



For Release: Thursday, November 10

**The Cleveland Orchestra announces details of inaugural Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *The American Dream***

**Three concert performances of Puccini's opera *La Fanciulla del West (The Girl of the Golden West)* are the centerpiece of the festival**

**Additional concerts at Severance Music Center feature music of Scott Joplin, Julia Perry, Julius Eastman, William Grant Still, Raven Chacon, and Edgard Varèse**

**Festival themes will be explored with humanities and cultural partner organizations including Case Western Reserve University, Chautauqua Institution, Cleveland Institute of Art Cinematheque, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland Public Library, City Club of Cleveland, and Karamu House. Events to be announced in the coming months.**

**CLEVELAND** – Today, The Cleveland Orchestra announced the title, vision, and programming updates surrounding its inaugural **Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *The American Dream***, which takes place [May 13 to 20, 2023](#) at Severance Music Center. The festival includes opera performances, symphonic concerts, pre- and post-concert discussions, and a free concert event for the community. Current information, as of November, about concerts, events, as well as humanities and cultural organization festival partners are listed below. Additional details of Cleveland Orchestra and partner events will be announced in February 2023.

Building on the success in recent years of The Cleveland Orchestra and Music Director Franz Welser-Möst's tradition of innovative opera presentations, this year's version will link the opera to an ambitious undertaking with themes and subjects that are explored through humanities programming. Curated by Elena Dubinets, The Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *The American Dream* is a series of opportunities for discussion created for the greater Cleveland community and headlined by concert performances of Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West (The Girl of the Golden West)* conducted by Music Director Franz Welser-Möst at Severance Music Center ([May 14, 17, and 20](#)). The festival is devoted to the examination, exploration, and changing promise of the American Dream. The American Dream festival will aspire to engage conversation from different perspectives around timeless questions including: what is the relevance of the American Dream today; what does it mean to the Greater Cleveland community?

From what was at first a yearning for self-rule, religious freedom, and democracy, the American Dream evolved to a universal concept that anyone coming to America would be able to succeed through opportunity and hard work — to forge a better life for themselves and their family, to achieve success

from their own initiative and efforts.

The American Dream remains an aspirational concept related to the promise of a country that embraces optimism for the future and the ability to shape it, as well as recognition of every person's potential as a dignified and free human being. However, while achievable for some, for many others it remains unattainable, a cruel illusion, an unfulfilled promise. The Cleveland Orchestra's 2023 Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *The American Dream* will acknowledge and engage in these subjects and offer an opportunity to explore and reflect on the American Dream of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

The Cleveland Orchestra's annual Opera and Humanities Festival is supported by a historic grant from the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation. This and future festivals will engage the Greater Cleveland community and will further establish Severance Music Center as a convening place for the entire community, as well as one of the country's great cultural centers. The National Endowment for the Arts supports The Cleveland Orchestra's annual opera presentations.

**André Gremillet, The Cleveland Orchestra's President & CEO** said, "With this season's inaugural Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *The American Dream* and future annual festivals, The Cleveland Orchestra is creating space and a forum at Severance Music Center and within the greater Cleveland community to explore broader topics through music and art. We hope to spark and inspire relevant conversations and reflections as a convener, and partner with area humanities and cultural organizations to promote great Cleveland institutions as well as Cleveland as a cultural destination. We are grateful to the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation for their historic grant, of which a portion is dedicated to supporting The Cleveland Orchestra's annual opera and humanities festival.

"The Cleveland Orchestra aspires to present an opera and humanities festival that stimulates contemplation and ideas, celebrates diversity of thought, and inspires self-reflection. These festivals combine intellectual curiosity and emotional depth, where the music making is informed by the complex subtleties of the world that produced it. In particular, the May 18 and 19 concerts at Severance are part of our efforts to expand our classical music catalogue by featuring composers like Julia Perry, Julius Eastman, William Grant Still, and Raven Chacon who all deserve wider recognition."

**Franz Welser-Möst, Music Director, The Cleveland Orchestra** said, "Puccini's underappreciated masterpiece *La Fanciulla del West* (*The Girl of the Golden West*) headlines our 2023 Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *The American Dream*, featuring an exploration of the changing promise of the American Dream. Often dismissed as a naïve 'cowboy opera,' the story of Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* is set in the American frontier of the California Gold Rush in 1849. The opera brings to a boil conflicting desires for fortune and friendship. Its characters give their all in a rough-and-tumble scramble for money, love, and loyalty — heightened by a passionate music score that boldly underscores dreams of riches, hope, desperation, and desire. This opera and our annual opera presentations showcase The Cleveland Orchestra's remarkable versatility and artistic ambition as a symphonic and opera ensemble."

