

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Piano Concerto No. 27

Garrick Ohlsson, *piano*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Symphony No. 29

**THE
CLEVELAND
ORCHESTRA
WELSER-MÖST**

MOZART

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PIANO CONCERTO NO. 27

GARRICK OHLSSON, *PIANO*

Composed 1788–91



Photo Yevhen Gulenko/Human Artist

This concerto is the last in Mozart's incomparable series of piano concertos. He completed it on January 5, 1791, and entered the date in his catalog. It has been associated with the pianist Maria Magdalena Hofdemel, but the association is tenuous, since the one Vienna performance was given not by her but by Mozart himself on March 4, 1791, nine months before his death.

The concert became historic in many ways, being the last time Mozart played the piano in public. It was given in a restaurant across the street from his lodgings, and the soprano soloist who also took part was none other than Aloysia Weber, sister of Mozart's wife, Constanze, and his *adorata* of some 12 years before.

Piano Concerto No. 27 is a strikingly serene work, even allowing for the brilliance always required in a concerto, with signs of a new level of maturity in Mozart's style. Outwardly, the concerto resembles the composer's others in its three balanced movements, judiciously placed cadenzas, and a tranquil middle movement of great beauty.

Mozart allows one bar of gentle introduction in the first movement (Allegro) and keeps a steadily pulsating tonic bass underneath the melody. A second theme presents a plain descending scale followed by the "same" scale modified with flat and natural signs. The movement's development section is easily recognizable for moving through remote keys; the solo cadenza, on the other hand, stays close to the home key.

In the concerto's slow movement (Larghetto), we observe the powerful contrast between extreme simplicity and sophisticated elegance, especially when the second violins and violas move into a winding inner line, a texture

Mozart had frequently used since his earliest works.

The finale (Allegro) is a rondo, essentially a series of variations alternating with a main melody. Here, however, solo cadenzas twice hold up the return of the theme. The one point where the theme appears in the "wrong" key is clearly prominent, if only because the pretense cannot be sustained for long.

Overall, Mozart's final piano concerto leaves the clear impression that his invention would have kept bubbling in a similarly wondrous vein for many years to come, had fate spared his early death. Still, the concertos we have are numerous enough — and rich enough in invention — to give us little possible ground for regret. ■

— *Hugh Macdonald*

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 27 AT A GLANCE

Born

January 27, 1756, in Salzburg

Died

December 5, 1791, in Vienna

World Premiere

March 4, 1791, in Vienna, with the composer as soloist

Cleveland Orchestra Premiere

April 1, 1948, with pianist Robert Casadesu and conducted by Music Director George Szell

Orchestration

flute, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, and strings, plus solo piano

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

SYMPHONY NO. 29

Composed 1774



The date inscribed at the head of the autograph score of this symphony (April 6, 1774) was later crossed out, leaving us a bit of a

mystery. The 18-year-old Mozart probably intended the symphony for a performance in Salzburg at that time, although no record of one survives. In January 1783, Mozart asked his father to send the symphony to him in Vienna, so it is likely to have been performed at that time.

What composer, after all, could lay aside and forget so profound and yet so simple a work as this? It has the intimacy of chamber music (only oboes and horns support the strings) with the drive of symphonic music. All four movements are on an equally high level, and from the very opening measures, listeners are aware of the confidence and effortless craft that imbue every page of the symphony.

At the top of the first movement (Allegro moderato), there is a plunging octave from the first note to the second, with this simplest interval full of hidden wealth and weightless harmonies that float beneath it. This is a striking opening to a symphony — no brassy fanfare here as a call to attention. Mozart follows it with lighter passages and simpler themes, but the tone is set.

The second movement (Andante) moves comfortably forward over a gently striding bass. The second violins are almost as important as the firsts in this luxurious movement, with a lovely coda added at the end. A special touch is found here — the oboes and horns attempt the main theme on their own for the first time, giving the violins time to discard their mutes for their final statement.

The dotted rhythms of the third movement (Menuetto) might be regarded as playful, except that a more ferocious use is found for them immediately after the end of the first section.

The movement's more relaxed Trio section has been compared to Chopin for its graceful style.

The plunging octave of the opening returns to launch the fourth movement (Allegro con spirito), and again the second violins maintain their near equality with the firsts. There is a coda here as well, an extension that Mozart seems to have been especially fond of at this point in his life. But then, he almost always seemed to have one more point to make, and to have found a way to make it with the utmost clarity and force. ■

— *Hugh Macdonald*

SYMPHONY NO. 29 AT A GLANCE

World Premiere

The date of the first performance is unknown.

Cleveland Orchestra Premiere

November 15, 1956, led by Music Director George Szell

Orchestration

2 oboes, 2 horns, and strings

The Recording

THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA
conducted by **FRANZ WELSER-MÖST**

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-flat major, K. 595
Garrick Ohlsson, *piano*

Track 1 – I. Allegro 14:33
Track 2 – II. Larghetto 7:13
Track 3 – III. Allegro 9:55

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
Symphony No. 29 in A major, K. 201

Track 4 – I. Allegro moderato 7:24
Track 5 – II. Andante 6:26
Track 6 – III. Menuetto 3:22
Track 7 – IV. Allegro con spirito 4:57

*Recorded live in Mandel Concert Hall
at Severance Music Center
in Cleveland, Ohio,
on March 14, 16 & 17, 2024 (Piano Concerto No. 27)
and October 5–7, 2023 (Symphony No. 29)*

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

About the Orchestra

Now firmly in its second century, The Cleveland Orchestra, under the leadership of Music Director 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. *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 it into one of the most admired globally.

