



For release: July 16, 2026

The Cleveland Orchestra to release recording of Verdi's Requiem



CLEVELAND— The Cleveland Orchestra and Music Director Franz Welser-Möst will release a new spatial audio recording of Verdi's Requiem on **August 21**, adding another landmark work to the Orchestra's growing catalog.

Recorded live at Severance Music Center during performances on January 15, 17, and 18, 2026, the recording captures one of the repertoire's most profound and dramatic choral masterpieces. Joining Welser-Möst and The Cleveland Orchestra are The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus, prepared by Director of Chorus Lisa Wong, and an internationally celebrated quartet of soloists: soprano Asmik Grigorian, mezzo-soprano Deniz Uzun, tenor Joshua Guerrero, and bass Tareq Nazmi.

Ahead of the album's release, a sample track will be available across all major streaming platforms on **July 31**.

Produced by seven-time Grammy Award-winning producer Elaine Martone, the album marks The Cleveland Orchestra's third recording release of 2026, following *Allison Loggins-Hull: The Cleveland Residency* in April and the release of Galina Ustvolskaya's Symphony No. 5 paired with Francis Poulenc's

La voix humaine earlier this month. It is also the 19th release on The Cleveland Orchestra's own recording label since its launch in 2020.

Verdi composed his Requiem in memory of the Italian writer Alessandro Manzoni, creating a work that blends the solemnity of the Catholic Mass with the dramatic power of his operas. Since its premiere in 1874, the work has captivated audiences with its extraordinary emotional scope, from the explosive power of the "Dies irae" to passages of remarkable tenderness, serenity, and hope.



Music Director Franz Welser-Möst leads the performance of Verdi's Requiem at Severance Music Center on January 15, 2026.
(Photo: Yevhen Gulenko)

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 from the performance can be found in the [press kit](#).

Product Information

Verdi's Requiem
The Cleveland Orchestra
Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*
Asmik Grigorian, *soprano*
Deniz Uzun, *mezzo-soprano*
Joshua Guerrero, *tenor*
Tareq Nazmi, *bass*
The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus

Track 1 – I. Introit — Kyrie
Track 2 – II. Dies irae: Dies irae
Track 3 – II. Dies irae: Tuba mirum
Track 4 – II. Dies irae: Mors stupebit
Track 5 – II. Dies irae: Liber scriptus
Track 6 – II. Dies irae: Quid sum miser

Track 7 – II. Dies irae: Rex tremendae
Track 8 – II. Dies irae: Recordare
Track 9 – II. Dies irae: Ingemisco
Track 10 – II. Dies irae: Confutatis
Track 11 – II. Dies irae: Lacrimosa
Track 12 – III. Offertory: Domine Jesu Christe
Track 13 – III. Offertory: Hostias
Track 14 – IV. Sanctus
Track 15 – V. Agnus Dei
Track 16 – VI. Communion: Lux aeterna
Track 17 – VII. Libera me
Track 18 – VII. Libera me: Dies irae
Track 19 – VII. Libera me: Requiem aeternam
Track 20 – VII. Libera me: Libera me

Audio Production

Elaine Martone, *recording producer*

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

Jennifer Nulsen, *stereo mastering engineer*

Daniel Shores, *immersive mixing engineer*

About Verdi's Requiem (by Hugh Macdonald)

When Rossini died in 1868, he left Giuseppe Verdi the title of greatest living Italian composer. In fact, Verdi had already dominated the field of Italian opera for at least 20 years, since Rossini's last opera, *William Tell* (1829), was followed by nearly 40 years of semi-retirement.

Verdi proposed a Requiem in Rossini's memory, to be jointly written by leading Italian composers and to be performed on the anniversary of his death. The idea foundered, largely because there was no impresario or publisher behind it, but it seems that this unrealized project prompted Verdi to begin work on an idea he had considered a couple of years earlier: to construct a Requiem of his own. It wasn't until May 1873, once he heard news of the death of Alessandro Manzoni — the hero of Italy's fight for nationhood — that the idea found its impetus.

Verdi set to work that winter and had the whole Requiem completed by April 1874, allowing a month to prepare the work for its premiere at the church of San Marco in Milan. The first performance was immediately followed by three performances at the Teatro alla Scala. Verdi then took the work to Paris for seven performances, and in the following year toured Paris, London, and Vienna, conducting in each city to great acclaim. Verdi's Requiem was unquestionably the most talked-about work of its time.

