

MUSIC WORCESTER



2025–2026 Season



2025–2026 Season

THE WORCESTER CHORUS

Chris Shepard, Director

Handel *Messiah*

December 6, 2025 at 8 pm – Mechanics Hall



Bach *Christmas Oratorio* with the Winchendon Festival Players
January 23, 2026 at 7 pm – Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon
January 24, 2026 at 8 pm – Mechanics Hall

Frederick: Cantata on the Life of Frederick Douglass

April 25, 2026 at 8 pm – Mechanics Hall



a world premiere

THE WORCESTER CHORUS WOMEN'S ENSEMBLE

Mark Mummert, Director

Holiday Concert

December 21, 2025 at 4 pm
Trinity Lutheran Church

Women's Ensemble & Cantilena

May 8, 2026 at 8 pm – Trinity Lutheran Church
May 9, 2026 at 8 pm – First Parish of Arlington

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MUSIC WORCESTER

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On the cover: Simone Dinnerstein, photo by
Blake Nelson



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Hanif Abdurraqib

MacArthur Fellow Hanif Abdurraqib is an award-winning poet, essayist, and music and cultural critic from Columbus, Ohio. His newest release, *There's Always This Year: On Basketball and Ascension* (Random House, 2024), was a New York Times Bestseller and longlisted for the National Book Award in nonfiction.

September 16



Puno, Sewing Memories

How do we experience loss? How can we hold and appreciate what has been left to us? This new program from the Papermoon Puppet Theatre Company tells the story of Tala, a young girl coping with her father's passing, through a poignant performance with astonishing modernist puppets.

September 25 & 26

American Patchwork Quartet

Drawing influences from American folk, jazz and country as well as West African and East Asian styles, APQ blends tradition and innovation in a celebration of America's cultural mosaic in this co-presentation with Music Worcester.

November 14



Djapo

Rooted in the rhythms of Senegal and Mali, *Djapo* combines traditional West African dance with contemporary African club culture, Afrobeats, and live percussion shaped through the intergenerational collaboration of celebrated dance artists and mother/son duo Marie Basse-Wiles and Omari Wiles.

November 21



Explore the full season and reserve your tickets at priorperformingartscenter.org

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THE 2025–2026 SEASON

 **Musicians of the Old Post Road** October 5, First Unitarian Church

BACHtoberfest 2025, Mechanics Hall

- **CONCORA & Baroklyn**, featuring **Simone Dinnerstein** October 24
- **BACHtoberfest: Peter Krasinski, organ** October 25
- **Simone Dinnerstein: *Inventions & Sinfonias*** October 25
- **BACHtoberfest Choir** October 26



Baroklyn with
Simone Dinnerstein

Kyung-Wha Chung: Violin Recital November 2, Mechanics Hall

Orchestre National de France & Daniil Trifonov, piano November 7, Mechanics Hall

American Patchwork Quartet November 14, Prior Performing Arts Center

The Worcester Chorus: Handel *Messiah* December 6, Mechanics Hall

The Worcester Chorus Women's Ensemble Holiday Concert December 21,
Trinity Lutheran Church

American Spiritual Ensemble January 10, Mechanics Hall

 **Bach Christmas Oratorio** January 24, Mechanics Hall

 **Emmanuel Music: Bach Solo Cantatas** February 21,
Curtis Hall at Assumption University

Aaron Diehl Trio February 27, Prior Performing Arts Center

Refugee Orchestra Project March 1, Mechanics Hall

Nelson Goerner: Liszt & Albéniz March 5,
Curtis Hall at Assumption University



Kyung-Wha Chung



American Spiritual
Ensemble

Bach's Birthday Bash 2026, Mechanics Hall

- **The Sebastians: *Brandenburg Concertos*** March 20
- **Keyboards Up Close** March 21
- **Worcester Chamber Music Society: *The Musical Offering*** March 21
- **Cantatathon 2026** March 22



