CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA

FRANZ WELSER-MÖST



CLASSICAL SEASON
WEEK 17 — APRIL 21–23

Szeps-Znaider Plays Sibelius



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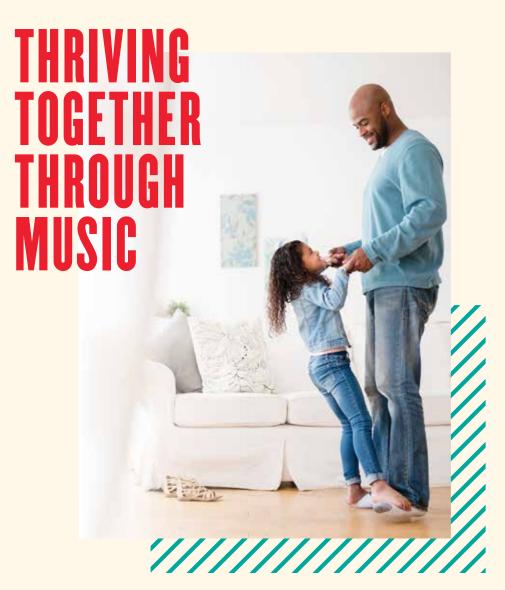
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CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA FRANZ WELSER-MÖST | MUSIC DIRECTOR

Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Concert Hall Thursday evening, **April 21**, 2022, at 7:30 p.m.

Friday evening, **April 22**, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. Saturday evening, **April 23**, 2022, at 8:00 p.m.

Klaus Mäkelä, conductor

JEAN SIBELIUS

Violin Concerto in D minor, Opus 47

- 1. Allegro moderato
- 2. Adagio di molto
- 3. Allegro, ma non tanto

NIKOLAJ SZEPS-ZNAIDER, violin

INTERMISSION

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975)

Symphony No. 10 in E minor, Opus 93

- 1. Moderato
- 2. Allegro
- 3. Allegretto
- 4. Andante Allegro

PRE-CONCERT TALKS

Michael Strasser of Baldwin Wallace Conservatory will give a free discussion about the concert in Reinberger Chamber Hall one hour prior to each concert.

This program is approximately 1 hour 45 minutes.

 $This weekend's \, concerts \, are \, sponsored \, by \, The \, \textit{J.M. Smucker Co.}$

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

CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA RADIO BROADCASTS

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Sibelius & Shostakovich

THE RISING CONDUCTOR Klaus Mäkelä makes his third visit to Cleveland with this weekend's program, leading the Violin Concerto by fellow Finn Jean Sibelius and Dmitri Shostakovich's piercing Tenth Symphony. Though the careers of these two towering figures of twentieth-century music overlapped for nearly 50 years, and in adjoining countries, they experienced vastly different circumstances. Sibelius was celebrated as a national treasure in Finland by the turn of the century, while Shostakovich feared for his life after the Soviet regime vilified his work.

Yet both Sibelius's Violin Concerto and Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony are deeply personal statements that offer clues to the composers' innermost feelings, hopes, and dreams — both fulfilled and unrequited.

Sibelius distilled his love for the violin into his concerto, the only concerto he wrote for any instrument. He once aspired to be a concert violinist, writing, "when I play, I am filled with a strange feeling; it is as though the insides of the music opened up to me." Between his late start at the age of fourteen, prickly personality, and limited talent, he never achieved his virtuoso aspirations. Nevertheless, his concerto radiates affection and sensitivity for the instrument. Soloist Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider brings his brilliance to this romantically nostalgic work.

Shostakovich completed his Tenth Symphony in 1953, after Joseph Stalin's death, and it is often interpreted as an allegory of the people's triumph over a soulless, dehumanizing regime. The composer embeds himself in this journey from despair and violence to relief and celebration, encoding his initials and those of a dear female student into the score. Scarred by his denouncement and persecution by Stalin earlier in his career, Shostakovich notoriously kept the true meaning of his works close to the vest, yet he created a work of sheer power, contrasting the stultifying effects of repression against the exhilaration of freedom.

