



For Release: Tuesday, April 25, 2023 (original announcement, November 10, 2022)

The Cleveland Orchestra announces updates to inaugural Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *The American Dream* – May 11 to 20

Updates: Vocal performance at Western Reserve Historical Society/Cleveland History Center, groups added to United in Song! Free Community Choral Concert, and more panelists for *Exploring The American Dream* at Case Western Reserve University

CLEVELAND –The Cleveland Orchestra announced updates to its inaugural **Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *The American Dream***, which takes place this spring at Severance Music Center and with Cleveland partner organizations.

Since the initial announcement on [November 10](#), The Cleveland Orchestra has continued to add programming to the festival lineup. [The American Dream](#) festival includes opera performances, an orchestra concert, education concerts, discussions, a free choral event for the community, festival keynote, film screening, poetry readings, and visual arts and theater programming. It also features 12 free performances and events.

Updated information about concerts and events is listed below.

Visual assets, including participant photos, logos, and trailers [available for download here](#).

The American Dream Festival Vision

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 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 an ideal that anyone living in America would be able to succeed through opportunity and hard work — to forge a better life for yourself and your family, to get rich from your own initiative and efforts, to move up and prosper.

Each person's view of the American Dream varies widely, dependent on age, race, country of origin, generation as an American, social strata, economic status, talent, abilities, field of study, etc. In some cases, priorities and opportunities have changed dramatically for people in different circumstances and different generations.

Today, there are many who wholeheartedly embrace the ideals of the American Dream, but there is also

a widespread view that the systems that make the dream possible in this country are not working equally for all. It seems urgent to turn within, to explore ideas and listen, and to seek inspiration and meaning from the arts and literature.

The 2023 Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival offers a unique opportunity to explore and reflect on the American Dream of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, through discussions and presentations, through art and music. We will look at the Dream's evolution from hard work and sacrifice to lottery luck and skipping ahead in line, from exploiting rules to a new embrace of democracy, fairness, justice, and opportunity.

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

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, or visit clevelandorchestra.com.

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

Festival Ticket Package/Passes: 4-concert Festival Passes start at just \$52. Purchase a festival pass for all 4 performances and save up to 50% over individual ticket prices. Those who already have a ticket to any performance of Puccini's opera *Girl of the Golden West* will receive the discounted rate when they purchase other festival programs.

Festival passes include:

Puccini's *Girl of the Golden West*

FRAGMENTS with Alisa Weilerstein

Musical Reflections

Keynote with Isabel Wilkerson

Hospitality bag at *Exploring The American Dream*

CALENDAR LISTING / PROGRAM INFORMATION (as of April 25, 2023)

(Free event): Cleveland Museum of Art

The American Dream: Community Voices

May to August 2023

11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio

The Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) will explore through its project *The American Dream: Community Voices* how works of art can address the concept of the American dream. As humans, we naturally perceive the world through our individual lived experience; and we each bring our lived experience to looking at art. CMA invited a variety of Cleveland residents and prominent figures in the community to select a work of art from the museum's collection that resonates with them around the festival's multifaceted exploration of the American dream of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. From May through August 2023, visitors will find more than twenty works of art selected by community members and be able to read their thoughts about how such works of art evoke the American dream in all its complexities. Tours of American Dream works of art selected and interpreted by community members will

occur beginning in May and throughout the summer. For tour schedules, visit clevelandart.org. For tour schedules, visit clevelandart.org.

Weilerstein Plays Barber

Thursday, May 4, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.*

Saturday, May 6, 2023, at 8:00 p.m.*

Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

Alisa Weilerstein, *cello*

ALLISON LOGGINS-HULL *Can You See?* (World Premiere, Cleveland Orchestra Commission)

SAMUEL BARBER Cello Concerto

SERGEI PROKOFIEV Symphony No. 4

Prelude concerts one hour prior, Honoring Black Composers take place in Reinberger Chamber Hall, includes music by Carlos Simon *Warmth from Other Suns*; I. Rays of Light, Bongani Nodana-Breen *Three Tales of African Migration*; Safika I and II, Allison Loggins-Hull *The Pattern*, and features Cleveland Orchestra musicians, violinists Wei-Fang Gu, Jeffrey Zehngut, Isabel Trautwein, Yun-Ting Lee, and Jessica Lee; violists Eliesha Nelson and William Bender; celloists David Alan Harrell, Brian Thornton, and Charles Bernard; clarinetist Amy Zoloto; and percussionist Thomas Sherwood, as well as pianist Danial Overly.

