



BACH CHOIR NEWS

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A Festival of Intimate Moments and Majestic Sweep *by David Ruhf*

THE 110TH BETHLEHEM BACH FESTIVAL will be full of intimate moments and majestic sweep, as befits a hearty celebration of our namesake. Opportunities for engagement with the musical and spiritual universe of J. S. Bach abound, even before a single note is heard: a lecture with the intriguing title of “Why Bach Matters,” by one of our great scholars, the musicologist and Dean of the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, George Stauffer. Between the Friday performances, there will be a more informal talk and dinner with Larry Lipkis, the Composer-in-Residence at Moravian College, whose erudition and good humor inspires much excitement.

Then there is the tremendous bounty of 110’s rich musical feast: across six concerts, you will have the opportunity to stimulate your intellect and refresh and nourish your soul with music of surpassing compositional brilliance and penetrating spirituality. Our Festival Artist-in-Residence this year is the recorder virtuoso, Tricia van Oers, whose breathtaking skill will be much on display. She’ll join members of The Choir and of the Bach Festival Orchestra for our Bach at 4 concert for Cantata 103, *Ihr werdet weinen und heulen*, which includes an extremely demanding part for descant recorder. Also on tap, the Festival premiere of Cantata 49, *Ich geh und suche mit Verlangen*, with an opening sinfonia featuring a brilliant dialogue between organ soloist and orchestra, and a Telemann sonata for cello and bass. This repertoire, combined with the stunning acoustic of The Incarnation of Our Lord church will surely delight. *please turn to page 3*



Loretta O'Sullivan performs at Bach at 4
Ryan Hulvat



Emma Sweet-George meets the Music Master puppet after the performance.



The Music Master and ghosts bring the artificial nightingale to the Emperor's palace.

The Nightingale – “Delightful from Beginning to End” *by Bridget George*

WHAT A COMPLETE JOY it was to have my three-year old grandchild Emma come to her first Bach Choir concert with parents Sam and Carrie. Her expression of wonderment at the show and delight upon meeting the puppets after the show filled my heart with gratitude not only for Emma but for everything we do at The Bach Choir. Six hours earlier, Greg Funfgeld, Doug Roysdon, The Bach Choir and Orchestra, the puppeteers of Mock Turtle Marionette Theater, the staff of Zoellner Arts Center and I were still in the throes of bringing all the pieces of this amazing production of Hans Christian Andersen’s *Nightingale* together. For the creators, it had been an almost two-year journey – researching stories, script writing, choosing the music, crafting the puppets and set, and of course the intense discipline and creativity of rehearsal by musicians and puppeteers alike. Finally, the audience was here and I took a deep breath as Greg and Doug came up on stage to introduce us to a collaboration that as Greg said, gets to the heart of “what is REAL!” *please turn to page 3*

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DEAR FRIENDS:



AN UNEXPECTED CHANGE OF PLANS the day after our Spring Concert, allowed my wife, Nanci, and me to have an overnight visit with The Bach Choir's youngest Guarantor, our granddaughter, Eleanor Ann, now nine months old. We left a dreary, cold and damp 37-degree Bethlehem and arrived a few hours later in a sun-drenched, blue sky 75-degree Chevy Chase, Maryland! We sat on the deck and Eleanor enjoyed her first *al fresco* dinner as her parents and grandparents delighted in her every move. One of the books Eleanor loves shows a collection of musical instruments, and, when you touch the instrument, you hear music. When you touch the cello, you hear the Prelude from Johann Sebastian Bach's first *Cello Suite*. I was delighted when Nanci found the *Suite* in a You-tube video on her phone and shared it with Eleanor – her eyes were big as saucers as she listened to the music and watched the young cellist – an early encounter with the genius of Bach, whose music even infants find rapturous.

At our Family Concert, hundreds of children had an enriching and stimulating encounter with the genius of Bach – along with Hans Christian Andersen, Doug Roysdon, and his puppeteers. We're offering it again at the Festival, so be sure to bring YOUR young music lovers!