— Amanda Angel

Violin Concerto in D minor, Opus 47

Composed: 1903, revised 1905



Jean SIBELIUS

BORN December 8, 1865 Hämeenlinna, Finland

DIED September 20, 1957 Järvenpää, Finland

At a Glance

Sibelius composed his Violin Concerto, his only concerto for any instrument, in 1903. It was first performed on February 8, 1904, in Helsinki, with the composer conducting and Victor Nováček as soloist. Following its original publication, in early 1905, Sibelius revised the concerto extensively. The revised score was first heard on October 19, 1905, in Berlin, conducted by Richard Strauss, with Karl Halíř as the soloist. The published score is dedicated to Ferenc Vecsey, who first played the work at age 17 in 1910, and in many subsequent performances world-

wide (including its first performances with The Cleveland Orchestra, in January 1922).

This concerto runs about 30 minutes in performance. Sibelius scored it for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, strings, and solo violin.

Since its first performance in Cleveland, the Sibelius Violin Concerto has been played frequently, most recently at Severance with violinist Alina Ibragimova and conducted by Juanjo Mena.

About the Music

"I'VE GOT SOME lovely themes for a violin concerto," Jean Sibelius wrote to his wife, Aino, in September 1902. The Finnish composer, already a national figure and the recipient of an annual pension from the Finnish government at 37, had been asked by the celebrated German violinist Willy Burmester to write a violin concerto. Despite the "lovely themes" Sibelius had in mind, the concerto wasn't coming along as expected. The difficulties had to do with the composer's alcoholism, which around this time began to alarm his family. The addiction, in turn, seemed to stem from a deep sense of insecurity. It was a year before Sibelius sent the piano score to Burmester, who responded enthusiastically: "I can only say one thing: Wonderful! Masterly! Only once before have I spoken in such terms of a composer, and that was when Tchaikovsky showed me his concerto."

But plans did not unfold as anticipated. Burmester was expecting to play the world premiere of the new work in the spring of 1904, but Sibelius, for financial reasons, pushed for an earlier date even though Burmester wasn't available sooner (and the orchestration of the concerto wasn't finished). Sibelius completed the concerto some time before the end of 1903 and gave it to a local violin teacher, Victor Nováček, to perform. By all accounts, Nováček was hardly more than a mediocre player. Leading Sibelius biographer Erik Tawaststjerna writes that at the Helsinki premiere, in February 1904, "a red-faced and perspiring Nováček

fought a losing battle with a solo part that bristled with even greater difficulties in this first version than it does in the definitive score."

Sibelius tried to pacify Burmester by saying that "Helsinki doesn't mean a thing," and promised him future performances in Berlin and elsewhere. But after the Helsinki premiere, Sibelius was dissatisfied with the work and decided to revise it entirely. After the definitive version was completed, he sent it off to his German publisher, who suggested Karl Halíř as the soloist. Sibelius acquiesced, passing Burmester over for the second time. Greatly offended, Burmester never played the work whose composition he had initiated.

The premiere went to Halíř, the concertmaster of the Berlin Court Opera, a former member of the Joachim Quartet, a professor at the conservatory there, and a fine violinist, but not a virtuoso of the highest caliber. However, the work is dedicated to an exceptionally gifted 17-year-old Hungarian named Ferenc Vecsey, who would become the work's first champion, performing it internationally, including its first presentations in Cleveland.