Tickets information: www.clevelandorchestra.com/attend/concerts-and-events/2223/severance/wk-22-Prokofiev/

Alisa Weilerstein FRAGMENTS

Thursday, May 11 at 7:30 p.m.*

Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall

Alisa Weilerstein, *project creator & performer*

Elkhanah Pulitzer, *director*

Seth Reiser, *scenic and lighting designer*

Carlos J. Soto, *costume designer*

Hanako Yamaguchi, *artistic producer & advisor*

With FRAGMENTS, cellist Alisa Weilerstein creates an immersive musical space that is at once intimate and expansive. This groundbreaking multi-year project for solo cello weaves together movements of Bach's six cello suites with newly commissioned works by 27 of today's most exciting composers, including The Cleveland Orchestra's Composer Fellow Allison Loggins-Hull.

In FRAGMENTS 1, audiences will experience selections of these newly commissioned works thoughtfully integrated with Bach's first cello suite to create a wholly original emotional arc. Enhanced by responsive lighting and scenic architecture, the music is performed without pause and without a program, creating an atmosphere of enchantment, adventure, and discovery.

*Post-concert discussion with Alisa Weilerstein and the FRAGMENTS creative team.

Alisa Weilerstein's performance is sponsored by Tony and Diane Wynshaw-Boris.

Karamu House

The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin

The Cleveland Foundation Jelliffe Theatre

2355 East 89th Street, Cleveland, Ohio

May 11 to May 14, 2023*

Kirsten Childs, *playwright*

Nina Domingue, *director*

What's a Black girl from sunny Southern California to do? White people are blowing up black girls in Birmingham churches. Black people are shouting "Black is Beautiful" while straightening their hair and coveting light skin. Viveca Stanton's answer: Slap on a bubbly smile and be as white as you can be! In a humorous and pointed coming-of-age story spanning the sixties through the nineties, Viveca blithely sails through the confusing worlds of racism, sexism, and Broadway showbiz until she's forced to face the devastating effect that self-denial has had on

her life. Karamu is excited to present this humorous musical that questions the toll assimilation takes on the Black artist in America. *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin* is presented through a special agreement with Dramatist Play Service, Inc.

*Performances begin April 21. Tickets start at \$25. For more information [visit this link](#).

(Free Event): United in Song! A Free Community Choral Celebration

Saturday, May 13, 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall

Orlando Watson, *host*

Johnny Parker, *producer*

Voces Hispanas with Andy Andino, *director*

Tri-C Vocal Arts Academy Choir with Dr. William Henry Caldwell, *director*

Cleveland Orchestra Children's Chorus with Jennifer Rozsa, *director*

Voices of Africa with Jimmy Olulami, *director*

Humbly Submitted Gospel Chorus with Eric Barnhill, *director*

A free afternoon of joyous vocal performances at Severance Music Center representing the rich diversity of the Greater Cleveland community, including *Humbly Submitted* Gospel Chorus; Andy Andino and *Voces Hispanas*; Tri-C Vocal Arts Academy + Cleveland Orchestra Children's Chorus; as well as Jimmy Olulami and Choir Africa. 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. Produced by bassist, songwriter, arranger and teacher, Johnny Parker.

Free event, tickets not required.

Keynote Speaker: Isabel Wilkerson

Saturday, May 13 at 7:30 p.m.*

Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall

Isabel Wilkerson, *speaker*

Dan Moulthrop, *CEO The City Club of Cleveland, moderator*

With musicians of The Cleveland Orchestra

Wei-Fang Gu, *violin*

Isabel Trautwein, *violin*

Jeffrey Zehngut, *violin*

Eliesha Nelson, *viola*

David Alan Harrell, *cello*

CARLOS SIMON First Movement from *Warmth from Other Suns*

DOLORES WHITE Selections from *Blues Dialogues*

FLORENCE PRICE Second Movement from String Quarter in G major

Presented in partnership with The City Club of Cleveland

Keynote speaker Isabel Wilkerson is a Pulitzer Prize Winner and author of critically acclaimed bestsellers, including *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, which was awarded the National Book Critics Circle Award for nonfiction. Wilkerson's *New York Times* best-selling book *Caste* (also an Oprah's Book Club 2020 selection) is being adapted to film for Netflix by Oscar-nominated filmmaker Ava DuVernay.

Wilkerson won the Pulitzer Prize for her deeply humane narrative writing while serving as Chicago Bureau Chief of *The New York Times* in 1994, making her the first Black woman in the history of American journalism to win a Pulitzer Prize and the first African American to win for individual reporting. In 2016, President Barack Obama awarded Wilkerson the National Humanities Medal for "championing the stories of an unsung history."

Ms. Wilkerson's presentation will include chamber music performances by Cleveland Orchestra musicians of music by composers affected by the American Dream.

This event will be livestreamed on [adella.live](#) and by Chautauqua Institution on CHQ Assembly at [assembly.chq.org](#), in partnership with Ideastream Public Media.

