

Cellist Yo-Yo Ma to present special program as part of Bach Choir of Bethlehem's celebration

By [Craig Larimer](#)

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Cello maestro Yo-Yo Ma will perform and present a special program as part of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem's celebration to honor Artistic Director and Conductor Greg Funfgeld's final season in 2021, it was announced Monday. (Alex Brandon/AP)

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Ma's program called "Truth, Trust, and Service: How Culture Connects Us" is scheduled for 7 p.m. Friday, Oct. 16 at Parkland High School, 2700 N. Cedar Crest Boulevard in Allentown.

Tickets will be available at Bach.org and 610-866-4382.

The event will be part of an ongoing Valley-wide conversation about how culture connects us, according to a news release.

The choir explains that Ma will explore the role culture can play imagining and building a better future by drawing on examples from his life as a musician and citizen.



Bach Choir of Bethlehem conductor Greg Funfgeld at the 2014 Bethlehem Bach Festival. (THEO ANDERSON / Contributed photo)

Ma performed Bach's Cello Suites at The Bach Choir's Centennial celebration in 1998. He also played Lehigh University's Zoellner Arts Center in 2010. "To welcome Yo-Yo Ma back to the Lehigh Valley is a rare privilege and precious opportunity," Funfgeld notes. "Yo-Yo Ma's artistry is recognized and

admired around the world. From Sesame Street to great concert halls everywhere, he has touched lives and inspired countless souls.

“Beyond his status as one of the world’s greatest artists, Yo-Yo is a profoundly deep thinker. His life, music-making, collaborations with outstanding artists in every discipline, and his interaction with people in every corner of the globe have given him extraordinary insight and wisdom, all of which he will share with us in this incredible program.”

Born in 1955 to Chinese parents living in Paris, Ma studied the cello with his father at age 4. Three years later he moved with his family to New York City, where he continued his cello studies at Juilliard. In 1976, he graduated from Harvard University with a degree in anthropology.

He’s received numerous awards including the National Medal of the Arts (2001), the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2010) and Kennedy Center Honors (2011).

Ma has performed for eight American presidents, most recently at the invitation of President Obama at his Inaugural Ceremony.

The choir plans to give away 300 tickets to students in diverse Lehigh Valley communities and to community leaders in the arts, culture, health, education, and the environment.

Bach Choir Executive Director Bridget George added, “A community engagement committee will involve these selected students and community leaders in pre and post-event activities in the weeks leading up to and following the event.

"The plan is for Yo-Yo Ma's presence with us on October 16 to have a significant and broad impact on a continuing Lehigh Valley conversation about the role of the arts and culture in connecting us. The follow-up will include an on-line exhibition of writing, artwork and video clips inspired by Yo-Yo Ma's presentation."

YO-YO MA

What: A presentation of his program "Truth, Trust and Service: How Culture Connects Us"

When: 7 p.m. Oct. 16

Where: Parkland High School, 2700 N. Cedar Crest Blvd., South Whitehall Township

Tickets and info: Bach.org

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