

Year 2 of The Complete Bach- Music Worcester's 11-Year Endeavor to Present all the Works of the Master Begins in October

Music Worcester begins year 2 of their extraordinary endeavor to present live performances of all known works by J.S. Bach over an 11 year period.

WORCESTER, MA, UNITED STATES, September 22, 2025 / EINPresswire.com/ -- [Music Worcester](https://www.musicworchester.org/) is set to launch Year 2 of its unprecedented initiative, [THE COMPLETE BACH](https://www.thecompletebach.org/) (TCB), an 11-year undertaking to present live performances of every known work by Johann Sebastian Bach. The project is believed to be the first intentional festival to present all of Bach's known works within a defined period of time.

This second year will feature more than 40 different works from Bach's expansive catalog over the course of 11 concerts, primarily during two festival weekends: BACHtoberfest Weekend (October 24-26, 2025) and Bach's Birthday Bash Weekend (March 20-22, 2026). The full schedule and details can be found at thecompletebach.org or musicworchester.org.

In Year 2, THE COMPLETE BACH includes two different concerts featuring pianist Simone Dinnerstein during BACHtoberfest Weekend. The first features her conducting debut, with her ensemble Baroklyn and Connecticut-based professional choir CONCORA; the second features Bach's Inventions, Sinfonias, and Viola da Gamba Sonatas with cellist Alexis Gerlach. New York-based ensemble The Sebastians headline Bach's Birthday Bash Weekend in the spring with the Brandenburg Concertos.

"The first year of TCB exceeded all of our expectations, and we were particularly thrilled that so



Pianist Simone Dinnerstein and her early music ensemble Baroklyn

many audience members came from far and wide to be a part of this history-making project,” said Chris Shepard, the Ruth Susan Westheimer Artistic Director of THE COMPLETE BACH.

THE COMPLETE BACH was announced in May 2024 and launched that fall during the first BACHtoberfest Weekend. Over the course of the inaugural season, audiences experienced choral, organ, and orchestral pieces, as well as the complete Cello Suites performed by

Zlatomir Fung, winner of the XVI International Tchaikovsky Competition; and the complete Keyboard Partitas played by McArthur “Genius” fellow Jeremy Denk.



The Complete Bach's Artistic Director Chris Shepard

“There was no greater composer than Bach,” said David Snead, the recently retired president

and chief executive officer of The Handel and Haydn Society. “And there has never been a greater way to experience his astonishing creativity and imagination than in live performance at Music Worcester's THE COMPLETE BACH. So far as I know, nothing like this festival has ever happened before, and it should not be missed.”

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*David Snead, retired president
& CEO of The Handel and
Haydn Society*

“As a teenager growing up in the Worcester area, I dreamed of performing Bach's Cello Suites in Mechanics Hall,” said Zlatomir Fung, who headlined 2024's BACHtoberfest. “So to finally have the opportunity—as part of Music Worcester's landmark THE COMPLETE BACH project in its inaugural season—was unforgettable. I'm grateful this project will share all of his works with the

community for many years to come.”

The project has national and international reach, as well as strong local ties, attracting both renowned performers from around the country, as well as individual singers who come together for the annual BACHtoberfest Choir. Singers from anywhere in the country or the world are invited to come together for rehearsals and a performance at Worcester's Mechanics Hall during the fall festival weekend. In 2024, 144 singers from 11 states participated, with 2025's numbers climbing even higher and singers traveling from as far away as Arizona. Several international choirs have expressed interest in participating in the future.

Locally, the project highlights the talents in the Greater Worcester area, providing opportunities for local groups to perform on the stage at Mechanics Hall, widely considered one of the best performance and recording venues in the world for its acoustics. The Worcester Bach Collective includes choirs from local churches, universities, and performing organizations. Every spring throughout the duration of THE COMPLETE BACH, Bach's Birthday Bash weekend will close with Cantatathon, featuring different members of the Collective each year.

