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## The Cleveland Orchestra adds three new events to its second annual Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival

The theme of the 2024 festival is *Power*, centered around four fully staged performances of Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute* conducted by Music Director Franz Welser-Möst and directed by Nikolaus Habjan

### Terence Blanchard, Terrance McKnight, and Christopher Raschka among festival guests now joining Kai Bird, Leila Josefowicz, Conrad Tao, and others

CLEVELAND — The Cleveland Orchestra announced three new programs as part of its second annual Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival, which runs May 15 to May 26 at Severance Music Center in collaboration with eight partner organizations, including Tri-C JazzFest, Assembly for the Arts, and Cleveland Public Library.

On May 18, young children and families are invited to join Caldecott Medalist and *New York Times* bestselling author/illustrator Christopher Raschka in two performances of *The Magic Flute for Kids*, an enchanting one-hour journey featuring storytelling, projected illustrations, live musical highlights from the opera, and interactive learning opportunities.

***Power Dynamics: Diverse Perspectives on Classical Music*** brings together thought leaders and artist advocates on May 19 to discuss the state of diversity in classical music today, both locally and nationally. Later that evening, celebrated **radio host, commentator, and writer Terrance McKnight** curates and leads a unique mix of conversation, reflection, and music through the lens of different *Magic Flute* protagonists such as Monostatos, the enslaved overseer of the wizard Sarastro's temple, and the Queen of the Night, a revenge-seeking sovereign of the nocturnal realm.

On May 21, **seven-time Grammy Award winner Terence Blanchard** makes his Severance Music Center debut with *Absence*, an evening of music honoring his mentor, jazz icon Wayne Shorter. He is joined on stage by longtime collaborators the E-Collective and Turtle Island Quartet.

Tickets for the 2024 Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival are now on sale. For more information, visit [clevelandorchestra.com/festival](https://clevelandorchestra.com/festival), email [boxoffice@clevelandorchestra.com](mailto:boxoffice@clevelandorchestra.com), or call Cleveland Orchestra Ticket Services at 216-231-1111.

Logos and photos for the 2024 Mandel Opera and Humanities Festival are available for [download here](#).

## About the 2024 Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival

Expanding on the success of The Cleveland Orchestra and Music Director Franz Welser-Möst's tradition of innovative opera presentations, the Orchestra launched the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival in May 2023.

This second festival edition (May 15–26) builds on the inaugural festival, which featured Puccini's *The Girl of the Golden West* and explored the American Dream of the past, present, and future in partnership with nine other cultural organizations. The festival was praised by *The New York Times* as a "compelling proof of concept" and "an ambitious achievement to put an exclamation point on a roller-coaster season."

Anchored by four fully staged performances of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* directed by Nikolaus Habjan and featuring The Cleveland Orchestra and Music Director Franz Welser-Möst, this year's festival examines the **theme of Power**. A core element of Mozart's beloved work, this theme will further be explored through a series of concerts, exhibitions, and conversations.

"Building on the tremendous success of last year's inaugural event, it is our hope that the Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *Power* will continue to expand the influence of classical music and the arts in greater Cleveland," said **Jehuda Reinharz, President and CEO of the Mandel Foundation**. "Art and music offer a powerful lens through which we can view history and ourselves, and this year's theme encourages us to think deeply about our shared humanity and the systems of power in which we live."

"The 2024 festival edition will continue to bring together our community and several of Cleveland's great cultural institutions for exploration, discussion, and reflection around the theme of *Power*," said **André Gremillet, President & CEO of The Cleveland Orchestra**. "Opera has a unique capacity to draw upon a multidimensional view of our world and shared human experience, and this year's performances of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* conducted by Music Director Franz Welser-Möst will set the stage for exploring different facets of *Power* through music, art, and lectures, among others."

"Mozart's *The Magic Flute* is an extremely fitting centerpiece for our 2024 Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival. Its touching and beautiful narrative makes it not only one of the greatest operas ever written, but also the greatest opera about humanity, given its many philosophical layers. This presentation of *The Magic Flute* at Severance Music Center, staged with imaginatively designed puppets, will once again highlight The Cleveland Orchestra's artistry and adaptability as both a symphonic and operatic ensemble," said **Franz Welser-Möst, Music Director of The Cleveland Orchestra**.

