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The Cleveland Orchestra raises \$1.2 million at annual gala



Richard Smucker, Helen Rankin Butler, Franz Welser-Möst, Michelle Shan Jeschelnic, and André Gremillet
(Photo: Aireonna McCall-Dubé)

CLEVELAND — The Cleveland Orchestra raised \$1.2 million for its artistic, education, and community engagement programs during its annual gala on Saturday, September 30, at Severance Music Center.

More than 250 guests enjoyed an elegant evening of dinner, drinks, and music. The highlight of the gala was Music Director Franz Welser-Möst leading The Cleveland Orchestra in a selection of works by Richard Strauss and Johann Strauss Jr. Guests were welcomed by a string quartet of musicians from The Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra and treated to a surprise performance by The Cleveland Orchestra Youth Chorus.

The gala is the Orchestra's largest fundraising event of the year, supporting programs in Northeast Ohio throughout the season. It remains a key enabler of The Cleveland Orchestra's commitment to serve the area as a resource for music education and entertainment, and as a source of pride and inspiration.

“We are honored to spend the evening celebrating The Cleveland Orchestra and Music Director Franz Welser-Möst, and the work they do annually in our neighborhoods,” said Helen Rankin Butler and Michelle Shan Jeschelnic, 2023 Gala Chairs. “Thanks to the generosity of Northeast Ohio, The Cleveland Orchestra continues to bring the community together and enrich people’s lives through music.”

Each year, The Cleveland Orchestra provides audiences with memorable, world-class music experiences at its venues, Severance Music Center and Blossom Music Center, on tour, and on its digital platform Adella. In addition, the Orchestra’s education and community programs reach more than 100,000 people annually and have been a cornerstone of the institution since its founding in 1918. They continue to evolve to reach people of all ages and backgrounds.

“Events like our annual gala play a crucial role in supporting the artistic and education programs of The Cleveland Orchestra,” said André Gremillet, the Orchestra’s President & CEO. “We are thankful for the support and dedication of our donors. Their generosity allows us to continue bringing extraordinary music to our schools, neighborhoods, and stages.”

The gala comes shortly after the start of The Cleveland Orchestra’s 106th season, which runs from September to May at Severance Music Center. The Orchestra kicked off the season with four concerts of the Academy Award–winning film *Amadeus* with live performances of the score, followed by concerts with pianist and local favorite Daniil Trifonov. The Cleveland Orchestra’s season continues with Tchaikovsky’s Second Symphony and the world premiere of Johannes Maria Staud’s *Wheras the reality trembles* on October 5, 6, and 7, and Mahler’s Seventh Symphony on October 12 and 13.

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About The Cleveland Orchestra

Now firmly in its second century, The Cleveland Orchestra, under the leadership of Music Director Franz Welser-Möst since 2002, is 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. *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.

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 made it one of the most admired globally. 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.

The 2023–24 season marks Welser-Möst’s 22nd 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, and a number of acclaimed opera presentations.

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