At our final *Bach at Noon* of the Bethlehem season, more than 130 fourth grade students from Catasauqua listened to Bach's brilliant Cantata 66, Vivaldi's virtuosic *Concerto for Two Trumpets*, and a string trio by Moravian composer John Antes, offered in celebration of the 275th anniversary of the Moravian Church in Bethlehem. Kurt Anchorstar, their teacher and a gifted member of our First Tenor section, lovingly prepared his students for more than two months and they absolutely loved the concert. We had them seated front and center where their experience was "up close and personal!"

Our board member Chip Dangelmajer often invites young men and women – high school, college age, young professionals – to attend *Bach at Noon* and other concerts with him – he gives them some background information, then accompanies them to the concert, and they'll get together afterwards to chat about the music and the experience. God bless Chip and his outreach to these young men and women!

At our *Zimmermann's Coffee House* concerts this year, you will be amazed at the talent of the high school and college students who will perform – singers, instrumentalists, Baroque ensembles and more. In these concerts, incredibly talented young artists have an opportunity to play in a professional concert for a thoughtful and educated audience. It's an invaluable opportunity!

I've recently had the pleasure of talking with Guarantor friends who will be attending the Festival this year with their children and grandchildren – that delights me! Three generations of a family sharing this amazing music and the tradition and love that are at the heart of Bach in Bethlehem!

To each one of you who are introducing the treasure and wonder, discipline and joy, spiritual and emotional depth of this music to the next generation – THANK YOU! To the rest of you, this question – WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?!? This is a responsibility in which we must all engage! Do your part – invite a young friend, a child or grandchild, support our educational outreach programs, donate some tickets – share in this privilege, and help us build the next generation of those whose lives have been touched and forever enriched by Bach – "the mind of God made audible!"

Ever grateful,

Greg Funfgeld, Artistic Director and Conductor

DEAR FRIENDS:



I HOPE THAT YOU HAVE NOTICED how the programming this year reflects the continued growth and evolution of The Bach Choir. Our creative team of Greg Funfgeld and Bridget George has done a great job augmenting our core performances of J.S. Bach's music with a variety of nuanced and thoughtful additions.

The Family Concert this year is a wonderful example of this. We were looking for the opportunity to collaborate with the Mock Turtle Marionette Theater, a local institution led by Doug Roysdon, a master puppeteer. Using Bridget's theater and storytelling background, Greg's ability to evoke mood and scene through music, and Mr. Roysdon's puppeteering genius, we created an original production of *The Nightingale*, from Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale. Tricia van Oers, the recorder virtuoso whom we have had the pleasure of listening to over the past few years, provided the nightingale's song. The puppeteers provided the action, and it must be said that they coax magic from their wood and cloth creations, drawing us in as though the puppets were living performers. The Choir and the Orchestra provided music throughout. I sat in front of a young member of the audience who gave a running commentary. He was afraid of the ghosts, anxious for the insomniac emperor, unhappy with the mechanical imposter, sad to see the nightingale banished, and pleased that everything came

out happily in the end. And he went home having listened to the music of Bach, Couperin, Poglietti, and Mozart.

At the Spring Concert we presented the formidable MASS of Leonard Bernstein, pairing it with Bach's motet *Jesu, meine Freude*. Bernstein, of course, was a great admirer of Bach and has created some marvelous educational pieces on the subject of Bach and his music. Bernstein's MASS, however, is his own creation and will not be confused with Bach's *Mass in B Minor*. It is a tribute to the scope and quality of our Choir members that they can perform in such a different style. They were joined by the Bel Canto Children's Chorus, adding treble voices to The Choir's mature sound. This continues our association with this fine children's chorus. This year, in addition to their own concerts Bel Canto, under the direction of Joy Hirokawa, has performed with Cordus Mundi, an all-male chorus, and with the Allentown Symphony Orchestra. The Spring Concert with the combined choirs on stage offered a clear example of how choral singing may become a lifelong journey for our choir members.

