



A COMMUNITY IN SONG

Annual Report 2024-2025





Glenn Koehler



Ryan Huvat

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, marked a period of exceptional artistic achievement and organizational strength for the Bach Choir of Bethlehem. Across performances, education, and community engagement, the Choir advanced its mission with clarity and ambition, building on deep tradition while expanding how and where this music is experienced.

The season was defined by artistic confidence and meaningful risk-taking. Highlights included the Choir's first-ever performances of Sergei Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil*, presented in partnership with the Westminster Choir in Bethlehem and at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul in Philadelphia. Our Christmas Concert continued the Carol Commission Project, pairing Bach's *How Brightly Shines the Morning Star* with *The Consolation of Apollo* by composer Kile Smith. The Greg Funfgeld Family Concert brought together high school and collegiate choirs from across the region for music by Bach and Mozart, celebrating mentorship and shared musical heritage.

A defining moment of the year was the return of the Thomanerchor of Leipzig for the Gala Concert and Fundraiser. Their performance at Central Moravian Church, followed by a benefactor dinner at Historic Hotel Bethlehem, was both artistically unforgettable and vital in support of the Choir's education and community engagement programs.

This season also marked the debut of the expanded four-day Bethlehem Bach Festival – the most significant structural change to the Festival in a generation. Anchored by artist-in-residence Rachell Ellen Wong and Barnette Distinguished Scholar Dr. Daniel R. Melamed, the Festival introduced new offerings including Cantata in Context and Outside the Bachs. Livestreaming and expanded digital access extended the Festival's reach, helping the Choir engage more than 15,000 in-person audience members and 4,200 virtual attendees over the course of the season.

The echoes of the Choir's European tour continued to resonate throughout the year, culminating in participation in Bethlehem's UNESCO World Heritage inscription celebration. Singing for an international gathering of dignitaries and Moravian leaders affirmed the Choir's role as a cultural ambassador – deeply rooted in Bethlehem and connected to a global musical heritage.

Closer to home, education and youth programs continued to grow in both scale and impact. The Bel Canto Youth Chorus now serves more than 80 singers across three ensembles, supported by new initiatives including a Bel Canto Scholarship Recital, expanded after-school programming, choral composition workshops, and Act 48 Provider status with the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

This year also marked a leadership transition on the Board, as we celebrated the distinguished service of Hal Black as President and welcomed Alan Battisti into the role following thoughtful succession planning.

Guided by the Board's five-year strategic plan, the Choir looks ahead with confidence – expanding artistic partnerships, strengthening digital reach, and investing in the people who make the music possible through Heart of the Bach Choir: A Campaign for the People Who Make the Music.

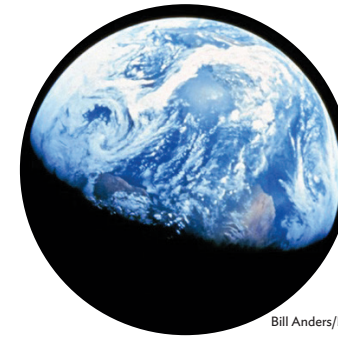
Thank you for your continued belief in this work. Your support sustains the music, the mission, and the future we are building together.

Alan S. Battisti, Esq.
President, Board of Managers

Leela Breithaupt
Executive Director



Glenn Koehler



Bill Anders/NASA

COLLABORATING IN THE COMMUNITY

This season marked the 140th Bach at Noon concert, a milestone for one of the Bach Choir of Bethlehem's most enduring traditions. A free musical offering and a gift to the community, Bach at Noon continues to welcome audiences into the music of Bach through performances by members of the Choir, the Bach Festival Orchestra, and guest artists, reflecting our mission to make music accessible while enabling connection through shared artistic experiences. The season's collaborative spirit extended beyond the series through performances with Westminster Choir College and programming that placed Bach in dialogue with contemporary voices, including the music of composer Kile Smith.

At the same time, new artistic initiatives expanded the scope of our work. The new Outside the Bachs series invited audiences to explore Bach's global influence through interdisciplinary collaboration, including a flamenco performance that highlighted the continuing reach of Bach's musical legacy. A Bach at Noon performance featuring Barbash Competition winner Emmanuel Coppey further reflected the Bach Choir's commitment to artistic excellence and to supporting the next generation of Bach interpreters. Together, these programs demonstrate how the Bach Choir continues to honor tradition while creating new opportunities for collaboration and community engagement.

