It wasn’t until his last year of high school, that friends convinced him to join the local youth choir. At the time he couldn’t read music or sing harmony.

At age 17, Isaiah made the decision to try music. He credits choir director Bev Barradell, who gave him free voice lessons and encouraged him to attend university to study music. He earned a Bachelor Degree in Music from the University of Victoria on Vancouver Island.

Isaiah grew up as one of six children on a farm in Fort St. John, in northern British Columbia, and still lives in Victoria, but his

performing schedule has taken him around the world. “I’m on the road a lot, seeing the world in a strange way and it’s easy to be disconnected,” he says. Imagine what it would be like to start a new job every week or month. He adds, “I’ve developed rituals that I take with me wherever I go, to create a sense of normalcy.” Enter Avocado Toast! “I realized I was eating a lot of Avocado Toast (it’s delicious), so I began chronicling my avocado toast’s travels around the world! It’s much less boring than saying, ‘I’m in Scotland now.’” If you’d like to follow Isaiah Bell and Avocado Toast be sure to “like” him on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/isaiahbelltenor>.

Mr. Bell’s life is a compilation of creating and experiencing art – acting, singing, composing. For him, “making art – whether it’s composing, or writing, or performing – is about trying to understand life. As a composer or a writer you’re expressing something that’s your own, whereas to be



Ryan Hulvat

THE HEART OF OUR SEASON

The Bach Festival – Second & Third Weekends in May 2016

A CHANGE IN LEHIGH UNIVERSITY’S ACADEMIC CALENDAR has called for a switch for the Bach Festival to the second and third weekends of May 13–14 and 20–22. Hopefully we’ve published this change in enough places that you are already making your plans, especially Guarantors who want to purchase Festival tickets before the December 18th priority seating deadline! The third weekend will also be Lehigh’s Alumni Reunion weekend – an opportunity for some who would like to travel to both events and a chance to try out some logistical changes on this weekend. Check BACH.org and future mailings for important parking and venue updates.

AS YOU MAKE YOUR PLANS, we hope you’ll enjoy and reflect on these longer excerpts from reviews of the 2015 Festival. The joyful and irrepressible spirit of this re-imagined Festival had many long-time Festival goers saying it was “the best Festival ever” and also elicited praise from newcomers of all ages and national and international press. It is always enlightening to see how new visitors see our city and our musical endeavors.

“In Review” – the Re-imagined 2015 Festival



Theo Anderson

Two days later I am Newark bound again, with a head full of the history of a town I previously had no awareness of, and with a heart full of the music of Bach, presented in a context that felt less like a festival than 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, June 2015



Theo Anderson



Choir Spotlight – John Sullivan – Bach, Family & Doctor Who by Andrea Fritchey

THE MEMBERS OF THE BACH CHOIR ARE truly remarkable individuals, and I know that I’m not the first to recognize what a treasure

it is to learn the stories of the people behind the smiling faces and the singing hearts. John Sullivan, a member of The Choir’s baritone section, is a wonderful example of an individual that has a lovely voice, and beyond that, so much more. John has been a member of The Choir since 1999. One of his favorite memories of the group came early in his tenure – performing the *Mass in B Minor* in February of 2000 at Carnegie Hall. John recalls the sold out crowd, and his feelings of amazement at the opportunity to sing in one of the world’s most recognized musical spaces. What a way to begin his Bach Choir journey!

John’s love of music began at an early age fostered by his parents’ encouragement and his experiences learning from his aunt, who spent her career as a lighting designer for the Washington Opera. Through gifts of recordings each Christmas, she exposed John to operas by Mozart, Wagner, and Verdi among others. As a teenager, John took piano and organ lessons, and played baritone horn in the school band. In high school, John participated in a student exchange program in Bayreuth, Germany, where he attended a

performance of *Das Rheingold* at the Bayreuth Festspielhaus – an experience that he identifies as propelling his lifelong love of music. While studying at Pomona College, John was a fixture in the music department, despite majoring in German and Media Studies. He took a work study job as the department’s recording engineer, which afforded him the privilege of recording nearly every musical performance. John also sang in the Glee Club throughout his college career.

John has taught for 17 years at Muhlenberg College where he is professor of Media & Communications. He is a huge fan of science fiction in all its forms, and especially loves *Doctor Who*, a British science fiction television series. In 2013, John traveled to the United Kingdom and visited the *Doctor Who Experience*, leading him to publish an academic article on the production history of the show from the 1960s to the 1980s. When not singing and exploring the world of *Doctor Who*, John enjoys outdoor grilling on the patio and trips with his family, including his wife of 13 years, Andra Basu, and their two daughters, Cynthia who is nine years old, and Niva who is seven.