You will be able to enjoy this growth and evolution at Festival. Amidst the music of Bach, *The Nightingale* will be restaged at the Ifor Jones concert on Saturday morning, combined with a performance by Bel Canto. I hope you are looking forward to it as much as I am.

Harold G. Black, President

The Nightingale cont.

We are very happy to be presenting two more performances of *The Nightingale* on the Saturday mornings of the 110th Bach Festival so DON'T MISS IT and bring your families and friends. Here are some reviews to encourage you!

“ • The world premiere of *The Nightingale* seamlessly blended puppets and Bach in an utterly charming and engaging interpretation of the Hans Christian Andersen tale. The Family Concert skillfully brought together the renowned choral group and four-foot-tall puppets hand carved by Mock Turtle Marionette Theater for an hour-long show that was delightful from beginning to end. The concert featured the glorious voices of 40 members of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem as well as 21 members of the Bach Festival Orchestra directed by Greg Funfgeld. Virtuoso recorder player Tricia van Oers provided the lilting voice of the nightingale on multiple recorders. – Review by Kathy Lauer Williams in *Lehigh Valley Stage*, February 27, 2017

• Imaginations soared with song and story for *The Nightingale*. Greg Funfgeld set the tone for the Feb. 26 event with heartwarming stories of past young audience members. One girl had sweetly told him after a concert that it “sounded so real.” Another shared that she had “practiced sitting still for three days” before attending. Funfgeld assured the packed Baker Hall audience overflowing with young parents that they were free to relax and move around if they needed to. The simple but profound *Nightingale* shared many words of wisdom about the value of true artistry and the sharing of one’s talents with others. Tricia van Oers on recorder embodied the soaring spirit of the nightingale. The Bach Choir of Bethlehem’s Family Concert certainly touched and inspired both the young and young at heart with evocative music and enchanting puppetry. – Review by Makenna Masenheimer in the *Bethlehem Press*.

”



Ryan Hulvat



Hub Willson



Hub Willson

Festival 2017 cont.

Alternately, across the river, a most-intriguing program is on offer at the Saal of the Moravian Museum, including chamber music by Biber, Heinichen, and Telemann, who, you may recall, was the first choice for the position of Thomaskantor, which was eventually filled by Bach, himself. The program will feature arias with viola d’amore obbligato from Bach and Telemann, showcasing the considerable talents of violists Paul Miller and Maureen Murchie. The sonorities of gut-stringed d’amores, in combination with the warm acoustic of the Saal will be most salubrious.

On Friday evening, we will trade the intimacy of the smaller two venues for the grandeur of Lehigh University’s Packer Memorial Church for the full forces of choir and orchestra. We will begin the evening’s performance with a French overture, in the opening moments of Cantata No. 97, *In allen meinen Taten*, a work of deep devotion from a time in Bach’s compositional oeuvre of particular craft (written the same year as the *Christmas Oratorio*). We’ll also hear a Telemann concerto featuring Tricia van Oers, joined by the viola da gambist, Mollie Glazer. Expect lyrical

melodies and musical fireworks during this showcase of two underheard baroque instruments. The concert will conclude with a bit of whimsical programming: Bach’s Cantata No. 110, *Unser Mund sei voll Lachens*, (Cantata No. 110 for the 110th Festival), which is one of Bach’s most ebullient and exuberant offerings. For this Christmas work, Bach combines music he had composed earlier for his *Fourth Orchestral Suite* (BWV 1069), complete with trumpets and drums, with new choral parts superimposed over the dexterous orchestral writing. This dramatic work begins with another French overture, this time to greet the Infant King, followed by some of Bach’s most evocative text-painting: The Choir will sing melismatic lines meant to evoke the laughter of angels.

Saturday morning’s offering is a reprise of The Choir’s riveting collaboration with the Mock Turtle Marionette Theater in an adaptation for chorus, orchestra, and puppets of Hans Christian Andersen’s *The Nightingale*. This fantastic collaboration is especially appropriate for children of all ages, and includes music by Mozart, Couperin, Bach, and Bolcolm, and will feature our artist-in-

residence, once more, as the voice of the nightingale. A personal endorsement: singing this at our Family Concert in February put an immediate halt to my usual late-February, seasonal affective ennui. It’s fiercely creative, touching, uplifting and very, very funny.