CARING THROUGH MUSIC

The Bach Choir's A Musical Heart program brought live music to individuals and families in hospice and inpatient care across our region through 54 visits, serving 230 patients and providing nearly 75 hours of music. Offered at the bedside and in small-group settings, these visits create moments of connection and dignity at life's most tender times. A Musical Heart continues to embody our belief that music is not only performance, but connection, extending the Bach Choir's mission of sharing music into spaces where it can offer profound comfort.



Marco Caldeon



Glenn Koehler

WHERE THE FUTURE FINDS ITS VOICE

Youth and education remained central to our mission through the continued growth of the Bel Canto Youth Chorus. Enrollment has increased by nearly 300% since the 2022 season, with 85 singers currently participating across four ensembles serving students in grades K–12+ and an expanded series of spring workshops in composition and performance for high school musicians.

New initiatives included the introduction of the Bel Canto Scholarship Recital, which showcases solo and small ensemble performances while supporting the Bel Canto Scholarship Fund, as well as district choir preparation sessions and educational workshops that deepen musical training and mentorship opportunities for young singers. Through programs such as Cantaré, which brings choral experiences to under-resourced schools in the Bethlehem Area School District, Bel Canto continues to broaden access and impact.

WHERE THE CHOIR MEETS THE CLASSROOM

Through our Bach to School program, the Choir brought live music and interactive learning directly into classrooms, serving 3,336 students across seven schools this season. Designed to complement classroom curriculum while introducing students to the richness of Bach's music, the program combines high-quality live performance with engaging discussion and age appropriate resources. Educators rated the experience as highly beneficial, citing the interactivity, the excitement it generated among students, and the meaningful exposure to classical music. Teachers noted that the program offered new ways to think about music and praised its ability to be both educational and inspiring. Bach to School continues to expand access to the arts, ensuring that students encounter live music in the age of AI and in the spaces where they learn every day.

THE NEXT GENERATION

In 2025, our Bach Choir Scholars continued to distinguish themselves as emerging leaders in music and beyond. From regional and All-State honors to national recognition through the 2025 NAFME Eastern Division Honors Ensembles, our scholars have demonstrated excellence at every level. One scholar, now studying vocal performance at Florida State University, was recognized with the Albert J. Neumeyer Performing Arts Award, a Freddy Award for Outstanding Solo Vocal Performance, and multiple academic and service honors, while maintaining leadership roles in music honor societies and school ensembles. Another scholar, a Bachelor of Music candidate in



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Music Education, performed the role of Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* with Montclair State University Opera and remains active in multiple collegiate ensembles and opera workshop productions. A senior music education major at Moravian University earned the Leon Prokofy Leonovich Memorial Prize for significant growth and excellence in music study, serves in collegiate music education leadership, and performs widely across university ensembles, including a solo appearance with the Bach Choir. Together, these accomplishments reflect not only artistic achievement, but a deep commitment to leadership and the future of choral music.

A CELEBRATION OF YOUNG VOICES

This season's Greg Funfgeld Family Concert – Youth Choirs Festival brought together our Bel Canto Youth Chorus, regional youth ensembles, and collegiate partners for a vibrant celebration of young voices. Featuring repertoire from cultures around the world and culminating in combined performances alongside the Bach Choir and Bach Festival Orchestra, the program invited audiences to actively engage in the music-making process. The concert highlighted both the musical growth of our youth singers and our ongoing commitment to education, collaboration, and building the future of choral music.

A FESTIVAL REIMAGINED

The 117th Bethlehem Bach Festival marked the introduction of a new Festival format, reimagined as a condensed four-day experience designed to deepen artistic impact. By bringing performances, lectures, and community events into a more immersive and connected schedule, the Festival continued its most cherished traditions, like the performance Bach's *Mass in B Minor* and chamber music concerts, while creating space for new initiatives such as the Outside the Bachs series and expanded community programming throughout Bethlehem's UNESCO World Heritage Site. The updated format reflects the Bach Choir of Bethlehem's ongoing commitment to honoring tradition while thoughtfully evolving to serve contemporary audiences.

