

Mechanics Hall

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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“Many Voices: Mechanics Hall Youth Singers” debuts on Sunday, October 16 in free public performance

New non-audition youth chorus is open to all Worcester 5th and 6th graders

September 26, 2022 (Worcester, MA) — This October, fifth and sixth-grade students from throughout Worcester will lift their voices in song during the first public performance of Many Voices: Mechanics Hall Youth Singers. The debut concert will be held at 4:00 p.m. during the Hall’s Founder’s Day celebration on Sunday, October 16. Led by Reagan G. Paras, Director of Music Education & Choral Activities for Anna Maria College, the new chorus will perform musical selections that represent the city’s cultural diversity. Mechanics Hall is located at 321 Main Street in Worcester. More information about the Hall’s Founders’ Day event, which is free and open to the public, can be found at mechanicshall.org.

Many Voices is a new Mechanics Hall initiative offering Worcester youth a non-audition, no-cost choral opportunity. Fifth and sixth grade students from across the city—representing its rich cultural and ethnic fabric—will develop new skills and gain performance experience in one of the nation’s finest and most beloved concert halls. With a festival-style format, the chorus will have three intensive rehearsals prior to the public performance. Rehearsals will be held at the Worcester Area Mission Society (WAMS), 6 Institute Road in Worcester, with transportation provided for chorus members.

“Mechanics Hall has resonated with the sounds of some of the world’s greatest musicians throughout its 165 years. It is entirely fitting that our own city’s youth—the heart and soul of our

community—should be included in that distinguished roster of performers. We can't wait to hear their young voices fill the Great Hall on October 16th," said Kathleen Gagne, Executive Director of Mechanics Hall.

"Many Voices is dedicated to empowering the children of Worcester through meaningful musical experiences," said Mr. Paras. "Our mission is to capture the humanity of each child by authentically representing them in song, movement, and other media from the Mechanics Hall stage. The result will be a celebration of the children's voices, diversity, and perspectives—which are uniquely and exclusively 'Worcester.'"

The Mechanics Hall Founders' Day celebration will take place on Sunday, October 16 from 1:30 to 5:00 p.m. At 2:00 p.m. there will be a dedication ceremony honoring the Ciborowski family, who have generously supported the Hall for many years, including recent renovations to the Hall's main lobby. From 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., the public will be invited to participate in the following 20-minute, themed tours of the building: "Art at Mechanics Hall," "A Look at the Mechanics Hall Architecture," "The History of Mechanics Hall," "Who Were the Worcester Mechanics," and "The Worcester "Hook" Organ." At 4:00 p.m., the debut performance of Many Voices will take place in the Great Hall. Admission to the Founders' Day event is free and open to the public. Donations will be accepted. More information can be found at mechanicshall.org.

About Many Voices: Mechanics Hall Youth Singers

Many Voices is the anchor youth program at Mechanics Hall, a recognition that Worcester's children are the heart and soul of our richly multicultural city. The program goal is to present music from around the world—contemporary and classic—selected with the cultures and music of the chorus participants in mind.

Open to fifth and sixth graders from every Worcester neighborhood, this non-audition, free chorus gives children of all backgrounds the opportunity to perform at Mechanics Hall—their own "home" concert hall. Under professional direction, children will learn to sing a variety of music, build friendships, and work toward excellence—together and in harmony. There is no cost to participate in the chorus. Any fifth or sixth grader living in Worcester or attending school in Worcester is encouraged to participate. Contact Mechanics Hall at 508-752-5608 to learn more.

The artistic director for Many Voices is Reagan G. Paras, who serves as the Director of Music Education & Choral Activities for Anna Maria College. Paras received his Master's of Music Education from Gordon College and is currently pursuing his PhD of Philosophy in Music Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. A passionate conductor, singer, and educator, he has directed performance tours across the U.S. and abroad.

Managing director for the chorus is Christon Carney, who serves as education and outreach coordinator for Mechanis Hall. A native of Nashville, TN, Carney received his M.Mus. in Vocal Performance from the New England Conservatory, and his B.Mus. in Music Education from Lipscomb University. He debuted as Giuseppe in Nashville Opera's production of La Traviata, and performs with the Boston Lyric Opera. He has been a concert soloist with the Rhode Island Civic Chorale and Orchestra, Nashville Symphony, the Heimermann Chorale, and has extensive choral experience.

About Mechanics Hall

Built in 1857 by the Worcester County Mechanics Association, 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. Among the world's most renowned orchestras and performers have taken the Hall's stage, from the London Philharmonic to Yo-Yo Ma, Ella Fitzgerald to Linda Rondstat. Among the many luminaries who have spoken at Mechanics Hall are Charles Dickens, Susan B. Anthony, Theodore Roosevelt, and Bill Clinton. 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, 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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