

# Music Worcester to Present THE COMPLETE BACH: 12 concerts a year for the next 11 YEARS, everything by J.S.Bach

*Music Worcester will present over 1000 compositions by J.S.Bach, culminating on March 21, 2035, the 350th anniversary of the Baroque master's birth.*

WORCESTER, MA, UNITED STATES, May 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With a performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's majestic Mass in B Minor in historic Mechanics Hall this Sunday (May 5, 2024), [Music Worcester](#) announces the launch of [THE COMPLETE BACH](#) (TCB). Over the next 11 years, under the leadership of the initiative's Artistic Director, Dr. Chris

Shepard (also director of The Worcester Chorus) and Music Worcester's Executive Director Adrien Finlay, Music Worcester will present over 1000 compositions by one of the most revered figures in Western music, culminating on March 21, 2035, the 350th anniversary of the Baroque master's birth.

“

As we approach the 350th anniversary of Bach's birth, we are committed to honoring this titan with a celebration befitting his place in history.”

*Chris Shepard, Artistic Director TCB*

Music Worcester, one of the nation's oldest concert presenters, will bring together a wide range of musical organizations in Worcester and beyond, the Worcester Bach Collective, as collaborators for this decade-long project.

“As we approach the 350th anniversary of Bach's birth, we are committed to honoring this titan with a celebration befitting his place in history,” said Artistic Director Chris

Shepard. “Such is the giant of his genius that all western composers after him have had to grapple with his legacy, whether they embraced it or rejected it. The legacy of western music up to his era flowed into Bach's enormous musical intellect, and it was refracted through the lens of



The Worcester Chorus

his creativity to all composers who followed him.”

“This multi-year, total engagement with the works of Bach celebrates exactly what makes Music Worcester unique,” states Executive Director Adrien Finlay. “In recent years our artistic planning discussions here at Music Worcester have increasingly focused on how can we leverage our assets, both internal and environmental, to further the arts and culture sector.

“Those assets include our 165 year tenure presenting concerts, often at historic Mechanics Hall,” continued Finlay, “The Worcester Chorus, which has been a central component of Music Worcester since our founding in 1858, Chris Shepard’s remarkable journey with the Chorus, leading them to new artistic heights over his 15-year tenure, and his encyclopedic knowledge of Bach. Music Worcester has never truly explored how to bring these components together.”

Coordinating TCB and leading many of the vocal concerts will be the Ruth Susan Westheimer Artistic Director

Chris Shepard, director of both The Worcester Chorus and CONCOR (Connecticut Choral Artists), Connecticut’s oldest professional choir in Hartford. A conductor, keyboard player, teacher, and musicologist, his award-winning PhD thesis from the University of Sydney examined the performance history of Bach’s B Minor Mass in America. Chris led BACH2010, a project in which his Sydneian Bach Choir & Orchestra presented all of Bach’s choral cantatas in Sydney, Australia.

“Music Worcester’s quirky history is what makes this extraordinary project possible,” said Shepard “Yes, we are well-known as a presenter of first-rate performers, but we also have the Worcester Chorus, which I love to refer to as the “vestigial arm” of the organization, since it was founded as a fundamental part of the original Festival. With more than half of each years’ concerts showcasing Bach’s choral works, it is impossible to present THE COMPLETE BACH



Artistic Director Chris Shepard conducting The Worcester Chorus



Christopher Shepard conducting The Worcester Chorus

without a choir that can handle a good chunk of the cantatas and major choral works.

“Of course, this means that The Collective also brings together ensembles from Worcester’s rich choral community, including community, church, and college choirs, as well as the Worcester Children’s Chorus.”

The concerts will regularly feature several of the outstanding area music organizations who are members of the Worcester Bach Collective. This includes the Handel and Haydn Society and Emmanuel Music from Boston; the Worcester Chamber Music Society, Trinity Lutheran Church and its Music at Trinity series, and Mechanics Hall, who will serve as the primary host of this 11-year project.

In its inaugural year, THE COMPLETE BACH will work with GBH Music as a media partner, aligning this ambitious project with audiences from CRB Classical 99.5, Classical.org, and The Bach Hour, a weekly radio show and on-demand stream hosted by Brian McCreath.