FROM BACH'S HOME CHURCH TO BETHLEHEM

This season's Thomanerchor Gala concert celebrated a remarkable cultural and musical partnership rooted in shared history. Welcoming the Thomanerchor of Leipzig, the historic choir once led by Johann Sebastian Bach, to Bethlehem created a meaningful connection between two ensembles united by a common musical legacy. Their performance at Central Moravian Church, the site of the Bach Choir of Bethlehem's first complete performance of the *Mass in B Minor* in America, offered audiences a powerful reminder of the enduring ties between Leipzig and Bethlehem and of Bach's continuing influence across generations and continents.

The Gala evening that followed brought together supporters, artists, and community members in celebration of this heritage while raising vital funds in support of the Bach Choir's youth and educational programs. Through music, fellowship, and philanthropy, the event reflected the Bach Choir's ongoing role as both cultural ambassador and community partner, strengthening international relationships while investing in the future of choral music.



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Ted Colegrove

Marco Calderon

FINANCE

Our financial story reflects both the ambition of this season and the strength of the community that makes it possible. Behind every performance, program, and partnership is a foundation of thoughtful stewardship and sustained support helping to bring our voice to the Lehigh Valley and the world. As we look at this year's financials, we see not only numbers, but a clear investment in artistic excellence, education, and our future.

Summary Financials – OVERVIEW 2024–2025 (MILLIONS)

Total revenue	\$ 1.73
Total expenses	\$ 1.62
Total net assets	\$10.61
Total contributed support	\$ 1.0*
Endowment	\$10.44

* Individual donations make up 61% of Contributed Support



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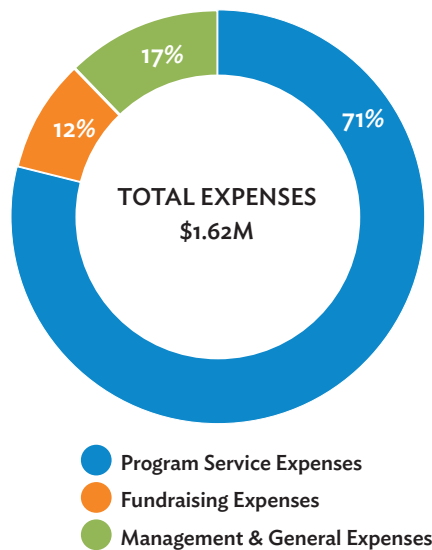
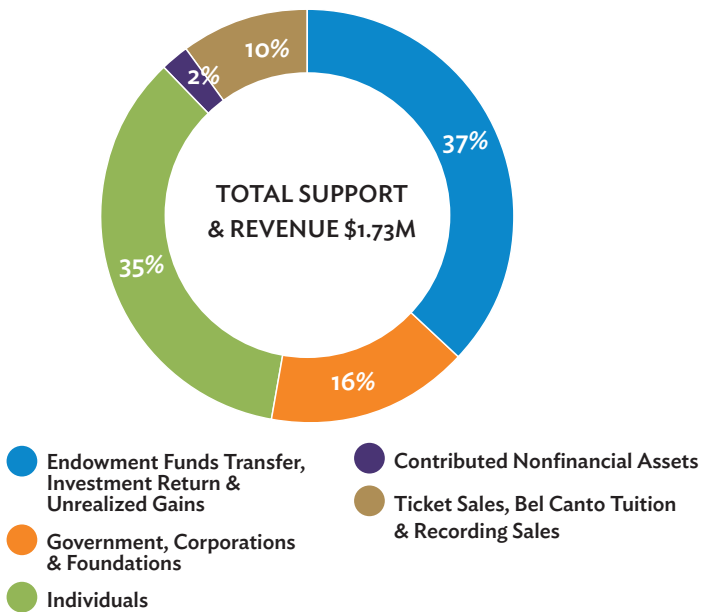
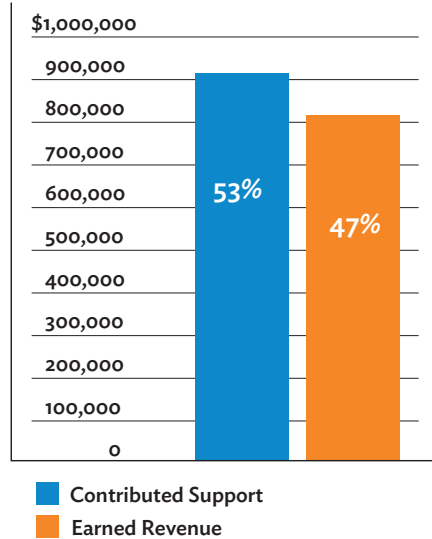


