

THE
**CLEVELAND
ORCHESTRA**

FRANZ WELSER-MÖST

OTELLO

**VERDI'S OTELLLO IN CONCERT
MAY 21, 26 & 29**

**BREAKING CONVENTION: PROGRAM I
MAY 27**

**BREAKING CONVENTION: PROGRAM II
MAY 28**

21
SEASON
22



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OTELLO

21
SEASON
22

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RELATED PROGRAMS BY OUR PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

KEITH HAMILTON COBB'S AMERICAN MOOR

MAY 6-29

AT KARAMU HOUSE'S CLEVELAND
FOUNDATION JELLIFFE THEATRE

A play written and performed by Keith Hamilton Cobb with Josh Tyson and directed by Kim Weild examining the experience and perspective of black men in America through the metaphor of William Shakespeare's character Othello. *American Moor* is a poetic exploration of Shakespeare, race, and America, not necessarily in that order.

Tickets: karamuhouse.org | 216-795-7077

ART SONG FESTIVAL

MAY 23-28

AT THE CLEVELAND INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

Tamara Wilson, who is Desdemona in The Cleveland Orchestra's performances of *Otello*, joins tenor David Portillo, and pianists Warren Jones and Craig Terry for this annual festival, featuring recitals and free master classes.

Tickets: artsongfest.com.



**Baldwin Wallace
Voice Performance**



La Casa de Bernarda Alba

**June 9, 10, 11 - 7:30pm; June 12, 2:00pm
Kleist Center for Art and Drama Mainstage
Baldwin Wallace University**

World-Premiere production of the new opera by Griffin Candey with libretto by OBIE-Award-winner Caridad Svich. Based on Garcia Lorca's last play of the same name, this powerful opera with an all-female cast and Spanish/English language libretto is a co-commission by Baldwin Wallace and Cleveland Opera Theater. Scenic Design: Jeff Herrmann, Costume Design: Tesia Benson, Lighting Design: Steve Shack, Stage Direction: Scott Skiba, Conducted by Dean Buck.

Tickets: \$25 General Admission

More info: clevelandoperatheater.org/bernarda



OPERAS [in PLACE]

Available On-Demand through June 2022

Nine newly commissioned Micro Operas written for Baldwin Wallace Students by internationally recognized composers and librettists who receive commissions from the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Washington National Opera, and other top companies around the world. Produced by an award-winning design and production team, this co-production with Baldwin Wallace Conservatory, Cleveland Opera Theater, and On Site Opera in New York City premiered in February '22.

More info: bwvp.org/oip



Opera For All

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June 18 - Uptown Park, Public Square - Medina, 7:00pm

July 30 - Triangle Park - Chagrin Falls, 7:00pm

August 28 - Dunham Tavern Museum - MidTown, 7:00pm

More info: clevelandoperatheater.org/ofa



Dear Friends,

We are delighted to welcome you to the culmination of our 2021–22 season at Severance Music Center, featuring Music Director Franz Welser-Möst leading three concert performances of Verdi's *Otello* along with two symphonic concerts inspired by the opera's themes.

As this season comes to a close, it's worth reflecting on this extraordinary year, which has been unusual in so many aspects. As we've navigated through these unpredictable and precarious times together, the ability to commune around great music has only become more precious. On behalf of the musicians, staff, volunteers, and all members of the Cleveland Orchestra family, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to you, our beloved community and audience who have supported us.

Last month, after his extraordinary performance of Sibelius's Violin Concerto, our great friend and collaborator Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider articulated what so many of us have felt over the past several years. Reflecting on this period, he said: "What we musicians had to learn was the answer to the question, 'Who do you play for? Do you play for yourself? Do you play for the music? Do you play for an audience?' We always felt it must, of course, be all three, but we never thought we would be living in a world where we could actually remove one and see what happens. And what happened was we understood that the act of music-making is incomplete unless there is somebody there with whom to share it, somebody there to listen to it being created in that moment."

Since reopening the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Concert Hall in October 2021, you have made our efforts complete. We will never again take for granted the fortifying energy you bring into Severance, that collective exhale as a final note resonates through the hall, or the thrill of an unanticipated encore. As Nikolaj said, these priceless moments only happen when they are shared together.

Thank you for sharing this extraordinary season with us; your participation made it truly memorable. We look forward to seeing you at Blossom Music Center this summer, and back at Severance for what I anticipate to be a truly spectacular 2022–23 season.

André Gremillet

Bustling with activity. That's how Pat Mallik and her husband Singh describe the newest

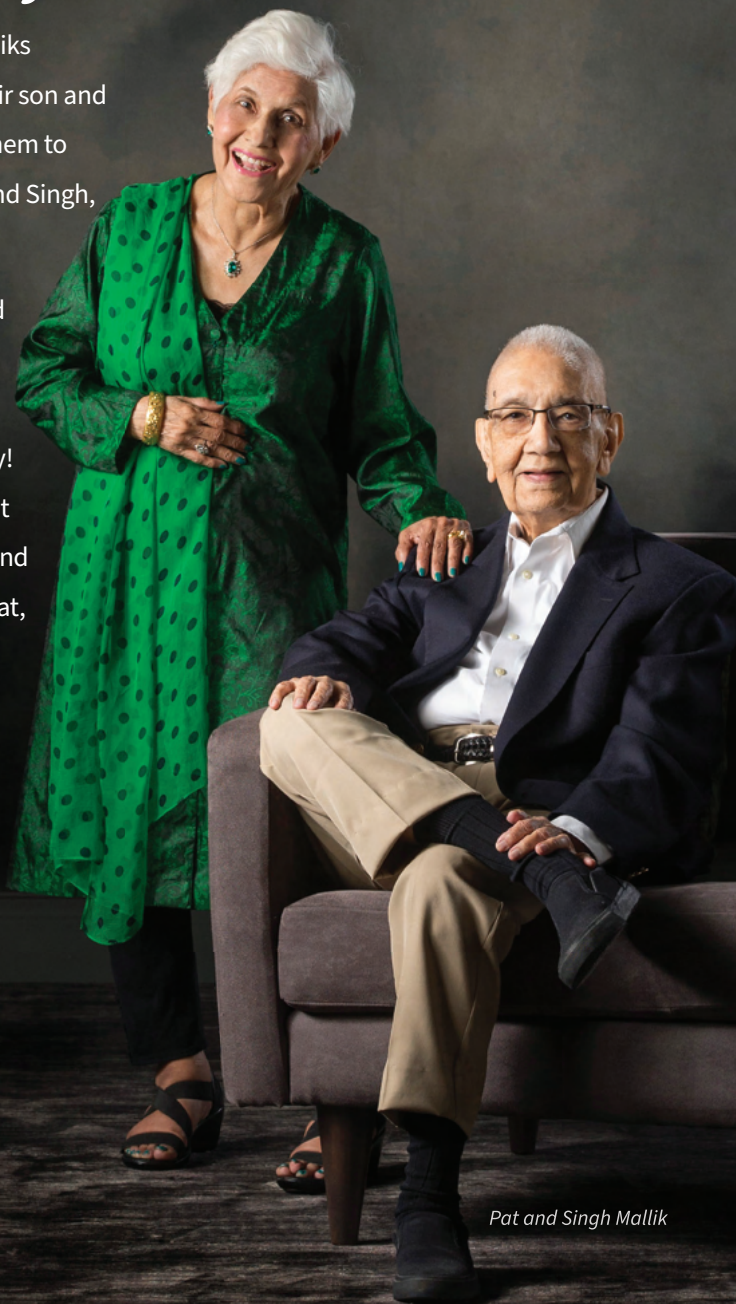
"There are so, so many reasons we're happy at Judson."

chapter in their lives. After the Malliks relocated from Seattle in 2018, their son and daughter-in-law quickly pointed them to nearby Judson Park. And for Pat and Singh, there's been no looking back.

Gardening, reading, staying fit, and freely sharing her beauty expertise with neighbors are everyday occurrences for Pat. "We're so busy! Just because we are retired doesn't mean we're going to sit in a chair and sleep. The exercise options are great, people are so friendly, and help is here if you need it," says Pat.

Read the full story at
judsonsmartliving.org/blog

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On the Outside

How much hope
has led us to this embrace?
How sweet it is to say
together:

"Do you remember?"
When you told me
of your life in exile,
and your long suffering ...

... I listened,
spellbound by your
terrifying stories.

(OTELLO, ACT I)

FOR MORE THAN 500 YEARS, the tragedy of *Otello* has haunted us, holding up a mirror to our human desire for acceptance along with the corrosive fear of being labeled an outsider. These two sides of a coin are in constant tension. Our unique qualities and individuality are at once responsible for our greatest successes — we laud those who “think outside the box” and “go against the grain.” But simultaneously these perceived differences threaten to undermine us, playing on constant fears of exclusion and rejection.

Both Shakespeare's original play, *Othello*, and Verdi's operatic adaptation recount the dismantling of a heroic figure through the manipulation of these fears. Otello enters as the conquering hero, a warrior who has come from “exile.” Born outside of Venetian society, he transcends his Moorish background to rise to the rank of general, earning the respect of its army and the adoration of his noble wife Desdemona.

This incredible ascent to the highest echelons of society makes his downfall all the more devastating, as Iago exploits the insecurities of otherness. Shakespeare scholar Howard Bloom calls this Otello's “uncreation,” a descent of “the great captain-general so that he can be returned to the original abyss, the chaos that Iago equates with the Moor's African origins.”

Over two weeks, The Cleveland Orchestra presents Verdi's *Otello* in concert along with two related programs linked through this theme of outsider perspectives, titled *Breaking Convention*. These events highlight composers who have courageously charted their own creative paths, whether by choice or by circumstance. Some consciously opted for a less-traveled route to hone a distinctive and unique vision; others didn't have that luxury, fearlessly creating art amid prejudice, ostracism, and persecution from intolerant societies.





Born nine years apart on opposite sides of the world, both George Walker and Sofia Gubaidulina, whose works appear on both *Breaking Convention* programs, fall into that second category. Raised in a prosperous Black family in Washington, D.C., Walker was recognized as an exceptional pianist at an early age, entering Oberlin Conservatory of Music at 14 and becoming the first Black graduate of The Curtis Institute in 1945. That same year he was the first Black concert artist to give a recital at New York's Town Hall and the first Black instrumentalist to perform with The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Walker would later recall, "Those successes were meaningless, because without the sustained effect of follow up concerts my career had no momentum. And because I was Black, I couldn't get either major or minor dates." His white peers at Curtis "were assured of 25 to 30 concerts a season, but I was lucky if I got seven. It was like being excommunicated from society. I was unwanted."

When his performance career stalled, Walker turned to composition, which his son, Ian Walker, described as a single-minded pursuit of originality, recalling that each effort "had to be as new in his mind as possible and as different in his mind as possible from what he had done before." Walker eventually came to embrace his iconoclastic stance: "I'm an outsider," he said. "I don't have connections to composers. Even Black composers."

"Artists almost never have easy lives," said Sofia Gubaidulina in a 2013 *Guardian* interview, noting the removed position many creatives inhabit. Coming of age in Soviet Russia, she faced daunting pressures from the Brezhnev government, which publically denounced her and called her music "noisy mud." In 1973, a man who most assume was a KGB agent, attempted to strangle her in the elevator of her apartment building. She scared him off with the irreverent question, "Why so slow?"

Forced to the outside of accepted circles, Gubaidulina found creative license. "Being blacklisted and so unperformed gave me artistic freedom, even if I couldn't earn much money," she said. "I could write what I wanted without compromise."

