BERND RICHARD DEUTSCH
Urworte

The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus

THE
CLEVELAND
ORCHESTRA
WELSER-MÖST

DEUTSCH

DEUTSCH
URWORTE


BERND RICHARD DEUTSCH

Photo Stefanie Luger

- **COMPOSED:** 2022–24 (co-commissioned by The Cleveland Orchestra and the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra)
- **WORLD PREMIERE:** February 7, 2025, with **Alan Gilbert** conducting the NDR Vocal Ensemble, MDR Radio Choir, and NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra
- **CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA PREMIERE:** September 26, 2025, with Music Director **Franz Welser-Möst** and The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus. This performance also marked the work's US premiere.
- **ORCHESTRATION:** 3 flutes (2nd and 3rd doubling piccolo), piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets (3rd doubling E-flat clarinet), bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bamboo wind chimes, bass drum, bell plate, congas, crotales, cymbals, flexatone, glockenspiel, güiro, lion's roar, maracas, marimba, metal chimes, ocean drum, sandpaper blocks, shaker, snare drum, spring coil, tam-tam, tambourine, temple blocks, thunder sheet, tom-toms, tubular bells, vibraslap, vibraphone, whip, wind machine, woodblocks, xylophone), 2 harps, piano, celesta, and strings, plus mixed chorus

COMPOSERS OFTEN SET ASIDE IDEAS that strike them in a flash of inspiration, waiting until the right moment arrives to wrestle them down in detail and give them an enduring form. For **Bernd Richard Deutsch**, one such idea was to write a work exploring the elemental forces that shape our lives. **Franz Welser-Möst** provided the occasion when he commissioned a score for The Cleveland Orchestra and Chorus, giving Deutsch *carte blanche* to choose whatever subject he wished. Cleveland audiences already knew the Austrian composer from his tenure as the Orchestra's Daniel R. Lewis Composer Fellow from 2017 to 2020, which saw performances of his organ concerto *Okeanos* and the world premiere of *Intensity* (performed by the Orchestra in 2019 and 2022, respectively).

Deutsch searched for a text that could carry such breadth and universality and yet be pithy enough to resonate in music rather than overwhelm it. He found it in *Urworte. Orphisch* (Primal Words: Orphic), a cycle of five poems **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** wrote relatively late in his career. Deutsch realized that the cycle readily lent itself to a five-movement form: each poem establishes a contrasting mood and atmosphere as Goethe traces the arc of a human life. Yet taken together, the five poems form a coherent whole, framed at the beginning and end by a cosmic perspective.

In the process, Deutsch found himself reflecting on questions that remain as relevant now as in Goethe's time. "In *Urworte*, Goethe speaks about the forces that influence all of our lives. He does so by considering the whole lifespan of a human being and ending with the concept of hope," Deutsch explains.

Goethe wrote these enigmatic, eight-line stanzas in the fall of 1817, giving each a subtitle that names its respective "primal word": *Daimon* ("Demon," referring to the inborn essence or genius of an individual), *Tyche* ("Chance" or "The Accidental"), *Eros* ("Love" or "Passion"), *Ananke* ("Necessity" or "Limitation"), and *Elpis* ("Hope"). The first four words derive from a late-Classical Roman source that lists Greek words naming divinities presiding over birth. Goethe's own invention was to conclude with the forward-looking concept of Hope (not present in the ancient source).



Photo Julian Dubé

Music Director **Franz Welser-Möst** leads The Cleveland Orchestra and The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus in the US premiere of *Urworte* at Severance Music Center in September 2025.

The full title, *Urworte. Orphisch*, evokes the ancient tradition of poetry attributed to the mythical singer Orpheus — texts dealing with wisdom, creation, and the ordering forces of the cosmos. By invoking this label, Goethe suggested that his five "primal words" are timeless formulas of Fate and existence, distilled for a modern age.

To give these poems and concepts musical form, Deutsch understood that they demanded the largest forces at his disposal. Because Goethe is not speaking from an individual perspective but to humanity as a whole, the score is conceived for chorus as a collective protagonist, without soloists. The instrumentation is correspondingly lavish. Contrabassoon, bass clarinet, and other low winds, reinforced by brass and low strings, form the subterranean foundation of Deutsch's soundworld, while piccolo, high woodwinds, divided strings, and glittering percussion reach into the stratosphere. This vast range creates a spatial dimension that mirrors the cosmic scale of Goethe's vision.