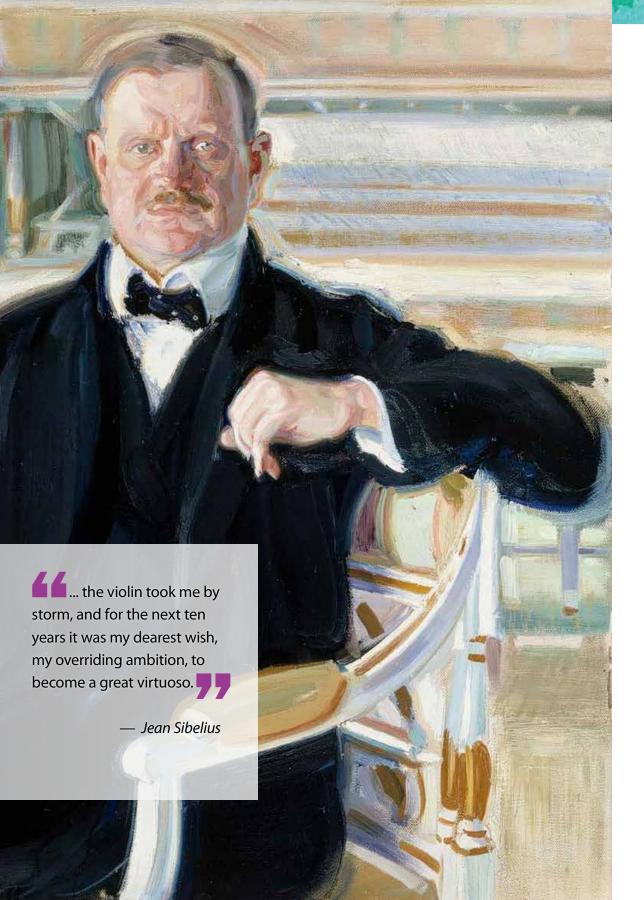
Ultimately, as Tawaststjerna noted, Sibelius wrote his concerto for neither Burmester nor anyone else but himself. Sibelius's primary instrument was the violin, and as a young man, he hoped to become a concert violinist. He gave up his dreams of a virtuoso career only with great reluctance. So unlike Brahms, who consulted Joseph Joachim when he was writing his violin concerto, Sibelius did not need to ask others for advice on technical matters. Tawaststjerna writes, "Naturally in his imagination Sibelius identifies himself with the soloist in the Violin Concerto and this may well explain something of its nostalgia and romantic intensity."

Nostalgia and romantic intensity — these are indeed key words if one wishes to describe the Sibelius Violin Concerto. Written in the first years of the twentieth century, it looks back to the great Romantic concertos of the nineteenth. The opening of the first movement, with the D-minor tremolos of the muted first and second violins over which the soloist plays a wistful melody, is unabashedly old-fashioned. The only unconventional features are the repeated augmented fourth leaps (from D to G-sharp or G to C-sharp), which create harsher sonorities, and the irregular phrase structure of the theme, which makes it difficult to predict how the melody is going to evolve.

Simple and song-like at first, the violin part gradually becomes more and more agitated, erupting in a first virtuoso cadenza. As the meter changes from 4/4 to 6/4 time, the orchestra introduces a second idea, which the violin soon takes over. When that happens, however, the tempo suddenly slows and the character of the theme changes from dramatic to lyrical. This is followed by a third, purely orchestral section, in a fast 2/2 time, lively and







energetic, which ends in *pianissimo* with the cellos and basses repeating a single quiet B-flat.

The three sections roughly outline the exposition of a sonata form, although the meter changes and the succession of characters is unusual; also, the key of B-flat minor, which is eventually reached, is a highly unusual tonal direction for a concerto movement in D minor. Its many flats contribute to a certain dark, "Nordic" flavor in the concerto, reinforced by the frequent use of the violin's low register. The brass parts also abound in "glacial" low notes, harmonized with austere-sounding chordal passages.

There is no traditional development section in the **first movement**. Its place is taken by the solo cadenza, which occurs in the middle of the movement rather than at the more customary position near the end. The cadenza is followed by a free recapitulation in which the first melody returns almost literally. The second theme (especially in its orchestral rendition) is substantially modified. The melody of the third section is now given to the violas while the soloist adds virtuoso passages, turning the ending of the movement into a kind of grandiose fantasy.

The **second movement**, marked *Adagio di molto*, is based on the combination of two themes, one played by the two clarinets at the beginning, the other by the solo violin a few measures later. The violin melody is, according to the composer's own written instruction, "sonorous and expressive." The clarinet theme later grows into an impassioned middle section whose dynamism carries over into the recapitulation of the violin melody (part of it is now given to the woodwinds). Only at the very end does the melody find its initial peace and tranquility again.

Speaking about the **third-movement finale**, it is impossible to resist quoting Donald Francis Tovey's characterization of its main theme as a "polonaise for polar bears." Tovey's words capture the singular combination of dance rhythms and a certain elegant, heavy-footedness felt at the beginning of this movement. Again, there are two themes, one in a polonaise rhythm, and one based on the alternation of 6/8 and 3/4 time (the first is subdivided into 3+3 eighth-notes, the second into 2+2+2). "With this," Tovey concluded his analysis, "we can safely leave the finale to dance the listener into Finland, or what-ever Fairyland Sibelius will have us attain."

