

THE
CLEVELAND
ORCHESTRA

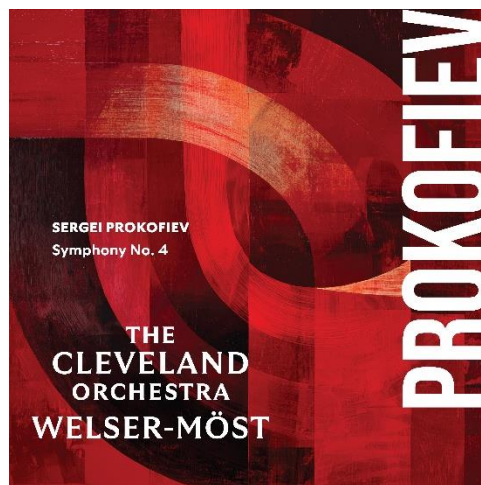
FRANZ WELSER-MÖST, MUSIC DIRECTOR

NEWS

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SEASON

For release: October 30, 2025

The Cleveland Orchestra to release Prokofiev's Symphony No. 4 as part of ongoing symphonic cycle



CLEVELAND — The Cleveland Orchestra will release a new recording of Sergei Prokofiev's Symphony No. 4 on **Friday, November 14**, marking the 95th anniversary of the work's premiere.

Led by Music Director Franz Welser-Möst and captured live at Severance Music Center on May 8 and 10, 2025, the performance will be available on all major platforms for digital streaming and download. A preview track will be released on October 31.

This new recording continues Welser-Möst's and The Cleveland Orchestra's acclaimed journey through Prokofiev's symphonies, following their interpretations of the composer's Second, Third, Fifth, and Sixth. Together, these performances illuminate the full creative arc of Prokofiev's symphonic voice from its early fire to its mature introspection as the Orchestra builds towards a complete symphonic cycle.

Produced by Elaine Martone, who earlier this year won her third Grammy Award for Classical Producer of the Year and sixth Grammy overall, this latest release showcases The Cleveland Orchestra's enduring dedication to sonic excellence and innovation.

Prokofiev first based his Fourth Symphony on his 1928 ballet *The Prodigal Son*, then revisited it nearly two decades later to create a work of greater scope and vitality. The 1947 revision expands the symphony's scale, moving from calm, reflective passages to bursts of energy, tender lyricism, and a finale charged with rhythmic drive.

Prokofiev's Symphony No. 4 marks The Cleveland Orchestra's third release of 2025, following the March release of [Eastman's Symphony No. 2](#) and [Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 2](#), and the July release of [Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 27 with Garrick Ohlsson and Symphony No. 29](#). It is the [16th release](#) on The Cleveland Orchestra's own label since it launched in 2020.

Media Reviewing Access

Access to the recording's audio files for media reviewing is available upon request. Album cover art, digital booklet, and high-resolution images can be found in the [press kit](#).

Product Information

The Cleveland Orchestra

Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

Sergei Prokofiev

Symphony No. 4 in C major, Op. 112

Track 1 – I. Andante — Allegro eroico

Track 2 – II. Andante tranquillo

Track 3 – III. Moderato quasi allegretto

Track 4 – IV. Allegro risoluto

Audio Production

Elaine Martone, *recording producer*

Gintas Norvila, *recording, editing, and mixing engineer*

Jennifer Nulsen, *stereo mastering engineer*

Alan JS Han, *immersive mixing engineer*

About Prokofiev's Symphony No. 4 (By Hugh Macdonald)

In 1947, 17 years after its premiere, Sergei Prokofiev made a revision of his Fourth Symphony (Op. 47) so radical that many commentators regard the revised version as a new work altogether. Its new opus number (Op. 112) supports that view.

But Prokofiev thought of both versions of this music as the natural outgrowth from his ballet *The Prodigal Son*, which he wrote in response to a commission from impresario Sergei Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes in 1928. The ballet was first performed in Paris with the composer conducting. At the same time, he was fashioning his Third Symphony out of the opera *The Fiery Angel*, frustrated by not being able to persuade any theater to stage it. He was also asked by Serge Koussevitzky to compose something for the 50th anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, to be celebrated in 1930. His response was to offer a new symphony, which was already in his head, using *The Prodigal Son* along with music intended for, but not included in, the ballet.

