

PERSPECTIVE – *from the New Executive Director, Leela Breithaupt*

WHAT A WARM WELCOME I have received from the entire Bach Choir community! As we approach my first Christmas in Bethlehem, I am struck by the visceral feeling of togetherness and community that The Bach Choir creates. From board members, choir, orchestra musicians, soloists, staff, and volunteers to audience members, sponsors, and community partners, the outpouring of support and genuine camaraderie has deeply touched me and my family.

My first months as Executive Director have been a whirlwind of activity and experiences as I get to know my new home. The Bach Choir sits at the nexus of a stunning historical tradition and a beacon for the future of the choral arts. Neatly tucked away in the charming center of Bethlehem, one could almost imagine that we are in an old-world European city. Add to that the bustling, vibrant stores, restaurants, and businesses, and there is no question that we are indeed in the center of the thriving Lehigh Valley, a community known for its unwavering support for the arts and culture. Now, Historic Moravian Bethlehem is poised to become a World Heritage Site. According to Historic Bethlehem, “Historic Moravian Bethlehem is a masterpiece of human creative genius with culture, architecture, and design that are exceptional and have universal value to humankind. That is what the team that evaluates potential World Heritage Sites looks for, and we’ve had it for centuries here in Bethlehem.” The Bach Choir

proudly stands at the core of this noteworthy heritage.

As we look to the future, The Bach Choir is eagerly embracing change while remaining steadfast in our history.

We have set goals to increase our digital and technology capacity to strengthen and build on Bridget George’s creative vision. Within the next year, The Bach Choir will welcome our seventh Artistic Director and honor and celebrate the legacy of Maestro Greg Funfgeld, the first full time Artistic Director of The Bach Choir. I am grateful to have the opportunity to work beside such a consummate artist and musician. The institutional knowledge, creativity, and compassion that Greg imbues in his every thought and action is key to my understanding of The Bach Choir and forms a wellspring of inspiration for future innovation together with the new Artistic Director.

We have so much goodness in store for you this season as we celebrate Greg’s tenure with The Bach Choir. As we all emerge from the period of isolation during the pandemic, let music be your touchstone offering hope, compassion, connection, curiosity, and comfort.

My best to you all!



Leela Breithaupt

BACH IS BACK! *A Look at Our September Bach at Noon*

by Mike DeCrosta

AFTER AN ABSENCE of nearly a year and a half, The Bach Choir of Bethlehem proudly returned to Central Moravian Church for September’s *Bach at Noon*, the first in-person performance since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Joined by 22 members of the Bach Festival Orchestra, nearly 30 Choir members and soloists Sherezade Panthaki, Brian Geibler and David Newman, Artistic Director and Conductor Greg Funfgeld described the program as “conceived with the idea of a great, festive re-opening. A rebirth, a beginning again.”

The program included the *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F Major* and Cantata BWV 137, *Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren* (Praise the Lord, the mighty King of honor), performed for an enthusiastic crowd of nearly two-hundred masked guests. Choir member Bryan Hay remarked, “After such a long dry spell away from a live audience, it felt liberating to be once again part of that inexplicable human energy field that’s created whenever listeners and singers engage. Greg’s selection of Cantata 137,

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Dear Friends:



ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE of *Bach Choir News*, I hope you will read a lovely article by Bridget White. Bridget was our Choral Scholar during the challenging 2020–2021 season, a year of virtual musical offerings, small group and often out-of-door rehearsals, endless COVID challenges, and some lovely music-making in spite of it all. Bridget is now a freshman at Bard College, active in their choral program, and will soon be involved in performances of J.S. Bach’s beloved Cantata 147 (the one that includes “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”) and Mahler’s towering *Second Symphony*. On the same page, you can meet the three Choral Scholars who are singing with us this year and learn a little about these talented young women. Our Choral Scholars program is one part of our Educational Outreach. We invite gifted high school seniors to sing with us – each is assigned a mentor, each attends every rehearsal, performs in all of our concerts, and takes away experiences and memories that enrich their lives forever. These three are joined by other new members, including two members of Lehigh University’s Class of 2019, a 2020 graduate of Nazareth High School, and 2020 graduate of Westminster Choir College, among others. These young people are fabulous new partners in glorious music-making and much-admired new members of our Bach Choir Family!