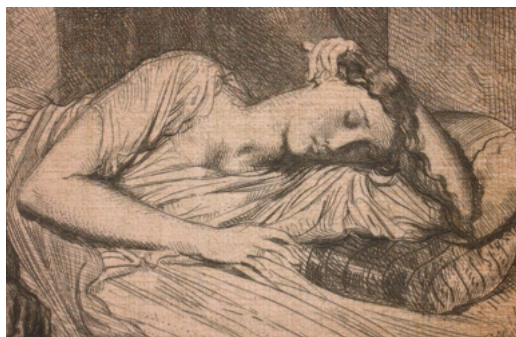
Curiously, it was Dmitri Shostakovich who encouraged Gubaidulina to venture down an "incorrect path." Shostakovich himself was denounced, faced prison, and feared for his life after his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mzensk District* was condemned publically. (The Passa-

caglia from the opera is included in *Breaking Convention II*.) Tormented by being labeled outside approved Soviet Realist standards, Shostakovich still emboldened the next generation of Russian composers to embrace their individuality rather than adhere to prescribed aesthetic principles.

This uncompromising individuality aptly describes the output of American composer Charles Ives, who may have not faced as dire stakes but created wildly inventive music in obscurity. His use of polyrhythms and polytonalities, apparent in *From the Steeples to the Mountaintops* (*Breaking Convention II*), predate modernist masters including Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Bartók. "It just so happens that I felt I could work better, and liked to work better if I kept to my own music and let other people keep to theirs," he said. It would take decades for the musical establishment to catch up to Ives; a case in point is his Third Symphony, which received the 1947 Pulitzer Prize in music even though it was written nearly 40 years earlier.

The examples of Philip Glass and Samuel Barber demonstrate the thin margin between acceptance and rejection due to the fickleness of taste. Barber was anointed early in his career as a great American composer for his achingly neo-romantic masterpieces such as the *Adagio for Strings* and *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. Around the time he wrote *Tocata Festiva* (*Breaking Convention II*), his nostalgia-tinged style would be written off as old-fashioned amid the rise of the 1960s avant-garde. The embarrassing flop of his opera *Cleopatra* coupled with alcoholism, found him on the outside for the rest of his life.

At the same time, Juilliard graduate Philip Glass (whose *Finale* from *Satyagraha* is in *Breaking Convention II*) was embarking on a musical career that willfully eschewed the European avant-garde that dominated the world's great concert halls. He found inspiration outside this traditional classical ecosystem and created his own ensemble to play in New York's downtown lofts and galleries. Commenting on his early days he said, "I liked the fact that I didn't have to get anybody's permission to play a concert. I just did it myself. I did it, at first, out of necessity, but then I did it out of pleasure because it was the best way to go." These days, Glass is a regular presence in those concert halls, celebrat-



Details (pg. 7–9) from Théodore Chassériau's suite of 15 illustrations based on Shakespeare's *Othello* (1900), courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

AMERICA'S PREMIER LYRIC THEATER FESTIVAL

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ed as one of the most influential composers of the last half century.

While the aforementioned composers all created music from an outsider's view, Estonian composer Jüri Reinvere actively grapples with the essence of otherness in his compositions, and employs a psychological perspective to his work: "Only through dialogue we can find out how the others see and understand us, as a person," he said.

His inquiry into the destructive nature of otherness comes to terrifying and poignantly relevant relief in *Norilsk, the Daffodils* (*Breaking Convention I*). Norilsk is the Siberian city where nearly 20,000 people — mostly political prisoners from Ukraine and the Baltic states — died working in forced-labor camps. The daffodils in the title refer to a poem by William Wordsworth in which a solitary narrator, finds restorative union in a field of yellow flowers. "A poet could not but be gay / In such a jocund company," Wordsworth writes. But it is only later, when the poet is alone, that he can truly make sense of the encounter:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

We ask great artists to assume this outsider status, to operate outside of convention in order to create powerful and lasting work. None other than Giuseppe Verdi realized that in order to succeed artistically, he must ignore critics and act on the courage of his convictions, stating, "An artist must yield himself to his own inspiration." It's up to us to listen.

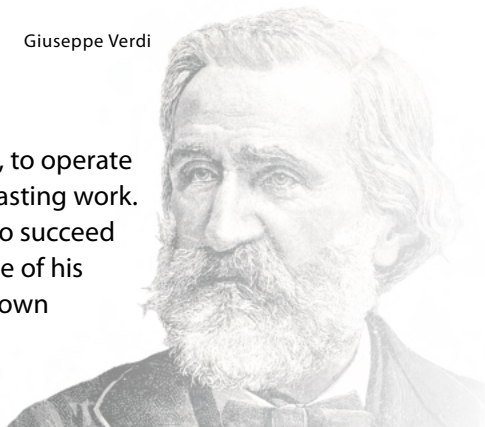
— Amanda Angel

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

By William Wordsworth

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had
brought:
For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.*

Giuseppe Verdi



THE CLEVELAND

FRANZ WELSER-MÖST

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Kelvin Smith Family Chair

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Jung-Min Amy Lee

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*Gretchen D. and
Ward Smith Chair*

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Trevor and Jennie Jones Chair

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Jiah Chung Chapdelaine

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Charles Paul

HARP

Trina Struble*

Alice Chalifoux Chair

This roster lists the fulltime members of The Cleveland Orchestra. The number and seating of musicians onstage varies depending on the piece being performed.

Seating within string sections rotates on a periodic basis.

Listing as of May 2022.

ORCHESTRA

21
SEASON
22

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Saeran St. Christopher

Jessica Sindell²

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PICCOLO

Mary Kay Fink

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Edith S. Taplin Chair

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Jeffrey Rathbun²

*Everett D. and
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Robert Walters

ENGLISH HORN

Robert Walters

*Samuel C. and
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Afendi Yusuf*

Robert Marcellus Chair

Robert Woolfrey

*Victoire G. and
Alfred M. Rankin, Jr. Chair*

Daniel McKelway²

Robert R. and Vilma L. Kohn Chair

Amy Zoloto

E-FLAT CLARINET

Daniel McKelway

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Amy Zoloto

Myrna and James Spira Chair

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Louise Harkness Ingalls Chair

Gareth Thomas

Barrick Stees²

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Jonathan Sherwin

HORNS

Nathaniel Silberschlag*

George Szell Memorial Chair

Michael Mayhew[§]

Knight Foundation Chair

Jesse McCormick

Robert B. Benyo Chair

Hans Clebsch

Richard King

TRUMPETS

Michael Sachs*

*Robert and Eunice Podis
Weiskopf Chair*

Jack Sutte

Lyle Steelman²

*James P. and Dolores D.
Storer Chair*

Michael Miller

CORNETS

Michael Sachs*

*Mary Elizabeth and
G. Robert Klein Chair*

Michael Miller

TROMBONES

Shachar Israel²

Richard Stout

*Alexander and
Marianna C. McAfee Chair*

EUPHONIUM AND

BASS TRUMPET

Richard Stout

TUBA

Yasuhito Sugiyama*

*Nathalie C. Spence and
Nathalie S. Boswell Chair*

TIMPANI

Paul Yancich*

Otto G. and Corinne T. Voss Chair

Tom Freer²

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Margaret Allen Ireland Chair

Donald Miller

Tom Freer

Thomas Sherwood

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2 Assistant Principal

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Franz Welser-Möst

MUSIC DIRECTOR
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Franz Welser-Möst is among today's most distinguished conductors. The 2021-22 season marks his twentieth year as music director of The Cleveland Orchestra, with the future of their acclaimed partnership extended to 2027, making him the longest-serving musical leader in the ensemble's history. *The New York Times* has declared Cleveland under Welser-Möst's direction to be "America's most brilliant orchestra," praising its virtuosity, elegance of sound, variety of color, and chamber-like musical cohesion.

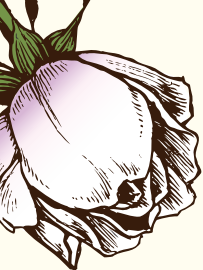
With Welser-Möst, The Cleveland Orchestra has been praised for its inventive programming, its ongoing support for new musical works, and for its innovative work in presenting semi-staged and staged operas. The Orchestra has also been hugely successful in building up a new and, notably, a young audience. To date, the Orchestra and Welser-Möst have been showcased around the world in nineteen international tours together. Since 2020, they launched the ensemble's own recording label and an original digital concert series, *In Focus*, that can be streamed worldwide.

As a guest conductor, Mr. Welser-Möst enjoys a close and productive relationship with the Vienna Philharmonic. He regularly conducts the orchestra in Vienna as well as on tour, and in January 2023, he will lead its celebrated New Year's Concert for the third time. Highlights of recent and upcoming appearances include performances of Strauss's *Die Ägyptische Helena* at Teatro alla Scala and *Elektra* at the Vienna State Opera, and concerts with the New York Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic. He is a regular guest at the Salzburg Festival, where he most recently led an acclaimed production of *Elektra*.

From 2010 to 2014, Franz Welser-Möst served as general music director of the Vienna State Opera. Previously, Mr. Welser-Möst led the Zurich Opera across a decade, conducting more than forty new productions.

During the 2020 Salzburg Festival, Mr. Welser-Möst was awarded the festival ruby pin and the Salzburg Badge of Honor. In 2019, he received the Gold Medal in the Arts by the Kennedy Center International Committee on the Arts in recognition of his impact on the international arts community. Other honors include The Cleveland Orchestra's Distinguished Service Award, a special citation from the Cleveland Arts Prize, the Vienna Philharmonic's "Ring of Honor" for his longstanding personal and artistic relationship with the ensemble, recognition from the Western Law Center for Disability Rights, honorary membership in the Vienna Singverein, appointment as an Academician of the European Academy of Yuste, and the Kilenyi Medal from the Bruckner Society of America.

Franz Welser-Möst's book From Silence: Finding Calm in a Dissonant World was published in Austria in July 2020 under the title Als ich die Stille fand, followed by an English version released worldwide in Summer 2021.



Blossom Summer Soirée

SUNDAY, JULY 31
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Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Concert Hall

AT SEVERANCE MUSIC CENTER

Saturday evening, **May 21**, 2022, at 8:00 p.m.

Thursday evening, **May 26**, 2022, at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday afternoon, **May 29**, 2022, at 3:00 p.m.

GIUSEPPE VERDI'S

OTELLO

IN CONCERT

Opera in Four Acts

Libretto by Arrigo Boito based on Shakespeare's
play *Othello*

THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA

Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

Sung in Italian with English supertitles

Supertitle Operator, Christopher Auerbach-Brown

Production Stage Manager, Brynn Baudier

Supertitle System courtesy of DIGITAL TECH SERVICES, LLC

Saturday evening's concert is dedicated to JoAnn and Robert Glick in recognition of their extraordinary generosity in support of The Cleveland Orchestra.

Thursday evening's concert is dedicated to Barbara and David Wolfort in recognition of their extraordinary generosity in support of The Cleveland Orchestra.

2021-2022 Season Sponsor: **The J.M. Smucker Co.**

GIUSEPPE VERDI'S

OTELLO

IN CONCERT

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Montano / The Herald Kidon Choi, baritone
Cassio Pene Pati, tenor
Iago Christopher Maltman, baritone
Roderigo Owen McCausland, tenor
Otello Limmie Pulliam, tenor
Desdemona Tamara Wilson, soprano
Emilia Jennifer Johnson Cano, mezzo-soprano
Lodovico Raymond Aceto, bass
Cleveland Orchestra Chorus
Cleveland Orchestra Children's Chorus

ACT I — a port in Cyprus

ACT II — The hall and garden of a castle

INTERMISSION

ACT III — The castle's great hall

ACT IV — Desdemona's bedroom

This performance runs approximately 3 hours and 5 minutes.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

A PORT ON THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS

A storm rages as the people of Cyprus await the victorious return of their governor and general, Otello. While Otello has been off fighting the Turks, the Venetian Roderigo has fallen in love with the general's wife, Desdemona. Meanwhile the Venetian officer, Iago, bitter that Otello promoted Cassio to lieutenant instead of him, promises to help Roderigo in his romantic pursuits.