THE COMPLETE BACH will be anchored annually with two focused weekends. For the next eleven years, the last weekend of October will be celebrated as Bachtobertfest. The inaugural weekend celebration October 25-27, 2024, includes 5 concerts highlighted by an October 26th Mechanics Hall performance of the Six Cello Suites by one of the preeminent cellists of his generation, Zlatomir Fung.

Bach Birthday Bash, celebrated on the closest weekend to March 21st (JSB’s birthday) until 2035, offers 4 concerts, scheduled March 21-23, 2025, that include renowned pianist Jeremy Denk playing the Keyboard Partitas Friday March 21st and the Handel and Haydn Society with Ian Watson performing the Concertos for Two Harpsichords on March 22nd.

These festival weekend concerts will be part of Music Worcester’s 2024-25 season. Also on the schedule next season will be the Worcester Chamber Music Society performing Bach’s Christmas Cantatas BWV 32, 132, 151 on December 6th, and Mark Mummert and Wesley Hall will give a joint organ recital of Bach compositions on April 27th.

In addition to the New England-based partner ensembles who will give repeat performances throughout the project, THE COMPLETE BACH will generate a new lens for Music Worcester in its programming at-large, providing an opportunity for guest artists and ensembles to incorporate Bach into the programs they bring to Worcester. Shepard notes that “this project was partly inspired by the spectacular Music Worcester performances in recent years of Bach’s music by such ensembles as The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, A Far Cry, The Knights and Apollo’s Fire. Our audience’s enthusiasm for their performances showed us that there is a real hunger for Bach’s music here in the heart of New England.

“It is still very early in the planning process to name all of the many vocal and instrumental soloists who will take part in the project,” continued Shepard. “However, three instrumentalists

who have had long associations with Music Worcester—pianist Simone Dinnerstein (and her Brooklyn-based chamber orchestra Baroklyn), violinist Vijay Gupta, and conductor/keyboardist Ian Watson—will play an important role in helping to present all of Bach’s music in Worcester.”

Reflecting Bach’s own career working with both professional and avocational musicians, THE COMPLETE BACH will also provide opportunities for choral singers around the country and beyond to participate in this historic project. Individual choral singers can come to Worcester for Bachtoberfest and be part of a choir each year that will present a concert of choral cantatas. Shepard says, “We hope to involve other Bach choirs from America and around the world who will put Massachusetts on their tour itinerary and present a concert as they travel here. We are also in discussions with several international festivals about ways in which we might place THE COMPLETE BACH in a global context in our own tours as well.”

The second largest city in New England, Worcester is a vital center for the arts in central Massachusetts. Worcester is home to two of the region’s most celebrated concert halls—Mechanics Hall with a seating capacity of more than a thousand, and the jewel-like Tuckerman Hall, a gilded venue for chamber performances dating from 1902. For small-scale performances, the extraordinary collection of the Worcester Art Museum will provide a rich visual counterpoint to Bach’s music. The city also boasts a number of beautiful churches, whose historic organs will showcase the repertoire in a wide variety of performance styles. The project will also utilize some of the city’s newer and more cutting-edge venues, including concerts in local breweries and coffeehouses, including Worcester’s Redemption Rock Brewing . Each season will feature a handful of concerts presented under the auspices of collegiate and church concert series.

THE COMPLETE BACH will include an educational component, including a podcast series Unlocking Bach; and Destination Bach, which will enlist travel and tourism affiliations throughout Central Massachusetts.

#### About Music Worcester

Music Worcester, Inc., originally known as the Worcester County Music Association, for years ran the Worcester Music Festival. Current programs reflect the merger in the mid-1990s of the Festival with the International Artists Series and the MA Jazz Festival. Notable performances by world-renowned orchestras and guest soloists, chamber music, ballet, world music and dance, jazz and choral masterworks are hallmarks of Music Worcester’s annual operations. Multiple educational programs currently serve youth and families of greater Worcester: masterclasses by visiting artists, Tickets to Opportunity, Festival Singers, and in-school residencies. Integral to Music Worcester’s annual operations, the Worcester Chorus has been part of the organization since the very first concert season in 1858.

David Balsom

CK Communications Group

+1 617-510-2316

dbalsom@ckcommgroup.com

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/708683591>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2024 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.