

Mechanics Hall

Where Community and Culture Meet

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Mechanics Hall presents “The Music of Leonardo Ciampa”

Free concert in memory of Dr. Sherrill A. “Ted” Conna will be held on June 16, 7:30 p.m.

Worcester, MA — May 22, 2023 —Composer Leonardo Ciampa will perform a concert of original compositions at Mechanics Hall on Friday, June 16 at 7:30 p.m. Given in memory of Dr. Sherrill A. “Ted” Conna, a well-known Worcester music lover and supporter, the concert will feature Mr. Ciampa on both piano and organ, with guest artists Letitia Stevens, soprano; Dianne Spoto, flute; Nino Ciampa, percussion; and The Henry Purcell Society of Boston. Admission is free, but pre-registration is recommended. Register online at mechanicshall.org or by calling 508-752-5608. Seating in the Great Hall will be on a first come, first served basis.

Mechanics Hall Composer-in-Residence 2021-2023, Mr. Ciampa is known internationally as a virtuoso both on the organ and piano. He has performed widely throughout Europe and is especially admired in Italy, where he has played in numerous international festivals. His compositions are known for their remarkable skill and variety. The program on June 16 will include numerous world-premieres, specifically tailored to the renowned acoustics and instruments of Mechanics Hall.

Dr. Sherrill A. “Ted” Conna (1931-2016) was a highly-regarded child psychiatrist, dedicated teacher, ardent social activist, passionate music lover, and talented amateur pianist. For more than 40 years, he worked as a psychotherapist and mental health consultant in the Worcester region and beyond. He was a professor of psychiatry at UMass Medical School from its inception in the 1970s until his retirement in 2009. The son and grandson of professional musicians, Dr. Conna had an insatiable love of music, which he shared with his wife, Mary Lou, and their four children, Ted, David, Edward, and Sherilyn. He was a long-time and frequent patron



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Where Community and Culture Meet

of musical performances at Mechanics Hall. This free concert is given in memory of Dr. Conna by his family, to celebrate the enthusiasm for and love of music he passed on to them.

When registering for the concert on June 16, attendees will have the option to make a tax-deductible donation to support Mechanics Hall concert programming, and preservation and maintenance of Mechanics Hall, as well as the world-renowned [Worcester “Hook” Organ](#) (E. & G. G. Hook, Op 334).

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 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, Monday through Friday from 9:30am to 4:30pm, by calling 508-752-5608.

About Leonardo Ciampa

Composer, organist, and pianist Leonardo Ciampa is a virtuoso musician of international renown. A native of Boston, he is Mechanics Hall’s Composer-in-Residence 2021-2023. In addition, he has served as Director of Music at Emanuel Lutheran Church in Worcester, Massachusetts, since 2019 and as Maestro di Cappella Onorario of the Basilica in Gubbio, Italy, since 2015. He was artistic director of organ concerts at MIT from 2009 to 2016 and founding director of Arts MetroWest from 2012 to 2019. As an organ recitalist, Ciampa has made over a dozen European tours encompassing Italy, Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. He is particularly admired in Italy, where he has played in numerous international festivals, including Festival Perosiano, Festival Biellese, Organi Storici della Valsesia, Le Voci della Città, Festival Organistico Lauretano, Organi Vespera, and Reate Festival. He has given organ recitals at cathedrals in Vienna, New York City, Boston, Lucca, Altenberg, Brandenburg, Tortona and Biella; at basilicas in Rome, Turin, Loreto, Tortona, Gubbio, Absam, and Rieti; and at abbeys in Dürnstein and Camaiore. [Learn more about Leonardo Ciampa.](#)

About Letitia Stevens

British soprano Letitia Stevens has been praised for her expressive performances, warm, rich tone and comic timing. Ms. Stevens recently returned to singing soprano, after many years singing mezzo-soprano: her first



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Where Community and Culture Meet

soprano role was Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* with Connecticut Lyric Opera, November 2017, a role she recently reprised with Opera51 in Concord, Massachusetts. In October 2021 she premiered a set of songs, *Les quatre éléments*, written for her by composer Leonardo Ciampa, at Mechanics Hall. In 2018-2020 she was a semi-finalist in The American Prize, in both Opera and Art Song divisions; Talents of the World Competition; and Harold Haugh Light Opera Competition. [Learn more about Letitia Stevens.](#)

About Dianne Spoto

Dianne Spoto's 25-year career in the music industry has spanned a myriad of genres and styles. A classically trained flutist, she has also succeeded as a pop singer-songwriter, music journalist, and recording industry executive. A native of Syracuse, New York, Ms. Spoto performs regularly with the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, Portland Symphony Orchestra, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and Bach, Beethoven, & Brahms Society, among others. She has performed in concert halls around the country, including New York City's Lincoln Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Boston's Symphony Hall and Jordan Hall. Ms. Spoto was a winner of the Syracuse Symphony Young Artist Competition, and a two-time finalist in the James Pappoutsakis Memorial Flute Competition in Boston.

About Nino Ciampa

Antonino Salvatore "Nino" Ciampa (b.2004) is a composer, arranger, bandleader, and multi-instrumentalist studying composition and percussion at the Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford. While attending high school in Acton, MA, he formed the group Nino Ciampa y su Orquesta which was the first ensemble for exclusively Latin music at the school. He has since started the Hartt Salsa All-Stars, with whom he performs his original compositions and arrangements. Mr. Ciampa is the son of composer Leonardo Ciampa.

About The Henry Purcell Society of Boston

Founded in 2013, The Henry Purcell Society of Boston (HPSOB) presents vibrant performances of the works of English composer Henry Purcell (1659 - 1695) and his English Baroque contemporaries. Using the texts, conventions, and styles of the period, HPSOB collaborates with other performing arts organizations to perform the full breadth of Purcell's compositions, celebrate the rich repertoire of his era, and make this music relevant for today's audiences. [Learn more about The Henry Purcell Society of Boston.](#)



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About Mechanics Hall

Built in 1857 by WCMA, Mechanics Hall is internationally regarded as one of the world's great concert halls for its superb acoustics and 19th-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 Fitzgerald to Linda Rondstat—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.

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