Another component of our Educational Outreach is a Competition for Young American Singers that The Bach Choir sponsors jointly with The American Bach Society. Former winners of this competition include Dashon Burton, Sasha Cooke, Nola Richardson, Janna Critz, Meg Bragle – all of whom have significant careers as professional soloists. Janna and Nola just gave a stunning performance of Pergolesi’s *Stabat mater* at our October *Bach at Noon*; Meg and Dashon have been regular guests; Brian Giebler, who earned an Honorable Mention not too many years ago, joined us for our September *Noon* and delighted our virtual and in-person audiences. The Competition is an important element in our Education Outreach program and has identified incredibly talented young singers who love Bach and are enjoying terrific careers. In November, nine outstanding young singers will compete before a panel of five judges. The winner receives a \$3,000 career development grant and will perform with The Bach Choir of Bethlehem. I’m proud of that!

In November, our *Bach to School* program was to present concerts to nearly 2,000 fifth graders in the Allentown School District – something we do every Fall. Because of COVID, the Allentown School District will not allow any field trips this year.



WELCOME! *New Choir Members*

(Left to right):
Elizabeth Campbell, First Soprano
Anna Soldano, Second Soprano
John Hare, Bass
Dominic Behe, Second Tenor
Leslie Dreyer Kalra, First Alto
Kelly Schmidt, First Alto
Karlynn Miller, Second Alto
Madelyn Dundon, First Soprano (not pictured)
Leah Kun, Second Alto (not pictured)

Once again, we have to be nimble, create a Plan B, and “punt!” We will visit three elementary schools with a group of 20 singers – members of The Bach Choir and our Bel Canto Youth Chorus, and a couple of colleagues from our Bach Festival Orchestra. I am creating a new one-hour program for these three schools – at least we will be able to offer Bach’s music to 250–300 of those precious fifth graders and I look forward to that! We present *Bach to School* each year to every third-grade student in the cities of Bethlehem and Easton and every fifth-grade student in Allentown. We see about 5,000 students a year! I’m proud of that! At this point, we still plan our full assembly programs for Bethlehem in January 2022. Please keep your fingers crossed with me that these programs can go on as scheduled.

In February, we will present our annual Family Concert. This will be a collaboration with three dance ensembles from the Charter School for the Arts. We have worked with these brilliant young dancers before and it is always a thrill – to “SEE” Bach’s music as you “HEAR” it – is an extraordinary experience. These young dancers are estimable colleagues in this concert – a collaboration for which I cannot wait! I’m proud of our relationship with the school, their instructors and these fabulous young dancers – these collaborations have become cherished memories.

All of this leads me to a question for YOU, our Guarantors, attendees, and dear friends. We are working very hard to bring the joy and wonder of Bach’s music to children and young people. How can you help us? What might you do as a partner in these endeavors? The music we love is precious, life-changing, enriching, a treasure! We – each one of us – has a responsibility to give that gift to the next generation. Often this takes more than a simple invitation to a concert, which may be rebuffed. Sometimes it’s an educational process...sharing what we love, talking about why we love it, listening, reading, engaging young people. Please join us in this – and be as creative and thoughtful as you can in so doing. A life that knows this music, cares about it, and loves it is a life transformed! We’ve been hard at work on this for decades... and I am, indeed, proud of that!

With gratitude and best wishes always...
Ever grateful,

Greg Funfgeld, Artistic Director & Conductor

Dear Friends:



THE BOARD OF MANAGERS of The Bach Choir is a large and active group comprised of long-standing supporters, new enthusiasts, and Choir representatives. While we are similar in our love of The Choir and its mission, we each bring different skills and experiences to the Board’s business.

We have just held our annual retreat. The retreat offers an opportunity for board members to discuss aspects of The Choir’s future beyond those normally covered in our board meetings. This year we are facing significant changes to The Choir’s leadership and its environment. To help prepare, the Board discussed four topics: leadership transition, our youth choir Bel Canto, our digital presence, and our posture with respect to diversity, equity, inclusion and access.

By the end of June 2022, we will have a new artistic director and conductor. For the first time in 24 years, we will have all new leadership in the executive and artistic chairs. The Board takes its responsibility in this transition process very seriously, as you might imagine. We are proceeding with the planning, care and diligence that you have come to expect from The Choir.

Five years ago, we began our relationship with Bel Canto,

one of the premier youth choruses around. The strength of the program and the Bel Canto team has been demonstrated throughout the pandemic by producing wonderful, inspiring art and providing a valuable educational experience for its members. The Board is convinced that we have yet to see all of the possibilities of the combination of The Bach Choir and Bel Canto Youth Chorus.

