

For release: November 16, 2023

The Cleveland Orchestra announces its second annual Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival (May 15–26)

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

Festival events feature Pulitzer Prize–winning author Kai Bird as keynote speaker, pianist Conrad Tao in special solo recital, Leila Josefowicz and Trina Struble in world premiere of Jüri Reinvere's Concerto for Violin and Harp

Exhibition of works by American photographer Chuck Stewart highlighting power of sound, presence, and purpose hosted at Severance Music Center

Community and family events feature *United in Song! A Community Celebration* and special performance for families inspired by *The Magic Flute*

Partner organizations include Assembly for the Arts, Chautauqua Institution, Chuck Stewart Photography, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cuyahoga Community College, Ideastream Public Media

CLEVELAND — The Cleveland Orchestra announced today details of the second [Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival](#), which will take place at Severance Music Center and partner locations throughout Cleveland from **May 15 to 26, 2024**.

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 over the course of two extended weekends.

“Building on last season’s successful launch of the Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival, the 2024 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. We are thankful for our wonderful partners and for the support of our generous donors, including the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation, without whom this festival would not be possible.”

“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.”

Logos and photos for the 2024 Mandel Opera and Humanities Festival are available for [download here](#). Additional information available at clevelandorchestra.com/festival.

2024 Festival Events and Programming

The festival opens on **May 15 with a keynote lecture by Pulitzer Prize–winning biographer and journalist Kai Bird**, who co-authored *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer* on which the blockbuster movie *Oppenheimer* was based. The evening also includes performances of works inspired by the festival’s theme by Cleveland Orchestra musicians and soloists.

On May 17, pianist Conrad Tao performs a thought-provoking solo recital, pegged to the enduring power of Rachmaninoff’s music and its timeless influence on American classical and popular music.

In addition to the opera performances, Welser-Möst also leads the Orchestra in **two concert performances on May 23 and 25** featuring Mozart’s Serenade No. 10, “Gran Partita.” It is paired with selections from Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* and the world premiere of a concerto by **Jüri Reinvere**, featuring violinist **Leila Josefowicz** and The Cleveland Orchestra’s principal harpist **Trina Struble** (Alice Chalifoux Chair).

Two exhibitions — ***The Magic Lens: A Photographic Journey by Chuck Stewart*** at Severance Music Center (April 11–May 26, 2024) and ***Africa and Byzantium & The Magic Flute*** at the Cleveland Museum of Art (April 14–July 21, 2024) — consider the festival themes through visual art.

Additional programs include a **free performance of choral music, *United in Song! A Community Celebration***; a **special performance for kids and families inspired by *The Magic Flute***; and a series of panel discussions inspired by this year’s festival theme.

The detailed program listing of Cleveland Orchestra events as of November 2023 can be found below. **The full festival lineup, including Cleveland Orchestra and partner events, will be announced in February 2024.**

Tickets for the 2024 Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival are now on sale. Visit clevelandorchestra.com/festival, email boxoffice@clevelandorchestra.com, or call Cleveland Orchestra Ticket Services at 216-231-1111.

About the 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.

The 2024 edition 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.”

Both editions have been curated by Elena Dubinets, 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.

The Cleveland Orchestra’s Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival is supported by a historic grant from the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation. The National Endowment for the Arts supports The Cleveland Orchestra’s annual opera presentations.

Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: *Power* – Partner Organizations (As of November 2023)

Assembly for the Arts
Chautauqua Institution
Chuck Stewart Photography
Cleveland Museum of Art
Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C)
Ideastream Public Media

Calendar Listing and Program Information (As of November 2023)

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

Severance Music Center, Bogomolny-Kozerefski Grand Foyer

Thursday, April 11, 2024 – Sunday, May 26, 2024

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 sound, presence, and purpose**, 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* and Gil Scott Heron's *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* 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

The Magic Lens: A Photographic Journey by Chuck Stewart is curated by Toussaint J. Miller.

[Africa and Byzantium & The Magic Flute](#)

Cleveland Museum of Art (11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio)

Sunday, April 14, 2024 – Sunday, July 21, 2024

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 considers 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

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

Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at 7 PM

Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall

Ticketed Event

Kai Bird, *speaker*

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

With musicians of The Cleveland Orchestra

Presented in partnership with Chautauqua Institution

Keynote speaker Kai Bird is a Pulitzer Prize—winning biographer and journalist. 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 and by Chautauqua Institution on CHQ Assembly at 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.

[Mozart's Magic Flute](#)

Thursday, May 16, 2024, at 7 PM

Saturday, May 18, 2024, at 7 PM

Friday, May 24, 2024, at 7 PM

Sunday, May 26, 2024, at 3 PM

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)

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.

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

Conrad Tao in Recital: Power and Influence

Friday, May 17, 2024, at 7:30 PM

Severance Music Center, Reinberger Chamber Hall

Ticketed Event

Conrad Tao, *piano*

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, 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

***The Magic Flute* for Kids**

Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall

Saturday, May 18, 2024, at 10 AM

Experience the joy of *The Magic Flute* as a family! Designed for kids ages 7+, this fairy-tale opera event will take you on a fantastical journey with playful musical themes and engaging storytelling.

[Mozart's Gran Partita](#)

Thursday, May 23, 2024, at 7:30 PM

Saturday, May 25, 2024, at 8 PM

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.

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

Severance Music Center, Mandel Concert Hall

Saturday, May 25, 2024, at 2 PM

Free Event, Tickets Required

An afternoon of joyous vocal performances at Severance Music Center representing the rich diversity of the Greater Cleveland choral community.

Details of performers and programming will be announced in February 2024.

All programs and artists are subject to change.

###

Media Contact:

Christophe Abi-Nassif, cabinassif@clevelandorchestra.com, 216-231-7441

Jen Steer, jsteer@clevelandorchestra.com, 216-231-7637

Amanda Ameer, First Chair Promotion, amanda@firstchairpromo.com, 212-368-5949