Cantatathon

Catherine Russell & Sean Mason Jazz Duo March 26, BrickBox at JMAC

Jordi Savall & Hespèrion XXI: *Un Mar de Músicas* April 11, Mechanics Hall

Alexandre Kantorow: Piano Recital April 17, Mechanics Hall

Frederick: Cantata on the Life of Frederick Douglass April 25,
Mechanics Hall

The Worcester Chorus Women's Ensemble & Cantilena May 8,
Trinity Lutheran Church

Dance Theatre of Harlem May 9, The Hanover Theatre



Jordi Savall

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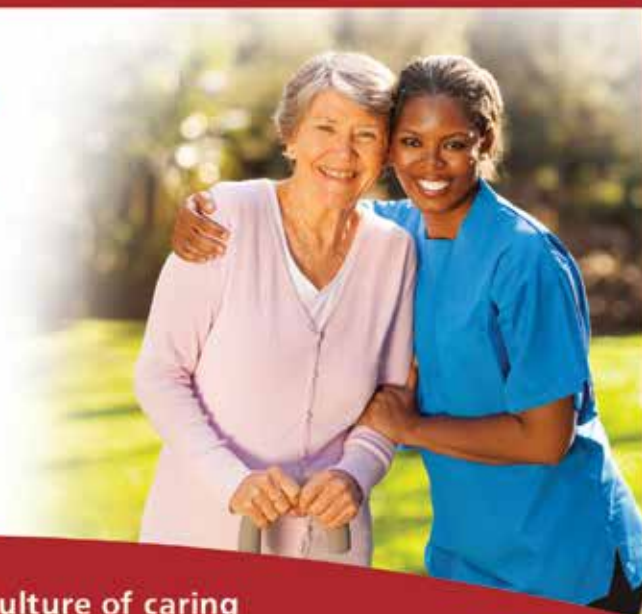
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Music Worcester's program book is distributed free of charge to all attendees at all season presentations. Our annual concert season attracts 20,000+ people from New England and beyond. Please visit musicworchester.org or contact us directly for ad rates, specifications, and details for the next printing. Thanks to our advertisers, our season culturally enriches the Worcester community!

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Music Worcester acknowledges the immense generosity of donors who have established concert funds as part of the organization's endowment. These named funds support select performances each season and enable Music Worcester to continue securing world-renowned artists to perform at Greater Worcester's celebrated cultural venues.



Zlatomir Fung with students at Westborough High School



Chineke! Orchestra with students at South Community High School



A member of Boston Brass with a student from Burncoat High School



Orchestre Métropolitain with a Joy of Music student



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
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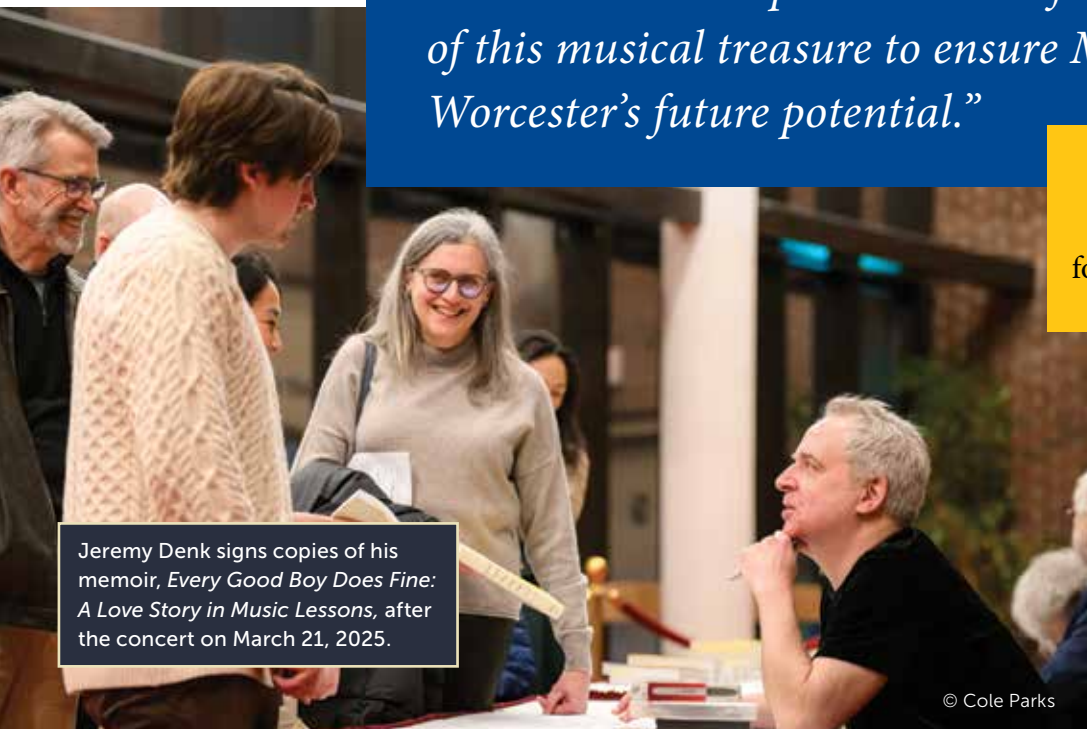
Music Worcester's commitment to sharing extraordinary musicians and ensembles, community engagement activities, and service to Central Massachusetts remain possible due to the immense generosity of many supporters over many decades. With a planned gift, you are honoring your own or a loved one's connection to Music Worcester, directly supporting performances and educational opportunities. Your support will help strengthen the organization's financial stability for future generations.