At various points throughout this ambitious score, the massive choral-orchestral forces recall the textures of **Schoenberg**'s *Gurre-Lieder*, while pounding *ostinatos* and stark harmonic repetitions carry a Stravinskian edge. Yet Deutsch refracts these antecedents into a language all his own — by turns playful, severe, luminous.

In the opening preludial passage, a dense, brooding chord is sustained in the lowest and darkest register, setting the work in motion with a thick cluster of sound that seems to rumble up from an ancient source. From this emerges a motive stated by the contrabassoon that seeds the entire first movement, while the brooding, cosmogenic sonority that launches *Urworte* returns at the very end, enclosing the whole work in a great arc.

This lays the foundation for the *Daimon* movement. For Goethe and the ancient Greeks alike, "Demon" did not connote something diabolical. It refers to a neutral force or guiding spirit "that drives people," according to Deutsch, and "signifies character, talent, that inner essence or charisma that is elusive and yet tangibly present." But it also encompasses the creative force that makes artists unique, adds Deutsch, and was translated by the Romans into "genius."

The chorus enters not with melody but in close, hovering harmonies that create a suspended, almost ritualistic atmosphere. At times, it declaims Goethe's words in massive, block-like sonorities; at others, the writing dissolves into shimmering *melismas*, whispered consonants, or even spoken shouts. At a certain point in each movement, the chorus explicitly enunciates its primal word, as if sealing Goethe's aphorisms in sound.



Photo Julian Dubé

(left to right) Director of Choruses **Lisa Wong** joins Music Director **Franz Welser-Möst** and composer **Bernd Richard Deutsch** on stage after the performance of *Urworte*.

Tyche, by contrast, is mercurial and *scherzo*-like, the music darting in unpredictable directions: sudden choral shouts, flickering orchestral colors, restless percussion that rattles and scrapes like Chance itself. The texture feels volatile, unstable, ready to veer off course. The chorus seizes on the stanza's final verse — "Die Lampe harrt der Flamme, die entzündet" (The lamp awaits the flame that will ignite it) — and repeats it ecstatically, fanning the image into a blaze of sound. "No other phrase is repeated and illuminated musically so often," according to the composer.

The flame is revealed as *Eros*, which begins with the strains of a long flute solo, its voice wandering and searching. "Goethe says that *Eros* comes from chaos, emptiness, loneliness," notes Deutsch, who reflects the poet's idea of *Eros* as "both love and creative energy."

Where *Eros* opened outward, *Ananke* closes in. The music pounds with motoric rhythms, circling obsessively around the same harmonic space as Deutsch implies the narrowing of possibilities with a claustrophobic sound world that refuses release. Goethe's line that *Ananke* can cause "the most beloved is exiled from the heart" finds its echo in the relentless textures.

Elpis begins in brightness: high strings shimmer, harps glisten, delicate percussion colors rustle like distant bells or rushing wind. The chorus soars in expansive *melismas* before subsiding into hushed, sustained chords. Goethe's final image is of a wingbeat that spans eons, placing human life in a cosmic frame. Deutsch's music correspondingly becomes vast, elemental — and, ultimately, unresolved. "It's more a question mark at the end," he remarked. "I don't give an answer." ■

— Thomas May

Thomas May is a writer, critic, educator, and translator. A regular contributor to The New York Times, The Seattle Times, Gramophone, *and* Strings *magazine, he is the English-language editor for the Lucerne Festival.*

Composer's Note



Städel Museum, Frankfurt | Wikimedia

In this 1787 painting, German artist **Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein** depicts **Goethe** lounging in the Roman countryside. To the poet's left, a fragment of a crumbling frieze depicts the mythological Greek princess, Iphigenia. (Goethe had previously translated and reworked **Euripides**'s tragedy, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, in 1779.)

IN MY VIEW, GOETHE'S FIVE "PRIMAL WORDS" encompass a kind of "Song of Destiny." I had long wanted to write a piece about the primal forces that shape our lives, and when I encountered this cycle of five poems, I realized that the ideas I wanted to express had been formulated there in exemplary fashion. These five stanzas cover the entire span of a human life: from childhood, youth, and early and middle adulthood through to old age.

