



- Full Festival programming returns.
- Livestream continues.
- Order your tickets TODAY!



2023 Bach Festival!
The Bach Choir of Bethlehem
440 Heckewelder Place
Bethlehem, PA 18018-5806

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THE BACH CHOIR
of Bethlehem

125 YEARS
1898-2023

115th Bethlehem BACH FESTIVAL

MAY¹²⁻¹³₁₉₋₂₀ 2023

Our Journey Continues . . .

The Bach Choir of Bethlehem & Bach Festival Orchestra
– Dr. Christopher Jackson, Artistic Director & Conductor

Ryan Hulvat



Dr. Michael Maul
German musicologist, Lecture



The Vivaldi Project Classical String Trio



SOLOISTS

Distinguished GUESTS



Mainstreet Brass

ARTIST- in-Residence

Loretta O'Sullivan, Principal Cello in the Bach Festival Orchestra, has been acclaimed for her "scrupulous musicianship . . . gorgeous sound and stylistic acuity" (*Washington Post*) and is known for her incandescent presence. A longtime member of our Festival Orchestra "family," Loretta is also engaged in an international career of broad scope, including performances at Carnegie Hall, Royal Albert Hall, Gewandhaus, La Fenice, the Kennedy Center, and Strathmore. Highlights include performances of Handel's *Messiah* with the Rogue Symphony Orchestra; Rameau opera with Opera Lafayette in Washington, D.C., and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York; Bach's *Saint John Passion* at Strathmore; French baroque cantatas in Philadelphia with Tempesta di Mare; live film scores for Hollywood's silent movies for Early Music Columbus; and with her newest venture, OpenPage Ensemble, commissioning and performing works of 20th- and 21st-century composers. Her orchestral credits include the Atlanta, Dallas, and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestras, the Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra, and The National Philharmonic.



Sherezade Panthaki
soprano



Meg Bragle
alto/ mezzo-soprano



Benjamin Butterfield
tenor



William Sharp
baritone



Edmund Milly
bass-baritone

As the seventh and newest Artistic Director and Conductor of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem, I am overjoyed to invite you to the 115th Bethlehem Bach Festival!

I would ask you to imagine the excitement and anticipation that has been building within me since June of last year. My very first act in this new position was to program the historic Festival. It is simultaneously the most tremendous honor and a wonderful challenge. Four different major concerts performed within 24 hours, world-class soloists, chamber music, The Bel Canto Youth Chorus, lectures, communal chorale sings, and the incomparable *Mass in B Minor*. For lovers of music like you and me, the Festival is a unique chance to immerse ourselves not only in the beauty of this music but also in the beauty of this community – and a tradition that spans more than a century and has positively impacted the lives of so many.

During my first two weeks in The Bach Choir office, I would return home each evening and read from a book containing the personal accounts of how The Bach Choir, and specifically this Festival, changed the lives of those who attended it. For some, it quite literally saved their lives, renewing their faith in God or in music. Others used it as a yearly pilgrimage to unite with friends and family. Some met their life-long partners here! And for many, it became an important way to measure a year. Just like our most sacred holidays, returning to great works of art like the *Mass in B Minor* has a unique way of allowing us to reflect on the passage of time and our own experience. There is something undeniably special about this Festival and, whether it will be your very first (like me!) or your 50th, I am delighted to welcome you.

It will be a special year for many reasons, but we are especially excited that, for the first time since 2019, we are back with our entire lineup of programming. Bach Outdoors, Zimmerman's Coffee House, Chamber Music in the Saal, Bach at Four, the Chorale Sings – they are all here. And we are continuing to Livestream our performance of the *Mass in B Minor* to help share the spirit of this Festival with those around the world. Welcome, bless you all, and we hope to see you here!

Christopher Jackson, Artistic Director & Conductor



Hub Willson



Whether you are a Bach aficionado or a first-time visitor, we will be delighted to welcome you to our Festival, and we hope you will come back often!

MAY 12 & 19
FRIDAYS



• 12 Noon | **Bach Outdoors!** • Mainstreet Brass

🚶 Payrow Plaza, Church & New Streets, Bethlehem

FREE AND OPEN TO ALL! Enjoy classical pieces on the beautiful Plaza that overlooks the City. *Rain location:* The Old Chapel, 412 Heckewelder Place, behind the Moravian Museum on Church Street.

• 2pm | **The Barnette Distinguished Scholar Lecture**

Dr. Michael Maul *Discovering Bach – The Story of Unearthing the Aria “Alles mit Gott,” BWV 1127*

🚶 Room 145, Zoellner Arts Center, Lehigh University

• FREE lecture, no tickets required

In 2005, Michael Maul, member of the research department of Bach-Archiv Leipzig and Artistic Director of Bachfest Leipzig, made a sensational discovery. After digging deep into hundreds of Central German Archives for almost four years, he came across an anonymous music score of an aria. Dr. Maul will share the story of this discovery, its first recordings, and the visible and hidden messages in this lovely Bach aria.



• 3:30pm | **Chorale Sing**

Our community joins Christopher Jackson and members of The Choir to sing Bach Chorales prior to the Bach at 4 concert. Singers of all levels welcome, sheet music provided, and no German language skills necessary!

• 4pm | **Performances in Intimate & Historic Settings**

Choice A: Bach at 4

🚶 Incarnation of Our Lord Church, Thomas & Buchanan Streets (Close to Zoellner Arts Center)

Join us for “conversation and concert” in the stunning Church of the Incarnation of Our Lord, as Conductor Jackson introduces and offers insight into each of the pieces performed, including Bach’s newly discovered aria, “Alles mit Gott,” BWV 1127. We’ll conclude with one of The Choir’s favorite cantatas, *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit*, BWV 106 (“Actus Tragicus”) for soloists, choir, violas da gamba, and recorders.