Then follows the most epic concert of the Festival, a return to our musical *raison d’être*: Bach’s towering *Mass in B Minor*. Superlatives abound, and last year’s musical race to the summit was so compelling, that Laurence Vittes from *The Huffington Post* wrote:

“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.”

After such a powerful and stirring performance, Zimmerman’s Coffee House, offered in Moravian College’s Peter Hall, is the perfect way to round out the weekend: German food and drink, along with offerings of chamber music from the next generation of Bach performers. It is most fitting to close 110’s metaphorical feast with literal gourmandise and much merriment!

Choir & Orchestra Spotlights by Renée James

BOTH OUR CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA SPOTLIGHT MEMBERS share more than a common connection through The Bach Choir. Both of them shared their thoughts about the power of music, something intangible yet very real for them; and the audience connections they love to make in our concerts throughout the season. Here are the profiles of two talented and generous women who are part of our Choir “family.”



Don Schroder



DEB IHLING, SOPRANO I: What do The Bach Choir and ‘Cinderella’ have in common? Deb Ihling, Soprano I! One of Deb’s favorite performances with The Choir was Warren Martin’s *The True Story of Cinderella*. “I felt so honored to be asked to play Cinderella, and the entire process was so much fun!”

Growing up around music in a family that performed together kindled a love of music in Deb at a very young age. She started with piano lessons, then picked up a variety of other instruments, and developed her vocal ability by “participating in any choir I could get my hands on!” In college, she sang numerous classical works and was a member of the choir who toured Spain with the first Spanish translation of Mendelsohn’s *Elijah*. After earning her degree in Music Education from Lancaster Bible College, she began teaching vocal music to 6th to 8th graders at Arts Academy Charter Middle School. Put simply, Deb says “I love teaching music.” She enjoys having her 8th grade students perform in a number of places around the area. You may hear them at the Iron Pigs or the Phantoms!

When she first moved to the Lehigh Valley, her college choral director suggested she audition for The Bach Choir and she remembers her audition process fondly. “Greg made me feel very comfortable and I got to showcase my voice. I fell in love with performing with The Choir.” Deb has been a member since 2013 and although there are numerous reasons to be grateful for her affiliation with The Choir, it means much more than a way to perform. Although they are together only two hours a week for rehearsal, Deb says it feels “like we are all part of a big family. We work hard during rehearsals, and we are such a great team. Greg is a fantastic leader, and I

look forward to every rehearsal.”

Deb feels the vitality of Bach’s music with every performance. “If you look at the audience, the people are varied in gender, age, and race. Music finds a way to speak to all people, no matter how divided we seem. There is not a person who leaves our concerts feeling like they had no connection with the music of Bach. I want to share my love of music—especially Classical music with everyone!”

The Choir family wishes Deb many blessings this June, when her son is due! We’re certain his life will be filled with love – and Bach!

TRICIA VAN OERS, RECORDER – FESTIVAL ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE: Flowers and a love of nature seem to be a recurring theme in the life of recorder virtuoso Tricia van Oers.

Growing up in the Netherlands, she received her first recorder at the age of 8 from a local flower shop that gave away plastic recorders. She soon discovered an aptitude for the instrument and a love of music, going on to study and perform throughout high school and at a local conservatory, where she was a harpsichord minor; then at university, where she earned both a teacher’s and a performer’s degree.

With her degrees completed, Tricia was offered a scholarship to study at I.U. Bloomington. She had previously traveled to the U.S. for several summers to participate in the International Leadership Camp in upstate NY, where she was both a music counselor and waterfront director! She has maintained her enthusiasm for active living, including

biking, kayaking and hiking and is also a certified organic gardener.