In addition to THE COMPLETE BACH, Music Worcester, under the leadership of Executive Director Adrien Finlay, presents 18 other concerts during the 2025-2026 Season, bringing renowned artists from across classical, jazz, folk, and world music, as well as Dance Theatre of Harlem, to venues throughout Central Massachusetts. Chris Shepard, who has served more than 15 years as the Artistic Director of The Worcester Chorus and now as the Artistic Director of THE COMPLETE BACH, has lent his experience and expertise to help launch this ambitious project.

Shepard, a conductor, keyboard player, teacher, and musicologist, authored an award-winning PhD thesis from the University of Sydney examining the performance history of Bach's B Minor Mass in America. He also led BACH2010, a project in which his Sydneian Bach Choir & Orchestra presented all of Bach's choral cantatas.

This extraordinary project also features three separate podcast and video series led by Chris Shepard: Bach 101, an introduction to Bach's music; ChatJSB, a series of conversations between Shepard and the musicians who are participating in TCB; and Unlocking Bach, audio program notes for each concert posted in advance of the performances. The podcasts have garnered more than 20,000 views to date and continue to gain new audiences.

TCB's partnerships extend beyond performers and include Tidepool Bookshop, an independent Worcester-based store which features a display of Bach-related books and hosts small special events related to the project. Other partnerships include GBH and Mechanics Hall, which has committed to hosting all of the festival weekends over the course of the project.

"The performances were so exciting, and the palpable sense of community in the beautiful Mechanics Hall was indescribable," said Shepard. "We are 9% through everything that Bach ever wrote, already an incredible achievement. By the end of the 11 years, the rings from this rock thrown into the water will hopefully go worldwide, because that's the power of the music of Bach."

Music Worcester has been bringing world-renowned musicians and ensembles to Central Massachusetts since its founding in 1858. Today, the organization regularly presents world-renowned orchestras, soloists, and ensembles from the worlds of classical, jazz, folk, world music, and dance to audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Education and outreach initiatives include in-school workshops and masterclasses, and the availability of free and reduced-price tickets. In 2026, Dr. Everett McCorvey will serve as the Artist-in-Residence, a bi-annual program

that establishes deep community relationships with an individual artist.

Tickets and information for THE COMPLETE BACH and all Music Worcester programs, can be found at musicworchester.org

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THE COMPLETE BACH- Year 2

Musicians of the Old Post Road

Bach Cantatas BWV 170, 173, 209

Sunday, Oct. 5 at 4 pm

First Unitarian Church of Worcester

BACHTOBERFEST WEEKEND October 24-26

All concerts at Mechanics Hall

CONCORA & Baroklyn, featuring Simone Dinnerstein

Cantatas BWV 9, 82, 1053

Friday, Oct. 24 at 8 pm

Peter Krasinski, organ

A selection of secular and sacred works

Saturday, Oct. 25 at 2 pm

Simone Dinnerstein, piano; Alexis Gerlach, cello

Inventions, Sinfonias, and Gamba Sonatas

Saturday, Oct. 25 at 8 pm

BACHtoberfest Choir

Cantatas BWV 29, 41, 190

Sunday, Oct. 26 at 4 pm

Bach Christmas Oratorio

The Worcester Chorus with the Winchendon Players

Saturday, Jan. 24 at 8 pm

Mechanics Hall

Emmanuel Music
Solo Cantatas, BWV 60, 158, 199
Saturday, Feb. 21 at 8 pm
Curtis Hall at Assumption University

BACH'S BIRTHDAY BASH March 20-22
All concerts at Mechanics Hall

The Sebastians
Brandenburg Concertos
Friday, March 20 at 8 pm

Keyboards Up Close
Piano and Harpsichord
Saturday, March 21 at 4 pm

Worcester Chamber Music Society
Musical Offering, Italian Concerto, and Toccata in F sharp minor
Featuring Randall Hodgkinson on piano
Saturday, March 21 at 8 pm

Cantatathon 2026
BWV 3, 14, 121, 144, and 124
First Baptist Church Choir, Salisbury Singers,
Voices of Concinnity and Consanare Choral Community, and Worcester Children's Chorus
Sunday, March 22 at 4 pm

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