It is said that Prokofiev declined the commission because the fee was too low, but he nonetheless allowed the Boston Symphony Orchestra to purchase the manuscript of the Fourth Symphony and premiere it. Much of it was in fact composed in the US during a lengthy tour that Prokofiev undertook in the early months of 1930. Its American reception in November of that year, after Prokofiev had returned to Europe, was only lukewarm, a response that was shared in Europe and the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, the Fifth Symphony, composed in 1944 after his return to the Soviet Union, was a success everywhere — and still is — which encouraged him to think again about the Fourth. Rather than

simply revising the work, he rewrote it, expanding the size of the orchestra and adding nearly 15 minutes to its duration. Its connection to the original ballet was now remote, and it is in this form that the music has won its place as an important part of the composer's legacy.

The listener will be struck by the abundance of musical ideas in this work. Symphonic forms are present, but hidden. In the first movement, there is a startling contrast between the placid atmosphere which opens the work and the aggressive, noisy music that bursts in at regular intervals, strangely labeled "eroico" (heroic). It is as if two alien musics are at war, with no resolution.

As we know from Prokofiev's ballets, there is a sweet and sometimes childish side to his music, and this is to be heard here, especially in the middle two movements. Prokofiev was never afraid to write crystalline, exposed, expressive melodies, often high above the supporting accompaniment, or barely accompanied at all.

The finale recalls the Haydnesque high spirits that inspired Prokofiev's First Symphony, the "Classical." This is music reminding us that the rhythmic vitality possessed in full measure by Prokofiev is the essential mark of a great composer of ballet.

About The Cleveland Orchestra

The Cleveland Orchestra, under the leadership of Franz Welser-Möst since 2002, is one of the most sought-after performing ensembles in the world. Year after year the ensemble exemplifies extraordinary artistic excellence, creative programming, and community engagement. In recent years, *The New York Times* has called Cleveland "the best in America" for its virtuosity, elegance of sound, variety of color, and chamber-like musical cohesion.

Founded by Adella Prentiss Hughes, the Orchestra performed its inaugural concert in December 1918. By the middle of the century, decades of growth and sustained support had turned the ensemble into one of the most admired around the world.

The past decade has seen an increasing number of young people attending concerts, bringing fresh attention to The Cleveland Orchestra's legendary sound and committed programming. More recently, the Orchestra launched several bold digital projects, including the streaming platform Adella.live and its own recording label. Together, they have captured the Orchestra's unique artistry and the musical achievements of the Welser-Möst and Cleveland Orchestra partnership.

The 2025–26 season marks Franz Welser-Möst's 24th year as Music Director, a period in which The Cleveland Orchestra has earned unprecedented acclaim around the world, including a series of residencies at the Musikverein in Vienna, the first of its kind by an American orchestra, and a number of acclaimed opera presentations.

Since 1918, seven music directors — Nikolai Sokoloff, Artur Rodziński, Erich Leinsdorf, George Szell, Lorin Maazel, Christoph von Dohnányi, and Franz Welser-Möst — have guided and shaped the ensemble's growth and sound. Through concerts at home and on tour, broadcasts, and a catalog of acclaimed recordings, The Cleveland Orchestra is heard today by a growing group of fans around the world. [Find out more.](#)

About Franz Welser-Möst

Now in his 24th season, Franz Welser-Möst continues to shape an unmistakable sound culture as Music

Director of The Cleveland Orchestra. Under his leadership, the Orchestra has earned repeated international acclaim for its musical excellence, reaffirmed its strong commitment to new music, and brought opera back to the stage of Severance Music Center. In recent years, the Orchestra also launched its own streaming platform, Adella.live, and a recording label. Today, it boasts one of the youngest audiences in the United States.

In addition to residencies in the US and Europe, Welser-Möst and the Orchestra perform regularly at the world's leading international festivals. Welser-Möst will remain Music Director until 2027, making him the longest-serving music director of The Cleveland Orchestra.

Welser-Möst enjoys a particularly close and productive artistic partnership with the Vienna Philharmonic. He regularly conducts the orchestra in subscription concerts at the Vienna Musikverein, at the Salzburg Festival, and on tour in Europe, Japan, China, and the US, and has appeared three times on the podium for their celebrated New Year's Concert (2011, 2013, and 2023). At the Salzburg Festival, Welser-Möst has set new standards in interpretation as an opera conductor, with a special focus on the operas of Richard Strauss.

Among Welser-Möst's many honors and awards, he was named an Honorary Member of the Vienna Philharmonic in 2024, one of the orchestra's highest distinctions.

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