There is a strong contrast between ancient and modern concepts of Fate. In Greek mythology, people seem helpless before the gods — think of Oedipus, who fulfills the oracle despite every attempt to resist. To oppose Fate is futile, for greater forces prevail. Modern, enlightened thought, by contrast, focuses on the individual and on shaping one's own destiny, a view that has led to great advances and revolutionary change. Yet the last word is not spoken, and there is always the danger of failing through hubris.

For Goethe, *Daimon* (Demon) was an extremely important concept. It is a force that drives people: character, talent, that certain something, charisma; it represents an elusive yet tangible essence. For Goethe as poet, the *Daimon* is above all the force that drives an artist creatively and makes him or her unique. A central theme of the piece is the question: Does freedom exist, and if so, what does it consist of?

The pair *Daimon* and *Tyche* (The Accidental) express a contrast between two principles: genetic disposition and environmental influences. Both are decisive. A key sentence in the *Tyche* poem reads: "The lamp awaits the flame that will ignite it." For me, this is one of the most important thoughts in the entire cycle. No other phrase is repeated and illuminated musically so often in my composition. *Eros* (Love) follows immediately and reveals that flame: not only love, but another central driving force in every creative activity.

Ananke (Necessity) personifies compulsion and restriction. She can even bring it about that "the most beloved is exiled from the heart," and our alleged freedom ultimately proves to be an illusion.

Elpis (Hope) is, like Fate, indestructible and, like *Daimon*, *Tyche*, and *Eros*, a force that drives us. It lifts and inspires us. The final line — "A wing flap! and behind us lie the eons" — suggests both immortality and the universal validity of the five principles across the ages. ■

— Bernd Richard Deutsch
(adapted from an interview with Kerstin Schüssler-Bach)

Urworte

by **Bernd Richard Deutsch**

Text by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**
English translation by **Kirk Wetters***

I. ΔΑΙΜΩΝ: DÄMON

Wie an dem Tag, der Dich der Welt verliehen
Die Sonne stand zum Gruße der Planeten,
Bist alsobald und fort und fort gediehen,
Nach dem Gesetz, wonach
Du angetreten.
So mußt Du sein, Dir kannst Du nicht
entfliehen,
So sagten schon Sibyllen,
so Propheten,
Und keine Zeit und keine Macht
zerstückelt
Geprägte Form die lebend sich entwickelt.

I. DAIMON: DEMON

As on the day you were granted to the world,
The sun stood to greet the planets,
You likewise began to thrive, forth and forth,
Following the law that governed
your accession.
You must be so, you cannot flee
yourself,
Thus sibyls long ago pronounced,
thus prophets,
And neither time nor any power can
dismember
Characteristic form, living, self-developing.

II. TYXH: DAS ZUFÄLLIGE

Die strenge Grenze doch umgeht gefällig
Ein Wandelndes, das mit und um uns
wandelt;
Nicht einsam bleibst Du, bildest Dich
gesellig,
Und handelst wohl so wie ein andrer handelt.
Im Leben ist's bald hin- bald widerfällig,
Es ist ein Tand und wird so durchgetandelt.
Schon hat sich still der Jahre Kreis
gerundet,
Die Lampe harrt der Flamme die entzündet.

II. TYCHE: THE ACCIDENTAL

Yet this strict limit is gently circumscribed
By a fluctuation that flows around and
with us;
You are not alone, but shape yourself
socially,
And must certainly act just as another acts.
In life things are often due, overdue, redone,
It is a trinket, passed in makeshift thrift.
The circle of the years is already silently
closed,
The lamp awaits the flame that will ignite it.

III. ΕΡΩΣ: LIEBE

Die bleibt nicht aus! — Er stürzt vom
Himmel nieder,
Wohin er sich aus alter Öde
schwang,
Er schwebt heran auf luftigem Gefieder
Um Stirn und Brust den Frühlingstag
entlang,
Scheint jetzt zu fliehn, vom Fliehen kehrt
er wieder,
Da wird ein Wohl im Weh, so süß
und bang.
Gar manches Herz verschwebt im
Allgemeinen,
Doch widmet sich das Edelste dem Einen.

III. EROS: LOVE

And there she is! — He hurtles down from
the heaven,
Where he had lifted himself out of ancient
chaos,
He soars and surges forward on airy wings
Surrounding brow and breast across the
vernal day,
Seems now to flee, but in flight he
turns about,
Creating pleasure in the pain, so happy
and forlorn.
Many a heart drifts away in
generality,
But the noblest devotes itself to the One.