*A book signing with Ms. Wilkerson will immediately follow the event

The Girl of the Golden West

Sunday, May 14, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.*

Wednesday, May 17 at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 20 at 7:30 p.m.

Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall

The Cleveland Orchestra

Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

Emily Magee, *soprano* (Minnie)

Limmie Pulliam, *tenor* (Dick Johnson)

Roman Burdenko, *bass* (Jack Rance)

Tony Stevenson, *tenor* (Nick)

Scott Conner, *bass* (Ashby)

Iurii Samoilov, *baritone* (Sonora)

Owen McCausland, *tenor* (Trin)

Joseph Lattanzi, *baritone* (Sid)

Benjamin Taylor, *baritone* (Bello)

Joseph Tancredi, *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)

John-Joseph Haney, *tenor* (Pony Express Rider)

Men of the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus

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

Puccini's *The Girl of the Golden West*, the operatic equivalent of a spaghetti western, tells the tale of a love triangle between a sultry saloon owner, a carousing constable, and a disguised desperado. Set on the American frontier of the California Gold Rush in 1849, the opera brings to a boil conflicting desires for fortune, friendship, and the American Dream. 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 and hope, desperation, and desire.

Sung in Italian with projected supertitles.

Presented with support from the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Cleveland Institute of Art Cinematheque

Land of Gold

Tuesday, May 16 at 7:00 p.m.

11610 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio

Filmmaker Jon Else recorded the rehearsals of the 2017 opera *Girls of the Golden West* by composer John Adams and director/librettist Peter Sellars (who conceived the idea for the work while doing research for a production of Puccini's *The Girl of the Golden West*) leading to its premiere at the San Francisco Opera with soprano Julia Bullock and mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges. The film grants audiences a detailed look behind the curtain at the production of the opera which tells the untold stories of groups who joined in the quest for riches during the California Gold Rush. Chronicled is the often-ignored story of brutal collision between Native Americans, European swashbucklers, Californians, freed slaves, Chinese, Mexican, and Yankee gold seekers thrown together in the explosive free-for-all of California's first great bubble. Directed by Jon Else (USA, 2021, 82 min). To view a trailer and for more

information [visit this link](#).

\$11 general admission. \$8 members and 25 and under. Tickets available [at this link](#).

**Partner Addition Update: Western Reserve Historical Society
Finding the Dream: Solo Vocal Performance by Steven Weems
Thursday, May 18 at 6:00 p.m.**

**Western Reserve Historical Society
10825 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio
Steve Weems, *tenor***

This African-American history initiative includes opening remarks by Dr. Regennia N. Williams, followed by local performances by tenor Steven Weems.

Free with paid museum admission. Tickets available [here](#).

**(Free Event): Jazz Lecture/Presentation
The American Dream, the American Nightmare, and Black American Music
Illustrated by live jazz, solo piano
Thursday, May 18 at 7:30 p.m.**

**Severance Music Center, Reinberger Chamber Hall
Julian Davis Reid, *presenter, piano***

Julian Davis Reid is a pianist, producer, and composer, who has performed and spoken throughout the country and around the world in various solo and collaborative musical projects. In this presentation, he will reflect on his own experience as a Black composer and performer, the descendant of voluntary and involuntary migrants. He will be engaging Amiri Baraka's book *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*. Music selections include *Come Sunday* by Duke Ellington, *Dolphin Dance* by Herbie Hancock, *What's Going On* by Marvin Gaye, and original compositions.

Free event, tickets not required.

**(Free Event): Cleveland Public Library, Main Library
The American Dream: Superheroes in Poetry
Youth Poetry Reading: Works of Langston Hughes and Julia De Burgos
325 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio
Friday, May 19, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

Dr. Raquel M. Ortiz, *host*

Experience the works of Langston Hughes and Julia De Burgos, performed by middle school students from the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and accompanied by live music, in collaboration with Cleveland Public Library's writer-in-residence and host Dr. Raquel M. Ortiz. Dr. Ortiz is an anthropologist, educator, activist, songwriter, and author of several bilingual children's books including *Sofi and the Magic, Musical Mural* (2015), *Sofi Paints her Dreams* (2019), *When Julia Danced Bomba* (2019). Her stories about Afro-Caribbean and Latinx culture invite children and adults to join in on adventures, featuring children as the protagonists so that they see and celebrate their creativity and valor.

Join Cleveland Reads and help the city get to 1 million. The Mayor's Office of Cleveland, Cleveland Public Library, Cleveland Metropolitan Schools, and dozens of other organizations have joined forces to encourage children and adults to take the Cleveland Reads Citywide Reading Challenge to collectively read 1 million books in 2023.