"This Mass is not to be sung in the way one sings an opera," was Verdi's instruction, and he was perfectly happy with any singer who had a beautiful voice. Yet Verdi could never disguise the fact that his Requiem has dramatic qualities, as almost all critics have pointed out since the beginning. The text, after all, includes some highly colored passages, especially in the Dies irae, while the later parts of the work are more contemplative in character. Verdi cared deeply about the unity of the work. Some of this is achieved by the recurrence of musical motives, such as the quotation of the opening cello phrase in the last movement; some is suggested by similar phrases for the solo voices echoed from earlier in the work. The most inescapable recurring passage is the mighty Dies irae, with great shouts from the chorus

against the orchestra in full fury. Off-beat blows on the bass drum are withheld on the first statement but add a new level of terror several bars later.

The Dies irae is by far the longest section, at about half an hour, incorporating subsidiary portions of the text. The contrast is illustrated by the hushed unison on the words “Quando Judex est venturus” (When the Judge shall appear) in preparation for the sound of the Last Judgement itself. Four offstage trumpets call across to the orchestra’s onstage trumpets, and the choral basses explode with the Tuba mirum. That is followed by Mors stupebit — perhaps the lowest point in the penitent’s journey — the Liber scriptus (a beautiful solo for the mezzo-soprano), a return of the Dies irae, and so on.

The Pie Jesu (still within the Dies irae movement) calls for the quartet of soloists to sing as a group, unaccompanied, exploring those rich harmonies that add so much character to Verdi’s late music. The Offertory again uses the soloists as a quartet, sharing a beautifully shaped phrase first assigned to the bass soloist on the words “Libera animas” (Deliver the souls). Even when the tempo quickens, the chorus is still silent, and the soloists close the movement with the motivic phrase on “Libera animas” now sung in a broad unison by all four soloists.

The Sanctus is a tour de force for the chorus: swift, short, and fiendishly difficult. With a no-nonsense cadence, thoughts of penitence and death are abruptly banished.

This is followed by a strange Agnus Dei, built like a set of variations on a theme presented in its most basic form at the beginning and left almost bare when it occurs again. Simplicity and purity seem to be the qualities to feed the imagination here.

In the Communion, bassoons, trombones, and a rumble of drums evoke the utter darkness that causes the penitent to plead for mercy. The response comes from the piccolo and high violins, which cast a gleam of light into the shadows and give a hint of the perpetual light for which they are praying. This is another movement assigned entirely to the soloists, leaving the chorus to return as major players in the Libera me.

If we can survive the final onslaught of the Dies irae in this final movement, the beautiful unaccompanied section that follows would restore anyone’s faith. Perhaps no more was needed, but Verdi gives us a life-affirming fugue on the words “Libera me, Domine” (Deliver me, O Lord) and a series of closing gestures that display his masterly control of mood, pace, color, and effect.

Verdi had learned through his work in opera over the years to never be satisfied unless everything was exactly right. When it came to writing a choral work for the concert hall, he worked persistently to make sure that his setting of this age-old text left no room for improvement. As we listen to the Requiem, whether for the first or for the umpteenth time, we can agree that he got it right.

About The Cleveland Orchestra

The Cleveland Orchestra, under the leadership of 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.

About 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 beginning his tenure in 2002–03, his leadership has characterized a quarter century of artistic excellence, community outreach, and global prominence.

Welser-Möst first appeared with The Cleveland Orchestra as a guest conductor in February 1993 and has returned every season beginning in 1995. By the end of the 2026–27 season, he will have led the Orchestra in more than 1,200 performances in 93 cities spanning 15 US states and 26 countries, including 701 concerts at Severance Music Center. He has appointed 56 of the Orchestra's 100 current musicians, profoundly shaping its sound for a new generation. Welser-Möst's tenure ushered in major milestones, from innovative opera stagings to the launch of its streaming platform, Adella.live, and its recording label.