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, the podcast *On a Personal Note*, and

its own recording label, a new chapter in the Orchestra’s long and distinguished recording and broadcast history. Together, they have captured the Orchestra’s unique artistry and the musical achievements of the Welser-Möst and Cleveland Orchestra partnership.

The 2024/25 season marks Franz Welser-Möst’s 23rd 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.

For more information, please visit clevelandorchestra.com. ■



Photo Yevhen Gulenko/Human Artist

The Cleveland Orchestra

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Franz Welser-Möst

Franz Welser-Möst is among today's most distinguished conductors. The 2024/25 season marks his 23rd year as Music Director of The Cleveland Orchestra. With the future of their acclaimed partnership extended to 2027, he will be the longest-serving musical leader in the ensemble's history. *The New York Times* has declared Cleveland under Welser-Möst's direction to be "America's most brilliant orchestra," praising its virtuosity, elegance of sound, variety of color, and chamber-like musical cohesion.

With Welser-Möst, The Cleveland Orchestra has been praised for its inventive programming, ongoing support of new music, and innovative work in presenting operas. To date, the Orchestra and Welser-Möst have been showcased around the world in 21 international tours together. In 2020, the ensemble launched its own recording label and new streaming broadcast platform to share its artistry globally.

In addition to his commitment to Cleveland, Welser-Möst enjoys a particularly close and productive relationship with the Vienna Philharmonic as a guest conductor. He has conducted its celebrated New

Year's Concert three times, and regularly leads the orchestra at home in Vienna, as well as on tours.

Welser-Möst is also a regular guest at the Salzburg Festival where he has led a series of acclaimed opera productions, including *Rusalka*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Fidelio*, *Die Liebe der Danae*, Reimann's opera *Lear*, and Richard Strauss's *Salome*. In 2020, he conducted Strauss's *Elektra* on the 100th anniversary of its premiere. He has since returned to Salzburg to conduct additional performances of *Elektra* in 2021 and Puccini's *Il Trittico* in 2022.

In 2019, Welser-Möst was awarded the Gold Medal in the Arts by the Kennedy Center International Committee on the Arts. Other honors include The Cleveland Orchestra's Distinguished Service Award, two Cleveland Arts Prize citations, the Vienna Philharmonic's "Ring of Honor," recognition from the Western Law Center for Disability Rights, honorary membership in the Vienna Singverein, appointment as an Academician of the European Academy of Yuste, and the Kilenyi Medal from the Bruckner Society of America. ■

Franz Welser-Möst conducts The Cleveland Orchestra in Mandel Concert Hall at Severance Music Center.



Photo: Roger Mastroianni

Garrick Ohlsson, *Piano*

Since his triumph as winner of the 1970 Chopin International Piano Competition, pianist Garrick Ohlsson has established himself worldwide as a musician of magisterial interpretive and technical prowess. Although long regarded as one of the world's leading exponents of the music of Frédéric Chopin, Ohlsson commands an enormous repertoire that ranges over the entire piano literature, encompassing more than 80 concertos.

Recent engagements include an appearance with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, performances with orchestras in Portland, Madison, Kalamazoo, Palm Beach, and Fort Worth, and recital programs — featuring works from Beethoven, Schubert, and Chopin to Barber and Scriabin — in Santa Barbara, Orange County, Aspen, Warsaw, and London.

Collaborations with the Cleveland, Emerson, Tokyo, and Takács string quartets — in addition to numerous orchestras and conductors — have led to decades of touring and recordings. His solo recordings are available on the British label Hyperion and in the US on Bridge Records. Both Brahms concertos and Tchaikovsky's Second Piano Concerto have been released on live

recordings with the Melbourne and Sydney symphonies, as well as Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Robert Spano, all on their own labels.

A native of White Plains, New York, Ohlsson began piano studies at age 8 at the Westchester Conservatory of Music, and at 13, he entered The Juilliard School in New York. He was awarded the Avery Fisher Prize in 1994 and the University Musical Society Distinguished Artist Award in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1998. Ohlsson is the 2014 recipient of the Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in Piano Performance from the Northwestern University Bienen School of Music, and in August 2018, the Polish Deputy Culture Minister awarded him the Gloria Artis Gold Medal for cultural merit. He is a Steinway Artist and makes his home in San Francisco. ■



Photo Dan Acosta

Mandel Concert Hall at Severance Music Center

Home of The Cleveland Orchestra



Photo Roger Mastroianni

Hailed among the world's most beautiful concert halls when it opened as Severance Hall in 1931, Severance Music Center has served as home to The Cleveland Orchestra for over 90 years. Its famed acoustics have helped shape the Orchestra's renowned sound and refined performance style. The building was named to honor John Long Severance (president of the Orchestra's board of trustees, 1921–36) and his wife, Elisabeth, who donated most of the money for its construction.

Designed by Cleveland's Walker & Weeks, the building's elegant Georgian exterior was constructed to harmonize with the classical architecture of the surrounding University Circle neighborhood. The interior of the building reflects a combination of design styles, including Art Deco, Egyptian Revival, Classicism, and Modernism.

An extensive renovation and expansion of the facility was completed in January 2000, including careful enhancements to the clarity and

warmth of the 2,000-seat concert hall's acclaimed acoustics, a project designed by David M. Schwartz Architects and Jaffe Holden Scarbrough Acoustics.

More recently, the main performance space has been augmented with a state-of-the-art robotic video camera system to capture and create a new generation of streaming programming. In 2021, the concert space was named in recognition of a generous grant from the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation, whose gift is funding the video equipment outfitting along with other initiatives to further The Cleveland Orchestra's ongoing success and to expand its reach for audiences around the world in the 21st century. ■

Acknowledgements

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