Iago sets a plot in motion to ruin Otello. Knowing Cassio's proclivities towards drink, Iago proposes a toast to Desdemona. Roderigo continues to fill Cassio's cup until he is drunk. Then, at Iago's goading, Roderigo starts a quarrel with Cassio. The former governor, Montano, attempts to break up the fight, but is instead drawn into the row and wounded. Otello enters and orders the fighting to stop. Seeing Desdemona disturbed by the commotion and Cassio in his inebriated state, Otello demotes him. The act ends with one of Verdi's most sublime love duets, as Otello and Desdemona declare their eternal love.

Act II

A HALL AND ADJOINING GARDEN OF THE CASTLE

Iago encounters the disgraced Cassio and advises him to plead his case to Desdemona, who has a mollifying influence on Otello. Alone, Iago reveals his lack of faith in human nature. Desdemona enters and speaks to Cassio, which Otello observes — and Iago exploits this for purposes of revenge. He asks Otello about Cassio's role when Otello was courting his wife, seeding doubt in Otello's mind. Otello's suspicions are further raised when Desdemona asks for pardon on Cassio's behalf. Otello claims to have a headache, and Desdemona attempts to tie her handkerchief around his brow. Otello tosses the handkerchief to the floor, and Desdemona's maid, Emilia (who is married to Iago), retrieves it. Iago wrests the handkerchief from Emilia.

Now alone with Otello, Iago falsely recounts that while in bed, he heard Cassio talk in his sleep about Desdemona, going so far to say that "I curse the fate that sent you to that Moor." Iago asks Otello if he knows of an embroidered handkerchief in Desdemona's possession, which Otello does — in fact, he gave Desdemona the handkerchief as a token of their early love. Iago says that he has seen it in Cassio's possession. Otello flies into a jealous rage and vows revenge.

Act III

THE GREAT HALL OF THE CASTLE

Iago is with Otello and promises to provide further proof of Desdemona and Cassio's affair. Before they can set up a trap, Desdemona enters and pleads Cassio's case once more. Otello feigns another headache and demands that Desdemona wrap his head with the handkerchief he gave her. She cannot — it is not in her possession. Instead, she continues to seek Cassio's pardon. Otello continues to berate her with increasingly insulting language, eventually calling her a whore. When she leaves, Otello is shaken. Iago enters reporting that Cassio is on his way, and Otello hides so that he can overhear their conversation. Iago is able to manipulate what is said so that it seems to Otello that Cassio is speaking of Desdemona (rather than his love interest Bianca). Cassio also produces Desdemona's handkerchief, which Iago had planted in his room. Otello sees this as evidence of Desdemona's betrayal.

The Venetian ambassadors arrive in Cyprus to announce that Otello is to return to Venice, and Cassio will be the next governor of Cyprus. The news sends Otello into a rage. He flings Desdemona to the ground where she weeps as observers are stunned by the scene. The act ends as the chorus sings "Long Live Otello, Glory to the Lion of Venice."

Act IV

DESDEMONA'S BEDROOM, LATER THAT EVENING.

Emilia helps Desdemona prepare for bed. Desdemona remembers a song that her mother's maid used to sing, "The Willow Song." The women embrace before Emilia leaves. Desdemona sings an "Ave Maria" before getting into bed. She awakes with the final of three kisses from Otello. He asks her whether she has prayed and insists that she confess her sins. Desdemona understands immediately that Otello is about to kill her. She cries out her innocence, but Otello strangles her.

Emilia enters the room with news that Cassio has killed Roderigo only to find her mistress dying. Otello confesses that he murdered her because of her affair with Cassio. Emilia, recognizing her husband's deceit, unveils Iago's plot. Otello, realizing his fatal mistake, stabs himself and dies alongside his beloved Desdemona.



Giuseppe Verdi
(1813–1901)
portrait by
Giovanni Boldini
(1886).

OPERA THRIVES ON OTHERNESS — and always has, from *Orfeo* to *Otello*, with characters of extraordinary power who have landed in a world that's not theirs, but belongs to adversaries without controls or limits. Monteverdi's 1607 *Orfeo* puts a god-like musician in an underworld where nothing good can happen. Verdi's 1887 *Otello* sets its title character in a land not of his own and against a one-man underworld — Iago — a once-trusted but conscience-free colleague who poisons him with jealousy.

More than any previous Verdi opera, this product of the composer's post-retirement 70s — arriving after a 13-year absence from writing any new works — has extraordinary texture and dimension. “Verdi wanted to show in *Otello* that he could do more than just write great music for voices,” said Cleveland Orchestra Music Director Franz Welser-Möst. “In his early operas, the orchestra is not that important, maybe just a cushion, if you will, for the voice to shine. But later on, the orchestra becomes more and more important in his writing.”

During this hiatus, Verdi attended his first opera by Wagner, who revolutionized the use of orchestra in opera with “endless melodies” filled with thematic leitmotifs that drove the plot as much as sung text. With *Otello*, Verdi flirts with this Wagnerian notion, and embeds the dramatic tension in a more fluid, continuous, and dramatic orchestral score. But what about the story of Shakespeare's *Othello* compelled the great Italian composer to return to writing opera?

Shakespeare's model for the original play was the brutal short story “Disdemona and the Moor,” one of ten published in the 1565 collection, *Hecatomithi*, by Italian novelist Giovanni Battista Giraldi, nicknamed Cinthio. Here the ensign falls in love with Disdemona, and convinces the Moorish Captain of her unfaithfulness. Together they bludgeon her to death before turning on each other.

Roughly 40 years later, Shakespeare may well have envisioned Othello as an Elizabethan-era rock star. “In 1600, the ambassador of the King of Barbary — roughly, modern-day Morocco — came to London as the guest of Queen Elizabeth for a six-month residency at court. He was a celebrity,” wrote Isaac Butler in an *Othello* commentary for Slate. This charismatic emissary was the first Moor that most Englishmen had ever seen. This compelling figure combined with Cinthio's tragic plot perhaps provided a hot topic for a play, which sprang from Shakespeare's pen four years later.

While the ambassador from Barbary was a phenomenon in England, Shakespeare infuses his fictional play with a built-in suspicion of the other

through direct and oblique references to his race. Notably, the first act of the play recounts how Desdemona's father Brabantio welcomed the Moorish general into his home, but is full of racist-fueled indignation when informed that they have secretly married. Having established Othello's otherness, Shakespeare offers him as prey to Iago, who exploits this self-doubt seeded by an unaccepting society leading to the play's tragic end.

Two and a half centuries later, the publisher Giulio Ricordi tried to coax Verdi out of retirement with an opera based on *Othello*. Verdi was a great admirer of Shakespeare, having written *Macbeth* in 1846–47 and attempted to adapt *King Lear*, a project he abandoned. Among the compelling aspects of Ricordi's pitch was the opportunity to collaborate with the cultivated composer/librettist Arrigo Boito. After years of back-and-forth revision, Verdi received Boito's libretto in 1879 and went to work.

"Knowing the genius of Verdi, [Boito] knew how much he could reduce the lines from Shakespeare to allow Verdi to express certain things. If it was fear, if it was darkness, like the beginning of act four with the double basses. You might need 20 lines to express that, and with music, you can do it in a second," said Welser-Möst.

Comparatively speaking, *Othello*'s blackness — on many levels — figures less in the opera than in the source material from which it came. Boito's libretto resists much of the play's crude frat-house racial banter: The opera's 1880s creation fell square in the middle of the polite, dignified Victorian era. It's true that the opera was called "the chocolate project" behind the scenes, though we can never know the exact spirit in which it was meant. Verdi definitely wanted his *Othello* to have the bearing of a Venetian nobleman. Also important: Italian opera rarely tells stories from the beginning. With admirable theatrical concision, many start halfway through the story with characters having only an implied past. As a result, the fraught backstory of *Othello* and Desdemona's elopement is bypassed, and the couple arrive innocently and deeply in love.

Without Desdemona, *Othello* is utterly alone. In Shakespeare, he is a man without a country, a Moslem (as they were then called) who fights other Moslems (Turks) for the benefit of white Venetians. He would seem to be a true individual who stands apart from his native country and without his own community. He never says where he's from — presumably Africa. Note, also, what the music in the Act I love duet doesn't say. The text deals with Desdemona admiring his heroism in battle, as in Shakespeare, implying her fascination with his otherness. The music, however, suggests no such objectification. This is the kind of exalted love match that people dream about. No fault



Librettist Arrigo Boito
(1842–1918).

lines. Security is unquestionable. Verdi establishes the marriage is the one thing Otello can count on in a world where he is forever seen as a person with dark skin. So when this relationship seems to be going wrong, and there are no battlefields requiring his heroism, he falls hard and is lost. Thus, race seems essential to the story.

Or so it seems in the social atmosphere of 2022. Perceptions will be different for every beholder and will change over time, like a Rorschach inkblot text. In the book *Blackness in Opera* (University of Illinois Press, 2014), Naomi André discusses many of these ideas, and is certain on at least one matter: However noble Otello's remorse-steeped death becomes, the murder of Desdemona nonetheless confirms the savage stereotype of blackness at that time — though also falling into line with opera's often-illogical, never-literal tradition of extreme emotions.

But here's the paradox: Listeners can love the opera but have only the vaguest sense of the racial issues. For all of its greatness, *Otello* is an opera that is often heard more than it is seen. Indeed opera casting has often followed a voice-first philosophy. The ability to sing a role both technically and dramatically — and in these regards, Otello is the summit of Italian tenor roles — comes first; physical attributes are secondary. This has led to well-meaning but now-condemned use of brown skin makeup, a practice that has fortunately been abandoned in major opera houses.

Now, with that controversy sidelined, *Otello* can be something beyond a cultural object. After all, the reason *Otello* exists in our world nearly 150 years after its premiere is the music. The opening chords strike like a thunderclap that magically dissolves, leading listeners into a score that's a whole and complete world unto itself. The aging Verdi seemed to have evolved by light years since *Aida* with music that both consolidates nearly 300 years of opera tradition and vigorously takes it to a fearless new level. Devoid of clichés or dated operatic traditions, *Otello* somehow always exists in the present.

It is telling that at one point in the opera's creation, there was discussion about naming it Iago — perhaps to acknowledge that the antihero has more agency than any of the other characters, or if only to differentiate the opera from Shakespeare's *Othello*. But as interesting as Iago's machinations may be, it is Otello who claims our empathy — and the key to that is his otherness. We've all been there in ways great and small, whether being passed over in work or in romance for reasons based on what we are rather than who we are. Through re-identifying with Otello, we can know the importance of creating bridges and bonds beyond any surface factors with the many kinds of “others” around us.

— David Patrick Stearns

David Patrick Stearns is a longtime music journalist who currently writes for the Philadelphia Inquirer, Classical Voice North America, MusicalAmerica.com, Gramophone magazine, and others.

A native of Sycamore, Illinois, he now resides in Brooklyn.