The pandemic forced us to develop our digital capabilities much more rapidly than we otherwise would have, and we learned just how valuable these can be to many people who find us online. As with any new program we plan our use of this technology carefully with an eye to enhancing our art and our supporters’ experience.

Finally, while we are very proud of the reach of our programming to diverse audiences through *Bach to School*, *Bach at Noon*, and Bel Canto to name just some, the Board is taking stock of our posture toward inclusion, diversity, equity and access to give us a fresh view of our efforts.

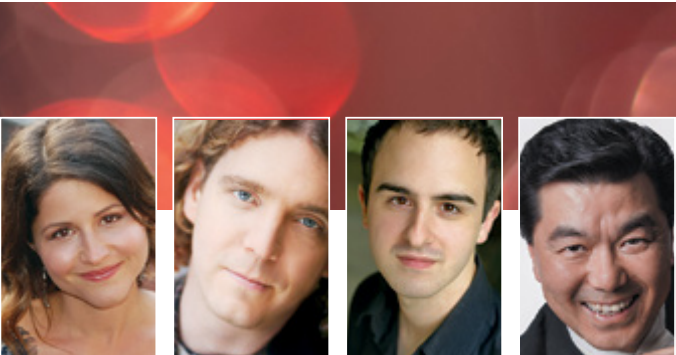
Sincerely,

Harold G. Black, President

A CHRISTMAS STORY:
In Six Cantatas by David Ruhf

BACH’S CHRISTMAS ORATORIO combines the intimate with the cosmic in a kaleidoscope of aesthetic, spiritual, theological, and musical brilliance. Indeed, the opening chorus begins with an orchestral introduction that seems to accomplish all of that in the span of a few bars. We hear a fanfare from the timpani, some trilling flute and oboes, and then the entire orchestra fanfares and rushes to fill every inch of aural space in a way that reminds me of the demonstrations of the fancy sound system at a movie theater. It’s a uniquely thrilling moment, in an oeuvre that is full of them, and should be a powerful reintroduction to our in-person audience of the full Choir and Orchestra, last assembled for our Christmas Concerts in 2019.

The first three cantatas of the *Oratorio* are filled with the full complement of emotions which accompany the narrative of the nativity: elegant and ebullient joy, exceptional tenderness, stalwart faith, and a sense of awe and discovery that The Choir has brought to this piece since it sang the first American performance of the work in 1901. One hundred and twenty years later, The Choir has been pouring its heart into revisiting (and in the case of some of our newer singers, learning) all of the challenging bits, and we are quite eager to bring this music before our beloved audience!



As a bass-baritone, one of my all-time favorites is “Grosse Herr” and I can’t wait to hear Christophéren Normura perform it.

– David Beckwith, Past President, The Choir’s Board of Managers

A particular delight of these concerts will be the presence of an especially exciting group of soloists, old friends and a newer (yet familiar) face – the fantastic tenor Lawrence Jones, who sang in last year’s memorable virtual Christmas concert and at *Bach at Noon*, will join longstanding and dear friends of the Choir Agnes Zigovics, soprano, Daniel Taylor, countertenor, and Christophéren Nomura (who sang on The Choir’s reference 1999 recording of the work). They will bring to life of some of Bach’s most beautiful and memorable arias.

We are delighted to offer the Sunday concert in person and virtually from the First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem, adding an important piece to The Choir’s digital portfolio. We hope to welcome friends from around the country (and the world) to the particular magic that happens at our Christmas Concerts, which always end with an especially moving rendition of *Silent Night*, complete with ravishing descant.



GUARANTORS – *Leading the Way Forward* by Cheryl Dungan

THE EARLY LEADERSHIP of The Bach Choir included some of Bethlehem’s most influential and visionary people who were committed to ensuring the future of The Choir for generations to come. They appreciated the significant role The Bach Choir played in the development of the community as a cultural center for the arts and as a source of fellowship, creative expression, and spiritual renewal.

These founding members guaranteed or promised the funds needed to sustain The Bach Choir each season. Today, nearly half of our Guarantors are second or third generation families who have a long history and deep connection with The Bach Choir. For Choir Member Peter Young and his family, being a Guarantor has been a tradition for three generations.