IV. ΑΝΑΓΚΗ: NÖTIGUNG

Da ist's denn wieder, wie die Sterne wollten:
Bedingung und Gesetz und aller Wille
Ist nur ein Wollen, weil wir eben sollten,
Und vor dem Willen schweigt die Willkür
stille;
Das Liebste wird vom Herzen weggescholten,
Dem harten Muß bequemt sich Will' und
Grille.
So sind wir scheinfrei denn nach manchen
Jahren,
Nur enger dran als wir am Anfang
waren.

IV. ANANKE: NECESSITY

Now all follows once again the stars' will:
The terms and laws and the wills of all
Are but a single will, just because we have to,
And before the will all choice is
silenced;
The most beloved is exiled from the heart,
Desire and fancy submit to hard
compulsion.
Thus apparently then, after many years,
we are
Only more tightly bound than in the
beginning.

V. ΕΛΠΙΣ: HOFFNUNG

Doch solcher Grenze, solcher eh'rnen Mauer
Höchst widerwärt'ge Pforte wird entriegelt,
Sie stehe nur mit alter Felsendauer!
Ein Wesen regt sich leicht und ungezügelt,
Aus Wolkendecke, Nebel, Regenschauer
Erhebt sie uns, mit ihr, durch sie beflügelt,
Ihr kennt sie wohl, sie schwärmt durch
alle Zonen;
Ein Flügelschlag! und hinter uns Äonen.

V. ELPIS: HOPE

But such a limit, such a steely wall,
Its most revolting portal is unlatched,
Though it may stand with a mountain's age!
A being arises lightly, without reins,
Out of the clouds' cover, fog and rainfall,
It lifts us up, with her, by her wings,
You know her well, she swarms toward
every zone;
A wing flap! and behind us lie the eons.

* From *Demonic History: From Goethe to the Present* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2015)



THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA
THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA CHORUS
conducted by Franz Welser-Möst

Urworte
for Chorus and Orchestra

Track 1 – I. Daimon: Dämon 13:19
Track 2 – II. Tyche: Das Zufällige 12:20
Track 3 – III. Eros: Liebe 12:41
Track 4 – IV. Ananke: Nötigung 7:20
Track 5 – V. Elpis: Hoffnung 13:49

Recorded live in Mandel Concert Hall at Severance Music Center in Cleveland, Ohio, on September 26, 27 & 28, 2025

Recorded at 24bit 96kHz PCM
Stereo and Dolby Atmos mixes available

About the Orchestra

The Cleveland Orchestra, under the leadership of Music Director **Franz Welser-Möst** since 2002, is widely recognized as one of the world's leading ensembles. Praised by *The New York Times* as "America's Finest," the Orchestra is renowned for its virtuosity, elegance of sound, and chamber-like musical flexibility. In his 25th and final season as Music Director, Welser-Möst concludes a transformative partnership that has been marked by exceptional artistic ambition, growing international recognition, and deep community connection.

During his tenure, the Orchestra has achieved major institutional milestones, including groundbreaking residencies at the Musikverein in Vienna — the first by an American orchestra — and at the Adrienne Arsht Center in Miami. In 2023, The Cleveland Orchestra launched the annual Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival, presenting acclaimed opera productions alongside art exhibits, community events, and civic conversations.

Through concerts, broadcasts, recordings, tours, and digital initiatives, The Cleveland Orchestra reaches an ever-growing audience around the world. Its in-house recording label and streaming platform, **Adella.live**, capture and share performances from the Welser-Möst era while introducing new generations of fans to the Orchestra's artistry.

Founded by **Adella Prentiss Hughes**, The Cleveland Orchestra gave its inaugural concert in December 1918. Over more than a century, it has grown into a treasured community institution, enriching lives through music, education, and a deep commitment to Northeast Ohio. Today, more than 400,000 people attend Cleveland Orchestra concerts each year. From its year-round home at Severance Music Center to its summer season at Blossom Music Center in Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the Orchestra continues to serve audiences across the region.