World Premiere: February 5, 1887,
at Teatro alla Scala

Scored for: 3 flutes (third doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, english horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 4 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 cornets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (cymbals, 2 bass drums, gong, tam-tam, thunder, cannon), strings, soloists, chorus, and children's chorus. Offstage: 6 trumpets, 4 trombones, organ, bagpipe, mandolin, and guitar.

The Cleveland Orchestra presented Verdi's complete Otello once before, in December 1934, with Artur Rodziński.



MINING THE REWARDS OF OTELLO

TENOR LIMMIE
PULLIAM ON
THE ROLE

“THAT FITS HIM LIKE A GLOVE.”

AS TOLD TO ALISON KINNEY

As a young lyric tenor, you look at certain roles with a starry-eyed attitude: “Will I ever sing that role? Is that something I’ll possibly be able to do one day?” There are certain roles for tenors like that, like Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Calaf in *Turandot* — to be able to stand on a stage and sing the “Nessun dorma”! And then you have *Otello*, which is just on a level of its own. When you look at the artistic lineage of those who have portrayed the role, as a young singer you question whether or not you’re worthy of being amongst that lineage.

It’s a role I never thought I would sing. I’ll never forget the day I had my first offer to sing this role. I was driving home from St. Louis and received a phone call from someone I didn’t know — at the time. I remember having to pull over, because I was so shocked that someone was offering me the opportunity to sing this role. I began to delve into the role, studying it. I knew I had to hear it live, to be in the room, to hear the orchestration. I went to see a live production and sat through it with my score in hand. At the end of the night, I closed the score and was able to admit to myself, “I think I can do this.” I made the call the next morning and said, “Yes, I’ll do it.” It’s been one of the best decisions I’ve made, because singing this role is so rewarding. It’s one that I hope I’ll be able to sing for the rest of my career.

After having done it multiple times now... you often hear people talking about a role that fits them like a glove. For me, that’s *Otello*. I’ve never felt more comfortable in a role than I have with *Otello*, vocally, dramatically. *Otello* returns from battle. You watch, from the moment he comes in and makes probably the greatest entrance in all of opera, to being celebrated and adored — and then watch over the next couple of hours, as Iago gets his tendrils into him, and starts to squeeze, and drives him to becoming the unthinkable and doing the unthinkable. *Otello* may be the person in charge, but someone else

is controlling the narrative.

We can also, in a way, relate that to modern society, in that you have instances where people of color are mainly figureheads, but someone else is pulling the strings. The part of the role that I connected with almost immediately was, just through my own personal experience, the isolation that Otello must feel, living in a situation where you're the only person who looks like you. Although you're a celebrated warrior, you're still alone and isolated, because there's no one else who looks like you there. As a Black man in opera, there are many times when, whether onstage or in the rehearsal rooms, I'm the only one who looks like me. Even though it's a supportive situation that you're in, and oftentimes the tenor is celebrated, there's still the sense of isolation. For many years, you'd hear there are no Black tenors capable of singing this role. I would hope we can begin to lay that to rest; I don't think there's ever been a time when there were so many Black tenors capable of portraying this role as right now, and some of the best portrayals of the role I've seen of late. Russell Thomas, who's given some wonderful portrayals of Otello — I've had the honor of covering him several times for the role. And Issachah Savage has sung the role on the international stage. I just think that companies and artistic administrators have to step up and provide the opportunities.

My Cleveland performances will be my eighth, ninth, and tenth times in the role. I spent time reacquainting myself with the text, notes, music, but I like to come into each production with an open mind, to learn something new about the piece, about Otello himself, and to be open to new musical ideas. I learn something new each time, whether from the maestro or from my colleagues. My Desdemona here may sing it differently from my Desdemona there, which may cause me to sing a line a different way, or if Iago says something that evokes a new emotion or reaction from me, it can completely change the course of how I interpret the role. Every time is a challenge, and I love a challenge! If you listen, you'll always hear something in a way you've never heard it before. Doing so will open a door and allow you to bring something fresh to this role.

I attended Oberlin Conservatory of Music, so we were constantly around The Cleveland Orchestra, going to their concerts, and they'd come and play on our campus. To us, they were the pinnacle of orchestras. To now have the opportunity to share the same stage with them, Maestro Welser-Möst, and the amazing cast they've assembled for these performances is an honor that just blows my mind, one that I'll cherish for a very long time. I'm really looking forward to this.



PHOTO BY DOUG JORGENSEN

Pulliam as
Otello
at Livermore
Valley Opera
in March 2022.

Alison Kinney is the author of Avidly Reads Opera (NYU Press 2021) and Hood (Bloomsbury 2016).

GUEST ARTISTS



Limmie Pulliam, *Otello*

Rising tenor Limmie Pulliam continues to thrill audiences with his captivating stage presence and his “stentorian, yet beautiful” sound. Highlights of his 2021–22 season include his highly-anticipated LA Opera debut as Manrico (*Il Trovatore*), his role debut as Turiddu (*Cavalleria Rusticana*) with Vashon Opera in Washington State, company debuts with Livermore Valley Opera (*Otello*) and Fort Worth Opera, and his Cleveland Orchestra debut in the role of *Otello*.

A Missouri native, Mr. Pulliam studied with Richard Miller at Oberlin College Conservatory of Music and participated in the young artist programs of Cleveland Opera, Opera Delaware, and Opera Memphis. He first sang the role of Verdi's *Otello* in his debut with the Phoenicia International Festival of the Voices, and has since taken on this demanding part with Maryland Opera's Verdi in the Valley Gala and covered the role for the Canadian Opera Company.



PHOTO BY CLAIR MCADAMS

Tamara Wilson, *Desdemona*

Recognized internationally for her interpretations of Verdi, Mozart, Strauss, and Wagner, soprano Tamara Wilson is a recipient of the prestigious Richard Tucker Award. Other honors include an Olivier Award nomination and Grand Prize in the annual Francisco Viñas Competition.

In 2021–22 she debuts at Teatro La Fenice (*Fidelio*) and Santa Fe Opera (*Tristan und Isolde*), as well as returns to the Bayerische Staatsoper (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), LA Opera (*St. Matthew Passion*), Houston Grand Opera (*Turandot*), and The Cleveland Orchestra (*Otello*). She gives solo recitals at Oper Frankfurt and Cleveland Art Song Festival.

She recently made her role debut as *Turandot* at Canadian Opera Company and returned to Deutsche Oper Berlin and Oper Frankfurt. She joined the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Franz Welser-Möst for a special Christmas performance and broadcast of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. Ms. Wilson frequently appears at the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Canadian Opera Company, and Teatro alla Scala, and Opernhaus Zürich. She was *Ariadne* in The Cleveland Orchestra's 2019 production of *Ariadne auf Naxos*.



PHOTO BY CHRIS SINGER

Christopher Maltman, Iago

Baritone Christopher Maltman is globally recognized for his portrayal of Don Giovanni, which he has sung in London, Berlin, Munich, Cologne, Salzburg, Amsterdam, Toulouse, Beijing, Chicago, San Sebastian, Edinburgh, and New York. Now increasingly in demand for Verdi roles, he has sung Posa (*Don Carlo*), Simon Boccanegra, Falstaff, Conte di Luna (*Il Trovatore*), Guy de Montfort (*Les Vêpres Siciliennes*), Don Carlo di Vargas (*La Forza del Destino*), and Rigoletto to wide critical acclaim.

A favorite at the Royal Opera House in London and a regular guest at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, the Wiener Staatsoper, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, and the Salzburger Festspiele, Mr. Maltman also performs at the Opéra National de Paris, Frankfurt Oper, Opernhaus Zurich, the Liceu Opera Barcelona, Teatro Real Madrid, Dutch National Opera, and the Teatro Regio in Turin. In the United States, he frequently appears at the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, and the opera companies of Seattle, San Diego, and Los Angeles.



PHOTO BY FAY FOX

Jennifer Johnson Cano, Emilia

A naturally gifted singer noted for her commanding stage presence and profound artistry, Jennifer Johnson Cano has garnered critical acclaim for committed performances of both new and standard repertoire. With more than 100 performances on the stage at the Metropolitan Opera, her most recent roles have included Nicklausse (*The Tales of Hoffman*), Emilia (*Otello*), Hansel (*Hansel and Gretel*), and Meg Page (*Falstaff*).

Ms. Cano has regularly appeared with The Cleveland Orchestra both at Severance and on tour, having sung in the operas *Salome* and *The Cunning Little Vixen*, as well as several concert performances. She toured with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel, and performed with the New York Philharmonic in New York and Vail. Highlights in the 2021–22 season include performances with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, the Chicago Symphony and Riccardo Muti, and the San Francisco Symphony. In February, Cano performed the New York premiere of a new chamber opera by Marc Neikrug, *A Song By Mahler*, at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.



PHOTO BY MARK LEEDOM

Pene Pati, Cassio

Samoan tenor Pene Pati is a graduate of San Francisco Opera's Adler Program where, under music director Nicola Luisotti, he made an acclaimed debut as Il Duca di Mantova in Verdi's *Rigoletto* in 2017. He was subsequently hailed "the most exceptional tenor discovery of the last decade" (Opéra-Online) following his performances as Percy in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* at Opéra national de Bordeaux in the 2018–19 season. He has received critical praise in productions of Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* at San Francisco Opera and Opéra national de Bordeaux as well as Alfredo in Verdi's *La Traviata* at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre.

During the 2021–22 season, Mr. Pati debuted at Opéra National de Paris (*L'Elisir d'Amore*), Teatro San Carlo di Napoli (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Wiener Staatsoper (*Anna Bolena*), San Diego Opera (*Roméo et Juliette*), and Staatsoper Berlin (*La Traviata*), and appears this summer at Festival d'Aix-en-Provence (*Moïse et Pharaon*). In concert, he performs *Das Lied von der Erde* in St. Pölten under Hans Graf, makes his Cleveland Orchestra debut in *Otello*, and joins l'Orchestre National de France and Pierre Bleuse for Massenet's *Thaïs*.



Owen McCausland, Roderigo

From Saint John, New Brunswick, Canadian tenor Owen McCausland has appeared this season in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with Pacific Opera Victoria, the Victoria Symphony's New Year's Day performance, and makes his Cleveland Orchestra debut in *Otello*. He recently joined the Canadian Opera Company for its return to live performance with the premiere of Cusson's *Fantasma*.

Mr. McCausland is increasingly in demand for engagements with important opera companies and symphonies across Canada. An alumnus of the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio, he sang the role of Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* for Opéra de Montréal, Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* for Pacific Opera Victoria, and was in Okanagan Symphony's *Messiah*. He opened the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal's 2018–19 season with the world premiere of *Chaakapesh, The Trickster's Quest* under the baton of Kent Nagano, which toured around Canada.

Mr. McCausland was a finalist and winner of the Canadian Encouragement Award in the George London Singing Competition and also a semi-finalist in the Montreal International Music Competition.



Raymond Aceto, Lodovico

A native of Brunswick, Ohio, bass Raymond Aceto first discovered a love of singing through his rock band at school, with whom he also played guitar. He went on to study at Bowling Green State University. On graduating, he joined the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program and made his debut in *Tosca*, singing the Jailer opposite Luciano Pavarotti as Cavaradossi.

Mr. Aceto's 2021–22 season began as soloist in Wolf Trap's 50th Anniversary Celebration Gala, followed by his return to Seattle Opera as Hunding in *Die Walküre* under conductor Ludovic Morlot. He also returned to Lyric Opera of Chicago as Captain in Daniel Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas*, directed by Francesca Zambello, and the Metropolitan Opera as Bonze in *Madama Butterfly* and Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*.