**Elena Dubinets** is the Curator for The Cleveland Orchestra's Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *The American Dream*, and is Artistic Director for the London Philharmonic Orchestra. She previously held top artistic planning positions at the Seattle and Atlanta symphony orchestras. Elena 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 and lived in the U.S. since 1996 and moved to London in 2021.

"The music and stories explored at the Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *The American Dream* speak to such essential topics as the underlying social contract in the US, access to education, cultural displacement, lack of representation, racism, and migration," said **festival curator Elena Dubinets**. "By

performing music created by composers of different nationalities, gender, skin color, and background we will initiate robust conversations about the American Dream by participants from across political, social, economic, and cultural spectrums. Community music events, film screenings, literary readings, exhibitions, scholarly presentations, and panel discussions will constitute the “humanities” portion of the festival surrounding and inform The Cleveland Orchestra performances.”

**Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *The American Dream* partner organizations (as of November)**

Details of humanities and cultural partners programming will be announced in February 2023.

Case Western Reserve University

Chautauqua Institution

Cleveland Institute of Art Cinematheque

Cleveland Museum of Art

Cleveland Public Library

City Club of Cleveland

Karamu House

**Pre-Festival: April 18-21: Education Concerts: *Ellis Island: The Dream of America***

Connected and leading up to the festival, [April 18-21](#) at Severance Music Center, The Cleveland Orchestra will present six performances for Cleveland-area students grades 6 to 12 with a program called *Ellis Island: The Dream of America*. A multimedia work for orchestra created by Grammy-nominated composer Peter Boyer, *Ellis Island: The Dream of America* honors the immigrant experience with a compelling combination of music, narration, and historic images. It traces the experiences of seven immigrants from seven countries on their way to America, beginning in the early parts of the past century. Spoken texts for the work come from the Ellis Island Oral History Project.

**Save the date May 13 for United in Song! A Free Community Celebration**

A free day of choral music performances at Severance Music Center with choruses from the Greater Cleveland community. Details of performers and programming will be announced in February 2023.

**May 18 & 19 Cleveland Orchestra symphonic concerts with Franz Welser-Möst**

The perception and existence of the American Dream varies widely across age, race, country of origin, generation, and economic status. Composers Scott Joplin, Julia Perry, Julius Eastman, William Grant Still, Bernard Herrmann, Raven Chacon, Thomas Adès, and Edgard Varèse represent a multiplicity of backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints, which manifest in their music to profound effect. Beautiful and discordant, poetic and potent, this range of composers' voices come together for two concerts led by Franz Welser-Möst filled with an expanse of sonic colors and meanings.

May 18: *The American Dream* Festival Concert Part 1

Dreams We've Dreamed; Songs We've Sung; Hopes We've Held

Scott Joplin: *Treemonisha* Overture

Julia Perry: Short Piece for Orchestra

Julius Eastman: Symphony No. 2

William Grant Still: Darker America

Bernard Herrmann: Suite from *Vertigo*

May 19: *The American Dream* Festival Concert Part 2

Dreams We've Dreamed; Songs We've Sung; Hopes We've Held:

Raven Chacon: Voiceless Mass

Thomas Adès: America: A Prophecy with Kelley O'Connor, mezzo-soprano

Edgard Varèse: Amériques (1929 version)

**Severance Music Center Ticket Information**

Tickets to 2022-23 Severance season individual performances are on sale now. For more information

about the variety of subscription packages offered, or for other questions, call Cleveland Orchestra Ticket Services at 216-231-1111 or 800-686-1141, email [BoxOffice@ClevelandOrchestra.com](mailto:BoxOffice@ClevelandOrchestra.com), or visit [clevelandorchestra.com](http://clevelandorchestra.com).

Tickets for *The American Dream* festival concerts May 18 and 19 start at \$30 each. Patrons who purchase or already have a ticket to *The Girl of the Golden West* performances May 14, 17, 20 will receive 50% off the festival ticket (\$25 or \$15). The discount will automatically be applied in the shopping cart when ordering online or calling Ticket Services.

Cleveland Orchestra Memberships can be purchased at any time during the year. Memberships are designed to offer ultimate flexibility and value for patrons who want to experience more Cleveland Orchestra concerts year-round at both Severance Music Center and the Blossom Music Festival. In exchange for a monthly membership fee of \$35 (billed automatically), members can reserve a single ticket for \$10 to any concert at any time. For more information about the Members Club, please visit [clevelandorchestra.com/membersclub](http://clevelandorchestra.com/membersclub).