“It was inevitable that The Bach Choir would become a very big part of my life. My family has had a long almost 100-year multi-generation relationship. The Choir was in my blood from the very beginning. As a young child, I remember sitting on the organ bench turning pages for the organist. My grandmother, aunt, mother and father and my own children all sang in The Choir.”

Many Guarantors have sponsored memberships for their children or grandchildren to continue a meaningful family tradition. Guarantor John Koontz often brings young family members to our Bach Choir concerts to support their cultural and arts education. “There are many reasons to cherish the legacy of Bach. For me, the most resonant are the reasons of the heart. That is the place

where love abides. And love, as we all well know, is never content solely with itself. It must be shared. But it has its own logic: I love the music of Bach; I love my children and grandchildren; thus, my children and grandchildren will love the music of Bach. I see it as our task to love Bach so well that, for succeeding generations, this music, at the very least, remains.”

For Guarantors Pat and Vicky Freeland, Festival is an annual tradition that brings together their grandchildren and friends they invite each season, to join in fellowship and celebration in beautiful historic Bethlehem.

“Four generations of Freelands have attended the Bach Festival, starting in the early ‘50s. We have amassed quite a few friends to join us, the largest contingent was 17 friends and family. After two years of deprivation, I am hoping the scourge is behind us and the ‘Kyrie’ will waft over all of us once again,” noted Pat.

From the first American performance of the *Mass in B Minor* over a century ago, Guarantors have led the way enabling The Choir to respond to challenging circumstances and a changing world. Our Guarantors are dedicated, generous and appreciative people who share their love of Bach’s music with others and support The Bach Choir, just as our earliest Guarantors intended. We are so grateful for all the ways they help us to move forward.



Ryan Hulvat

WAYS TO SUPPORT THE BACH CHOIR ♦ Invite family & friends to concerts & events ♦ Watch online and invite others to join you ♦ Sponsor or recommend a Guarantor membership ♦ Consider a Planned Gift or Bequest ♦ Establish a Lifetime Guarantee ♦ Increase your annual pledge ♦ Consider The Choir as you plan your end-of-year donations
Ready to support The Choir? Contact Cheryl Dungan: email cheryl@bach.org or call 610-866-4382 ext. 113.



GALA 2022: by Renée James

Yo-Yo Ma & Kathryn Stott

WHAT BETTER WAY to enhance our return to live performances this season than an appearance by our very special 2022 Gala artists: Yo-Yo Ma and Kathryn Stott. The concert takes place on April 30, 2022, just a few weeks before Greg Funfgeld leads The Choir in May’s Bethlehem Bach Festival, his final as Artistic Director and Conductor. Long-time patrons will remember that The Choir last presented Yo-Yo Ma in 1998, when he gave an unforgettable performance of Bach’s complete *Cello Suites*. For the Gala, he and world-class pianist, Kathryn Stott, will perform a concert with repertoire to be announced.

Collaborators since 1985, Yo-Yo Ma and Kathryn Stott’s most recent release is titled *Songs of Comfort and Hope*. Greg is anticipating the performance with great excitement: “From Sesame Street to the great concert halls of the world, Yo-Yo Ma graces our lives with music and wonder, joy and peace, hope and love. This concert from Yo-Yo Ma and Kathryn Stott is a not-to-be missed event for every one of us – bring your friends, children, grandchildren, everyone you love and care about!”

Seating will be reserved in Central Moravian Church, with some allocated to students to attend and experience this outstanding performance. Excitement has been building since we announced the concert in July and tickets to the Gala and/or the concert are selling very quickly. Prior to the 8PM concert, The Choir will hold a festive Gala Event, with cocktails and dinner. Benefactor tickets to the Gala are \$275, and include cocktails and dinner at Northampton County Country Club, a concert ticket and a \$150 deductible contribution to The Choir. Reserved seats to the concert only are priced at \$95, \$70, and \$50 for adults, with limited student tickets priced at \$9.

Tickets went on sale to Guarantors on November 1, and to the public on November 15. We hope you’ve made your plans to join us and experience this exquisite performance.

“Over those many years, they’ve developed a wonderfully warm and mutually responsive musical partnership that has blossomed in performance that are both generous and incisive.”