— 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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Symphony No. 10 in E minor, Opus 93

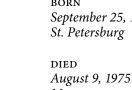
Composed: 1948-53



Dmitri **SHOSTAKOVICH**

BORN *September 25, 1906*

DIED Moscow





At a Glance

Shostakovich composed his Tenth Symphony during the summer and autumn of 1953, although some thematic material may date from previous years. It was premiered in Leningrad (what is today St. Petersburg) on December 17, 1953, by the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Yevgeny Mravinsky.

The first performance in the United States took place on October 14, 1954, with Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting the New York Philharmonic.

This symphony runs just over 50 minutes in performance. Shostakovich scored it for 3 flutes (second and third doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (third doubling english horn), 3 clarinets (third

doubling bass clarinet), 3 bassoons (third doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, tam-tam, triangle, tambourine, xylophone), and strings.

The Cleveland Orchestra first performed Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony in December 1967 under David Oistrakh's direction. The most recent performances were given in the 2013–14 season at Severance, on tour in Vienna and Frankfurt, and the following season during the Orchestra's annual residency at Miami's Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, all under the baton of Franz Welser-Möst.

About the Music

SHOSTAKOVICH MADE it known publicly that he composed the great Tenth Symphony in the months following Joseph Stalin's death, which took place on March 5, 1953 (the same day as Prokofiev's death). It is clear to us now, however, and was probably clear to many of his friends then, that he had been working on the symphony for several years — and that it was written under the shadow of events in January 1948 when Andrei Zhdanov, the politburo member who largely oversaw the arts, led a purge on Soviet musicians, with Shostakovich as a main target. An important group of composers, which included both Shostakovich and Prokofiev, were singled out for their sins against the ideals of Soviet music and, in particular, for Formalism, the recurrent catchall accusation that had been heard in official pronouncements throughout the Stalinist era.

In general, Formalism was an insult lobbied against movements that championed art for art's sake, which the Soviet state found to represent bourgeois values incompatible to communism. The only accepted movement was Soviet Realism, which eschewed these capitalist elements in favor of music that was supportive of communism, strove for a better future, and embraced a popular aesthetic. Those who sought an alternative artistic path were open to condemnation, not simply for not supporting the official line but for actually subverting it.

At the moment when the purge occurred, Shostakovich was engaged in composing a violin concerto written in admiration of the playing of David Oistrakh. He continued writing the concerto, but only in secret, as it could not be performed. Shostakovich turned to film music and choral works instead, as his sole means of retaining recognition as a composer. In private, he was also working on string quartets and on a successor to the Ninth Symphony of 1945. In fact, sketches for the Tenth Symphony go back as early as 1946, and there is evidence that he was working on it in 1951.

With Stalin's death in 1953, Shostakovich finally released the backlog of music that had been waiting to be brought out in public. The Fourth and Fifth String Quartets were heard toward the end of 1953, along with the Tenth Symphony, presented on December 17 by the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra under Shostakovich's leading interpreter of the day, Yevgeny Mravinsky. The Violin Concerto followed two years later, in 1955.

In the West, Shostakovich was recognized as a leading living composer dating back to his First Symphony in 1925. When the Tenth Symphony was presented internationally, it was greeted as one of the composer's major works, and Shostakovich's standing in Europe and North America was reinforced through the 1950s and the last twenty years of his life with new works. His writing was widely appreciated as a counterblast to the craze for serial and atonal music that gripped many young composers, especially in the United States.

Interpreting the Tenth Symphony, as with any work by Shostakovich, presents immense problems. From his many years grappling with the Soviet apparatchik, he learned to dissemble and mask his true feelings about what he created. In addition, he was a very private, not to say inscrutable, individual.

All these circumstances allow us to adopt almost any view of his work, but without any certainty that our views coincide with his. The layers of irony are deep. What seem to be depictions of misery or horror may be nothing of the kind. The hollow hymns of triumph may not be hollow. He was indeed a formalist composer, in the sense that he was deeply concerned with the structure and shape of his music, always looking for new ways to insert contrast or its opposite, hinting at references

12 **About the Music** The Cleveland Orchestra 2021-2022 Season **About the Music 13** that may be decoys, and extracting veins of gold from the traditional large orchestra.