Theo Anderson

The first of Saturday’s concerts, the Chaconne Project...was sensational and it is an extremely impressive idea to include local school children in future festival endeavors...the skill of these keen and talented school students was amazing.

– Roman Markowicz, *Kurier Plus*, May 2015

Nestled in the Pennsylvania countryside, on and around the bucolic campus of Lehigh University, the Bethlehem Bach Festival under the direction of conductor Greg Funfgeld, is in its 108th season and going strong. If it has flaws, they are like those that distinguish a fine emerald from the perfect clarity of a fake. The Bach Choir of Bethlehem’s 100 volunteer singers perform the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and that of his sons and contemporaries with exceptional devotion. When they lift their voices in the 19th century sanctuary of Lehigh’s Packer Memorial Church, their choral sonority is so rich you can feel it in your bones...

The Saturday morning Bach Festival orchestra concert included the Bach Chaconne Project, conceived by Moravian College composer-in-residence Larry Lipkis, who engaged talented young musicians from area high schools and mentored them as each composed an original melodic variation on the choir progression of Bach’s celebrated Chaconne in D-minor from the Partita for solo violin. Played by the students (flutists, guitarists, trumpeters etc.) the variations were arranged as a continuous work with an accompaniment orchestrated by Dr. Lipkis – and the resulting joint composition is worth repeating at a future concert. Afterwards the excellent young violinist and festival artist-in-residence Caroline Goulding gave a superb account of the Chaconne as Bach wrote it.

Student musicians were spotlighted again on Saturday evening at the informal Zimmermann’s Coffee House concert in the elegant Terrace Room of the Historic Hotel Bethlehem. Seated at tables with a menu of beverages and German edibles that Bach himself might have enjoyed at Leipzig’s original Zimmermann establishment, patrons dined while young people played Bach and his contemporaries. It proved a delightful finale to a rich musical weekend.

– Barrymore Laurence Scherer, *Wall Street Journal*, May 2015

Board & Staff News by Bridget George

AS ALWAYS, THE BOARD OF MANAGERS has been playing a crucial role in the governance and strategic planning of The Bach Choir and we thank President Hal Black and all of our board members for their generous gifts of time, talent, and treasure. We are happy to announce the election of two new board members, Jim Harbaugh and Janet Loengard. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Paul Larson who retired as The Choir’s archivist in June 2015 after 29 years of service. Paul has made many valuable contributions to the work of The Choir including his publications on J. Fred Wolle, *An American Musical Dynasty*, and on the history of The Bach Choir, *Bach for a Hundred Years*. He will continue as choir historian in the coming year to give two history lectures at Heckewelder House following the November and April *Bach at Noon* concerts. We are delighted to welcome Mary Dawson as The Bach Choir’s new archivist after many years of service both as a singer in The Choir and a member of the Archives and History Committee of the board, where she has put her librarian skills to work in cataloguing our archival collection.



Jim Harbaugh is currently Vice President of City Center Investment Corp. He joined the company in October 2011 and has been involved in all facets of the business and development planning. Jim and his wife returned to the Lehigh Valley from Doylestown in 2012. In 2011 he retired from Bristol-Myers Squibb Co., where he served as executive director of Global Real Estate from 1994. Jim holds a degree in economics from Ursinus College and an M.B.A. from Lehigh University. He serves on the board of directors of the Allentown Chamber of Commerce. Jim has known and appreciated The Bach Choir for many years and was highly supportive of the inaugural Allentown *Bach at Noon*. He lives in Hellertown with his wife Eleanor and they are members of The First Presbyterian Church in Bethlehem. They have two grown sons and a grandson.



Janet Loengard has been a Bach Choir Guarantor since 1982 and currently lives in Bernardsville, NJ. She is Professor of History Emeritus at Moravian College. Dr. Loengard has also been an Adjunct Professor of Law at Rutgers Law School, a Visiting Scholar at New York University Law School, and J.H. Becker Lecturer at Cornell University. She holds a BA from Cornell University, LL.B. from Harvard University, and M.A. and Ph.D. in history from Columbia University. Dr. Loengard is widely published and is a specialist in English legal history. She was elected as a fellow of the Royal Historical Society in 2008. Other activities include serving on the advisory board of Jacob Riis Neighborhood Settlement House (Long Island City), and as a senior warden of the Church of the Incarnation (Manhattan).



