

Bach Choir of Bethlehem plans modified 2021 festival; artistic director and conductor Greg Funfgeld will complete 39th season

THE MORNING CALL |
MAR 03, 2021 AT 12:09 PM

The Bach Choir of Bethlehem plans to operate its 2021 Bethlehem Bach Festival on a modified schedule in May due to the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, artistic director and conductor Greg Funfgeld will be leading The Bach Choir and Bach Festival Orchestra through June, 2022, completing his 39th season.

This year's modified festival will take place the weekend of May 14-15, with all locations to be confirmed next month. Audiences will be allowed only on a limited basis according to pandemic protocol in place at the time.

Despite being unable to present concerts to an in-person audience, Funfgeld has produced performances this season through virtual programming, including monthly "Bach at Noon" concerts, weekly "Moment of Comfort" videos, and an online Christmas concert that was viewed by people around the world. He is also at work on an educational film titled "Bach, Bikes and Basketball." He will continue this virtual approach with the 2021 festival, and lead choir members, along with orchestra members and soloists through live-streamed performances and — if able — in front of a small audience. Starting in the fall, he will open a new season of concerts, perhaps presented live to an audience.

The provisional schedule is as follows, with all events livestreamed and limited in-person audience as allowed:

Friday, May 14

- 2 p.m.: Distinguished scholar lecture.
- 4 p.m.: Bach Outdoors Chamber Music, featuring Bach and other composers, including Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" featuring Elizabeth Field, concertmaster as the violin soloist.

Saturday, May 15

- 10:30 a.m.: Ifor Jones Chamber Music Concert, featuring Paul Taylor Dance Company in Bach's Brandenburgs Opus No. 88 and Esplanade Opus No. 61; Bach Flute Sonata, with Robin Kani, flute, and Greg Funfgeld, keyboard.
- 7:30 p.m.: "Blessings and Benediction" concert.

The choir staff will contact all patrons currently holding tickets to the 2021 Bethlehem Bach Festival, and offer options for their tickets. Ticket holders may also contact the choir by calling 610-866-4382, ext. 115 or 110. x 115 or x 110. Tickets to the livestreamed events (and possibly a limited number of in-person tickets) are expected to be available online in April.

Should an audience be allowed, priority in-person tickets will be made available to the choir's guarantors before being offered to the public. Audience members will be seated according to distancing protocol in May. There will be no reserved seats.