Bach Choir Archives

Ted Colegrove



CONTRIBUTED/EARNED INCOME RATIO



CONTINUING AND PRESERVING OUR MUSICAL HERITAGE

This season brought renewed focus to the preservation and sharing of the Bach Choir's rich history through archival initiatives. Over the past year, historic materials including early films, recordings, photographs, and ephemera have been digitized to ensure their long-term preservation and accessibility. Projects like the development of a new online digital repository represent an important step in making more than 125 years of artistic legacy available to researchers, audiences, and future generations. These efforts not only safeguard the past but also deepen understanding of the Choir's ongoing role in the cultural life of the Lehigh Valley.

This work gained additional resonance as Bethlehem's Moravian Church Settlements received UNESCO World Heritage designation, bringing global recognition to the shared history that connects the community and the Bach Choir. The Choir was also a subject of the documentary feature film ROOTED, highlighting the relationship between artists and place in Bethlehem's cultural story. Together, these initiatives affirm the Bach Choir's commitment to honoring its history while ensuring that its legacy remains a living part of the community's future.

A BELOVED LEADER SAYS GOODBYE

The 2024-2025 season culminated with the retirement of Harold G. Black following more than two decades of dedicated service to the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, including 10 years as President of the Board of Managers. Throughout his tenure, Hal's thoughtful guidance, strategic vision, and deep commitment to artistic excellence helped guide the organization through periods of growth, transition, and unprecedented challenges, strengthening the choir's financial stability and long-term sustainability. His leadership played a meaningful role in advancing the choir's educational initiatives, expanding community engagement, and supporting the artistic ambitions that continue to shape the organization today. The Bach Choir expresses its sincere gratitude for Hal's extraordinary service and lasting impact and welcomes Alan Battisti as he assumes the role of Board President.



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THE BACH CHOIR OF BETHLEHEM 2024-2025

ARTISTIC STAFF

Christopher Jackson
Artistic Director & Conductor

Kerry Heimann
Rehearsal Accompanist
& Assistant Conductor
Charlotte Mattax Moersch
Orchestra Personnel Manager
Jean Donegan Vrabel
Choir Manager
Ulrike Shapiro
German Diction Coach

The Bel Canto Youth Chorus

Kelly Rocchi
Director
Alaina Swartz
Youth Chorale Conductor
Erica Silver
Da Capo Treble Choir Conductor
Dr. Larry Lipkis
Faculty
Andrea Berntsen
Collaborative Pianist
Tina Lebrecht
Collaborative Pianist

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Leela Breithaupt
Executive Director

Cheryl Dungan
Development Director
Alaina Swartz
Director of Education
& Community Engagement
Glenn Koehler
Marketing Manager
Sara Scott
Production & Orchestra Coordinator
Claudia Carroll
Finance & Business Manager
Lindsay Liiro
Administrative Assistant
Cory Dieterly
Archivist

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Alan Battisti
President Elect
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Treasurer
James Horvath
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James Rowland
Anthony Villani
Jean Donegan Vrabel

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Janice S. Bonge
John A. Jordan Jr.

Terms Expiring 2025

Harold G. Black
Charles P. Dangelmajer
James Harbaugh
Cheryl Matherly
Bruce Maza
Joan M. Moran
Barbara Oppen
Anthony R. Thompson

Terms Expiring 2026

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Alan Battisti
Malcolm Bruno
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Chad Gruver
James Horvath
Alfred J. Krug
Larry Lipkis, Ph.D.
Erika Riddle Petrozelli
Kalyna Procyk
Jacqueline Renner
Annette Thiel
Charles Thiel
Donald Wertman



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The Bach Choir gratefully acknowledges and thanks our 2024-2025 sponsors. The choir is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