• 4pm | **Choice B: Chamber Music in the Saal**

The Vivaldi Project *Novelty and Familiarity –*

Unknown and Beloved String Trios from Vivaldi to Beethoven

🚶 Saal of the Moravian Museum, Church Street

The Saal is on the second floor and is not handicapped accessible.

The Vivaldi Project, performing on period instruments, has been hailed as “simply breathtaking!” and “The group’s exquisite sense of ensemble... represent period instrument playing at its best.” Widely acclaimed for innovative programming that combines scholarship and performance, Co-directors Elizabeth Field and Stephanie Vial are joined by Allison Edberg-Nyquist to form The Vivaldi Project Classical String Trio.

• 5:45pm | **Dinner Discussion** • **Dr. Larry Lipkis**

🚶 Butz Lobby, Zoellner Arts Center

• Tickets/Registration required, limited seating

The perfect choice for dinner between our 4pm concerts and Bach at 8. Delicious food and lively discussion! Host Dr. Lipkis is Professor of Music and Composer-in-Residence at Moravian University.

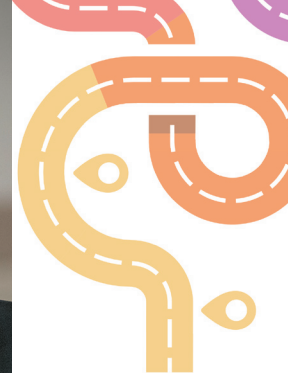
• 8pm | **Bach at 8**

🚶 Packer Memorial Church

Experience Johann Sebastian Bach’s early-career masterpieces for choir and a fiery early cello concerto by J.S.’s son Carl Philipp Emanuel. The gorgeous cantata *Aus der Tiefen ruf ich, Herr, zu dir*, BWV 131, gives voice to hope in despair. Then, Loretta O’Sullivan, Artist-in-Residence, performs the virtuosic tour-de-force, C.P.E. Bach’s *Cello Concerto in A Minor*, Wq 170. The final piece on the program, *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis in meinem Herzen*, BWV 21, begins with the words “I had much grief in my heart, but your consolation restores my soul” and contains some of Bach’s most profound outpourings of grief and most beautiful expressions of mercy and grace, culminating in an exquisite duet between Jesus and the soul.



Shuttle service is provided to and from these venues.



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PLEASE NOTE

Saturday programming for the two weekends has different start times. Programming times on May 13th are consistent with previous Festivals, while May 20th times are earlier. Each time is noted by date.



MAY 13 & 20 SATURDAYS

Ifor Jones Chamber Music Concert

Bach Festival Orchestra, Loretta O'Sullivan, Artist-in-Residence, and The Bel Canto Concert Choir

• MAY 13 at 10:30am | MAY 20 at 10am

🚌 Baker Hall, Zoellner Arts Center

Bach's well-documented admiration for Antonio Vivaldi's music makes the latter composer's inclusion in this program an excellent pairing. Enjoy the fire and zest of Vivaldi's *Concerto for Two Cellos in G Minor*, RV 531, with suave accompaniment by the virtuosi of the Bach Festival Orchestra and then luxuriate in Bach's stately and majestic *Orchestral Suite in D Major*, BWV 1068, including his transcendent and lyrical "Air." Ms. O'Sullivan will perform with The Bel Canto Concert Choir on "Wir eilen mit schwachen, doch emsigen Schritten" from Cantata 78, *Jesu der du meine Seele*.

Festival Luncheon

• MAY 13 at 12:30pm | MAY 20 at 11am

🚌 Butz Lobby, Zoellner Arts Center

Open to the public, the luncheon includes conversation with one of our Festival soloists. Members of the Heritage Society and Guarantors in the top three giving circles (\$750+) are our guests. Registration required.

Chorale Sing • MAY 13 at 2pm | MAY 20 at 12:30

Friends and choral enthusiasts gather together to sing Bach chorales for 20 minutes with Christopher Jackson and members of The Choir, accompanied by the Mainstreet Brass. On the lawn near Packer Church – or indoors in inclement weather.



Shuttle service is provided to and from these venues.



Mass in B Minor

• MAY 13 – Part 1 at 2:30pm | Part 2 at 4:30

• MAY 20 – Part 1 at 1pm | Part 2 at 2:30

🚌 Packer Memorial Church, Lehigh University

Our return in 2022 reminded us all of the majesty and power of this piece, and we look forward to seeing you and many others again in 2023! Please join us as we welcome Christopher Jackson to the podium, conducting The Choir, the Bach Festival Orchestra, and our soloists in his first Festival *Mass in B Minor*.

🔊 Mass in B Minor LIVESTREAM

• MAY 13 – Part 1 at 2:30pm | Part 2 at 4:30

Can't be with us in person? Join our growing world-wide audience for the May 13 performance of the *Mass in B Minor* concert – livestreamed from Packer Memorial Church.

Zimmermann's Coffee House

• MAY 13 only • 7–9:30pm

New venue: 1869 Luckenbach Mill located in the Industrial Quarter (459 Old York Rd., Bethlehem)

While living in Leipzig, Bach presented his music at Zimmermann's, and we do the same in the lovely renovated 1869 Luckenbach Mill. Hear Baroque chamber music performed by young musicians (chosen by audition) and purchase German fare, wine, and beer throughout the evening. An appearance by Christopher Jackson and friends adds to the festivities. *Very limited seating – please don't wait to buy your tickets!*

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Photography by Ryan Hulvat, except where noted.

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