

[Coronavirus](#)

Bethlehem Bach Festival canceled due to coronavirus pandemic, 1st time without a festival in 113 years

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The 113th annual Bethlehem Bach Festival has been cancelled due to safety concerns regarding the coronavirus pandemic.

Express-Times

By [Connor Lagore](#) | [For lehighvalleylive.com](#)

After going strong for 113 years, the Bach Choir of Bethlehem will not be raising its voices this year.

The choir announced on Friday that it is canceling the 2020 Bethlehem Bach Festival. This was set to be the 113th annual edition of the festival, but safety concerns over the spread of [coronavirus](#) led the partners behind the festival to cancel it out of an abundance of caution. The choir is in its 122nd year since being formed in 1898, and it has largely gone uninterrupted since then. However, while the choir is deeply saddened to have to skip hosting the festival this year, which was supposed to run on May 8, 9 and 15-17, it's for the safety of the audience members, choir members, musicians and the rest of those involved.

Some of the scheduled performances for this year's festival have been rescheduled for the 2021 season, including Handel's "Messiah," Part Two and additional repertoire, which will be performed at the choir's spring on March 21, 2021, concert, and The Chaconne Project, which the music of young composers, based on Bach's "Chaconne," which will be scheduled as a Bach at Noon concert.

The choir's press release did include important information regarding ticketing for this year's festival: "Ticket buyers may choose to donate the value of their ticket(s) as a tax-deductible contribution, a portion of which will help The Choir give some support to members of The Bach Festival Orchestra for their loss of income. They may also request a voucher good toward future Bach Choir Concerts through the upcoming season. Please contact Renée James, Marketing Director, with any questions about making ticket donations or requesting vouchers: 610-866-4382 x 115."

The 2021 season will be Artistic Director and Conductor Greg Funfgeld's last, as he is retiring after what will be 38 seasons with the choir. The 2021 festival is scheduled for May 14, 15, 21 and 22.

Funfgeld said in the release that all of the choir's events will resume when it is wise to do so.