Of the Tenth Symphony's four parts, the **first movement** is the longest and perhaps the bleakest, giving prominence (as does the whole symphony) to the leading woodwinds. A clarinet, for example, is the first to join the strings' opening meditations, and a low flute is the first to present an important new theme later on. Two lonely piccolos are heard at the close. The music is in no hurry. Twice the music rises to fearsome climaxes, fed on the frightening rap of the snare drum and the weight of the full brass.

The raw energy of the **second movement** is unrivaled in twentieth-century music, like a runaway train. Is it exultation or fury? It's hard to say. Over the wild gambols of the rest, the brass occasionally stamp out what sounds like an Orthodox Russian chant. What can that mean?

The relaxed air of the **third movement** is more than welcome, and it becomes more personal when Shostakovich gradually homes in on his personal signature, the D-S-C-H motif that permeated a number of his later works. This was created from the way his name is spelled in German, as Dmitri SCHostakowitsch, and the fact that in German the note of E-flat is "Es" (and thus S) and B-natural is H:



Another prominent tune that keeps recurring on the horn seems planets away from the tone and color of the movement. This too has been shown to have an explanation as ELMIRA, the name of one of his female students, although, as before, the significance of her intrusion in the symphony is a mystery:



The movement concludes with what sounds like a corny brass band playing loose with D-S-C-H, as if in mockery.

Before the true finale begins, there is a thoughtful introduction featuring oboe and bassoon and casting a veil of mystery. This is dispelled in the exuberant **fourth-move-ment** *Allegro*, whose climax is a triumphant writing-on-the-wall of the letters D-S-C-H. Triumph or cataclysm? It could be either. It is certainly an exhilarating musical experience whatever we read into its meaning.

— Hugh Macdonald

The Cleveland Orchestra

Hugh Macdonald is Avis H. Blewett Professor Emeritus of Music at Washington University in St. Louis. He has written books on Beethoven, Berlioz, Bizet, and Scriabin.

FRANZ WELSER-MÖST ON SHOSTAKOVICH'S **TENTH SYMPHONY** The Tenth Symphony is perhaps Shostakovich's most personal utterance about his own lack of freedom. Written in the melancholy key of E minor, the first movement is a perpetual Valse triste or "sad waltz," which rises up, from time to time, in great despair, whipping into a great frenzy, only to fade into a kind of icy silence. In the second movement — in a dark and gloomy B-flat minor — Shostakovich paints a merciless mug of Stalin. In the third — a cautious and deliberate waltz — he encodes the name of his muse and beloved, Elmira Nazirova, while his own initials (D-S-C-H) are repeated over and over again. The movement, which is in C minor, ends on a melancholy A-minor chord, with another dash of the composer's initials thrown in. The introduction to the final movement is an elegy, followed by a pseudo-happy folk festival — a last dance, as it were — in E major. And yet, even here, Shostakovich wouldn't be the great tragedian that he is if he didn't hammer his initials into our ears one last time just before the end.

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Klaus Mäkelä

Klaus Mäkelä is chief conductor and artistic advisor of the Oslo Philharmonic. In September 2021, he assumed the role of music director with Orchestre de Paris, where he has been artistic advisor since June 2020. He is also

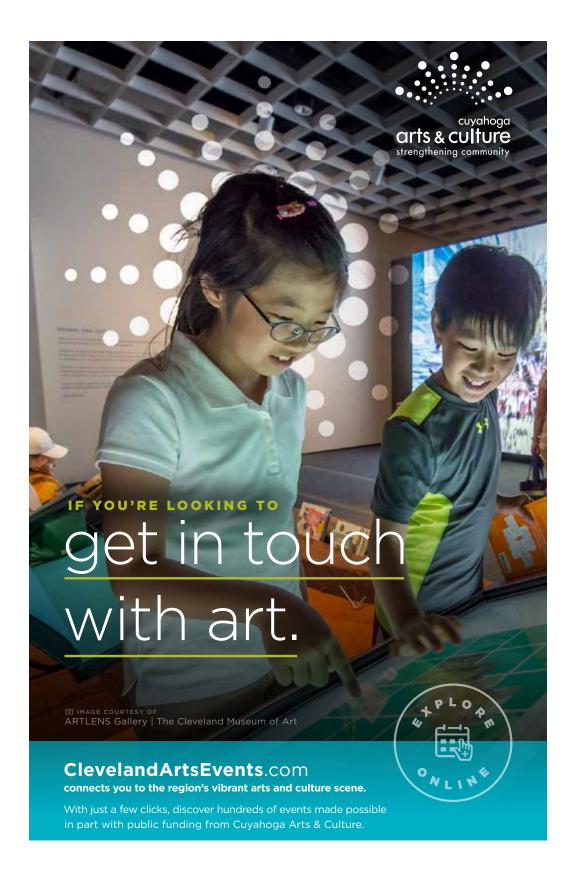
principal guest conductor of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and artistic director of the Turku Music Festival in Finland. As an exclusive Decca Classics Artist, Mr. Mäkelä has recorded the complete Sibelius Symphony cycle with the Oslo Philharmonic, his first project for the label, which was released on April 8, 2022.