Mr. Aceto made his Cleveland Orchestra debut during the 1997 Blossom Music Festival, singing Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* under conductor Leonard Slatkin, and has appeared regularly with the Orchestra, including performances of *Carmen*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, and *The Cunning Little Vixen*, as well as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.



Kidon Choi, Montano & The Herald

Baritone Kidon Choi is a recent graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera, where he appeared in *La Fanciulla del West* (José Castro), *Otello* (Herald), and *Madama Butterfly* (Prince Yamadori).

His appearance in *Otello* marks his Cleveland Orchestra debut. Recent appearances include *La Fanciulla del West* (Jack Rance) with National Opera of Korea, scenes from Verdi's *Otello* at the Bay Street Theatre, followed by debuts at North Carolina Opera in *I Pagliacci* (Tonio) and Opera Idaho in *La Bohème* (Marcello). He debuted at Wolf Trap Opera as the title role in *Rigoletto* and has appeared in Chautauqua Opera's productions of *Rigoletto* and *La Bohème*.

Among his many awards, Mr. Choi is a 2019 Sullivan Foundation Grant recipient. He earned his professional studies diploma from Mannes School of Music, his master's degree at Manhattan School of Music, and his bachelor's degree from Hanyang University in Seoul, South Korea.



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Lisa Wong, Director
of Chorus

Frances P. and Chester C. Bolton Chair

Lisa Wong was appointed director of choruses for The Cleveland Orchestra in May 2018 after serving as acting director in the 2017–18 season. She joined the choral staff of The Cleveland Orchestra as assistant director of choruses at the start of the 2010–11 season, helping to prepare the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus and Blossom Festival Chorus. In 2012, she took on added responsibilities as director of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Chorus.

Ms. Wong is a faculty member at the College of Wooster, where she co-chairs the Music Department, conducts the Wooster Chorus, and teaches courses in conducting and music education. An advocate for the music of under-represented composers, Ms. Wong serves as the Repertoire and Resource Chair for World Music and Cultures for the Ohio Choral Directors Association.

Active as a clinician, guest conductor, and adjudicator, she serves as a music panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts. Recent international accolades have included work at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya, as a part of Tunaweza Kimuziki, and as a conductor for "Conducting 21C: Musical Leadership for a New Century" in Stockholm, Sweden.

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This spring The Cleveland Orchestra, with the collaboration and guidance of Cleveland resident and poet Aumaine Rose Smith, sent out a request for poetry submissions that reflect upon the themes of *Otello* and the two *Breaking Convention* programs from residents in Northeast Ohio. Among many deserving submissions, two stood out, “The History of Birdsong in Cities” by Zach Savich, which appears below, and “What is your substance....” by Diane Kendig (p. 43).

The History of Birdsong in Cities

Swifts sing in chimneys, thrushes in bushes,
and sparrows tear coupons into shopping cart nests.
But that adaptive chatter can't out-shout
the bells near the gulls, or leaf blowers under
doves in the roof. Therefore, they alter
their songs by half-notes, quaver, and tamp.
They fashion them for frequencies otherwise free.
Some grow softer, not to be heard *over* but *among*,
within, and *through*.

Much as in Shakespeare's *Othello*,
when the musicians are told that if they “have any music
that may not be heard,” they should play it,
I like to think they do, and continue, scoring
the horrid plays. Their inaudible strains stop nothing
but attend it, since music is also a witness. It bears
more than we hear. May each unheard note offer a home.

Zach Savich is an award-winning author of six books of poetry, including Daybed (Black Ocean, 2018), and two books of prose, including the memoir Diving Makes the Water Deep (Rescue Press, 2016).

He is an associate professor at the Cleveland Institute of Art.

Prelude Concert: HONORING BLACK COMPOSERS

Free 30-minute performances, featuring musicians of The Cleveland Orchestra, are presented 1 hour prior to Breaking Convention: Programs I & II

Reinberger Chamber Hall

AT SEVERANCE MUSIC CENTER

Friday evening, **May 27**, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday evening, **May 28**, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

BRIAN R. NABORS
(B.1991)

Ohio Sketches for String Quartet
Mvt. III Cleveland

ELAYNA DUITMAN, KATHLEEN COLLINS, violins
SONJA MOLLOY, viola
CHARLES BERNARD, cello

DOLORES WHITE
(B. 1932)

Blues Dialogues
Mvt. III Fast and Funky
ISABEL TRAUTWEIN, violin

GEORGE WALKER
(1922–2018)

String Quartet No. 1
Mvt. II Molto Adagio
EMMA SHOOK, YUN-TING LEE, KATHLEEN COLLINS,
ISABEL TRAUTWEIN, violins
LISA BOYKO, ELIESHA NELSON, violas
CHARLES BERNARD, BRYAN DUMM, cellos

MELIKA FITZHUGH
(B.1972)

Love in the Time of Covid-19
ELIESHA NELSON, viola

H. LESLIE ADAMS
(B. 1932)

Sonata for Violin and Piano
Mvt. III Allegro
YUN-TING LEE, violin
DANIEL OVERLY, piano

WILLIAM GRANT STILL
(1895–1978)

Danzas de Panama
Mvts. I Tamborito & IV Cumbia y Congo
EMMA SHOOK, KATHLEEN COLLINS, violins
LISA BOYKO, viola

On Tuesday, May 24, at 7:00 p.m., musicians of The Cleveland Orchestra will perform an extended version of Honoring Black Composers at Cleveland's Karamu House, recognized as the oldest, producing African American theater in the nation.

Following the 1-hour concert, Karamu's President and CEO Tony Sias will lead a discussion with musicians and composers.

For more information, and to reserve free tickets, visit karamuhouse.org.

THE CLEVELAND OPERA

salutes The Cleveland Orchestra with its
summer 2022 Opera presentations.



Don Pasquale (2015)

- 🌀 *Summer with Beloved Melodies* — June (free)
- 🌀 *Opera in the Italian Garden* with Cleveland Ballet — July 24
- 🌀 *Echo in the Woods* (*Echo w lesie*) a comic opera by Józef Elsner, who was Chopin's teacher — September (free)

The Cleveland
Opera's
27th season
2022-2023
will include

Mozart and Salieri

a one-act opera by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Don Pasquale

a hilarious comedy by Gaetano Donizetti

Christmas with The Cleveland Opera

Valentine Concert

with Cleveland Women's Orchestra

L'amico Fritz

an opera in three acts by Pietro Mascagni

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THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA

FRANZ WELSER-MÖST - MUSIC DIRECTOR

BREAKING CONVENTION: PROGRAM I

Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Concert Hall

AT SEVERANCE MUSIC CENTER

Friday evening, **May 27**, 2022, at 7:30 p.m.

Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

21
SEASON
2

JÜRI REINVERE
(B.1971)

GEORGE WALKER
(1922–2018)

SOFIA GUBAIDULINA
(B.1931)

Norilsk, the Daffodils

Lilacs (for voice and orchestra)

LATONIA MOORE, *soprano*

The Light of the End

HONORING BLACK COMPOSERS *A free 30-minute performance, featuring musicians of The Cleveland Orchestra takes place in Reinberger Chamber Hall at 6:30 p.m. See page 33.*

This program runs approximately 1 hour. It will be performed without intermission.

2021-2022 Season Sponsor: **The J.M. Smucker Co.**

Norilsk, the Daffodils

Composed: 2012



BY

**Jüri
REINVERE**

BORN

December 2, 1971
Estonia

At a Glance

Jüri Reinvere wrote *Norilsk, the Daffodils* in 2012. It premiered that year in Finland in programs by the Jyväskylä Sinfonia and Kuopio Symphony Orchestra.

The work runs 17 minutes in performance. Reinvere scored it for 3 flutes (third doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, english horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 6 horns, 3

trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, percussion (vibraphone, bass drum, sand blocks, triangle, chimes, crotales, shaker, cymbals), harp, piano (doubling celeste), strings, and recorded voice.

This evening's presentation of *Norilsk, the Daffodils*, led by Music Director Franz Welser-Möst, marks its first performance by The Cleveland Orchestra.

About the Music

AUGUST 23 IS A DATE of particular significance in Europe. In 2009, the European Union declared it a memorial day for the victims of National Socialism and Stalinism. The date was chosen because on August 23, 1939, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin divided up the lands of Eastern Europe into respective spheres of influence as part of the secret protocol attached to their non-aggression pact. Hitler could march into Poland, and Stalin would have a free hand in annexing western Ukraine and the Baltic lands.

In the winter of that year, Stalin attacked Finland. Under the pact, the Soviet Union could retake much of the lands to the west of Russia that had been lost by the Russian Empire during the First World War.

Norilsk, the Daffodils is a work by Jüri Reinvere that reflects on the consequences of these events. Located in northern Siberia, Norilsk is the most northerly major city in the world. Stalin established a nickel production facility there in 1935, and from its founding this industrial community was a forced-labor camp for political prisoners and remained so until 1956. An estimated 17,000 to 18,000 people lost their lives in Norilsk due to the toxic process of nickel smelting, and the inhumane conditions under which prisoners were treated.

Following Stalin's death in 1953, Soviet security services began to execute prisoners by firing squad. Many of the prisoners who were killed had been transported to Siberia from the Baltic states after the Soviet occupation.

Composer, poet, and essayist Jüri Reinvere is Baltic. He was born in the Estonian capital of Tallinn in 1971 and lived through the Russification pressures of the last years of the Soviet Union.

He subsequently studied in Finland and made friends with Estonian pianist Käbi Laretei and her ex-husband, Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman. Based in Germany since 2005, Reinvere has written three full-length operas and several orchestral and chamber music works, and he has won prizes, not only for his compositions, but also for his historical and political essays.

His composition *Norilsk, the Daffodils* was premiered in Finland in 2012. It combines a large orchestra with a Finnish poem that represents the lullaby of a mother in a labor camp. She is singing her child to sleep, possibly to quell the child's fear of death. The daffodils in the title are a dual reference, first to the well-known poem by the Romantic English poet William Wordsworth, which begins "I wandered lonely as a cloud" and ends "and then my heart with pleasure fills / and dances with the daffodils." The second reference is to the toxic gases released from nickel smelting, which form flower-like shapes in the freezing air. The crystalline, icy, and brittle orchestral sound combines with the intense poem in a modern melodrama of beauty and death, but also of comfort. It is an elegy arising from the experiences of violence in the twentieth century.

— Jan Brachmann

(Translation by Jaakko Mäntyjärvi)

Jan Brachmann is a music journalist and contributor to Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung since 2016 and can be heard on SWR2 and Deutschlandfunk Kultur, among others.

Spoken Text: *Norilsk, the Daffodils*

by Jüri Reinvere, original text in Finnish

A
Talvi oli kylmä – kyyneleni jäätyivät ripsiin,
tippuivat maahan ja vierivät kuin helmet, helisten –
pitkin pääkatuja; kaukana – kaasukammiot hymyilivät,
ylös, ylös, ylös, kohti taivasta
...ja aukio oli tyhjä, vain muutama sointu ilman päällä,
pilviä, puuttomia, pimeyttä,
teepannun vihellys tähtien alla, ja Moskovan radion
ääni,

A
The winter was cold – tears froze on my eyelashes,
dropped to the ground and rolled away like pearls, tinkling –
along the avenues; far away – the gas chambers were smiling,
up, up, up towards the sky
...and the square was empty, only a few chords hanging
on the air, clouds, no trees, darkness,
a kettle whistling under the stars, and the sound of
Radio Moscow,

(cont. on page 38)

Spoken Text: **Norilsk, the Daffodils** (cont.)

kaikki oli niin uutta
tämä taivas, ja tämä jää,
tämä pilvien hidas hengitys, ja vuorovedet, jotka
huuhoivat hylkeiden ruumiita,
aamun sumuinen pirteys, kuin kultaa, voimistelua ty
hjydyssä,
kohti äärettömyyttä ja yhtä suoraa viivaa pitkin,
ei yksinäisyyttä enää –
ei kipuja enää – vain punaisia värilaikkuja, vääriä kel
loja, kauppoja, jotka myivät seiä,
– täällä ei enää miehiä, ei naisia, vain lasten vaatteita,
rattaita, huuruksia karuselleja,
– täällä ei enää teitä, ei polkuja, vain vaeltavia sieluja,
vain aamuja, jotka kestivät yöhön, vain kastepisaraita,
jotka tanssivat hyytävän maan päällä,
vain junia, jotka kulkivat pitkin kalpeita, säkenöiviä
hohtimia,
kohti hautoja.