Mary Dawson, Archivist, is a long time member of The Bach Choir along with her husband Bruce. She has a bachelor’s degree in history and a master’s degree in library science and worked as a children’s librarian at the Bethlehem Area Public Library for many years. Mary also worked as a museum teacher for Historic Bethlehem Partnership giving tours to school children. She has been a member of the archives committee since its inception and has worked with Paul Larson on several projects. Mary’s two children are also singers and her daughter Megan was a choral scholar the year The Choir traveled to the UK. Her favorite memory is standing next to Megan and singing the parallel thirds in the *Mass in B Minor* at King’s College Cambridge.



Guarantor Spotlight by Cheryl Dungan

Fred & Evie Rooney of Washington, D.C.

BEING AMBASSADORS for The Bach Choir of Bethlehem comes naturally to Former Congressman Fred Rooney and his wife, Evie.

Fred, who is a native of Bethlehem, went on to serve in the U.S. Army as a paratrooper. He then earned his degree from the University of Georgia and entered the real estate and insurance business. In 1958, Fred was elected to the PA State Senate, where he served until 1963, when he won a bid to fulfill a vacancy in the 88th Congress. He continued to serve for seven succeeding Congresses before returning to the private sector as a consultant in Washington.

In recent years, Fred has been recognized locally for his impact in the Lehigh Valley. Appropriately, the Fred B. Rooney Highway (Rt. 378 in Bethlehem) and the Fred B. Rooney Building for affordable apartment living in SouthSide Bethlehem bear his name and attest to his commitment to transportation and housing issues in the region. Fred, who is proud to be celebrating his 90th birthday this year, credits his wife, Evie Lisle Rooney, with first introducing him to The Bach Choir. Evie adds, “My family has been part of The Choir for over 90 years. It has enriched our lives deeply.”

Evie’s roots in Bethlehem and her family’s history with The Choir do indeed go back almost a century, to her relatives who were involved from the founding of the organization. Evie recounts that her family was very engaged in the community and nurtured her appreciation for the arts and classical music, especially the music of Bach and The Bach Choir. She has early memories of Dr. Ifor Jones,

fourth conductor of The Choir, coming to her family’s home to practice. Then starting around the age of eight, she recalls going to ticketed rehearsal concerts, where seats were assigned alphabetically. Seating in the “L” section assured the best vantage point to be able to fully appreciate The Bach Choir’s performance.

As a community leader in Washington, Evie, a graduate of Briarcliff College, has focused much of her energy to support the arts and educational programs for underserved students in Washington’s inner city. She has served on the boards of several Washington organizations. Despite the distance, Evie continues to serve as an engaged and thoughtful member of The Bach Choir’s board of managers. Evie is quick to praise artistic director and conductor Greg Funfgeld for all of the ways that he has advanced and developed The Choir saying, “I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as a board member and to work with Greg Funfgeld, an extraordinary leader. His commitment is an inspiration to my entire family.”

For both Fred and Evie, the annual performance of the *Mass in B Minor* remains their favorite event of the season. Evie, who cannot recall a year when she missed a Festival, enthusiastically describes the *Mass* as seeming fresh and exciting each time. Another favorite memory is the 1998 performance by acclaimed cellist YoYo Ma, which was part of The Bach Choir Centennial Celebration.

Always enthusiastic and energetic ambassadors for The Bach Choir, the Rooneys have helped to encourage several



patrons and Guarantors from the D.C. area. They have instilled appreciation for the music and culture of The Choir in their children, Tim Rooney, Martha Rooney Webb and Greg Rooney and their families. Likewise, Evie’s sister, Lucy Murray Brown and her brother, John Lisle, and their respective families continue The Bach Choir tradition and often bring grandchildren and other relatives and friends to concerts.

Though the Rooneys established a home and full life in Washington D.C. many years ago, they remain committed to their roots and connection to The Bach Choir community. Evie explained that she and Fred view being Lifetime Guarantors as a way to demonstrate their commitment to long-term sustainability, in the hope that future generations will be able to enjoy The Choir.

Fred and Evie and their extended family remind us that, for many of our Guarantors, The Bach Choir is an important part of the tapestry of their life story and family legacy, just as they are an important part of ours! We are grateful to have them in our Guarantor family and especially want to wish Fred a happy birthday!

Corporate Spotlight – HMK INSURANCE since 1914

Building on a Century-Old Tradition of Trust by Cheryl Dungan

LIKE THE BACH CHOIR OF BETHLEHEM, Hampson Mowrer Kreitz Insurance has established a solid reputation for its commitment to excellence and its focus on fostering long lasting relationships. The agency traces its roots in Bethlehem to 1914 when Arthur Hampson established The A.B. Hampson Agency, which specialized in fire, casualty and life insurance. Gordon Mowrer joined the agency in the late 1950s and expanded its scope to include personal and commercial lines of business. In 1973, William Kreitz joined the agency, where he was one of eight employees.

