

Mechanics Hall

Where Community and Culture Meet

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Free summer concerts showcase the historic Worcester “Hook” organ at Mechanics Hall

Worcester, MA — July 20, 2023 —The historic and iconic Worcester “Hook” Organ at Mechanics Hall will be showcased in [two noontime concerts](#) this August as part of the Worcester Organ Concert Series. On **Wednesday, August 2**, Laurent Jochum of Paris, France, will perform music by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), César Franck (1822-1890), Samuel Barber (1910-1981), and Léon Boëllmann (1862-1897). On **Wednesday, August 9**, Justin J. Murphy-Mancini of Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, will play works by Dudley Buck (1839-1909), Herbert Howells (1892-1983), and Louis Vierne (1870-1937). Free and open to the public, the concerts begin at 12 noon; doors open at 11:30 a.m. Cabaret-style seating in the Great Hall is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Attendees are invited to bring their own lunch; refreshments will also be available for purchase. Mechanics Hall is located in downtown Worcester at 321 Main Street. For more information, visit mechanicshall.org or call 508-752-5608.

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. All concerts 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.

Produced by Mechanics Hall and the Worcester Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, the Worcester Organ Concert Series has presented free concerts on the Worcester “Hook” organ since 2007. The series features accomplished organ musicians from throughout the northeast—and beyond—and showcases rising star talents in the organ world.

This summer’s concerts include both international and regional artists. [Laurent Jochum](#) is the organist at Église Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Belleville in Paris, home of one of the organs built by the distinguished 19th-century organ builder, Aristide Cavallé-Coll. Jochum has performed in many of the city’s most prestigious churches, including Cathédrale Notre-Dame, Église Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, Église de la Madeleine, and Basilique Saint-



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Clotilde. For over twenty years he has performed in concerts, recitals, and festivals throughout Europe and in North America. Jochum's repertoire extends from baroque music to contemporary masterpieces, including the romantic and symphonic music of the 19th century.

Organist, harpsichordist, and composer [Justin J. Murphy-Mancini](#) is a faculty member in the organ at the University of Southern Maine and serves as Director of Church Music at the First Religious Society, Unitarian Universalist, in Newburyport, Massachusetts. As an organist, he has appeared at the Spreckels Organ Pavilion in San Diego, California; Hendricks Chapel at Syracuse University in New York; Methuen Memorial Music Hall in Methuen, Massachusetts, Epsilon Spires in Brattleboro, Vermont; and other venues across the U.S. As a composer, Murphy-Mancini writes both for amateur and professional musicians, aiming to incorporate themes and ideas from the Middle Ages into contemporary contexts. He earned degrees in performance, composition, and philosophy from Oberlin College and Conservatory of Music and a Ph.D. in composition at the University of California, San Diego.

About The Worcester "Hook" Organ

The Worcester Organ was installed at Mechanics Hall in 1864. The 52-stop, 3,504-pipe instrument was constructed by American organ builders Elias and George Hook, brothers from Boston, and thus also referred to the E. & G.G. Hook Opus 224, or simply the "Hook Organ." Today, it is the oldest unaltered four-keyboard pipe organ in the Western Hemisphere located at its installation site.

Since its restoration in 1982, the Worcester Organ has become one of the most popular and respected organs in the United States. It has been featured numerous times on National Public Radio, performed in several recordings, and has been featured on television and in a major motion picture, as well as in a music video starring Michael Crawford, the original "Phantom of the Opera."

The Worcester Organ is used frequently for wedding ceremonies, graduations, and awards events, as well as for the Worcester Organ Concert Series, produced by the Hall in collaboration with the Worcester Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (AGO). Learn more at hookorgan.org.

About Mechanics Hall

Built in 1857 by the Worcester County Mechanics Association, Mechanics Hall is internationally regarded as



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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](http://www.mechanicshall.org).

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