

Greg Funfgeld, Bridget George to retire from The Bach Choir of Bethlehem

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Greg Funfgeld and Bridget George at rehearsal (Courtesy of The Bach Choir)

BETHLEHEM, Pa. - Two prominent leaders of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem are retiring.

Artistic Director and Conductor Greg Funfgeld and Executive Director Bridget George will retire in the next two years, Board President Harold Black announced Wednesday.

"While we will be sad to see them go, their retirements are positively well-deserved and follow a long and impressive tenure for both," Black said in a news release.

Funfgeld will retire in June 2021 after the Bethlehem Bach Festival in May of that year. He will have conducted 38 seasons since taking on his role in 1983.

Funfgeld is one of only six artistic directors and conductors in the choir's history, and has served the longest.

His accomplishments include expanding the choir's programs from the annual Bach Festival to a year-round season of 40 concerts and programs, as well as leading two major concert tours to Germany and the United Kingdom.

"The Bach Choir is an extraordinary organization and our years together have been rewarding, inspiring, challenging and incredibly stimulating," Funfgeld said. "The people in this organization are incredible."

George is set to retire in December 2020 after 24 years with the choir.

She's led the implementation of five strategic plans, three major fundraising campaigns and 22 concert seasons since 1997, the news release said.

George was also the executive producer of the film *Mr. Bach Comes to Call*, and planned and booked the choir's UK tour.

"Thanks to Greg, and a board, staff and family of musicians prepared to take creative risks, the 22 years I have spent with the choir have been an exciting time of musical growth, programming initiatives and new partnerships..." she said.

The Bach Choir's board of managers has launched a leadership transition plan to fill both positions. A search committee for each position will be organized this summer. The international search for an artistic director and conductor will begin in Oct. 2019 and the national search for an executive director will begin in April 2020.