Seven Music Directors — **Nikolai Sokoloff**, **Artur Rodziński**, **Erich Leinsdorf**, **George Szell**, **Lorin Maazel**, **Christoph von Dohnányi**, and **Franz Welser-Möst** — have shaped the ensemble's distinctive musical identity and celebrated "Cleveland sound." Welser-Möst's tenure as the longest-serving Music Director in Cleveland Orchestra history stands as a defining chapter in that evolution. ■



Photo Julian Dubé

The Cleveland Orchestra

Franz Welser-Möst MUSIC DIRECTOR
Kelvin Smith Family Chair

FIRST VIOLINS
Joel Link
CONCERTMASTER
Blossom-Lee Chair

Elizabeth Fayette
FIRST ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER
Virginia M. Lindseth, PhD, Chair

Philip Marten
ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER
Gretchen D. and Ward Smith Chair

Zhan Shu
ASSISTANT CONCERTMASTER
Clara G. and George P. Bickford Chair

Stephen Tavani
ASSISTANT CONCERTMASTER
Dr. Ronald H. Krasney Chair

Wei-Fang Gu
Drs. Paul M. and Renate H. Duchesneau Chair

Kim Gomez
Elizabeth and Leslie Kondorossy Chair

Chul-In Park
Harriet T. and David L. Simon Chair

Miho Hashizume
Theodore Rautenberg Chair

Jeanne Preucil Rose
Larry J.B. and Barbara S. Robinson Chair

Alicia Koelz
Oswald and Phyllis Lerner Gilroy Chair

Yu Yuan
Patty and John Collinson Chair

Isabel Trautwein
Trevor and Jennie Jones Chair

Katherine Bormann
Paul and Lucille Jones Chair

Analise Handke
Gladys B. Goetz Chair

Genevieve Smelser

SECOND VIOLINS
Stephen Rose*
Alfred M. and Clara T. Rankin Chair

Eli Matthews[1]
Patricia M. Kozerefski and Richard J. Bogomolny Chair

Jason Yu[2]
James and Donna Reid Chair

Sonja Braaten Molloy

Carolyn Gadiel Warner

Elayna Duitman

Ioana Missits

Jeffrey Zehngut^

Kathleen Collins

Beth Woodside

Emma Shook
Dr. Jeanette Grasselli Brown and Dr. Glenn R. Brown Chair

Yun-Ting Lee
Deborah L. Neale Chair

Jiah Chung Chapdelaine

Liyuan Xie

Gawon Kim

Dustin Wilkes-Kim

VIOLAS
Wesley Collins*
Chaillé H. and Richard B. Tullis Chair

Gareth Zehngut[1]^
Charles M. and Janet G. Kimball Chair

Stanley Konopka[2]

Lisa Boyko
Richard and Nancy Sneed Chair

Richard Waugh

Lembi Veskimets
The Morgan Sisters Chair

Eliesha Nelson^
Anthony and Diane Wynshaw-Boris Chair

William Bender
Thomas Lauria and Christopher Lauria Chair

Sean Juhl

Gabriel Napoli^

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Louis D. Beaumont Chair

Richard Weiss[1]
The GAR Foundation Chair

Charles Bernard[2]
Helen Weil Ross Chair

Bryan Dumm
Muriel and Noah Butkin Chair

Tanya Ell
Thomas J. and Judith Fay Gruber Chair

Ralph Curry

Brian Thornton
William P. Blair III Chair

David Alan Harrell

Martha Baldwin

Dane Johansen
Marguerite and James Rigby Chair

Paul Kushious

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Maximilian Dimoff*
Clarence T. Reinberger Chair

Charles Paul[1]
Mary E. and F. Joseph Callahan Chair

Derek Zadinsky[2]