– NPR

EMERGING STRONGER THAN EVER:

Bel Canto’s Journey by Joy Hirokawa

WHILE NO ONE WOULD WANT TO REPEAT last season’s forced changes due to COVID, the upside was that it allowed for the creation of the widely acclaimed project by Bel Canto – *Stand Up: Singing the Underground Railroad*. Using spirituals, Bach chorales, spoken word, music by contemporary African American composers, and creative videography, *Stand Up* followed the journey taken by the enslaved as they escaped on the Underground Railroad. Choristers and leaders alike deeply felt the significance of filming on location at local sites important to the Underground Railroad in Quakertown, Buckingham, and Bethlehem. Through this project, our choristers gained new insight to our region’s role in supporting the UGRR, the experience of the enslaved, and the connections of that lived experience to contemporary issues of equity. It was an inspiring journey for all. Please let us know if you missed it online and would like to view it (office@bach.org).

The current season extends this curriculum, focusing on how song is used to uplift and amplify. Our Winter Concert, called *All Together We Are Love*, will feature music both historic and contemporary that follows the Christmas story and emphasizes Peace and Unity. You won’t want to miss this joyful start to the holiday season on Sunday, December 5th, 2021, at 4PM at St. John Windish Lutheran Church, 617 E. 4th St., Bethlehem!

After a long and challenging year in which singing was either restricted or severely limited, our Spring Concert, *Rise Up Singing!*, celebrates how song has the capacity to lift us up, call attention, and make a statement. Expect to be taken on a musical journey sure to shatter your expectations of a choral music concert.

We end the season joining in the celebration honoring



LOOKING FOR A UNIQUE SINGING OPPORTUNITY FOR A CHILD YOU KNOW?

Bel Canto is accepting new singers for January!

Please contact us at 610-866-4382 x116 or sign up on our website at bach.org/belcanto

Greg Funfgeld’s tenure as the Artistic Director of The Bach Choir, singing the children’s chorus part in Bach’s *Saint Matthew Passion* at the 2022 Bach Festival. Within a month, our choristers will experience singing a breadth and depth of choral music that will most assuredly propel them into a lifetime of exploration of choral music.

This season also welcomes Liz Kane as the Director of our Preparatory Chorus. Liz comes to us with 18 years of teaching experience and a passion for lifelong and community music making. She has been significantly involved in the New Jersey Choral society where she worked hard to ensure high quality and informative intergenerational music performances. Welcome Liz!

BACH IS BACK CONT.

“Lobe den Herren,” was the most appropriate invitation for the joyful reunion. Many smiles, perhaps a few tears of elation behind the masks.”

Indeed, performing in front of a live audience proved to be quite an emotional moment for The Choir, evident in the tone of Greg’s voice as he welcomed the crowd into Central Moravian Church. One member of The Choir exclaimed, “It was a glorious time! My heart was grateful and my soul refreshed while singing Bach’s music once again in this spiritual place.” Todd Fennell, bass, described the previous year as “a long season of yearning and waiting and hoping for the time when we can sing again with a live audience. It has been said, ‘he or she who sings prays twice.’ Indeed, our singing in the presence of an audience has been an answer to prayer.” For many, the chance to be in front of an audience again felt monumental on the path towards a new, post-pandemic way of life. “What I felt overwhelming was how much I missed being surrounded by such wonderful musicians,” said Patti Sakdiponephong. “We were finally able to move forward and sing in a world that wouldn’t allow us. It’s been a long journey.”



“Tears were streaming down my face as the audience applauded. In my mind, my only thoughts were, We’re back! We told you we’d be back, and we’re back!”

– Patty Alercia, Choir & Board member



E-BACH:
The Choir Online by Renée James

Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you’re doing the impossible.– Francis of Assisi

What a testament to the journey The Choir and our patrons have been on over the last 18 months!

When the pandemic forced our shut down of all live performances, it became necessary for us to find new ways to connect with our audience, and continue our mission to perform and encourage appreciation of Bach’s music. With hard work, dedication to our message and relentless promotion, we found that it was not only possible to record and then share concerts, clips and messages of comfort, hope, and resilience regularly to our audience, it was a way to build our audience far beyond our region and our steadfast ticket buyers. Before long, we were doing what we may have imagined was impossible: A Virtual Christmas Concert, a re-imagined *Bach to School* program through a new film, and a Virtual LIVE-STREAMED Festival. Reaching our patrons, new and old, near and far, has grown The Bach Choir’s footprint enormously, all over the world and we are building on that growth.

