

# Mechanics Hall

321 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608

PRESS RELEASE

## For Immediate Release

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### **Fall Brown Bag Concerts announced by Mechanics Hall and 90.5 WICN Public Radio** *First free noontime concert is on November 9*

November 1, 2022 (Worcester, MA) — The Brown Bag Concert Series returns for its 37<sup>th</sup> season with four Wednesday noontime concerts this fall. Featured will be a variety of artists that showcase a diversity of musical styles—from the syncopated rhythms of African drum music to innovative jazz piano and classic jazz saxophone to holiday favorites. The concerts include Crocodile River Music on November 9; Laszlo Gardony on November 16; Greg Abate on November 30; and the Navy Band Northeast on December 7. All concerts are free to the public.

Produced by [90.5 WICN Public Radio](#) and [Mechanics Hall](#), the Brown Bag Concert Series is held at Mechanics Hall, 321 Main Street, Worcester. Concerts begin at noon and end promptly at 1:00 pm. Doors open at 11:30am. Cabaret-style seating in the Great Hall is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Attendees are invited to bring their own “brown bag” lunch. Limited concessions are available for purchase. Brown Bag Concerts is broadcast live on 90.5 FM WICN Public Radio and streamed at [wicn.org](http://wicn.org). Concerts are subject to change without notice. For more information, visit [mechanicshall.org](http://mechanicshall.org) or call 508-752-5608.

“The fall Brown Bag Concerts includes a wonderful range of music and performers,” said Kathleen Gagne, Executive Director of Mechanics Hall. “We are looking forward to welcoming both old and new friends to enjoy this noontime, musical experience at Mechanics Hall.”

“We are so excited to bring back the fall Brown Bag Concert series for the first time since November 2019,” said WICN General Manager David Ginsburg. “Collaborating with Mechanics Hall to provide free live music downtown is a tradition we are proud of and pleased to be able to continue.”

The accessible entrance to Mechanics Hall is located on Waldo Street. Elevators are located in the ground-floor 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.

Brown Bag Concerts is sponsored by The Fred Harris Daniels Foundation and Mass Cultural Council.

**About the Artists:**

More information is available on the Mechanics Hall [website](#).

**November 9: Crocodile River Music**

Crocodile River Music specializes in African and African-influenced music, dance, and art experiences. Using the universal influence and connectivity of African rhythms and melodies, an infectious beat, and a participatory performance style, Crocodile River Music engages audiences of all backgrounds and capabilities.

Zach Combs, Director of Crocodile River Music, fell in love with the rich and diverse cultures of West Africa while in Mali on a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. With his Malian friend and teacher, Issa Coulibaly, Combs founded Crocodile River Music in 2011. Together, they set out to provide opportunities for emerging and established artists from Africa and evoke new ways of cultural thinking in our communities. Balla Kouyaté, the group's musical director, was honored in 2019 with a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) National Heritage Fellowship, the nation's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts.

Today, Crocodile River Music continues to share the cultures of Africa through song, dance, and art that informs, connects, and inspires audiences.

**November 16: Laszlo Gardony**

Internationally acclaimed Boston-based jazz pianist and composer Laszlo Gardony is one of the most expressive and technically skilled pianists working in jazz today. A native of Hungary, he has performed in 27 countries and released 13 albums on the Sunnyside, Antilles, and Avenue Jazz labels during his distinguished decades-long career. Gardony's recordings and performances convey the joy of inspired creation, drawing on a deep well of emotions, a prodigious technique, and a playful curiosity that thrives on creating music that is truly alive in each unique moment. His 14th album as a leader, "Close Connection" (Sunnyside Records), which features his trio, Yoron Israel (drums) and John Lockwood (bass), will be released on December 2, 2022.

Gardony embarked on his professional musical career after graduating from the Bela Bartok Conservatory and the Science University of Budapest in 1979. Possessing a powerful sense of swing, a strong feel for the blues, and a firm command of post-bop vocabulary, he became one of Europe's most sought-after accompanists. In 1983, Gardony emigrated to the United States where he enrolled at Boston's Berklee College of Music on full scholarship. He was awarded first prize in the Great American Jazz Piano Competition in 1987 and after graduating from

Berklee joined their faculty as a professor of piano, a position he still holds. Gardony has divided his time between composing, recording, performing, and teaching.

### **November 30: Greg Abate**

Based in Rhode Island, Greg Abate is a jazz saxophonist, flutist, and composer, known for his dynamic, hard bop-influenced style. A 1972 graduate of Berklee College of Music, Abate has had a long and successful musical career, which includes 18 albums and a busy international performance schedule that takes him on the road 225 days a year. His early experience included playing lead alto sax for the Ray Charles Orchestra in the mid-1970s and playing tenor sax with the revived Artie Shaw Orchestra under the leadership of Dick Johnson from 1986-87. He has performed as a post hard bop soloist at jazz festivals, jazz societies and jazz clubs throughout the United States, Canada and abroad, including most of Europe, the United Kingdom, Russia, and Georgia.

Abate is an adjunct professor of Jazz Studies at Rhode Island College and is also a very active jazz clinician, conducting workshops and master classes through the United States and abroad. He was inducted into the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame in 2016.

### **December 7: Navy Band Northeast**

Established in 1974, Navy Band Northeast is based at the United States Naval Station in Newport, Rhode Island and is one of 11 official U.S. Navy bands worldwide, providing musical support for military ceremonies, recruiting, morale and retention programs, and community relations.

For their performance at Mechanics Hall, the Navy Band Northeast will perform favorite tunes for the holiday season.

### **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 19<sup>th</sup>-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](http://mechanicshall.org).

## **About WICN Public Radio**

90.5 WICN Public Radio, Inc. has been a dynamic presence in the cultural life of central Massachusetts for over fifty years. WICN originated in 1969 as Worcester's Inter-Collegiate Network, joining The College of the Holy Cross and Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) with other local colleges. WICN was accredited by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in 1987.

As one of the few remaining jazz-focused radio stations in the United States, WICN is committed to the keeping the Worcester community vibrant and economically sustainable through the presentation of authentic, independent music, on the radio and in the concert halls, preserving America's living art forms of jazz and other music for generations to enjoy. Learn more at [wicn.org](http://wicn.org)

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