Recorder virtuoso, teacher, performer, master gardener, bee-keeper and wine-maker, Tricia deeply appreciates everything that The Choir stands for; especially through her recent involvement in our *Bach to School* program. “It’s what the world needs to be a better place... it’s what children and education need. I feel such joy when I come there and can play.”

Tricia believes Bach’s music speaks to the imagination of mankind and human life. “It is deep and only with age and by reading and understanding the text, knowing what to listen for...it speaks to modern life.” His music has become the dearest to Tricia’s heart because of the Cantatas. “When he features the recorder there is special meaning from him...it just has made me feel so proud and happy to be playing recorder and performing the Cantatas.”

Clearly Tricia’s gifts and generous spirit are a blessing to The Bach Choir and our audience. As she says, “If you don’t have passion in your life, you may as well stop living.”

In addition to playing in the Festival *Bach at 4* and *Bach at 8* concerts and embodying the voice of the nightingale in the Saturday morning performances of The Nightingale with Mock Turtle Marionette Theater, Tricia will give lecture demos with Doug Roysdon and Anna Russell of Mock Turtle Marionette Theater and Larry Lipkis at William Allen High School, Allentown and Northeast Middle School, Bethlehem, on the two Friday mornings of the Festival.



Matthew Angelo, Administrative Assistant & Special Events Coordinator

by Bridget George

In January, we were pleased to welcome Matthew Angelo to The Bach Choir staff.

All of us are enjoying Matthew’s bright and personable nature. He is a very well qualified young man. Matthew received a Bachelor of Music in flute performance from West Chester University, PA in 2012 and a Master of Music in flute performance from the University of Hartford’s The Hartt School, CT in 2014. He has acquired valuable administrative experience working for Hartford Independent Chamber Orchestra, the Liberty Wind Symphony, and the Maryland Wind Festival.

Please welcome Matthew when you see him at Festival under the box office/merchandise tent or at our social events.

Bach to School by Renée James

HOW DO YOU MEET, cultivate and connect with about 5,000 people who may not yet know the beauty and majesty of Johann Sebastian Bach's music? We do just that every season through our *Bach to School* program, which has been one of our favorite community programs since it began in 1993.

This season, we presented *Bach to School* to these schools and/or school districts:

- 500 7th & 8th grade students in Southern Lehigh Middle School
- 700 3rd grade students in the Easton Area
- 1,371 5th grade students in the Allentown
- 960 3rd grade students in the Bethlehem Area
- 400 students in 7th and 8th grade, plus 5th and 6th grade music students in the Catasauqua Area
- 850 middle school students in Quakertown

With representatives from The Choir and Orchestra performing several pieces of music throughout the program, Artistic Director and Conductor Greg Funfgeld presents the life and times of Bach in a lively and interactive discussion – where he tells the story of a real person, including the challenges Bach faced as young person and the obstacles he overcame to pursue his passion for music. Lesson plans are provided to school music

teachers prior to the performance so the students can have some background and participate in the discussion as fully as possible. Mr. Funfgeld brings out the parallels between music, sports, and school work and why dedication, practice, and collaboration are so important to leading a successful life. The ideas of creativity, dedicated practice and working as a team on something you love are not lost on the students as the program unfolds.

In many cases, this program is the first live performance of music the students have ever attended. It is often the first time they've met and talked with professional musicians, or been exposed to the instruments used and choral music presented in the program. We invite them to continue the concert experience by providing each student with a voucher good for two tickets to an upcoming performance by The Choir and were pleased to welcome a number of them to our Christmas and Family concerts this year.

The rewards for us are many, and we treasure the feedback these students offer from their hearts. Among the notes and reflections we received this year, we read these from some Easton area third graders:



Nobuo Kitagawa, oboe, plays for students at Strayer Middle School in the Quakertown School District.

Don Schroder

"I liked...
the baby organ.
the cello and violin.
the conductor's conducting.
"I noticed...
How Mr. Greg explained everything.
How high they could sing.