Bill became president in 1994, when the name changed to Hampson Mowrer Kreitz Insurance, and has been with the agency for four decades. He attributes the company’s success to the guiding principles of commit-

ment to its customers, employees, and the community in which they live. Today, HMK is the largest locally owned independent insurance agency in the Lehigh Valley, providing insurance and employee benefits to nearly 6,000 companies and individuals. The agency employs 52 people, 11 of whom are owners of the business.

A Bach Choir supporter encouraged the agency to consider sponsorship opportunities with The Choir, seeing that we were aligned in our mutual commitment to excellence, building on our past, and giving back to our community. HMK has proudly supported The Choir for more than a decade, focusing particularly on *Bach at Noon*.

Bill Kreitz notes, “The Bach Choir is one of the Lehigh Valley’s cultural gems. The season includes free concerts, a Bach Festival,

and extraordinary concerts throughout the year. There’s something for everyone.”

In 2014, HMK celebrated its 100th anniversary, receiving the Milestone Award from the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce and was also recognized by The Morning Call with a Top Work Places Award.

True to its culture, HMK celebrated its anniversary by providing more than 500 volunteer hours of service over a little more than a week to complete the exterior construction of a new home for a local family. Individually, HMK employees can be found volunteering with numerous community organizations.

We are proud to count HMK Insurance among our valued corporate partners who share our commitment to building on the strong foundation of the past while looking forward to the future.

Meet Our Newest Guarantors!

We are pleased to introduce these new members of The Bach Choir Guarantor Family!

Mr. & Mrs. William Brown II
Rehrersburg, PA
Paul & Tracey Dangelmajer
Kinnelon, NJ
Sandra Deiter
Northampton, PA
Keith Diehl
State College, PA
Dr. James F. Evans
Danville, PA
Andrew Frey
Bethlehem, PA

Dr. & Mrs. Mark Hanlon
Schwenksville, PA
Dr. & Mrs. Richard Hjorth
Bethlehem, PA
Joyce Meinke
Bethlehem, PA
Sam & Patricia Mitchell
Fogelsville, PA
Jack & Kelly Payne
Allentown, PA
Brian Snyder
Allentown, PA

Ginger O’Sullivan
Emmaus, PA
William & Lynn O’ Toole
Bethlehem, PA
Carol Porter
Denver, CO
Margot Teleki
Hellertown, PA
Thomas Whalen
Allentown, PA
Janet Yamron
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Allentown Bach at Noon Concerts a Spectacular Success *by Bridget George*



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Few knew what to expect for the inaugural Allentown Bach at Noon concert. If they present it will they come? Indeed they did with an estimated 650 in attendance June 9 at St. John's Lutheran Church, Allentown...

The powerful voices of the soloists rang out, the choir's voices soared and the orchestra's glorious sound rose upward and out, thrilling the audience and eliciting "Bravos" and a standing ovation.

– Paul Willistein, *The Press*, June 2015

Special thanks to Lee Butz for this beautiful photograph, which captures the beauty of St. John's Lutheran Church and the spirit of the concert.



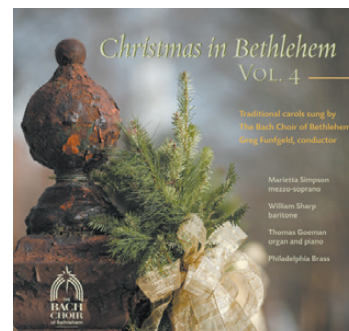
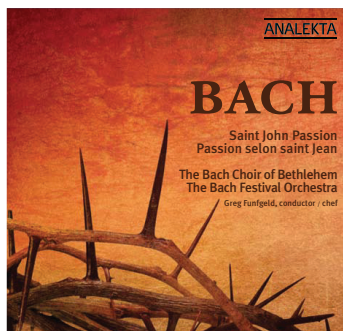
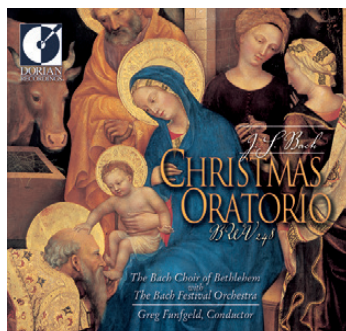
The Bach Choir News
is published by:
The Bach Choir
of Bethlehem
440 Heckewelder Place,
Bethlehem, PA 18018-5806
610.866.4382
BACH.org

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Supported in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, The Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Inc. is recognized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions to The Bach Choir are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. The official registration and financial information for The Bach Choir of Bethlehem may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling, toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999.



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