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"It is incumbent upon us as beneficiaries of this musical treasure to ensure Music Worcester's future potential."

—KATHY ROONEY
Former board member and
founding Legacy Society member



Jeremy Denk signs copies of his memoir, *Every Good Boy Does Fine: A Love Story in Music Lessons*, after the concert on March 21, 2025.

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To learn more about
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SERENADE AND SOUVENIR – Tom Keil Memorial Concert

Guests: Tracy Kraus, flute; Pascale Delache-Feldman, double bass

Sept 27 7:30 PM Mechanics Hall, Worcester
Hoffmann, Mozart, and Tchaikovsky

THE JOY OF YOUTH

Guest: Tracy Kraus, flute

Nov 7 7:30 PM Unitarian Universalist Church, Harvard
Nov 9 4:00 PM Jeanne Y. Curtis Hall, Assumption University
Boulanger, Mozart, and Brahms

BAROQUE ON FIRE

Guests: Tracy Kraus, flute; Moisés Carrasco, double bass; John McKean, harpsichord

Dec 4 7:30 PM First Congregational Church, Princeton
Dec 5 7:30 PM Museum of Worcester
Geminiani, Rameau, Scarlatti, Telemann, and Vivaldi

SHADOW AND LIGHT

Guests: William Kirkley, clarinet; Jensen Ling, bassoon; Clark Matthews, French horn; Edwin Barker, double bass

Feb 1 4:00 PM Jeanne Y. Curtis Hall, Assumption University
Gubaidulina, Clarke, and Beethoven

FAIRY TALES AND FABLES – ANNUAL FREE FAMILY CONCERT

Guests: Leslie Amper, piano; Lilit Hartunian, violin

Mar 8 3:00 PM Mechanics Hall, Worcester
Ravel – Mother Goose Suite
Navok – Beauty and the Beast – world premiere

WOVEN STRANDS – part of The Complete Bach Project in collaboration with Music Worcester

Guest: Tracy Kraus, flute

Mar 21 8:00 PM Mechanics Hall, Worcester
Bach

LA FÊTE FRANÇAISE

Guests: Franziska Huhn, harp; Tracy Kraus, flute; William Kirkley, clarinet

Apr 10 7:30 PM Fitchburg Art Museum
Apr 12 4:00 PM Shapiro Hall, Joy of Music, Worcester
Ravel, Saint-Saëns, and Chausson

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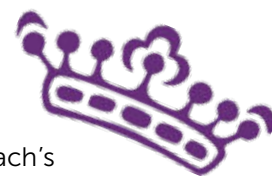
Nov 2 12:00-2:30 pm *Brahms - Piano Quartet in A Major*
Mar 29 5:00-7:30 pm *Chausson - Piano Quartet, Op. 30*



Tickets and information: Online: Worcesterchambermusic.org
Phone: 508-926-8642 Email: boxoffice@worcesterchambermusic.org



All of Bach for All of Us



Chris Shepard
Ruth Susan Westheimer
Artistic Director of
THE COMPLETE BACH

In our second season of THE COMPLETE BACH, we focus on how Bach's music is performed today. The "period instrument" forces and the "modern instrument" players have tussled over Bach's legacy for half a century, we are now in a moment where both approaches have legitimacy. So we are presenting performances by both types of performers throughout the season.

This season, from Simone Dinnerstein to The Sebastians or from the BACHtoberfest Choir to Cantatathon, offers the Greater Worcester community presentation after presentation of Bach's music. It is an "embarrassment of Bach riches" as THE COMPLETE BACH checks off many more of the master's work in Year 2 of this monumental project.

Bach101

Learn about all things Bach through this growing resource. Engaging with Bach101 allows for deeper understanding of the performances throughout THE COMPLETE BACH.

Tune into Music Worcester's three podcast series to further engage in the music of J.S. Bach. Hosted by Chris Shepard. Visit musicworchester.org/bach-podcasts.

ChatJSB

Interviews with musicians and scholars with close performance and research history, discussing their growing relationship with the music of J.S. Bach.

Unlocking Bach

Audio program notes for each concert in THE COMPLETE BACH. Hear how Chris Shepard deciphers Bach's music at the piano and gives historical context for the works presented.