If we ever want to remind ourselves about why music is such an integral part of a full life, we need look no further than the sentiments expressed by these students:

"The music made me relax." ... "I wish I could be in it someday." ... "I want to tell you that this is my favorite concert so far."

"I wish you could come back someday."

We will! And with the help of our supporters and their generous donations, we'll continue to bring the joy and glory of this music to this audience, full of curiosity and gratitude for the experience they had at *Bach to School*.

News from The Bel Canto Children's Chorus of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem by Bridget George

• **THE 27 CHORISTERS** of the Bel Canto Concert Choir joined Greg Funfgeld and The Bach Choir and Orchestra in our Spring Concert, which included Bach's motet, *Jesu, meine Freude* and Bernstein's *MASS* in the concert version edited by Doreen Rao. As reviewer Steve Siegel wrote in the *Morning Call*, "The Bel Canto Children's Chorus, prepared by director Joy Hirokawa, sang with exuberance and joy in this, their first major performance since the group's formal alliance with The Bach Choir in 2016."

• **BEL CANTO'S 2016-17 SEASON** ends with their own Spring Concert "Simple Songs, Simply Children" on Saturday May 6, 4pm at Wesley United Methodist Church, Bethlehem; singing as part of our Bach Festival Saturday morning concerts on May 13 and 20; and a tour to the Sing-a-mile-high Festival in Colorado in June.

• **AUDITIONS** for the Concert Choir and the Intermediate/Prep choirs start in mid-May so if you have children grades 2–12 interested in singing, go to belcantochildren.com.

• **CHORAL VILLAGE:** July 24-28, Bel Canto launches its first Choral Village Summer Camp at Brougal Middle School, Bethlehem, providing an opportunity for young people throughout the Lehigh Valley to dive into world music reflecting the many cultures right here in our community. Middle Schoolers will spend a full week exploring expressive choral performance, participate in drum circles, and engage in theater exercises, all in an atmosphere of community building and teamwork. Register at belcantochildren.com.



• **SILAGH WHITE HIRED AS BEL CANTO ADMINISTRATOR:** We are delighted to welcome Silagh White to The Bel Canto Children's Chorus staff. Silagh has more than 20 years of experience in arts management, most recently at Lehigh University as Director of ArtsLehigh (2005–2011) and Director of Arts Engagement & Community Cultural Affairs (2011–2016). Her career is also anchored in musical performance. She has a Doctorate in Bassoon Performance and Literature from the Eastman School of Music and a Masters in Educational Leadership from Lehigh University. Silagh also has plenty of experience with children as a mother of 14 year old twins entering Liberty High School in the fall; as a former middle and high school band director; and as a volunteer for many Lehigh Valley musical and cultural organizations. Silagh will be a terrific asset to The Bel Canto and Bach Choir organizations.



Gala Past & Future by Bridget George

THE 2016 GALA CONCERT by Roomful of Teeth, described by Steve Siegel in the *Morning Call* as “intoxicating vocal artistry”, was a huge success, “captivating a near-capacity audience” in Foy Hal, Moravian College. The concert, along with benefactor cocktails, dinner, and auction at the Hotel Bethlehem exceeded goal and raised \$28,400 in net income. Congratulations to Gala co-chairs Hopeton & Shelia Clennon and Charles & Terry Walter, and the whole Gala Committee.

For the 2017 Gala, Bach’s own choir, the world famous Thomanerchor (St. Thomas Boys Choir) from Leipzig will make one of its U.S. appearances. To hear the Thomanerchor



SAVE THE DATE

The Bach Choir welcomes
THOMANERCHOR

Saturday, November 11
4pm • Central Moravian Church

6pm Benefactor Cocktails,
Dinner & Auction
Saucon Valley Country Club

in Central Moravian Church, Bethlehem, where many of Bach’s works were performed for the first time in America, is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Our thanks to Gala co-chairs Jim & Eleanor Harbaugh and Ray Malec & Jane Pearson; honorary chairs, Albert & Ingrid May, who are important supporters of both The Bach Choir and the Thomaschule (St. Thomas Boys Choir school); and to our lead sponsor for the event, B Braun Medical.