This season, our virtual programming is a mix of free and ticketed concerts. Working with two production companies, chosen after issuing an RFP last Spring, we’ll offer our patrons a total of five *Bach at Noon* Concerts (July, August, September



and November, 2021 and June 2022). These will be streamed on our YouTube channel, free to all. We’re offering virtual tickets to two concerts: Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio*, Parts 1, 2 and 3 from Bethlehem on December 12 and the *Mass in B Minor* from Festival on May 21, 2022. Virtual tickets provide a private link to each buyer, who then access the concert the day it premieres, and have access to view it for two additional weeks.

To build our audience, both in person and online, we’ve engaged Non-Profit Megaphone to manage our Google Ads program, a digital marketing tool that utilizes the Google search engine to target potential patrons. With our direction and building on our web content, Bach Choir ads will appear online during relevant Google searches and lead consumers to our site and our organization, and to our performances, either in-person or online.

The only thing to count on is change. We’re enormously grateful to you, our patrons who have supported us through this period of growth and reinvention. We are emerging stronger and more energized than ever!

A CHORAL SCHOLAR’S EXPERIENCE:
Growing as a Vocalist by Bridget White

THE BACH CHOIR CHORAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM was, quite simply, one of the highlights of my senior year. I grew as a vocalist, and as a community member and musician.

I learned about the Choral Scholars program while singing with The Bel Canto Youth Chorus. Bel Canto merged with The Bach Choir in my sophomore year of high school, and older members of Bel Canto were encouraged to audition for the program. I had the opportunity to work with members of The Bach Choir when we performed Benjamin Britten’s *Noah’s Flood*, and couldn’t wait to join them again!

My experience began in Fall 2020 when COVID restrictions were in effect, so it had some unique qualities. The Bach Choir customarily chooses several Scholars each year, but I was the only one of the season and the rehearsals were modified due to gathering restrictions. I was paired with a fellow soprano who served as my mentor and section buddy. We joined six other Choir members that met outdoors to rehearse as often as possible. I didn’t see the full Choir until a parking lot rehearsal in October, and saw their unmasked faces for the first time during the final hilltop recording session a few weeks later.

Despite the restrictions, I found joy in every rehearsal. The intimate rehearsals allowed me to ask questions and follow along without becoming lost in the music. My fellow sopranos were incredibly encouraging and supportive. Though our time together was limited, they gladly took me into their “family” and guided me through the challenging music. (Their reactions to my prom dress make up some of my favorite memories of the year!) My success also relied on the care and support of Greg Funfgeld, whose



2021-22 Choral Scholars (l to r): Taylor Kendall, First Soprano, Abriana Ferrari, First Soprano & Hailey Falzone, Second Soprano

guidance during rehearsals and in individual sessions helped me flourish as a performer, student, and musician. By the end of my year with The Choir, I had a new family of wonderful vocalists and am eternally grateful for the opportunity to make music with them.

The music provided plenty of challenges to stimulate my musical growth. The Festival selections were especially difficult, and therefore incredibly rewarding to perform. The Bach Choir traditionally performs the *Mass in B Minor* annually, but in 2021, we had to adapt. We instead learned four Cantatas which Bach eventually incorporated in his *Mass*. I had never before encountered vocal music as complicated as these Cantatas, but The Choir was the perfect environment in which to learn them. I learned to find patterns in the *melismas*, to sustain short high pitches (which is much harder than it sounds), and, perhaps most importantly, to admit early when I’m lost! These recording sessions were among the most exhilarating and exhausting choral performances I’ve ever done, and I’d do it all over again in a heartbeat!

The Choral Scholars program calls to students who love to sing, learn, and work. It enriches both the mind and soul of the musician, and anyone looking for an immersion into a professional choral experience should audition. I, for one, can’t wait for the chance to sing the full *Mass in B Minor* with The Choir someday.

BOARD & STAFF *News* by Leela Breithaupt
WE ARE VERY PLEASED TO WELCOME:

NEW STAFF MEMBERS

JEAN DONEGAN VRABEL, Choir Manager, is a retired elementary



school counselor who worked for many years for the Bethlehem School District. Jean is a long-time Bach Choir family member. She has been a Choir member for 42 years and sang with her mother who was in The Choir for 25 years. Her bed and breakfast, Rustic Dreams, is located at her home in Bethlehem Township. Jean and her husband, Matt, have enjoyed having many

wonderful guests over the past 10 years, including some of the orchestra members and soloists from The Bach Choir. “We enjoyed spoiling our musicians who for years spoiled us with their amazing musical talent.” Jean is a Bethlehem native and appreciates the history of The Choir and how it has enriched our community.