The 2025–2026 season marks the start of Year 2 of THE COMPLETE BACH: by Spring 2035, Worcester will become home to each known work composed by J.S. Bach. Artistic Director Chris Shepard, the driver behind the project, feels the composer's vast library of work is anything but daunting ... rather, it's a thrill.

Programming 11 years in advance is an exciting challenge in terms of distribution of music, rehearsal and performance, and re-imagining how Bach is heard in the 21st century. The goal of this 132-concert series is to invite listeners of all backgrounds to expand their knowledge of Bach, and to experience his music in new ways, by bringing Bach's repertoire to the stage alongside dance, film, and other genres of music. More information is available online at thecompletebach.org.



Music Worcester is very likely the first presenter of an entirely live-performance project like this since Bach's lifetime. Our programming of THE COMPLETE BACH reflects how Bach heard his own music performed—by everyone. From professional court ensembles and orchestras to amateur choirs, annual regroupings like the BACHtoberfest choir, and a growing roster of performers in the Worcester Bach Collective, Music Worcester aims to activate all kinds of performers and listeners.



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—VICTOR HUGO



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EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Music Worcester's commitment to engaging with our community goes beyond bringing world-class talent to the area's concert halls. We also engage learners of all ages with opportunities like masterclasses, coachings, demonstrations, Q&As, and more. Last season, Music Worcester brought six ensembles into schools to work directly with students throughout the region in classrooms and rehearsal rooms: Zlatomir Fung, Rodney Marsalis Big Brass, Imani Winds, Boston Brass, Sphinx Virtuosi, and Time For Three. This season, Music Worcester continues to activate education spaces throughout the Worcester area through our direct work with elementary, middle, and high schools.

Because learning never stops, Music Worcester strives to provide enriching opportunities to audiences of all ages. In addition to our three THE COMPLETE BACH podcast series (read more on page 11), Music Worcester's education and outreach activities include the following programs.

The Worcester Chorus Award for Musical Excellence was established by The Worcester Chorus in 2010 and previously known as the Dr. Gerald R. Mack Music Award. Each year, a graduating senior from a Worcester-area school who is majoring in music is granted the award to help them further their music education. This award honors Dr. Mack's lifelong dedication to music education, as well as the next generation of musicians and educators. In the 2024–25 academic year, soprano Margaret King was the recipient of the award and will continue her studies at Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University. Applications for the 2026 award will open in the spring.



Sphinx Virtuosi with Boston students who attended the March 2025 concert at the Prior Performing Arts Center.

Time For Three's energy was contagious!

The students were moved by and enthusiastic for their music ... The energy and synergy in the auditorium that day was at an all time high. And my students' involvement in Time For Three's Music Worcester event helped create a fantastic atmosphere for the public audience.

—Peter Sulski, Director of Strings
Abby Kelley Foster Charter School



In May 2025, Time for Three worked with students from Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School, where students joined the group for their finale, Joy, on stage at JMAC.

Music Worcester has been such an amazing partner in supporting our student musicians.

Opportunities to meet and perform with world class artists like Rodney Marsalis are truly inspirational.

—Brian McCulloch, Director of Bands
South High Community School



Music Worcester aims to bring performances to everyone in our community. Our **Tickets to Opportunity** program provides free concert tickets through organizations like YOU Inc., OpporTUNEity, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Neighborhood Strings, and more. We gratefully recognize support from organizations like Greater Worcester Community Foundation, Mass Cultural Council, Hoche-Scofield Foundation, and Hie Hill Foundation for helping more members of our community experience live music.

Our **pre-concert lectures** provide an opportunity to more deeply engage with our programming. On January 24, 2026, Claire Fontijn, the Phyllis Henderson Carey Professor of Music at Wellesley College will be speaking about Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* prior to that concert. Other pre-concert lectures will be added to the schedule throughout the season.

To learn more about our commitment to outreach and community engagement, visit musicworcester.org/outreach/

Cross-Pollinations

Musicians OF THE Old Post Road 2025-2026 SEASON



Brilliant Borrowings

Witness the magic of inspiration and influence among Baroque luminaries!

Saturday, October 25
First Parish, Sudbury

***Sunday, October 26**
Old South Church, Boston

A Hive of Creativity

Immerse yourself in the buzzing, convivial atmosphere of Sara Levy's Berlin Salon gatherings!

***Saturday, March 14**
First Parish, Wayland

Sunday, March 15
Old South Church, Boston

***Livestreamed performance**

Christmas in the Bach Workshop

Celebrate the season with festive arias, cantatas, and instrumental works by J. S. Bach, his students, and family members!