Established in the year 1212, the Thomanerchor was led by J.S. Bach for 27 years and together they premiered many of his works. The 2017 program includes three Bach motets – *Der Geist Hilft; Komm, Jesu Komm;* and *Fürchte dich nicht* along with works by Heinrich Schütz, Johann Hermann Schein, and Felix Mendelssohn.

Corporate Spotlight – **B|BRAUN**

B. Braun Medical Inc. Sharing Expertise, Committed to Excellence,
Innovation and Our Community by Cheryl Dungan

ANYONE HEADING INTO BETHLEHEM will recognize the familiar white and green building that is the U.S. corporate headquarters of B. Braun Medical Inc. Based in Melsungen, Germany, B. Braun has operations in 64 countries and is widely respected as an innovative leader in the field of medical devices.

Locally, B. Braun Medical Inc. has been a loyal sponsor of The Bach Choir for over 35 years, particularly supporting our *Bach at Noon* concert series. Led by Caroll H. Neubauer, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of B. Braun of America Inc., B. Braun most recently stepped up as the leading sponsor of our 2017 Gala Concert, which will feature the world famous Thomanerchor, (St. Thomas Boys Choir) from Leipzig, Germany. Hailing from Bach’s own church, the choir will be on a limited engagement tour in the United States, which notably includes a special performance here in Bethlehem.

“The Bach Choir is truly a wonderful organization committed to preserving the rich history of baroque music for multiple generations to experience and enjoy,” said Caroll Neubauer. “B. Braun is proud to sponsor this year’s Gala, which features the German boys choir. The Bach Choir is not only a regional asset in our community but a national treasure as well.”

Demonstrating their strong belief in the value of supporting the highest quality of life in the communities in which their employees work and live, B. Braun is committed to investing in a wide range of community benefit programs in the arts and various educational and environmental programs, through corporate contributions and employee volunteerism, including employees who have served as musicians and singers or have volunteered with The Bach Choir over the years.

B. Braun manufacturing is guided by

their overarching philosophy of Sharing Expertise—expertise which is honed through their commitment to cutting edge innovation, increased efficiency, and sustainable manufacturing methods.

Worldwide, more than 58,000 employees of B. Braun share their expertise with clients and colleagues to ensure greater safety for patients and medical practitioners and to promote better working processes and medical practices.

A visit to the B. Braun website quickly gives one a greater sense of B. Braun Medical Inc. as an innovative and responsible manufacturer, an environmental leader and a corporate citizen invested in the health and success of the communities in which they live and serve. We share their commitment to excellence and are proud to count B. Braun among our most valued corporate partners!



Guarantor Spotlight by Cheryl Dungan

Meet Robert and Patsy Hassert, Strasburg, VA

BOB AND PATSY HASSERT have traveled from their home in Virginia to attend Festival for many years but Patsy's history with The Bach Choir and Festival goes back decades, to her visits with her mother, Lois Claytor Walthall. Patsy's mother was a well-educated woman who was intent on ensuring that her children had opportunities to develop appreciation for the fine arts and classical music, and especially for the music of J.S. Bach.

Patsy earned her M.A. in Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago and worked as a Medical Social Worker/Administrator at several large teaching hospitals in the Chicago and Philadelphia areas. She worked in several specialties, including Cardiology and Dialysis; served on a Bioethics Committee for many years, and was the hospital's HIV Coordinator. Since her retirement, she has become an avid gardener.

After earning a graduate degree in Near Eastern archaeology, Robert switched to a career in computers, working as a contractor for numerous companies, doing general programming and database development. In retirement, Robert remains interested in computer technology and has become an amateur genealogist.

Although Robert and Patsy were both students at the University of Chicago, they did not meet until later, as volunteers for an archaeological "dig" in Israel. Years later they re-met, and friendship grew into love and a happy marriage. Robert credits Patsy for introducing him to the music of The Bach Choir and the Festival, which they now share as a treasured tradition.