"The festival's theme of *Power* comes from Mozart's idea to place the universe of *The Magic Flute* within the surroundings of the Masonic temples of Nature, Wisdom, and Reason, thus reflecting upon the power of our planet, humanity, and order," said **Elena Dubinets, who returns this year as the festival's curator**. "By situating Mozart's musical vision both in his contemporaneous and in our current contexts, we will be exploring different power structures embedded in the world, including the powers of music and love that transcend human fear and hatred, the Enlightenment doctrines of political liberalism and religious tolerance, and the prevalence of knowledge over ignorance."

Festival Curator Elena Dubinets is the artistic director for the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Dubinets previously held top artistic planning positions at the Seattle and Atlanta symphony orchestras. She has

taught at universities in the United States, Russia, and Costa Rica; published five books; and written hundreds of articles, liner and program notes in multiple languages. Her latest book, *Russian Composers Abroad: How They Left, Stayed, Returned*, was published by Indiana University Press in 2021. Dr. Dubinets received her MA and PhD degrees from the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Russia, lived in the US since 1996, and moved to London in 2021.

### **With Gratitude**

The Cleveland Orchestra's Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival is supported by a historic grant from the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation.

The Cleveland Orchestra's production of *The Magic Flute* is generously sponsored by Jan R. Lewis.

*The Magic Flute's* puppets are generously sponsored by Ms. Cathy Lincoln.

General support for the Mandel Opera and Humanities Festival is generously provided by Mr. David and Dr. Carolyn Lincoln, in memory of Emma Lincoln.

*The Magic Flute's* Director Nicholas Habjan is generously sponsored by Michael Frank and Patricia A.\* Snyder.

Kathryn Lewek (Queen of the Night) is generously sponsored by Dr. Roland S. Philip and Dr. Linda M. Sandhaus.

### **Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: Power – Partner Organizations (As of March 2024)**

Assembly for the Arts (*May 19*)  
Chautauqua Institution (*May 15*)  
Chuck Stewart Photography (*April 11 – May 26*)  
City Club of Cleveland  
Cleveland Museum of Art (*April 14 – July 21*)  
Cleveland Public Library (*May 18*)  
Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) and Tri-C JazzFest (*May 21*)  
Ideastream Public Media

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### **2024 Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival Calendar (As of March 2024)**

#### **[The Magic Lens: A Photographic Journey by Chuck Stewart](#)**

*Curated by Toussaint J. Miller*

Severance Music Center, Bogomolny-Kozerefski Grand Foyer

Thursday, April 11 to Sunday, May 26

Free Exhibition

Hosted in Severance Music Center's Grand Foyer, this exhibition invites visitors to explore the world of Mozart's masterpiece in a new evocative light — through Chuck Stewart's camera lens. We will explore three captivating themes that encapsulate the essence of Stewart's vast archive. *The Magic Lens: A Photographic Journey by Chuck Stewart* is a visual symphony, harmonizing three themes: **the power of rhythm, presence, and passion**, and providing a fresh perspective on the enduring appeal of *The Magic Flute*. Each selected photograph captures an unwavering dedication to Stewart's camera. We implore viewers to immerse themselves in the rich literal and metaphorical pictorial journeys of Chuck Stewart, navigating life's labyrinth with his magical flute — his camera.

Chuck Stewart was one of the most prolific photographers of the twentieth century. With more than 800,000 images in his archive, Stewart has left an indelible mark on the documentary photography and photojournalism traditions. Born in 1927 in Henrietta, Texas, he discovered his passion for photography at an early age when his mother gifted him a 616 Box-Brownie camera for his 13th birthday. His career was subsequently born and spanned the last seven decades. Stewart's works have graced the covers of more than 2,000 album covers including Nina Simone's *Little Girl Blue*, Gil Scott Heron's *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, and Wayne Shorter's *Wayning Moments* and have garnered recognition from esteemed institutions worldwide including the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Harvard University, and the British Museum.

"It's probably easier to ask me whom haven't I photographed than to tell you who I have. But if there's a historic moment in American music, social or cultural history that you're curious about, chances are I was there or have photographs of somebody who was." — Chuck Stewart

*Toussaint Miller is a junior at Harvard College pursuing a degree in neurobiology with a secondary in music. On campus, Miller co-founded the Black Arts Collective, an organization dedicated to the liberation of Black creative expression, and performs with the Harvard Jazz Orchestra. In addition to his artistic endeavors, Miller is a research assistant at the Dana Farber Cancer Research Institute and aspires to become a neurosurgeon. Through his work, he explores the intersection between arts and medicine seeking to bridge the gap between scientific understanding and the healing power of music.*

Artist Representative: Kim Stewart, Fireball Entertainment Group.

