

Things to do: Bach Choir to hold virtual Bach Festival

- Kathy Lauer-Williams

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The Bethlehem Bach Festival is back. After canceling the 2020 Bach Festival due to the pandemic, [The Bach Choir of Bethlehem](#) has announced it will hold the 113th [Bethlehem Bach Festival](#) as its first-ever virtual festival, with livestreamed concerts and events on Friday and Saturday.

While audiences will not be admitted to the performances, livestreamed concerts will feature The Bach Choir, the Bach Festival Orchestra, soloists and special guest performers.

The choir has partnered with [WFMZ.com](#) to host its online performances.

"The Bethlehem Bach Festival is such a quintessential piece of Lehigh Valley tradition," said Barry Fisher, 69-WFMZ-TV's general manager. "WFMZ is thrilled to play a part in keeping the tradition alive."

The festival will be presented for free, with an option for donations to the choir.

Events will be streamed from Germany, Zoellner Arts Center in Bethlehem, and St. John's Lutheran Church in Allentown.

Greg Funfgeld, artistic director and conductor, will lead the choir, orchestra and guest soloists in the performances. Funfgeld, who was originally supposed to retire at the end of the season, will remain in his position through June 2022.

On Friday, the festival will feature Peter Wollny, director of The Bach Archiv in Leipzig, Germany, in the distinguished scholar lecture at 4 p.m. The Lfor Jones Chamber Music Concert at 7:30 p.m. will include the Paul Taylor Dance Company dancing to Bach's Brandenburgs Opus 88 and Esplanade Opus 61, followed by the Bach Flute Sonata with Robin Kani on flute and Funfgeld on keyboard.

On Saturday, the Chamber Music concert at 4 p.m. will feature music by Bach and Handel; as well as Vivaldi's Four Seasons, featuring Elizabeth Field, concertmaster, on violin. Additional soloists include Loretta O'Sullivan, cello, Charlotte Mattax Moersch, harpsichord, and Paul Miller, viola.

At 7:30 p.m., members of the choir and orchestra will perform four Bach cantatas in "Blessings and Benediction" featuring soloists Sherezade Panthaki, soprano; Meg Bragle, mezzo-soprano; Lawrence Jones, tenor; and Dashon Burton, bass-baritone. Included are Cantata 12 "Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen;" Cantata 120 "Gott, man lobet dich in der Stille;" Cantata 171

"Gott, wie dein Name, so ist auch dein Ruhm" and Cantata 191 "Gloria in excelsis Deo."