Mark Atherton

Thomas Sperl

Henry Peyrebrune
Charles Barr Memorial Chair

Charles Carleton

Scott Dixon

Brandon Mason

HARP
Trina Struble*
Alice Chalifoux Chair

FLUTES
Joshua Smith*
Elizabeth M. and William C. Treuhaft Chair

Saeran St. Christopher

Jessica Sindell[2]^
Austin B. and Ellen W. Chinn Chair

Mary Kay Fink

PICCOLO
Mary Kay Fink
Anne M. and M. Roger Clapp Chair

OBOES
Frank Rosenwein*
Edith S. Taplin Chair

Corbin Stair
Sharon and Yoash Wiener Chair

Jeffrey Rathbun[2]
Everett D. and Eugenia S. McCurdy Chair

Robert Walters

ENGLISH HORN
Robert Walters
Samuel C. and Bernette K. Jaffe Chair

CLARINETS
Afendi Yusuf*
Robert Marcellus Chair

Robert Woolfrey
Victoire G. and Alfred M. Rankin, Jr. Chair

Daniel McKelway[2]
Robert R. and Vilma L. Kohn Chair

Amy Zoloto

E-FLAT CLARINET
Daniel McKelway
Stanley L. and Eloise M. Morgan Chair

BASS CLARINET
Amy Zoloto
Myrna and James Spira Chair

BASSOONS
John Clouser*
Louise Harkness Ingalls Chair

Gareth Thomas

Catherine Van Handel[2]
Sandra L. Haslinger Chair

Jonathan Sherwin

CONTRABASSOON
Jonathan Sherwin

HORNS
Nathaniel Silberschlag*
George Szell Memorial Chair

Michael Mayhew§
Knight Foundation Chair

Jesse McCormick-Stepp
Robert B. Benyo Chair

Hans Clebsch

Richard King

Meghan Guegold Hege^
Gay Cull Addicott and Robert R. Cull Chair

TRUMPETS
Michael Sachs*
Robert and Eunice Podis Weiskopf Chair

Jack Sutte

Lyle Steelman[2]^
James P. and Dolores D. Storer Chair

Michael Miller

CORNETS
Michael Sachs*
Mary Elizabeth and G. Robert Klein Chair

Michael Miller

TROMBONES
Brian Wendel*
Gilbert W. and Louise I. Humphrey Chair

Richard Stout
Alexander and Marianna C. McAfee Chair

Shachar Israel[2]

BASS TROMBONE
Luke Sieve

EUPHONIUM & BASS TRUMPET
Richard Stout

TUBA
Yasuhito Sugiyama*
Nathalie C. Spence and Nathalie S. Boswell Chair

TIMPANI
Peter Nichols[2]
Mr. and Mrs. Richard K. Smucker Chair

PERCUSSION
Marc Damoulakis*
Margaret Allen Ireland Chair

Thomas Sherwood

Tanner Tanyeri

Peter Nichols

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Carolyn Gadiel Warner
Marjory and Marc L. Swartzbaugh Chair

LIBRARIAN
Michael Ferraguto*
Joe and Marlene Toot Chair

ENDOWED CHAIRS CURRENTLY UNOCCUPIED
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Sunshine Chair
Otto G. and Corinne T. Voss Chair
Rudolf Serkin Chair

** Principal*

§ Associate Principal

[1] First Assistant Principal

[2] Assistant Principal

^ Alum of The Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra

† In Memoriam

CONDUCTORS
Christoph von Dohnányi†
MUSIC DIRECTOR LAUREATE

Taichi Fukumura
ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR
Elizabeth Ring and William Gwinn Mather Chair

James Feddeck
PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR & MUSICAL ADVISOR OF THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA YOUTH ORCHESTRA
Sidney and Doris Dworkin Chair

Lisa Wong
DIRECTOR OF CHORUSES
Frances P. and Chester C. Bolton Chair

Listing as of August 2026 | This roster lists the full-time members of The Cleveland Orchestra.

Franz Welser-Möst

Franz Welser-Möst has forged one of the most transformative artistic legacies in the history of The Cleveland Orchestra, as its seventh and longest-serving Music Director. Now in his 25th and final season, he has shaped its sound with extraordinary care and imagination, cultivating greater warmth and flexibility, while preserving precision and transparency. Since the start of his tenure in 2002–03, he has led more than 1,200 performances across 15 US states and 26 countries, and has appointed 56 of the Orchestra's 100 current musicians.

Widely admired for his interpretations of Central European and Russian repertoire, Welser-Möst has also been a champion for living composers, specifically through the Orchestra's Daniel R. Lewis Composer Fellowship. His artistic collaborations have resulted in dozens of commissions and co-commissions, and at the close of the 2026–27 season, he will have led The Cleveland Orchestra in 27 world premieres and 21 US premieres. Welser-Möst's tenure also brought about major innovative milestones for the Orchestra, including the creation of its recording label, the launch of its streaming platform, **Adella.live**, and the inauguration of the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival.

Opera has become a defining element of Welser-Möst's Cleveland career through acclaimed productions of **Dvořák**'s *Rusalka*, **Richard Strauss**'s *Ariadne auf Naxos*, **Janáček**'s *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and **Mozart**'s *The Magic Flute*. In May 2027, he leads a fully staged production of Richard Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. With the appointment of **Lisa Wong** as Director of Choruses, Welser-Möst also elevated the all-volunteer Cleveland Orchestra Chorus as an essential artistic partner in these productions and other large works.