#### **CALENDAR LISTING / PROGRAM INFORMATION (as of November 9, 2022)**

**Pre-Festival Education Concerts: *Ellis Island: The Dream of America***

**Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall**

**Tuesday, April 18 at 12:00pm**

**Wednesday, April 19 at 10:00pm**

**Thursday, April 20 at 10:00AM and 12:00pm**

**Friday, April 21 at 10:00AM and 12:00pm**

The Cleveland Orchestra

Daniel Reith, *conductor*

A multimedia work for orchestra, *Ellis Island: The Dream of America* honors the immigrant experience with a compelling combination of music, narration, and historic images. It traces the experiences of seven immigrants from seven countries on their way to America, beginning in the early parts of the past century. The actor's monologues/narratives are a powerful testament to the experience of thousands of immigrants who entered America through that iconic portal. The text from "Ellis Island" comes from The Ellis Island Oral History Project. By the time the doors were closed in 1954, more than 12 million immigrants had come through. The concert is a timely reminder that, for so many who have come here, America has been a symbol of freedom and opportunity for new life.

For more information, including information on how to register schools and students for a performance, as well educator materials for the concert, visit [clevelandorchestra.com/attend/concerts-for-schools/](http://clevelandorchestra.com/attend/concerts-for-schools/).

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#### **United in Song! A Free Community Choral Celebration**

**Saturday, May 13**

**Severance Music Center**

Time, details of performers, and program to be announced

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#### **The Girl of the Golden West**

**Sunday, May 14, 2023 at 3:00pm**

**Wednesday, May 17 at 7:30pm**

**Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall**

The Cleveland Orchestra

Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

Tamara Wilson, *soprano* (Minnie)

Limmie Pulliam, *tenor* (Dick Johnson)

Eric Owens, *bass* (Jack Rance)

Tony Stevenson, *tenor* (Nick)

Scott Conner, *bass* (Ashby)

Iurii Samoilov, *baritone* (Sonora)

Owen McCausland, *tenor* (Trin)  
Reginald Smith, *baritone* (Sid)  
Benjamin Taylor, *baritone* (Bello)  
Alok Kumar, *tenor* (Harry)  
Alex McKissick, *tenor* (Joe)  
Joseph Barron, *bass-baritone* (Happy)  
Kyle Miller, *baritone* (Jim Larkens)  
Zachary Altman, *bass-baritone* (Billy Jackrabbit)  
Taylor Raven, *mezzo-soprano* (Wowkle)  
John Brancy, *baritone* (Jake Wallace)  
Michael Adams, *baritone* (Jose Castro)  
Men of the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus

PUCCINI *La Fanciulla del West* (opera in three acts, in concert) (Cleveland Orchestra Premiere)

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***The American Dream Festival Concert Part 1***

**Dreams We've Dreamed; Songs We've Sung; Hopes We've Held**

**Thursday, May 18 at 7:30pm**

**Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall**

The Cleveland Orchestra

Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

SCOTT JOPLIN *Treemonisha* Overture  
JULIA PERRY Short Piece for Orchestra  
JULIUS EASTMAN Symphony No. 2  
WILLIAM GRANT STILL Darker America  
BERNARD HERRMANN Suite from *Vertigo*

***The American Dream Festival Concert Part 2***

**Dreams We've Dreamed; Songs We've Sung; Hopes We've Held**

**Friday, May 19 at 7:30pm**

**Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall**

The Cleveland Orchestra

Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

Kelle O'Connor, *mezzo-soprano*

RAVEN CHACON Voiceless Mass  
THOMAS ADÈS America: A Prophecy  
EDGARD VARÈSE Amériques (1929 version)

The perception and existence of the American Dream varies widely across age, race, country of origin, generation, and economic status. Composers Scott Joplin, Julia Perry, Julius Eastman, William Grant Still, Bernard Herrmann, Raven Chacon, Thomas Adès, and Edgard Varèse represent a multiplicity of backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints, which manifest in their music to profound effect. Beautiful and discordant, poetic and potent, this range of composers' voices come together for two concerts filled with an expanse of sonic colors and meanings.

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***The Girl of the Golden West***

**Saturday, May 20 at 7:30pm**

**Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall**

The Cleveland Orchestra

Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

Tamara Wilson, *soprano* (Minnie)

Limmie Pulliam, *tenor* (Dick Johnson)

Eric Owens, *bass* (Jack Rance)

Tony Stevenson, *tenor* (Nick)

Scott Conner, *bass* (Ashby)

Iurii Samoilov, *baritone* (Sonora)

Owen McCausland, *tenor* (Trin)

Reginald Smith, *baritone* (Sid)  
Benjamin Taylor, *baritone* (Bello)  
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Alex McKissick, *tenor* (Joe)  
Joseph Barron, *bass-baritone* (Happy)  
Kyle Miller, *baritone* (Jim Larkens)  
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PUCCINI *La Fanciulla del West* (opera in three acts, in concert) (Cleveland Orchestra Premiere)

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***All programs and artists are subject to change***

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**Media Contacts:**

Justin Holden, [jholden@clevelandorchestra.com](mailto:jholden@clevelandorchestra.com), 216-231-7476

Jen Steer, [jsteer@clevelandorchestra.com](mailto:jsteer@clevelandorchestra.com), 216-231-7637