B
Siellä, ...siellä
sinisten siimojen ompelema – kuivuus, joka kostutet
tiin satein ja surukimpuin
...siellä:
sammaleisten vuorien takana
sora, joka nauroi korvissa ja kieppui pilviin,
keuhkoissa, jotka liukenivat lampeen, ja ruusuja ryö
mien yli mudan,
ja sade – joka vei,
vei sinut pois minulta, ja sinusta tuli vain haamu,
kankeissa verhoissa,
hymy, ja silmät, ja ...
ei kukaan.

C
Nuku, nuku lapseni, taivas on täynnä narsisseja,
savupiippu tuhnuttaa niitä lisää.
Nuku, nuku lapseni,
Mm-mm, mm-mm.
Nuku, lapseni, maa jatkaa huminaansa vielä satoja vuosia,
jalcojen alta jää ei katoa,
routa murtuu hiljaa, hiljaa
Nuku – mm-mm, mm-mm...
Nuku, nuku lapseni,
lintuni seuraavat sinua,
mennään ylös, ylös,
yhä ylemmäs – niin ylös
kunnes me emme enää tunne mitään.
Mm-mm.
Mm-mm.

*it was all so new,
this sky, and this ice,
this slow breathing of the clouds, and the tides where dead
seals wash up,
the foggy brightness of morning, like gold, gymnastics
in the void,
towards infinity on a single straight line,
no more loneliness –
no more pain – just red dots, wrong clocks, shops that
sell walls,
– no more men here, no more women, only children's
clothes, strollers, frosted roundabouts,
– no more roads here, no more paths, only errant
souls,
only mornings lasting into the night, only dewdrops
dancing on the chilly earth,
only trains running along pale, glistening pincers
towards the graves.*

B
*There... there
sown with blue strings – drought wetted with rain and
funeral bouquets
...there:
beyond the mossy mountains
gravel that laughed in your ears and spiralled up to the clouds,
in the lungs that dissolved into the pond, and roses
crawled across the mud,
and the rain – that took you,
took you from me, and you became a ghost, in a stiff
curtain,
a smile, eyes, and...
no one.*

C
*Sleep, sleep, my child, the sky is full of daffodils,
the chimney puffs out more of them all the time.
Sleep, sleep, my child.
Mm-mm, mm-mm.
Sleep, my child, the earth will go on humming for centuries,
the ice will not go away from underfoot,
but the permafrost breaks slowly, slowly.
Sleep – mm-mm, mm-mm...
Sleep, sleep, my child,
my birds follow you
on the way up, up,
ever higher – so up
that we do not feel anything any more.
Mm-mm.
Mm-mm.*

Lilacs (for voice and orchestra)

Composed: 1995



BY

**George
WALKER**

BORN

June 27, 1922
Washington, D.C.

DIED

August 23, 2018
Montclair, N.J.

At a Glance

American composer George Walker won a Pulitzer Prize for the composition *Lilacs*. It was commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and premiered on February 1, 1996, at Symphony Hall with soprano soloist Faye Robinson and conductor Seiji Ozawa.

Lilacs runs about 15 minutes in performance. Walker scored it for 2 flutes, piccolo, alto flute, 2 oboes, english horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, tuba,

timpani, percussion (glockenspiel, xylophone, vibraphone, chimes, triangle, tambourine, guiro, glass chimes, snare drum, cymbals, claves, wood block, temple blocks, maracas, castanets, gong), harp, harpischord, celeste, and strings, plus soprano.


The Cleveland Orchestra and Music Director Franz Wesler-Möst performed *Lilacs* for the first time in March 2022 with soloist Latonia Moore.

About the Music

IN 1917 TENOR ROLAND HAYES rented Boston's Symphony Hall for his debut recital. This was unheard of, especially for an African American. It signified Hayes's determination to cultivate a career as a concert artist in an American performing arts culture that was beholden to Jim Crow practices. Over the next six years, Hayes concertized throughout Europe and the United States. Although he faced racist audiences, promoters, and critics, he was significant in elevating the Negro spiritual as an American song form and situating it alongside lieder, Italian arias, and other European works for voice in his concerts.

In 1923, he returned to Boston's Symphony Hall by invitation and performed the spirituals "Go Down Moses" and "By and By" alongside an aria from Mozart's *Così fan Tutti* and Berlioz's *The Childhood of Christ* (*L'enfance du Christ*) with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It marked the first time a Black singer of serious music performed with a major American orchestra.

Seventy-two years later, the Boston Symphony Orchestra commissioned composer George Walker to write a piece honoring Hayes's legacy. The result was *Lilacs* (for voice and orchestra), a four-part song cycle. A year after its premiere in 1995, *Lilacs* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for music, a first for an African American composer. The symmetry between Hayes's and Walker's contributions to the progression of America's concert idiom extends well beyond this commission. Both cultivated careers that were based in faith, and an artistic integrity that was rooted in challenging myopic views of Black music, Black intellectual culture, and the Black concert artist.



George Theophilus Walker was born in 1922 in Washington, D.C. His father was a Jamaican immigrant and doctor who ran a successful practice out of their home, and his mother, who recognized George's musical talent early on, worked for the U.S. Government Printing Office. As a family, the Walkers embodied the spirit of Black exceptionalism, and their achievements were evidence of the Black intellectual community that existed in the capital prior to World War II. George began piano lessons as early as age 5 and gave his first formal recital at age 11 at Howard University. His sister, Frances Walker-Slocum, was also a celebrated pianist who became the first Black woman to receive tenure at Oberlin Conservatory, after a successful performing career.

Following his graduation from Dunbar High School at age 14, Walker enrolled at Oberlin, graduating in 1941 with a degree in piano performance. Soon afterward, he enrolled at the Curtis Institute of Music, where in 1945, he became its first Black graduate, earning artist diplomas in piano performance and composition. That same year, he became the first Black concert artist to give a recital at Town Hall in New York and the first Black instrumentalist to appear with The Philadelphia Orchestra.

In 1954, Walker embarked on a highly acclaimed tour of seven European countries, but it became clear that his professional trajectory as a concert pianist would be undermined by race. Disillusioned by the politics of the American and European concert scene, Walker turned his attention to teaching and composition. He enrolled at the Eastman School of Music, where in 1956, he became the first Black student to receive a Doctor of Musical Arts, and in 1957, he went to France to study with famed teacher Nadia Boulanger for two years.

For the next sixty-plus years, George Walker focused on teaching and composing. He served on the faculties of Dillard University, Smith College, University of Colorado, University of Delaware, and Rutgers University, where he became a distinguished professor in 1976 and retired in 1992.

George Walker's oeuvre consists of 90 works for orchestra, chamber orchestra, piano, strings, voice, organ, clarinet, guitar, brass, woodwinds, and chorus. Walker's early compositions reflected the romanticism promoted by American composers, but later works were complex and more aggressive in sound and structure. At times Walker employed Black idioms like the blues, spirituals, and jazz in his works, but these are not obvious features of his compositional voice. This often made it difficult to distinguish his works from those of his white counterparts. During his later years, he spoke candidly about how the narrow-minded view of what constituted Black concert music impacted the programming of his work.

Lilacs is a four-movement song cycle based on Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," an elegy for President Abraham Lincoln. The poem, published in 1865, was inspired by Whitman's experience working as a nurse during the Civil War. Whitman's poetry emphasizes three major symbols — the lilac, the star, and the bird — that embody the sentiments of love and loss underscored throughout. The lilac represents the enduring love for the departed. The star signifies Lincoln's role in serving as the guiding star that navigated the country through the Civil War. The last symbol is the bird, specifically a wood thrush, whose song is the only thing that brings solace to the poet.

While all three are invoked in Walker's setting, only the lilac and bird are explicitly represented by distinct motives. The work overall is atonal in nature, but the melismatic melody is surrounded by lush harmonies that invoke both grief and hope throughout the four movements.

The fourth movement is distinct as it makes a direct reference to Hayes. Walker sets the first two phrases of poem's thirteenth stanza to the melody of "Lit'l Boy, How Old Are You," one of Hayes's signature spirituals. For a moment the coupling of the spiritual melody and Whitman's poetry seem to frame the enduring legacy of Hayes and the repertory of songs he curated. It also reminds us of the tensions created by the mythologizing of Lincoln's Presidency, the lived experience invoked by the sorrow songs of the slaves, and the prevailing shadow of slavery. Unlike real life, Walker does not leave these tensions unresolved, but mediates them with the entrance of the horns invoking the opening theme. It is a reminder of the permanence of hope and love as represented in the blossoming of the lilac.

— Tammy L. Kernodle

Tammy L. Kernodle is University Distinguished Professor of Music at Miami University in Ohio. She is also the immediate Past President of the Society for American Music.

Sung Text: **Lilacs** *Based on the poem "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" by Walt Whitman (1819–1892)*

1
When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky
in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning
spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the
west,
And thought of him I love.

2
O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd—O the black murk that
hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless
soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

3
In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near
the white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-
shaped leaves of rich green,

With many a pointed blossom rising delicate,
with the perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in
the dooryard,
With delicate-colour'd blossoms and heart-
shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

13
Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird,
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your
chant from the bushes,
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender!
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
You only I hear—yet the star holds me, (but will
soon depart.)
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

The Light of the End

Composed: 2003



PHOTO COURTESY JAPAN ART ASSOCIATION THE SANKEI SHIMBUN

BY

**Sofia
GUBAIDULINA**

BORN

October 24, 1931
Tschistopol,
former U.S.S.R

At a Glance

Russian-born composer Sofia Gubaidulina wrote *The Light of the End* in 2003. It was commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which performed its world premiere with conductor Kurt Masur. Just under a half hour in length, it is performed as a single, dramatic movement.

Gubaidulina scored it for 4 flutes (third doubling alto flute, fourth doubling piccolo), oboe, english horn, heckelphone, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3

trumpets, trombone, bass trombone (doubling tenor trombone), contrabass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion (vibraphone, marimba, tubular bells, mark tree, glockenspiel, crotales, antique cymbals, suspended cymbals, crash cymbals, tam-tam, bass drum), harp, and strings.

This evening's concert, led by Music Director Franz Welser-Möst, marks the first performance of Gubaidulina's *The Light of the End* by The Cleveland Orchestra.

About the Music

NOW IN HER 90TH YEAR, Sofia Gubaidulina has become known for her profoundly spiritual and philosophical approach to music making. Of Tartar descent, she was born in a small town along the Volga River in the Tartar Republic of what was then the U.S.S.R.