KATE RACCULIA, Archivist, fills the position of Bach Choir Archivist



in November 2021. Kate is a novelist living in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. She is the author of the novels *This Must Be the Place* and *Bellweather Rhapsody*, winner of the American Library Association’s Alex Award. Her third novel, *Tuesday Mooney Talks to Ghosts*, was published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in October 2019. Kate was a teenage bassoonist in her hometown of Syracuse, and studied illustration, design, Jane Austen, and Canada at the University of Buffalo. She moved to Boston to get her MFA from Emerson College, and stuck around for 11 years. She has been a cartoonist, a planetarium operator, a movie and music reviewer, a coffee jerk, a bookseller, a designer, a finance marketing proposal writer, and a fundraising prospect researcher. She is a donor relations writer for Lehigh University, teaches writing online for Grub Street, and volunteers for the Bethlehem Area Public Library. Kate has been a member of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem since 2016 and has served as choir representative to the board since 2018.

ELIZABETH KANE, Director of The Preparatory Choir, is thrilled to



lead the Preparatory Choir of The Bel Canto Youth Chorus. She has earned a Masters of Musical Arts in Ethnomusicology from Hunter College, City University of New York, and a Bachelor of Music degree with honors in Music Education from The College of New Jersey. She is currently completing her DMA in Music Education at Boston University with a research focus in social-emotional learning and currently teaches music at Bridgewater Raritan Regional School district, a NAMM “Best Communities For Music Education” district for several years running. Elizabeth has a deep passion for lifelong and community music-making. She has been both a performer, lecturer, and board of trustees member for the New Jersey Choral Society. Elizabeth believes in helping every child experience and create music in meaningful and fun ways.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

PHYLLIS H. GIBSON, joined our Board of Managers in September 2021 and has been an enthusiastic patron since her first introduction to The Bach Choir a few years ago. Phyllis has held corporate roles in global consumer products and service companies including Pepsi-Cola, Avon Products, Mars, Inc., CSX/Sea-Land Service, Inc. and Avis Rent A Car, Inc. She believes strongly in the power of effective communications and views Communications not only as a critical corporate function, but as a Strategic Management tool. Passionate in her views, she has often served as a speaker at corporate meetings and events. Phyllis holds a B.S. from Hampton University and a M.A. from Columbia University. She enjoys tennis, hiking, cross country skiing, French, classical music, violin, reading, writing, theatre, dance, health, fitness and travel.

CHAD D. GRUVER, joined our Board of Managers in September 2021. After moving to the Lehigh Valley 14 years ago to begin a career in the fire service with the City of Easton, Chad has gained an appreciation for the culture, art, and music of the area. Attending annual Bach Choir concerts for the last 12 years and socializing with members of the Bethlehem Bach Choir has become a part of his life. While continuing to grow within the fire service, Chad has expanded his skill set to encompass administrative roles including board membership on the City of Easton Pension board, participating in labor relations, and working with local non-profits to expand their community outreach. He is passionate about community service and has volunteered for Coats for Kids, The Spring Garden Children’s Center, and North Bethlehem Little League. Mr. Gruver earned his B.S. in Fire Science/Fire Safety from New Jersey City University and hold several Pro Board Accredited Fire Service certifications.



THANK YOU, JANIE!

With grateful hearts, we offer our best wishes to retiring Choir Manager Janie Kolb Florenz, who has held this position for many, many years. Janie also sang with The Choir and worked in our office as well. As Choir Manager, she assisted Greg each season: distributing music, tracking attendance and coordinating all manner of Choir tasks and communication. In retirement, she plans to split her time between Pennsylvania and Georgia. Congratulations, Janie!



The Bach Choir of Bethlehem
440 Heckewelder Place
Bethlehem, PA 18018-5806

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Christmas music from The Bach Choir? Yes, please!

J.S. Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* Parts 1, 2 & 3



8pm ♦ Sat., December 11, 2021 (in person)
First Presbyterian Church of Allentown

4pm ♦ Sun., December 12, 2021
(in person &  LIVE-STREAMED)
First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem

Experience the Nativity story with some of Bach's most evocative music. Enjoy Bach's glorious music IN PERSON or LIVE-STREAMED to our expansive and enthusiastic audience.

In-Person Tickets: Adult: \$38; Student: \$9

 **LIVE-STREAMED Ticket: \$20**

BACH.org ♦ 610-866-4382 ext. 110/115



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