



Washington Bach Consort

The Nation's Premier Baroque Chorus and Orchestra
Dr. Dana T. Marsh, Artistic Director

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Washington Bach Consort to Receive \$25,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts



Washington, DC—Washington Bach Consort has been approved for a \$25,000 Grants for Arts Projects award from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to support ***Giving Bach to the Community***. The Consort's performance and community engagement project is among 1,130 projects across the country, totaling more than \$31 million, that were selected during this second round of Grants for Arts Projects fiscal year 2023 funding.

"The National Endowment for the Arts is pleased to support a wide range of projects, including ***Giving Bach to the Community***, demonstrating the many ways the arts enrich our lives and contribute to healthy and thriving communities," said NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD. "These organizations play an important role in advancing the creative vitality of our nation and helping to ensure that all people can benefit from arts, culture, and design."

Washington Bach Consort's ***Giving Bach to the Community*** music education and community engagement programs are central to the organization's mission. Five free initiatives – the **Noontime Cantata Series**, **Bach to School**, **Wunderkind Projekt**, **Talking Bach**, and a **Bach in Your Neighborhood Community Concert** – will provide a range of educational and enrichment activities for more than 5,000 diverse residents of the Washington, DC area who, for reasons of cost, location, schedule or lack of familiarity with the music, are unlikely to be regular attendees at the Consort's performances.

The Bach Consort's 2023-2024 ***Giving Bach to the Community*** free community engagement and education programs will serve more than 5,000 DC-area residents.

Our **Noontime Cantata Series** at the downtown Church of the Epiphany and St. Mark's on Capitol Hill presents music as it would have been heard in Bach's time. Each 50-minute concert features an organ prelude plus our superb chorus and orchestra performing a Bach cantata (vocal composition with instrumental accompaniment). As many as 30 professional musicians are part of each performance. The Washington Post calls this 30-year tradition "the gift you can't put a price on." 12 concerts will serve 3,000 attendees, including senior citizens, DC students, people experiencing homelessness, and business professionals.

Bach to School field trips serve 1,700 DC public and public charter school students in grades 1-5 through the Consort's 45-minute plays: **Bach in Time** and **A Goldberg Variation**, both written by Helen Hayes Award winner Eric Shimelonis. Performances are held at Sitar Arts Center, Atlas Performing Arts Center, and THEARC, located in DC's most underserved quadrant. Each interactive play features Consort artists with education backgrounds telling the story of Bach's life and performing on period instruments. Students discover the significance of early music, enhance their musical vocabulary, and are encouraged to ask questions. Each student receives a comic book, illustrated by award-winning DC cartoonist Andrew Cohen, with stories, a review of instruments, activities and games. A Teacher's Guide reinforces concepts covered in the plays.

The Wunderkind Projekt brings Consort teaching artists into 6th-12th grade DC public and public charter school music classrooms to lead pre-performance discussions for 700 students, tailored to their age and musical level. Each class then attends our corresponding **Noontime Cantata** performance to enjoy the full concert experience. Consort musicians return to lead post-performance discussions, encouraging students to share thoughts on the musical experience. As we will prioritize employing BIPOC teaching artists, more students will see musicians who look like them represented in our work.

Bach to School and the **Wunderkind Projekt** support the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education's Arts Education Learning Standards. Both programs are offered through the DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative's Arts and Humanities for Every Student program.

One-hour, pre-concert **Talking Bach** lectures are presented free to subscription concert ticket holders. Acclaimed Bach scholar Dr. Michael Marissen highlights the musical elements and historical context of works to be performed.

The Consort's FY22-FY26 strategic plan details plans for serving diverse audiences through expanded outreach, including **Bach in Your Neighborhood** concerts in underserved DC neighborhoods. During the grant period, a Consort quartet will perform a pop-up concert at a community venue.

For more information on other projects included in the NEA grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](https://www.arts.gov/news).

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The Washington Bach Consort shares the transformative power of music, with the works of J.S. Bach and other Baroque composers at the core. Our professional artists inspire audiences with the highest levels of artistic excellence, enrich the cultural life through historically-informed performances, and provide educational programs in the Washington, DC community and beyond.