As part of Cleveland Reads, The Cleveland Orchestra's 2023 Mandel Opera and Humanities Festival: *The American Dream* is partnering with Cleveland Public Library to encourage everyone to read *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson who also wrote the bestseller, *Caste*. The book counts towards the Cleveland Reads challenge. For more information or to join the Cleveland Reads Challenge, visit clevelandreads.com. Isabel Wilkerson will be *The American Dream* festival's keynote speaker on May 13 at Severance Music Center's Mandel Concert Hall.

Free event, no tickets required.

The American Dream Festival Concert

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

Friday, May 19 at 7:30 p.m.*

Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall

The Cleveland Orchestra

Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

SCOTT JOPLIN *Treemonisha*

JULLIA PERRY *Short Piece for Orchestra*

WILLIAM GRANT STILL *Darker America*

BERNARD HERRMANN *Suite from Vertigo*

RAVEN CHACON *Voiceless Mass*

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, William Grant Still, Bernard Herrmann, and Edgard Varèse represent a multiplicity of backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints, which manifest in their music to profound effect. Beautiful and discordant, and potent, this range of composers' voices come together for a concert filled with an expanse of sonic colors and meanings.

*Pre-concert discussion at 6:30pm led by Kira Thurman and Douglas Shadle.

(Free Events): Case Western Reserve University

Exploring The American Dream

Saturday, May 20 times listed below

Tinkham Veale University Center Ballroom A, 11038 Bellflower Road, Cleveland, Ohio

Presented in partnership with Case Western Reserve University

Join two robust conversations about the American Dream by participants sharing diverse viewpoints from across political, social, economic, and cultural spectrums. A performance of the opera, *La Fanciulla del West*, follows the day's presentations.

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. / Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* and Its Influences: Placing the Opera into a perspective

With Allison Loggins-Hull, Kira Thurman, Douglas Shadle

Elena Dubinets, *moderator*

Presentations/discussions by leading musicologists studying the opera, its time, reception, and influences. Kira Thurman, author of *Singing Like Germans*, will speak about the American Dream from a perspective of an African-American scholar studying the musicianship of black artists. Douglas Shadle, author of *Orchestrating the Nation: The Nineteenth-Century American Symphonic Enterprise* and co-author of a forthcoming book about Florence Price, will address institutional problems related to underrepresented composers in the United States. Allison Loggins-Hull is The Cleveland Orchestra's Daniel R. Lewis Composer Fellow, and Elena Dubinets is Curator of the Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *The American Dream*.

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. / Cleveland's Cultural DNA and The American Dream: Past, Present, and Future

Co-presented by The City Club of Cleveland and in partnership with Ideastream Public Media

Rick Jackson, *moderator, Ideastream Public Media Senior Host/Producer*

With Dr. Regennia N. Williams, Michael Jeans, Karis Tzeng, Marcia Moreno, Cynthia Connolly

This panel will examine how the idea of the American Dream has played out in Cleveland, starting with the displacement of Indigenous people at the founding of the city. While Cleveland's role in both the Underground Railroad and later the Great Migration held out hope for access to opportunity, that hope was often undermined by policies that shaped economic reality throughout the 20th century and up to the present day. Distinguished Scholar of African American History and Culture at Western Reserve Historical Society Dr. Regennia N. Williams will delivery opening remarks, followed by a discussion with City Club of Cleveland Programming Director Cynthia Connolly, Growth Opportunity Partners Chief Executive Officer Michael Jeans, AmMore Consulting Founder and President Marcia Moreno, and Midtown Cleveland Vice President of Planning Karis Tzeng.

Free events, tickets not required.

Honoring Black Composers

Sunday, May 21, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.

Karamu House

The Cleveland Foundation Jelliffe Theatre

2355 Est 89th Street, Cleveland, Ohio

Allison Loggins-Hull, *flute*

Wei-Fang Gu, *violin*

Jessica Lee, *violin*

Sonja Braaten Molloy, *violin*

Beth Woodside, *violin*

Jeffrey Zehngut, *violin*

Eliesha Nelson, *viola*

Gareth Zehngut, *viola*

Charles Bernard, *cello*

David Alan Harrell, *cello*

Joshua Smith, *flute*

Daniel McKelway, *clarinet*

Amy Zoloto, *clarinet*

Thomas Sherwood, *percussion*

Daniel Overly, *piano*

JESSE MONTGOMERY *Rhapsody No. 1*

FLORENCE PRICE *Strings Quartet in G Major; II. Andante moderato — Allegretto*

CARLOS SIMON *Warmth from Other Suns; I. Rays of Light*

ALLISON LOGGINS-HULL *Homeland*

SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR *Clarinet Quintet; I. Allegro energico*

ALLISON LOGGINS-HULL *The Pattern*

Program order subject to change.

All programs and artists are subject to change

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