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### [Keynote Event: An Evening with Kai Bird](#)

Wednesday, May 15, at 7 p.m.

Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall

Ticketed Event

Kai Bird, *speaker*

Michael E. Hill, EdD, President of Chautauqua Institution, *moderator*

Jung-Min Amy Lee, *violin*

Dashon Burton, *bass-baritone*

SARASATE Fantasy on *The Magic Flute*

JOHN ADAMS "Batter My Heart" from *Doctor Atomic*

Keynote speaker Kai Bird is a Pulitzer Prize—winning biographer, journalist, and co-author of **American**

***Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer***, on which the blockbuster movie ***Oppenheimer*** was based. He is the executive director and distinguished lecturer of the Leon Levy Center for Biography at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York City.

His most recent [books](#) include ***The Outlier: The Unfinished Presidency of Jimmy Carter*** and ***The Good Spy: The Life and Death of Robert Ames***, which was a *New York Times* best-seller. He chronicled his childhood in the Middle East in his memoir, ***Crossing Mandelbaum Gate: Coming of Age Between the Arabs and Israelis***. He is the author of biographies of John J. McCloy, McGeorge Bundy, and William Bundy. He won the Pulitzer Prize for Biography in 2006 for ***American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer*** (co-authored with Martin J. Sherwin). His work includes critical writings on the Vietnam War, Hiroshima, nuclear weapons, the Cold War, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the CIA.

He won the National Books Critics Circle Award and the Duff Cooper Prize for History and is the recipient of numerous fellowships. He is an elected member of the prestigious Society of American Historians.

Bird's keynote presentation will include performances of works inspired by the festival's theme by Cleveland Orchestra musicians and soloists. The event will be livestreamed on The Cleveland Orchestra's digital home, [adella.live](http://adella.live) and by Chautauqua Institution on CHQ Assembly at [assembly.chq.org](http://assembly.chq.org)

A book signing with Bird will immediately follow the event.

*Ticket holders for Mozart's Magic Flute (May 16, 18, 24 & 26) and Mozart's Gran Partita (May 23 & 25) qualify for and can claim complimentary tickets for the festival's keynote event.*

Presented in partnership with Chautauqua Institution



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### [Mozart's Magic Flute](#)

Thursday, May 16 at 7 p.m.

Saturday, May 18, 2024, at 7 p.m.

Friday, May 24, 2024, at 7 p.m.

Sunday, May 26, 2024, at 3 p.m.

Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall

Ticketed Performances

The Cleveland Orchestra

Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

Nikolaus Habjan, *director*

Julian Prégardien, *tenor* (Tamino)

Ludwig Mittelhammer, *baritone* (Papageno)

Christina Landshamer, *soprano* (Pamina)

Kathryn Lewek, *soprano* (Queen of the Night)

Tareq Nazmi, *bass* (Sarastro)  
Alexandria Shiner, *soprano* (First Lady)  
Jennifer Feinstein, *mezzo-soprano* (Second Lady)  
Daryl Freedman, *mezzo-soprano* (Third Lady)  
Rodell Rosel, *tenor* (Monostatos)  
Dashon Burton, *bass-baritone* (Speaker of the Temple)  
Owen McCausland, *tenor* (First Armored Man and Second Priest)  
Kidon Choi, *baritone* (Second Armored Man and First Priest)  
Ashley Emerson, *soprano* (Papagena)  
The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus

### MOZART *The Magic Flute*

One of the greatest operas ever written, Mozart's timeless classic is about the search for truth and reason, love and enlightenment, and how power is used for good or evil purposes. Staged with imaginatively designed puppets, ***The Magic Flute*** draws us into a world where a prince, Tamino, and a princess, Pamina, triumph over every obstacle in their search for wisdom and are finally united in love. Throughout their journey, audiences are delighted with the lovers' soulful arias, the stratospheric vocal fireworks of the villainous Queen of the Night, the subterranean depths of the formidable high priest Sarastro, and the comic melodies of the lovable bird catcher, Papageno.