Widely admired for his interpretations of Central European and Russian repertoire, Welser-Möst has also championed living composers, specifically through the Orchestra's Daniel R. Lewis Composer Fellowship. His artistic partnerships 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 has made opera an annual tradition at Severance Music Center, culminating in the creation of the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival in 2023. Acclaimed productions of Dvořák's *Rusalka*, Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and Mozart's

The Magic Flute demonstrated his commitment to large-scale storytelling. In May 2027, Welser-Möst leads a fully staged production of Richard Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, a fitting capstone to his enduring artistic vision and remarkable legacy with The Cleveland Orchestra.

A defining aspect of Welser-Möst's Cleveland career has been his work with The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus. He has consistently advocated for the all-volunteer ensemble as an essential artistic partner in performances ranging from symphonic masterworks to staged opera productions. In 2010, Welser-Möst appointed Lisa Wong to work with the Chorus and, in 2018, he named her Director of Chorus. Together, they have elevated the Chorus with performances at home and on the road.

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.

About Asmik Grigorian

Lithuanian soprano Asmik Grigorian is regularly engaged at the world's leading opera houses, with recent performances at the Wiener Staatsoper, The Metropolitan Opera, and Teatro alla Scala. She was a founding member of Vilnius City Opera, has twice been awarded the Golden Stage Cross, and received the prestigious Österreichischer Musiktheaterpreis in 2024 in the Special Jury Prize category. In 2025, she was awarded the Der Faust Theater Prize for her critically acclaimed performance of *Salome* at the Hamburgische Staatsoper.

Recent seasons include *Madama Butterfly* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, *Macbeth* at Bayerische Staatsoper, *Eugene Onegin* at The Metropolitan Opera, and recitals across Europe with pianist Lukas Geniušas.

About Deniz Uzun

Turkish German mezzo-soprano Deniz Uzun is a graduate of the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and was a 2022 winner of the Elizabeth Connell Prize and a 2021 winner of the Eva Marton Prize. She was a member of the Young Artist Program of the Bavarian State Opera.

Recent season highlights include Vivaldi's *Farnace* in Madrid, Paris, and Geneva with Ensemble I Gemelli; *Eugene Onegin* at Berlin's Schillertheater; *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* in Wuppertal; the title role in *Carmen* at the Landestheater Salzburg, *Dialogues des Carmélites* at the Teatro La Fenice, and concert appearances with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and The Cleveland Orchestra.

About Joshua Guerrero

Grammy Award-winning Mexican American tenor Joshua Guerrero is celebrated internationally for his passionate interpretations of the lyric and dramatic repertoire. He is a recipient of a Richard Tucker Foundation Career Grant and a graduate of Los Angeles Opera's Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program.

Opera highlights include appearances at leading houses including the Wiener Staatsoper, Teatro Real, and Los Angeles Opera. On the concert stage, Guerrero has performed with The Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra, among others.

A versatile artist, Guerrero's work also includes appearances in film and television, including Disney/Pixar's *Coco*.

About Tareq Nazmi

Bass Tareq Nazmi studied at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich and began his career at the Opera Studio of the Bavarian State Opera, where he remained a member of the ensemble until 2016.

With his distinctive portrayals, Nazmi has established himself as a sought-after singer on international opera stages. Milestones include *The Magic Flute* at the Salzburg Festival, *Lohengrin* and *Fidelio* at the Vienna State Opera, *Parsifal* at the Tokyo Spring Festival, and Mahler's Eighth Symphony with the Vienna Philharmonic.

Nazmi is also a regular lieder singer, recently performing with Gerold Huber at the Schubertiade in Hohenems and in Munich, Cologne, and London's Wigmore Hall.

About Lisa Wong

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.

A sought-after leader in the field, Wong has served as a grant panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and Chorus America and presented at state and national conferences on varied topics. She is President-Elect of the Ohio Choral Directors Association and served as the Repertoire and Resource Chair for World Music and Cultures and on the Committee for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Ohio Music Education Association.

With degrees from West Chester University and the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, Wong's academic foundation is complemented by a rich career dedicated to inspiring and nurturing musicians of all ages.

About The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus

Now entering 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

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Media Contacts:

(United States)

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

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

(United Kingdom and other international territories)

Katy Rogers-Davies, LSO Live Marketing & Partnerships Manager, Katy.Rogers-Davies@lso.co.uk, +44 20 7382 2543