Mr. Mäkelä launched the Oslo Philhar-monic's 2021–22 season in August with a special concert featuring Saariaho's *Asteroid 4179: Toutatis*, Sibelius's *Lemminkäinen*, Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, and two new works by Norwegian composer Mette Henriette. In 2022, Klaus Mäkelä and the Oslo Philharmonic perform the complete Sibelius Symphony cycle at the Vienna Konzerthaus and Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, along with additional concerts at the Philharmonie de Paris and London's Barbican Centre.

In addition to The Cleveland Orchestra, Mr. Mäkelä guest conducts
Amsterdam's Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra,
Germany's Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Munich Philharmonic, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and the San Francisco Symphony,
among others, during the 2021–22 season. In summer 2022, he returns to
Switzerland's Verbier Festival to conduct the Verbier Festival and Verbier
Festival Chamber Orchestras as well as perform as a chamber musician.

Mr. Mäkelä studied conducting at the Sibelius Academy with Jorma Panula and cello with Timo Hanhinen, Hannu Kiiski, and Marko Ylönen. As a soloist, he has performed with several Finnish orchestras, and as a chamber musician, he has appeared with members of Germany's Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, and the Oslo Philharmonic.

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Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider, violin

As a virtuoso violinist, Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider maintains his reputation with a busy calendar of concerto and recital engagements. During recent seasons, he appeared as soloist with Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Orchestre National de France, and the Vienna

Symphony, and performed the complete Beethoven Violin Sonatas with Rudolf Buchbinder in Vienna's Musikverein.

An acclaimed conductor as well, Mr. Szeps-Znaider began his first season as music director of the Orchestre national de Lyon in September 2021. He conducted the Orchestra's 2019–20 season-opening concerts, and they toured Russia together in February 2020. He regularly conducts the world's leading orchestras, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, Germany's Bamberg Symphony, Orchestre symphonique de



HOTO BY LARS GUNDERSEN

Montréal, and the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra.

Mr. Szeps-Znaider enjoys a strong relationship with the London Symphony Orchestra, which he has worked with extensively both as conductor and soloist. Together they recorded the complete Mozart Violin Concertos, with *The Strad* praising it as "possibly among the most exquisite violin sound ever captured on disc."

His extensive discography also includes the Beethoven and Mendelssohn Concertos with Zubin Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Brahms and Korngold Concertos with Valery Gergiev and the Vienna Philharmonic, the Elgar Concerto in B minor with Sir Colin Davis and the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Mendelssohn Concerto on DVD with Riccardo Chailly and Leipzig's Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Nielsen Violin Concerto with Alan Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic, and the Prokofiev Concerto No. 2 and Glazunov Concerto with Mariss Jansons and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, Mr. Szeps-Znaider has recorded the complete works of Brahms for violin and piano with Yefim Bronfman.

He is passionate about supporting the next generation of musical talent and is competition president of the Carl Nielsen International Competition in Odense, Denmark. He plays the 1741 Guarneri del Gesú "Ex-Kreisler Guarnerius," on extended loan to him by The Royal Danish Theatre through the generosity of the VELUX Foundations, the Villum Fonden, and the Knud Højgaard Foundation.

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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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THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA

FRANZ WELSER-MÖST

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Mark Atherton Thomas Sperl Henry Peyrebrune

Charles Barr Memorial Chair **Charles Carleton**

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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.

FLUTES

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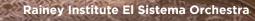
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