

# *Mechanics Hall*

*Where Community and Culture Meet*

## PRESS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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### **Mechanics Hall celebration of new portraits continues with festive community concert**

*Event takes place Thursday, April 25, 6:30 p.m.*

Worcester, MA — April 11, 2024 — Three new portraits of nineteenth-century Black Americans, recently unveiled at Mechanics Hall in Worcester, will be celebrated during a festive community concert on Thursday, April 25. [\*Beyond the Frames: A Musical Celebration\*](#), will feature individual musicians plus several of Worcester's instrumental and choral groups in an inspirational program honoring the portrait subjects—William and Martha Brown, Sojourner Truth, and Frederick Douglass—as well as contributions by Black composers and artists to America's rich music traditions. The two-hour concert begins at 6:30 p.m., with doors opening at 5:45 p.m. There will be a cash bar, and sweet treats will be provided by Struck Catering. Admission to the concert is “pay what you can.” Tickets can be reserved at [mechanicshall.org](http://mechanicshall.org).

The *Beyond the Frames: A Musical Celebration* program includes performances by the [Worcester Youth Orchestras](#), [Worcester Chamber Music Society](#), [Worcester Chorus Women's Ensemble of Music Worcester](#), [Many Voices: Mechanics Hall Youth Singers](#), [Crocodile River Music](#), Mechanic Hall Principal Organist [Peter Krasinski](#), and tenor [Christon Carney](#). In addition, five celebrated Black organists from across the United States ([George Davey](#), [Tedde Gibson](#), [Nathaniel Gumbs](#), [Nicole Keller](#), and [Wolff von Roos](#)) will perform on the Hall's famous Worcester “Hook” Organ. Among the Black composers featured in the program will be [Florence Price](#) (1882–1953) and [Margaret Bonds](#) (1913–1972), whose vast and diverse works were centered within a larger movement focused on the elevation of Black identity and Black historical narratives through music.

The accessible entrance to Mechanics Hall is located on Waldo Street. Elevators are available in the ground-floor Waldo lobby and provide access to the second and third floors. There is no elevator access to the



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balcony. The concert will take place in the Great Hall on the third level. Those who need assistance can contact the Mechanics Hall Ticket Office, Wednesday through Friday from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, by calling 508-752-0888.

## **About the Portraits**

In the fall of 2022, Mechanics Hall commissioned three portraits depicting four Black individuals who lived lives of extraordinary courage during the nineteenth century. The finished portraits were unveiled to the public on March 14, 2024 with a gala community celebration. The portrait subjects include Worcester business owners and abolitionists William Brown and Martha Ann Tulip Lewis Brown, painted together by Brenda Zlamany of Brooklyn, NY; formerly enslaved abolitionist and women's rights activist Sojourner Truth, painted by Manu Saluja of Long Island, NY; and the formerly enslaved civil rights leader, orator and writer Frederick Douglass, painted by Imo Nse Imeh of Holyoke, MA.

[Photograph of the portrait of William and Martha Brown is available here.](#)

[Photograph of the portrait of Sojourner Truth is available here.](#)

[Photograph of the portrait of Frederick Douglass is available here.](#)

The Mechanics Hall portrait gallery is a commanding installation honoring 19th-century Worcester innovators, social reformers, Civil War heroes and political leaders. The portrait subjects represent a combination of interests that honor the values of the [Worcester County Mechanics Association](#), which founded Mechanics Hall in 1857. These interests include education, the pursuit of excellence, human welfare, and a wider vision of human endeavor. Four prominent women of the same time-period were added in 1999, and now four impactful Black Americans—including two formerly enslaved persons—have joined the gallery of distinguished individuals. Full information about the portrait subjects and artists can be found at [mechanicshall.org/portraits-project](http://mechanicshall.org/portraits-project).

## **About Mechanics Hall**

Built in 1857, Mechanics Hall is internationally regarded as one of the world's great concert halls for its superb acoustics and 19<sup>th</sup>-century elegance. Regionally, it is widely considered to be Worcester's finest meeting place. The world's most renowned orchestras and performers—from the London Philharmonic to Yo-Yo Ma and Ella



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Fitzgerald to Linda Ronstadt—have taken the Hall’s stage. Among the many luminaries who have spoken at Mechanics Hall are Charles Dickens, Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, and Mark Twain.

In addition to serving as a premiere venue and recording site, Mechanics Hall offers inspiring cultural experiences for diverse audiences through a variety of creative initiatives—including free concerts, community events, a youth chorus, and collaborative programs with local colleges and non-profit organizations.

A non-profit organization, Mechanics Hall is owned and operated by the Worcester County Mechanics Association (est. 1842). It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Learn more at [mechanicshall.org](http://mechanicshall.org).

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