After studying at the Kazan Conservatory, she transferred to Moscow, where she came into contact with Dmitri Shostakovich, who famously encouraged her to pursue her own voice. While she found validation in Shostakovich's advice, Gubaidulina also endured censorship and suppression of her work. She supported herself by writing film scores, while reserving time to compose for herself.

In the 1970s, her work became increasingly influenced by her spirituality. She was baptized into the Russian Orthodox church at this time, but also sought to reconcile her beliefs with the Muslim heritage of the Tartar people, the Jewish religion of many of her teachers, and her abiding faith in her cultural heroes from Germany such as Bach, Beethoven, and Goethe. Gubaidulina moved to Germany in the 1990s and still lives outside of Hamburg.

The Light of the End is inspired by a great confrontation between human innovation and nature. At first these forces clash. Natural harmonics and structures built upon the golden ratio are at odds with the man-made invention of the 12-tone tempered scale, which divides an octave into a dozen equally spaced notes. Booming eruptions, thunderous claps, and swirling winds and strings invoke the struggle. As the forces gather, cascading glissandos in the harp usher in a glorious resolution.

Composer's Note:

The name of the composition derives from the bright sound of the antique cymbals that bring the coda of this piece to a close. But despite such an optimistic title, the overall sense of the composition is dramatic. The drama is caused by the conflict between the intrinsic character of instruments — brass instruments in particular — to produce the sounds of the natural overtone row and the necessity of adapting them to the sounds of 12-tone tempered tuning.

For some time I have experienced this conflict as my own drama: the incompatibility, in principle, of these intrinsic qualities with real-life circumstances in which nature neutralized. Sooner or later, this pain had to be manifested in some composition.

The conflict in this piece arises between a theme consisting exclusively of sounds from the natural overtone row theme that uses the 12-tone tempered scale.

The duet of French horn and cello before the central expressive tutti sounds especially antagonistic: The horn and cello play one and the same melody in different tunings, the natural and tempered. Great dissonance.

The piece concludes with the removal of this dissonance — as if by tonic — in which the contrasts are resolved. The chromatic glissandi of the strings remove the fundamental conflict; these sounds are contained both in the natural overtone scale and in the tempered system.

— Sofia Gubaidulina

WHAT IS YOUR SUBSTANCE, WHEREOF ARE YOU MADE

Oh elocution. To speak plainly.
How to tell you how, in the dream,
when you step in my back door,
from windowless attic to my kitchen
astream with its sunlight and
stained glass
and wait while I complete
the necessary and trivial gesture —
twisting a jar lid,
straightening a towel —
I turn to all of your darkness
and quote the sonnets.

*Diane Kendig's six poetry collections include
Woman with a Fan: On Maria Blanchard (2021).*

*A recipient of Ohio Arts Council Fellowships in
poetry and other awards, she curates*

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Latonia Moore, soprano

The voice of soprano Latonia Moore is unforgettable. The Metropolitan Opera star and Texas native has been praised as “richly talented” by *The New York Times*, and most recently, performed in two acclaimed Met productions during the 2021–22 season, *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* and *Porgy and Bess*, in the roles of Billie and Serena, respectively.



PHOTO BY COCO JOURDANA

Last season Ms. Moore returned to the title role in *Tosca* in her house debut at Austin Opera, as well as at Opéra de Rouen Normandie in France. Other operatic

highlights include appearances as Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* at the Metropolitan Opera, Liù in *Turandot* at Royal Opera House, Elisabeth in *Don Carlo* with Opera Australia, Mimi in *La Bohème* with Semperoper Dresden, Desdemona in *Otello* at Bergen National Opera in Norway, and an appearance at the Metropolitan Opera's 50th Anniversary at Lincoln Center gala.

Ms. Moore is scheduled to reprise the title role in *Aida* for an LA Opera production conducted by James Conlon in May 2022. She has received global acclaim for her interpretation of this role, with *The New York Times* raving, “her voice was radiant, plush and sizeable at its best, with gleaming top notes that broke through the chorus and orchestra during the crowd scenes.” Ms. Moore has sung *Aida* at the Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House, Opernhaus Zürich, Opera Australia, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, English National Opera, New National Theatre Tokyo, and Dubai Opera.

Her honors and awards include the Maria Callas Award from Dallas Opera, a Richard Tucker Foundation grant, first prize in the Concours International d'Opéra in Marseille, and first prize in the 2004 International Competition dell'Opera, when it was held in Dresden.



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BREAKING CONVENTION: PROGRAM II

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AT SEVERANCE MUSIC CENTER

Saturday evening, **May 28**, 2022, at 8:00 p.m.

Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

Iveta Apkalna, *organ*

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SEASON
22

CHARLES IVES

(1874–1954)

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

(1906–1975)

SOFIA GUBAIDULINA

(B. 1931)

PHILIP GLASS

(B. 1937)

GEORGE WALKER

(1922–2018)

SAMUEL BARBER

(1910–1981)

From the Steeples and the Mountains

Passacaglia,
from ***Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District***
for solo organ

Light and Darkness
for solo organ

Finale from Act III of ***Satyagraha***
for solo organ

INTERMISSION

Sinfonia No. 4, “Strands”

Toccata Festiva
for organ and orchestra

HONORING BLACK COMPOSERS A free 30-minute performance, featuring musicians of The Cleveland Orchestra takes place in Reinberger Chamber Hall at 7:00 p.m. See page 33.

This program runs approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Saturday evening's concert is dedicated to The Honorable John Doyle Ong in recognition of his extraordinary generosity in support of The Cleveland Orchestra.

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From the Steeples and the Mountains

Composed: 1901



BY

**Charles
IVES**

BORN

October 20, 1874
Danbury, Connecticut

DIED

May 19, 1954
New York City

At a Glance

Ives wrote *From the Steeples and the Mountains* in 1901. The original was not performed during Ives's lifetime. It received its world premiere with Lukas Foss leading members of the New York Philharmonic, in July 1965. Foss also led the first perfor-

mances by The Cleveland Orchestra, in October 1965 and later in May 1979. Music Director Franz Welser-Möst led the only other performance, at Blossom in August 2010. Ives scored this 4-minute work for trumpet, trombone, and chimes.

About the Music

CHARLES IVES was a true musical iconoclast. Raised in an idyllic New England setting, his childhood was filled with church and everyday small-town pleasures. He nonetheless spent his life deconstructing music, and reconstructing it in remarkably disjointed but recognizable ways. A renegade in many ways, he pursued music as a hobby while earning a fortune as an insurance salesman. His music, much of it unperformed in his lifetime, has been recognized in the half century since his death as masterfully cutting edge.

From the Steeples and the Mountains dates from 1901, when Ives was church organist at the Central Presbyterian Church in New York City. He wrote a number of hymns and organ pieces during his tenure there and worked several of these into his Symphony No. 3, composed around this time. The symphony was first performed in 1946, and won a Pulitzer Prize the following year, but *From the Steeples and the Mountains* wasn't heard in performance until 1965, a decade after Ives's death.

From the Steeples and the Mountains recalls the musical "experiments" that Ives's father George, a bandmaster, directed during Charles's youth. As his son later wrote, George liked "as an acoustical object lesson, to dispatch sections of various bands to different parts of the city, each playing variations on a hymn or march. One would be stationed in the church steeple, another atop a building on Main Street, and a third on the village green." Similarly, *From the Steeples* seems to accurately describe the sounds of walking through a New England town as peeling bells call parishioners to Sunday services. At the end of the score, Charles Ives wrote: "After the brass stops, the chimes sound on until they die away. . . . From the Steeples — the Bells! — then the Rocks on the Mountains begin to shout!"

— Eric Sellen

Eric Sellen is The Cleveland Orchestra's Editor Emeritus. He previously was program book editor for 28 seasons.

WORKS FOR SOLO ORGAN

Passacaglia from *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*

BY DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906 –75) | *Composed: 1932*

FEW MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS weigh as heavily on the history of the twentieth century as Dmitri Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. Premiered in 1934, it was a world-wide phenomenon — in an early coup, Artur Rodziński and The Cleveland Orchestra presented the U.S. premiere at Severance Hall in January 1935. However, in early 1936, Joseph Stalin attended a performance and left displeased before its end. A subsequent article in *Pravda* called it “Muddle instead of music,” and condemned it. Following these public denunciations, Shostakovich feared for his life. The opera has outlived its censors. Shostakovich published a revised version in 1962, and since the composer's death, the original has reentered the repertoire.

The 7-minute-long Passacaglia appears as an entr'acte between the fourth and fifth scenes of the opera, after the heroine has poisoned her father in law and been named his murderer. The music churns with turmoil, owing equally to Bach and Shostakovich's dissonant soundworld. It is uncertain whether Shostakovich first composed the orchestral version or that for organ, though the latter premiered first in a performance at Leningrad Philharmonic Bolshoi Hall in January 1933.

Light and Darkness (Hell und Dunkel)

BY SOFIA GUBAIDULINA (B. 1931) | *Composed: 1976*

SOFIA GUBAIDULINA wrote this work for solo organ one year after the death of Dmitri Shostakovich. Upon meeting the elder composer in 1959, he encouraged her to follow her “incorrect path.” *Light and Darkness (Hell und Dunkel)* adheres to neither a time signature nor bar lines, offering the soloist freedom of interpretation. A 10-minute-long study in contrasts, Gubaidulina juxtaposes fluttering trills and scurrying scales and spectral lines that provide a filigreed lightness against the weighty opacity of dense tone clusters.

Finale from Act III of *Satyagraha*

BY PHILIP GLASS (B. 1937) | *Composed: 1980*

MEANING “DEDICATION TO THE TRUTH” in Sanskrit, *Satyagraha* loosely follows Mahatma Gandhi's early years in South Africa and his development of non-violent protest as a political force. Each act presents a silent historical figure as observer, and in the third act, Martin Luther King, Jr. assumes this position, pointing to Gandhi's legacy in the American march toward Civil Rights. The finale itself is a rising three-chord progression that Glass modulates with subtle but impactful variations — a shift from duple to triple meter to accompany an ascending scale or anchoring gravitas of chords in the organ's lower registers. The Finale doesn't so much end as point toward a continued struggle for truth and equity.

Sinfonia No. 4, “Strands”

Composed: 2011



BY

**George
WALKER**

BORN

June 27, 1922
Washington, D.C.

DIED

August 23, 2018
Montclair, N.J.

At a Glance

George Walker wrote *Sinfonia No. 4, “Strands,”* in 2011. Conductor Jacques Lacombe led the New Jersey Symphony in its world premiere on March 30, 2012, in Newark.

Sinfonia No. 4 runs about ten minutes in performance. Walker scored it for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes (second doubling english horn), 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (chimes, glockenspiel, marimba, vibra-

phone, xylophone, bass drum, cymbals, tam-tam, tom-toms, temple blocks, wood blocks, triangle, snare drum, tambourine), harp, piano, and strings.


Music Director Franz Welser-Möst leads The Cleveland Orchestra's first public performance of *Sinfonia No. 4, “Strands,”* on May 28. The work was previously recorded during a series of community appreciation performances in October 2021.

About the Music

AS A BLACK AMERICAN MAN man growing up in a segregated nation, George Walker (1922–2018) fought against convention simply by pursuing his dreams. His very presence in the classical music world was disruptive. Walker's grandmother was born a slave, yet he would break through racist barriers as both a pianist and composer. During an illustrious eight-decade career, he would concertize at New York's Town Hall, solo with The Philadelphia Orchestra, achieve the rank of Distinguished Professor at Rutgers University, and win America's most coveted award for music composition — the Pulitzer Prize.

