

Long:

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*, Puccini's *La fanciulla del West*, 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 Choruses. 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.

Short:

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*, Puccini's *La fanciulla del West*, 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.

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