Beyond Cleveland, Welser-Möst maintains a distinguished international career, marked by a longstanding artistic partnership with the Vienna Philharmonic. He regularly leads the ensemble at the Musikverein and on major international tours, and has already conducted the celebrated annual New Year's concert three times. In 2024, he was named an Honorary Member of the Vienna Philharmonic, one of its highest honors. He is also celebrated for his interpretations of opera, conducting productions which have been widely acclaimed at the Salzburg Festival and the Vienna State Opera. ■



Photo Sebastian Frölich

Lisa Wong

Director of Choruses

Frances P. and Chester C. Bolton Chair



Photo Roger Mastroianni

Lisa Wong, a distinguished choral conductor and educator, serves as Director of Choruses for The Cleveland Orchestra, where she has prepared The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus and Blossom Festival Chorus for acclaimed performances under conductors **Franz Welser-Möst**, **Klaus Mäkelä**, **John Adams**, **Jane Glover**, **Susanna Mälkki,** and **Eric Whitacre**, among others.

Wong served for 16 years as the Olive Williams Kettering Professor of Music at The College of Wooster. As director of the award-winning Wooster Chorus, she elevated the ensemble to national prominence through annual tours, performances at state and regional conferences, and the premieres of 15 new works. Her expertise in music education is informed by 32 years of classroom experience and extensive work as a clinician, adjudicator, and guest conductor. ■

ABOUT THE CHORUS

Now in its 75th season, The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus is celebrated for its versatility and refined musicianship, appearing regularly with The Cleveland Orchestra at Severance and Blossom music centers. As one of the few all-volunteer, professionally trained choruses affiliated with a major American orchestra, it received the 2019–20 Distinguished Service Award, recognizing extraordinary service to the Orchestra.

Visit **cochorus.com** for more information on the Chorus and auditions.

The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus

SOPRANOS

Amy Foster Babinski
Claudia Barriga
Jesse Bobbitt
Emily Carlson
Signe Carlson
Ruby Chen
Caitlin DiFranco
Maddie Dirrim
Emily Engle
Molly Falasco
Lisa Fedorovich
Emily Flood
Jennifer Gilles
Julia Halamek
Rebecca S. Hall
Casey Hasen
Sarah Henley
Lisa Hrusovsky
Rachel Imhoff
Shannon R. Jakubczak
Kiersten Johnson
Sarah Jones-Gould
Katie Kitchen
Hope Klassen-Kay
Brianna Knapp*
EvaCecilia Koh
Kate Macy
Gracie Mino
Sarah Moldover
Julie Myers-Pruchenski
Jennifer Heinert O'Leary
Katie Paskey
Victoria Peacock
Elizabeth Stockton Perkins
Sarah Peterson
Grace Prentice
Jylian Purtee
Lisa M. Ramsey
Emma Russell
Ellie Kleber Smith
Megan Tettau
Meagan Ulery
Cassie Utt
Sharilee Walker

ALTOS

Laurel Babcock
Debbie Bates
Riley Beistel
Kristina Bodnar
Carla Cashman
Barbara J. Clugh
Amber Dimoff
Brooke Emmel
Colleen Endrizzi
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Sarah Hutchins
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Severance Music Center

Home of The Cleveland Orchestra



Photo Roger Mastroianni

Severance Music Center, home of The Cleveland Orchestra since 1931, is one of Cleveland's most treasured landmarks and among the world's most admired concert halls. Located in University Circle, Severance was designed by the Cleveland firm Walker & Weeks and funded largely through a $1 million gift from **John and Elisabeth Severance**. The hall's creation was the result of years of advocacy by Orchestra founder **Adella Prentiss Hughes** and the Musical Arts Association.

Today, Severance houses the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Concert Hall, named in 2021 following a $50 million grant from the Mandel Foundation, as well as Reinberger Chamber Hall, an intimate space ideal for smaller ensembles, recitals, and lectures. The building is used year-round for concerts, rehearsals, and education programs, and is also available to community organizations for performances and private gatherings. A $36 million renovation completed in 2000 restored the hall's original Art Deco details, improved patron amenities, modernized backstage areas, and preserved its legendary acoustics.

Recognized by the Cleveland Landmarks Commission and the National Register of Historic Places, Severance Music Center is a symbol of Cleveland's philanthropic spirit and commitment to the arts. ■

Acknowledgments

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