Classical music was Walker's passion. He began piano lessons at age 5 and his talent combined with determination inspired the support of teachers at the nation's top music schools. Even as he experienced the daily insults of racial discrimination — being denied service at lunch counters frequented by his white peers or being asked to leave a white church where he had sought to hear a concert — Walker thrived as an artist. He graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory and Philadelphia's Curtis Institute, made his Town Hall debut in 1945, and afterwards won a Fulbright Fellowship to study in Paris with the legendary composition teacher Nadia Boulanger. His artistic pedigree is unimpeachable.

Art making by Black Americans has always carried additional symbolic weight — it has always been political. During Harlem's Renaissance of the 1920s and '30s, for example, Black artists sounded a clarion call for justice through poetry, literature, painting, and music. In music, this meant classical composition, and it inspired the



neo-romanticism of William Grant Still, Florence Price, and William Levi Dawson. Their artistry proved false the notion that a people could ever be reduced to things bought and sold or be treated as less than others; art argued that Black Americans were truly equal.

Walker was born into the next generation of Black composers. With colleagues like Julia Perry, Hale Smith, T.J. Anderson, David Baker, Olly Wilson, and Adolphus Hailstork, he used musical excellence as a shield and weapon in the battle for civil rights. For this generation, excellence meant creating music in the most contemporary and sophisticated musical language of their time — modernism.


Walker's compositional tools were forged in the fires of European tradition, especially the classical piano repertory of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, Prokofiev, Debussy, Ravel, and Rachmaninoff. The influence of these composers along with Stravinsky, Hindemith, Schoenberg, and Copland can all be heard in his music. Yet, Walker's art is not a pastiche of other's styles. Instead, Walker's voice is deeply personal, combining sonic fascination with expressive romanticism and modernist technique. His melodic motifs fragment across an array of instrumental color; his syncopated rhythms resist any sense of regular, metrical pulse.

Sinfonia No. 4 is an eleven-minute work for large orchestra composed in 2012. Its subtitle — “Strands” — refers to the composer's rigorous intertwining of independent melodic threads or “strands” to weave a composition of contrapuntal sophistication and imagination. The opening strands can be heard as an antiphonal battle among instrumental choirs (strings, winds, and brass), in which lyrical melodic exclamations contrast with hammered repeated pitches. Thematic statements weave in and out, stitched together into one musical tapestry by a shared chromatic vocabulary and recurring intervallic echoes.

The work's central musical episode features the African American spiritual “There Is a Balm in Gilead.” This quiet cry for hope emerges about six and a half minutes into the piece, as relentless drive gives way to what the composer calls “pensive relief.” Listen for about 25-seconds of a readily identifiable set of even “marching” notes in the lower winds and pizzicato strings. These immediately precede a short orchestral interlude that signals the arrival of the folk melody.

Walker never invokes the metaphysical power of African Ameri-






can spirituals in a simple or straight-forward way. Here, the melody begins in the solo cello with a slow and gentle two-note “sigh” motif. This is soon echoed by the violins an octave higher, and then the vocalise is distributed note-by-note throughout the orchestra: strings and horn carry the tune, then bass trombone, tenor trombones, principal horn, clarinet and vibraphone, and finally back to cello. In this way, the orchestra intones the spiritual’s full opening lyric — “There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole.”

The melody is then immediately repeated, moving from winds to horn and cello, strings, trombone, and then to piccolo, brass, and percussion. A triumphal chord and brass fanfare complete the spiritual tune, and the even “marching” theme returns with extra vigor.

A second spiritual quotation — “Roll, Jordan Roll” — is sounded by the piano not long after the first, yet it is all but unrecognizable. Walker’s artistic impulse here is not to offer a comforting arrangement of African American melody, but to depict a striving Black spirit. In Walker’s music, spirituals are never nostalgic. They are repositories of ancestral knowledge and urgent calls to action.



It is tempting to read Sinfonia No. 4 as an allegorical, if not autobiographical tone poem — a chronicle of Black activism and resolve, renewal and solace, celebrating fleeting moments of victory embedded in a rolling, ongoing and insistent march for civil rights. This would be the story of George Walker, if not the story of the United States itself. Unfortunately, Walker left no precise description of his intent, at least nothing beyond what is depicted in his music.

— Mark Clague

Mark Clague, Ph.D., is a musicologist and professor at the University of Michigan who focuses on the history of music in the U.S. His newest book — O Say Can You Hear?: A Cultural Biography of “The Star-Spangled Banner” — will be released on June 14, 2022, Flag Day.

Toccata Festiva

Composed: 1960



BY

**Samuel
BARBER**

BORN

March 9, 1910
West Chester,
Pennsylvania

DIED

January 23, 1981
New York City

At a Glance

Samuel Barber wrote the *Toccata Festiva* to inaugurate a new organ at Philadelphia's Academy of Music. It premiered on September 1960 with Paul Callaway, organist of the National Cathedral, and conductor Eugene Ormandy leading the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Toccata Festiva runs about 15 minutes in performance. It is scored for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, english horn,

2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, tam-tam, xylophone), strings, and organ.

The Cleveland Orchestra's first and most recent performances of Barber's *Toccata Festiva* were in February 2006, with conductor Jahja Ling and principal keyboard Joela Jones as soloist.

About the Music

THE STORY GOES that one day in 1960, Eugene Ormandy, then music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra, received a telephone call from Mary Curtis Bok Zimbalist, the outstanding philanthropist who had founded Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music back in 1924. "Eugene, are you standing?" she reportedly asked the conductor. "Please sit down, I'm giving you that pipe organ you've been longing for." To Ormandy's question, "Do you know how much it will cost?" Mrs. Zimbalist simply replied, "Don't worry about that."

The organ, built by the Aeolian-Skinner Company of Boston, ended up costing \$150,000. For its dedication, Mrs. Zimbalist turned to her old friend Samuel Barber, who had been one of the very first students at the Curtis Institute, to compose a new work for organ and orchestra. (Mrs. Zimbalist's daughter-in-law Nellie Bok later recalled that the 14-year-old Barber had been the second person to walk through the newly opened doors of the Institute.) Barber did not accept a fee for his work, which he completed in the spring of 1960, a few months before the scheduled premiere.

(To bring part of the story up-to-date without dampening the celebratory music that Barber wrote, the "new" organ at the Academy of Music was not universally praised — the dry acoustics of the hall may have had as much to do with this as any unworthiness of the instrument itself. Over the next two decades, it gradually fell into disuse and was eventually sold and removed from the building.)

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Toccata Festiva, written to display the wide expressive range of the new instrument, as well as the virtuosity of The Philadelphia Orchestra, is built around the transformations of a single theme, first introduced by the brass right after a brief introductory flourish. This theme, taken up by the organ as well as various orchestral instruments, is in turn fanfare-like, lyrical, playful and grandiose. Its frequent recurrences unify a piece that otherwise contains great contrasts in tempo, dynamics, and sound color.

There are two extended organ solos, the first a lyrical passage, much of it over a single long-held pedal tone, and the second a cadenza for pedal only. The program book for the first performance notes that this cadenza was written with the cooperation of Barber's friend Thomas Schippers, the eminent conductor who was also an accomplished organist. The cadenza adds a great deal of brilliance to a work that, originally written to celebrate a single joyous occasion, has gone on to earn a permanent place in the organ repertoire.

— Peter Laki

*Peter Laki is a musicologist and frequent lecturer on classical music.
He is a visiting associate professor at Bard College.*



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Iveta Apkalna, organ

Latvian organist Iveta Apkalna is one of the leading instrumentalists in the world. Since 2017 she has served as the organist of the Klais organ at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Germany. For the January 2017 opening of the hall, she took



PHOTO BY BY KRISTAPS ANSKENS

part in the two world premieres of the evening: Wolfgang Rihm's *Reminiszenz - Triptychon und Spruch in memoriam Hans Henny Jahnn* and Jörg Widmann's *ARCHE*. In September 2018, Berlin Classics released the album *Light & Dark*, the first solo album recorded on the Klais organ.

Since Ms. Apkalna's debut with the Berlin Philharmonic under the baton of Claudio Abbado in 2007, she has performed with the Bavarian Radio Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and collaborated with conductors such as Mariss Jansons, Marek Janowski, Kent Nagano, Thomas Hengelbrock, Gustavo Dudamel, Antonio Pappano, and Andris Nelsons.

In October 2018, Ms. Apkalna inaugurated the new Klais organ at the National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts in Taiwan, where she recorded her solo album *Widor & Vierne* (2020). Since 2019, Ms. Apkalna has been artist-in-residence at Konzertkirche Neubrandenburg, where she recorded her most recent CD *Triptychon* (Berlin Classics). This season, she began a three-year residency at the Konzerthaus Berlin.

Ms. Apkalna regularly performs works by contemporary composers including Naji Hakim, Ēriks Ešenvalds, Arturs Maskats, and Thierry Escaich. She presented the world premieres of *Multiversum* by Péter Eötvös with the Concertgebouw and Pascal Dusapin's *Waves* with the Hamburg Philharmonic State Orchestra and Kent Nagano.

Ms. Apkalna received the award for Concert of the Year from the Latvian Grand Music Award, the most prestigious award in music in Latvia, in 2018 and in 2020. On the occasion of the Republic of Latvia's centennial, she received the Order of the Three Stars, the highest civilian honor conferred by the state. She became a cultural ambassador of Latvia upon receiving its Excellence Award in Culture 2015.

She was the subject of the 2008 documentary, *Dancing with the Organ*, (Arte), and was the first organist to be named Best Performing Artist at the 2005 ECHO Klassik awards.

The Cleveland Orchestra



Now in its second century, The Cleveland Orchestra, under the leadership of Franz Welser-Möst since 2002, remains one of the most sought-after performing ensembles in the world. Year after year the ensemble exemplifies extraordinary artistic excellence, creative programming, and community engagement. In recent years, *The New York Times* has called Cleveland “the best in America” for its virtuosity, elegance of sound, variety of color and chamber-like musical cohesion, “virtually flawless,” and “one of the finest ensembles in the country (if not the world).”

Founded by Adella Prentiss Hughes, the Orchestra performed its inaugural concert in December 1918. By the middle of the century, decades of growth and sustained support had turned the ensemble into one of the most admired around the world.

The past decade has seen an increasing number of young people attending concerts, bringing fresh attention to The Cleveland Orchestra's legendary sound and committed programming. More recently the Orchestra launched several bold digital projects, including the streaming broadcast series *In Focus*, the podcast *On A Personal Note*, and its own recording label.

The 2021-22 season marks Franz Welser-Möst's 20th year as music director, a period in which The Cleveland Orchestra earned unprecedented acclaim around the world, including a series of residencies at the Musikverein in Vienna, the first of its kind by an American orchestra. The Orchestra's 100th season in 2017-18 featured two international tours, concluding with the presentation of Welser-Möst's *Prometheus Project*, featuring works by Beethoven, on three continents.

Its acclaimed opera presentations, including Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* (2019), Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (May 2017), Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin* and *Bluebeard's Castle* (April 2016), and Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* (2014 and 2017), have showcased the ensemble's unique artistry and collaborative work ethic.

Since 1918, seven music directors — Nikolai Sokoloff, Artur Rodziński, Erich Leinsdorf, George Szell, Lorin Maazel, Christoph von Dohnányi, and Franz Welser-Möst — have guided and shaped the ensemble's growth and sound. Through concerts at home and on tour, broadcasts, and a catalog of acclaimed recordings, The Cleveland Orchestra is heard today by a growing group of fans around the world. For more information, visit clevelandorchestra.com.

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Amanda Angel, Managing Editor of Content
E-MAIL: aangel@clevelandorchestra.com

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