***Saturday, December 13**
First Unitarian, Worcester

Sunday, December 14
Old South Church, Boston

Ben Franklin's Musical Curiosity

Delve into Franklin's musical circles, at home in America and at the Paris soirées of composer Anne Brillon de Jouy.

***Saturday, May 2**
Museum of Worcester

Sunday, May 3
Shirley-Eustis House, Boston

All concerts at 4:00pm • Subscriptions/single tickets: oldpostroad.org



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HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW MUSIC WORCESTER'S HISTORY?

With more than 150 years of providing exceptional musical experiences for Central Massachusetts audiences, Music Worcester embarks on an archival project to digitize our history, with seed funding from The Fletcher Foundation. This project will organize, preserve, and document materials including programs and posters, sheet music, broadcast transcripts and articles, some dating back to the Worcester Music Festival's inception. It will also include hundreds of high-quality concert recordings beginning with the organization's return to Mechanics Hall following its renovation in the late 1970s. In addition to preserving our history, Music Worcester aims to make this information accessible to the public in the near future.

1. This piece by Benjamin Franklin Baker was performed at the first two festival weekends and then at the Centennial Celebration in 1959.

- a. *The Choral*
- b. *The Burning Ship*
- c. *The Storm King*
- d. *Camillus*

Answer: B. Music Worcester has documentation of the program from 1859 and a recording of the Centennial Celebration performance!

2. _____ conducted their own music on stage at Mechanics Hall in the 1890s.

- a. Brahms
- b. Dvořák
- c. Rachmaninoff
- d. Tchaikovsky

Answer: B. Dvořák conducted his *Praise Jehovah (149th Psalm)* and *Husitská* at Mechanics Hall in 1893.

3. Music Worcester was previously known as the _____.

- a. Worcester County Music Festival
- b. Central Massachusetts Music Festival
- c. Worcester Music Makers
- d. Classical Worcester

Answer: A. In 1996, the Worcester County Music Festival became Music Worcester through a merger with the Mass Jazz Festival and International Artists Series. The 2025–2026 Season reflects the diversity of classical, jazz, dance, and more that that merger made possible.

4. The first documented performance of Handel's *Messiah* in Worcester was in what year?

- a. 1788
- b. 1812
- c. 1858
- d. 1902

Answer: C. At the first festival weekend in 1858, there was a "Grand Concert" on the fourth and final night that featured a chorus of 200, and the repertoire included sections of Handel's *Messiah*. Join Music Worcester at Mechanics Hall on December 6 for the 167th year of *Messiah* in Worcester.

5. In November of 1977, the "Dedicatory Concert" featured a program of entirely what composer's works?

- a. Mozart
- b. Bach
- c. Shostakovich
- d. Beethoven

Answer: D. In 1977, the first concert after the Mechanics Hall renovations was an all-Beethoven program featuring his *Consecration of the House*, *Piano Concerto No. 5*, and *Symphony No. 5*. David Epstein conducted The Worcester Orchestra, and Andre-Michel Schub was the piano soloist. This season, Alexandre Kantorow will perform Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No. 32* on April 17, 2026.

Enjoy learning about Music Worcester's history? Support and stay up to date with our archives project—with your help, Worcester's musical history will be available to all.

LOOKING AHEAD

The 2025–2026 Season brings a variety of musicians to Worcester, with programs to please. This season, fans of specific genres like piano, orchestras, and choruses will have many opportunities to experience their favorites.

PIANO

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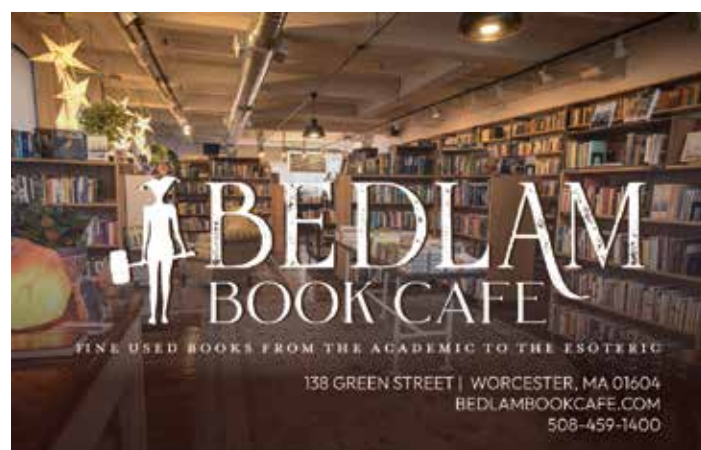
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