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The Cleveland Orchestra to honor Robert Madison with Distinguished Service Award



Robert Madison with Gwendolyn Johnson at The Cleveland Orchestra Gala.
(Photo: Aireonna McCall-Dubé and Julian Dubé)

CLEVELAND — The Cleveland Orchestra will present its 27th Distinguished Service Award to architect and entrepreneur Robert P. Madison on October 12, 2023, at Severance Music Center.

Through this annual award, The Cleveland Orchestra recognizes extraordinary service and dedication to the organization. The award presentation will take place prior to the concert of Mahler's Song of the Night at 7:30 p.m. in the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Concert Hall.

Madison, a beloved member of The Cleveland Orchestra family, joined the Board of Trustees in 1998. Later, he was the chair of its Community Relations Committee and its MLK Community Service Award Selection Committee, before being named an honorary trustee for life. He's served on more than two dozen other arts, academic, and professional boards, and was awarded the Cleveland Arts Prize in 2000.

Madison's impact in Northeast Ohio extends well beyond his contributions to the arts. He founded the first Black-owned architectural firm in the state of Ohio in 1954. The firm, later called Robert Madison

International, was part of many important downtown Cleveland building projects, including Cleveland Browns Stadium, the Cleveland Public Library renovation and expansion, the Gateway District, the Great Lakes Science Center, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, and the RTA's Waterfront Line. Madison is recognized as an expert in urban design, as well as a devoted mentor, training and nurturing countless Black architects and engineers.

"We are grateful to Robert Madison for his many years of service to The Cleveland Orchestra and for what he's done to shape both the physical and cultural landscape of Greater Cleveland," said André Gremillet, The Cleveland Orchestra's President and CEO. "It's a privilege to honor this true pioneer and dedicated civil leader with this year's Distinguished Service Award."

Madison turned 100 years old earlier this year.

About the Distinguished Service Award

The Cleveland Orchestra's Distinguished Service Award was established in 1996 by the Musical Arts Association, the non-profit organization overseeing the Orchestra's operations, to recognize ongoing and extraordinary commitment and service to The Cleveland Orchestra. Recipients are chosen from written nominations reviewed by a committee currently chaired by Cleveland Orchestra Trustee Katherine T. O'Neill.

Previous Distinguished Service Award recipients are Dorothy Humel Hovorka (1996–97), David Zauder (1997–98), Ward Smith (1998–99), Christoph von Dohnányi (1999–2000), Gary Hanson (2000–01), John Mack (2001–02), Richard J. Bogomolny (2002–03), Thomas W. Morris (2003–04), Alex Machaskee (2004–05), Klaus G. Roy (2005–06), John D. Ong (2006–07), Gerald Hughes (2007–08), Louis Lane (2008–09), Clara Taplin Rankin (2009–10), Robert Conrad (2010–11), Richard Weiner (2011–12), Milton and Tamar Maltz (2012–13), Pierre Boulez (2013–14), James D. Ireland III (2014–15), Rosemary Klena (2015–16), Robert Vernon (2016–17), Dennis LaBarre (2017–18), Franz Welser-Möst (2018–19), The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus (2019–20), Joela Jones (2021–22), and Jane B. Nord (2022–23).

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