Patsy shares some wonderful memories and her enthusiasm for The Bach Choir, in her own words.

Recollections of the Bach Festival

My mother, Lois Claytor Walthall, drove to Bethlehem with a friend from our home in Atlanta to attend her first Bach Festival in 1961.



It was at this festival that the choir and orchestra made their first live recording of the *Mass in B Minor*; mother mentioned all the cameras and microphones. I have a copy of that album and enjoy knowing that she was in the audience; maybe one of the coughs was hers! She loved the experience, and told me that I had to come with her the next year – which I did. And the next, and the next, and....

In those early years we stayed at the Hotel Bethlehem and enjoyed visiting the Moravian Book Shop – much smaller then, only one store-front, I think. At that time the Saucon Valley Country Club invited Bach Festival attendees to have lunch in their lovely dining room; though if we were in a hurry we went to Saint Peter's. The ethereal tones of the brass "choir", heralding the concerts to come, wafted from Packer Church's tower in those days.



Dr. Ifor Jones, who was Director then, somehow controlled an enormous choir – around 200 members, I think. The concerts were heavily attended; the pews in Packer were moved as close together as possible, with rows of folding chairs added in the back. There was very little leg room, the pews had no cushions, and they were very hard. The beauty of the music helped us forget those discomforts; nevertheless, most people soon learned to bring their cushions as well as their scores.

Dr. Jones believed that proper reverence for the music meant absolutely NO APPLAUSE. During my second festival (1963) the great British soprano, Jennifer Vyvyan sang Cantata 51, *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*. At the conclusion of her breathtaking performance there was a moment of stillness. Then, almost as one, the audience stood and broke into enthusiastic applause. Horrors! We had broken Dr. Jones's cardinal rule! The next day the *Morning Call's* headline read: "Bach Festival Tradition Shattered by Applause".

Mother and I continued to attend yearly until her death in 1974. For the next ten years I continued to attend first with my father, then with my husband Robert. After that, our busy careers and a part-time antiques business, interrupted our long Bach Festival tradition. But when we heard the news of the 100th anniversary of the Festival in 2007, we came back and decided to become Guarantors, in memory of my mother. Our move from the Philadelphia area to Virginia's Shenandoah Valley has made our annual pilgrimage a bit longer – but it also makes the reward waiting for us in Bethlehem that much sweeter! I also love what you are doing with the Festival today, with your emphasis on training young people and in using Bach's music in contemporary ways – like the Paul Taylor dancers.

My most recent "special memory" is from last year's festival, when Professor Wolff told us about research on Bach's life and music. He spoke of a recently discovered piece of music that Bach wrote as a teenager, and he played a recording of it – music that no one had ever heard until this discovery. As I realized what I was hearing, the tears came and I felt my mother, very close to me.



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Allentown Bach at Noon Concert Named in Honor of Dorothy Hess Baker & Elizabeth Leith Hess *by Bridget George*

THE DEXTER F. AND DOROTHY H. BAKER FOUNDATION has given a very generous legacy gift to The Bach Choir's Allentown *Bach at Noon* series. This gift names the annual June concert in honor of Dorothy Hess Baker (left) and her mother Elizabeth Leith Hess (right), both former members of



The Bach Choir of Bethlehem. Funds will support the concerts offered by members of The Bach Choir and Bach Festival Orchestra and the participation of featured soprano and alto soloists. Greg Funfgeld and Bridget George were sincerely touched by their conversations with Dorothy Baker about the long history of connections between The Bach Choir and the Baker family, both as singers and philanthropists who care deeply about the arts and their impact on our community. The entire Choir, staff, and board of managers are deeply grateful for this support of The Bach Choir's important contribution to the

arts in downtown Allentown as well as the Baker Foundation's ongoing support of The Choir's many educational outreach programs.

The 2017 Bach at Noon summer series in Allentown will be presented at St. John's Lutheran Church, 37 S. 5th St. on June 13, July 11, and August 8, 12:10-1pm. Complete repertoire and soloists to be posted soon at BACH.org.



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