Staged production sung in German with projected supertitles.

Pre-opera lectures are given by Bonnie Gordon (*May 16*), Nikolaus Habjan (*May 18*), Kristen Windmuller-Luna (*May 24*), and Jessica Waldoff (*May 26*).

*Ticket holders for Mozart's Magic Flute qualify for and can claim complimentary tickets for the festival's keynote event on May 15.*

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### [Conrad Tao in Recital: Power and Influence](#)

Friday, May 17 at 7:30 p.m.  
Severance Music Center, Reinberger Chamber Hall  
Ticketed Performance

Conrad Tao, *piano*  
Dane Johansen, *cello*

In November 1918, **Sergei Rachmaninoff** arrived in his newfound homeland, the United States, after a tumultuous year fleeing the political unrest of his native Russia. Through this thoughtfully constructed program and his own spoken commentary, pianist Conrad Tao presents a fascinating dialogue between Rachmaninoff's old and new homes, discussing the power of old world and new, tradition and innovation.

RACHMANINOFF Prelude, Op. 32, No. 5  
STRAYHORN Take the "A" Train  
SONDHEIM In Buddy's Eyes  
RACHMANINOFF Variation 15 from *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*

STRAYHORN Lush Life  
RACHMANINOFF Variation 18 from *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*  
ARLEN Somewhere Over the Rainbow  
R. SCHUMANN "Auf einer Burg" from *Liederkreis*  
RACHMANINOFF Études-Tableaux, Op. 39, No. 2  
RACHMANINOFF "Daisies" from *Six Romances*  
STRAYHORN Day Dream  
RACHMANINOFF Études-Tableaux, Op. 33, No. 3  
KAYE Full Moon and Empty Arms  
RACHMANINOFF Cello Sonata

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### [The Magic Flute for Kids](#)

Saturday, May 18 at 10 a.m.  
Saturday, May 18 at 12 p.m.  
Severance Music Center, Reinberger Chamber Hall  
Ticketed Performances, Under 18s Free

Join us on Saturday, May 18 for *The Magic Flute for Kids*, an enchanting one-hour performance hosted by **Caldecott Medalist and New York Times bestselling author/illustrator Christopher Raschka** in the intimate Reinberger Chamber Hall. Raschka, an opera lover and musician himself, will use projections of his beautifully illustrated book, *The Magic Flute*, to share the story of Mozart's beloved opera interspersed with live musical highlights for children 7 and older.

At 11 a.m., join other kids for fun opera-themed interactive lobby activities!

Presented in partnership with Cleveland Public Library



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### [Power Dynamics: Diverse Perspectives on Classical Music](#)

Sunday, May 19 at 4 p.m.  
Severance Music Center, Reinberger Chamber Hall  
Free Event, Tickets Required

Terrance McKnight, *host*  
Jeremy Johnson, *moderator*

In the first half of this special evening, barrier-crushing artist advocates who have both embraced and challenged time-honored conventions in classical music come together to discuss key questions in our field today. How will diverse, classically trained artists engage the eyes and ears of future audiences? What power dynamics must be navigated and addressed to increase representation on the stage, in the

seats, and in executive leadership? Hear what initiatives are currently advancing diversity in the field of classical music both locally and nationally. This conversation is moderated by **Jeremy Johnson, President and CEO of Assembly for the Arts.**

In the second half, celebrated **radio host, commentator, and writer Terrance McKnight** curates and leads a unique evening of conversation, reflection, and music through the lens of different *Magic Flute* protagonists such as Monostatos, the enslaved overseer of the wizard Sarastro's temple, and the Queen of the Night, a revenge-seeking sovereign of the nocturnal realm. McKnight is the author of the upcoming book *Concert Black*, soon to be released by Abrams Press. He is the weekday evening host for WQXR, New York's only all-classical music station. In early 2023 in association with the station, his production company, Concert Black LLC, launched the podcast series *Every Voice*. The first topic, representations of Blackness in opera, was captured in 16 weekly episodes and distilled into four, one-hour radio documentaries.

Presented in partnership with Assembly for the Arts



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### [Terence Blanchard & Friends: A Celebration of Wayne Shorter](#)

Tuesday, May 21 at 7 p.m.

Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall

Ticketed Performance

Terence Blanchard, *trumpet*

Featuring the E-Collective and Turtle Island Quartet

Renowned for his trumpet prowess and composing skills, **seven-time GRAMMY® Award winner Terence Blanchard** makes his Severance Music Center debut with *Absence*, an evening of music honoring his mentor, jazz icon Wayne Shorter. Joined by longtime collaborators the E-Collective and Turtle Island Quartet, Blanchard celebrates both the brilliance of Shorter's legacy and the inspiration he has given Blanchard, influencing his ever-expanding amalgam of music and storytelling.

"Hardly any other musician has so solid a grasp on the scope of what's going on in jazz today." — *The New York Times*

Presented in partnership with Cuyahoga Community College and Tri-C JazzFest





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### [Mozart's Gran Partita](#)

Thursday, May 23 at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 25 at 8 p.m.

Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall

Ticketed Performances

The Cleveland Orchestra

Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

Leila Josefowicz, *violin*

Trina Struble, *harp*

WAGNER Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan und Isolde*

JÜRI REINVERE Concerto for Violin and Harp

(World Premiere, TCO Commission)

MOZART Serenade No. 10, "Gran Partita"

Written a decade before *The Magic Flute*, Mozart's glorious Serenade No. 10, "Gran Partita," shows the composer probing Enlightenment ideals and considering the tenets of Freemasonry upon which he would expand in his final opera. The evening opens with the artistically and emotionally potent Prelude and Liebestod from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, an overpowering statement on all-consuming desire. The world premiere of a new concerto for violin and harp by Jüri Reinvere, a composer and published author on political topics, rounds out the concert.

*Ticket holders for Mozart's Gran Partita qualify for and can claim complimentary tickets for the festival's keynote event on May 15.*

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### [United in Song! A Community Choral Celebration](#)

Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall

Saturday, May 25 at 2 p.m.

Free Performance, Tickets Required

Join us for an afternoon of joyous vocal performances at Severance Music Center representing the rich diversity of the Greater Cleveland choral community. Performing groups include the North Coast Men's Chorus, Cleveland Chorale, The Cleveland Orchestra Children's Choruses, and Cleveland School of the Arts' R. Nathaniel Dett Concert Chorus.

The event is hosted by writer, spoken word poet, voiceover talent, and recording artist Orlando Watson, a Cleveland native who is currently the senior director of programming for Pittsburgh's August Wilson African American Cultural Center.

Orlando Watson, *host*

North Coast Men's Chorus, Rich Cole, *director*

Cleveland Chorale, David Gulley, *director*

The Cleveland Orchestra Children's Choruses, Jennifer Rozsa, *director*  
Cleveland School of the Arts' R. Nathaniel Dett Concert Chorus, Robert McCorvey, *director*

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### **Africa and Byzantium**

Cleveland Museum of Art  
Sunday, April 14 to Sunday, July 21  
Ticketed Exhibition

Three centuries after ancient Egypt's pharaohs ended their rule, new African rulers built empires in the continent's north and east. The Byzantine Empire also participated in these artistic and cultural networks as it expanded into Northern Africa. Together, these great civilizations created unique art reflecting their heritages while also building a shared visual culture across regions linked by the Mediterranean and Red seas, and the Nile River. In *The Magic Flute*, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart also looked to the African past to write a new opera that reflected his present. Ancient Egypt fascinated both Mozart and the Freemason fraternal organization he belonged to. Like Nubian and later Egyptian artists whose creations interpreted pharaonic legacies, Mozart's opera considers these histories in pieces like the aria "O Isis und Osiris."

***Africa and Byzantium*** ponders the complex artistic relationships between Northern and Eastern African Christian kingdoms and the Byzantine Empire from the fourth century and beyond. The first international loan exhibition to treat this subject, it includes nearly 160 artworks lent by African, European, and North American collections. Most were made by African artists or imported to the continent at the request of the powerful rulers of precolonial kingdoms and empires. The art and faith of these historical kingdoms — including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam — resonate with many worldwide today.

For tickets, tour schedules, and programming visit [clevelandart.org](http://clevelandart.org) or the exhibition's [website](#).

Kristen Windmuller-Luna, the *Africa and Byzantium* exhibition curator, will deliver a pre-opera talk on May 24 at Severance Music Center.



All programs and artists are subject to change.

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