

Bach Choir of Bethlehem's Bach at Noon concerts to return from sanctuary at St. John's Lutheran Church

By MORNING CALL STAFF

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Soprano Sherezade Panthaki will be featured on the Bach Choir of Bethlehem's June 9 program.(Armando L. Sanchez / Chicago Tribune)

The Bach Choir of Bethlehem will present the first of three Bach at Noon concerts Tuesday, June 9 at St. John's Lutheran Church in downtown Allentown.

Because of the restrictions on large gatherings during the COVID-19 outbreak, these concerts will be video recorded, featuring a handful of musicians with social distancing in place. There will also be one videographer and one sound engineer present.

No audience members will be admitted to the church.

The Bach at Noon concerts will be presented on the second Tuesday of the month in June, July and August, appearing online on The Bach Choir's YouTube channel. Additional viewing options will be announced as they become available.

The June 9 program will feature soprano Sherezade Panthaki, with Robin Kani, flute, and Loretta O'Sullivan, cello.

Selections by J.S. Bach will include soprano arias with flute obbligato from “The Coffee Cantata” and “The Saint John Passion”; soprano aria from Cantata 61 — “Öffne dich,” and “Flute Sonata in G Minor,” BWV 1020.

Also, “O For the Wings of a Dove,” by Felix Mendelssohn.



Robin Kani is principal flutist of the Bethlehem Bach Festival Orchestra.(Steve Siegel/For TMC)

The June 9 program is supported by a legacy gift from The Baker Foundation in honor of Dorothy Hess Baker and her mother, Elizabeth Leith Hess, both former members of choir.

The July Bach at Noon program will be held July 14 and is named in honor and loving memory of Alice Anne Miller, and made possible in part by a gift from The Century Fund and from Alice’s sister, Joan Miller Moran.

Panthaki and O’Sullivan will return, joined by Dashon Burton, bass-baritone, and Mary Watt, oboe. They will perform works by J.S. Bach, Gabriel Fauré, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Georg Philipp Telemann.

The August performance, on Aug. 11, is endowed by Rev. Ronald R. Miller in memory of Maestro James A. Simms.

It will feature Nola Richardson, soprano; Janna Critz, mezzo- soprano, and Elizabeth Field, violin, in works by J.S. Bach, and George Frederick Handel. Both Nola Richardson and Janna Critz are winners of the bi-annual Young American Singers Competition, jointly sponsored by The American Bach Society and The Bach Choir of Bethlehem.

Bach at Noon is a series of 10 free concerts the choir performs each year, including three in downtown Allentown, all led by artistic director and conductor Greg Funfgeld, and presented in collaboration with

Arts at St. John's. This is the sixth year of the series and, this summer, in lieu of gathering a group of choir and orchestra members, the concerts will offer solo pieces, duets and small ensemble compositions.

The choir has collaborated with WWFM, a longtime media sponsor, to share the concerts with its listeners and Bach Choir fans. Because the "Bach at 1" broadcasts have been suspended due to COVID-19, rebroadcast dates for these concerts are to be announced.

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