



ANTON BRUCKNER

Symphony No. 4

**THE
CLEVELAND
ORCHESTRA
WELSER-MÖST**

BRUCKNER

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SYMPHONY NO. 4, “ROMANTIC”

Composed 1874–80, Revised 1886–88



Anton Bruckner had to wait until the public premiere of his Fourth Symphony in 1881 to enjoy his first real taste of

success, following years of bitter rejection in his adopted city of Vienna. Possibly to enhance its chances of being accepted, the composer allowed the Fourth to be published with the official subtitle “Romantic,” and listeners have as a result been introduced to the work as the epitome of Romanticism in symphonic music.

However, the Brucknerian aesthetic contrasts sharply with Romantic drama, instinctively tending toward a more spiritual contemplation. His music creates a sense of sonic spaciousness and awe that is unique to him. As commentator Robert Simpson writes, Bruckner’s symphonies illustrate a quest toward an “essence crystallized, the sky through which the earth moves.”

The Fourth Symphony’s much-ad-

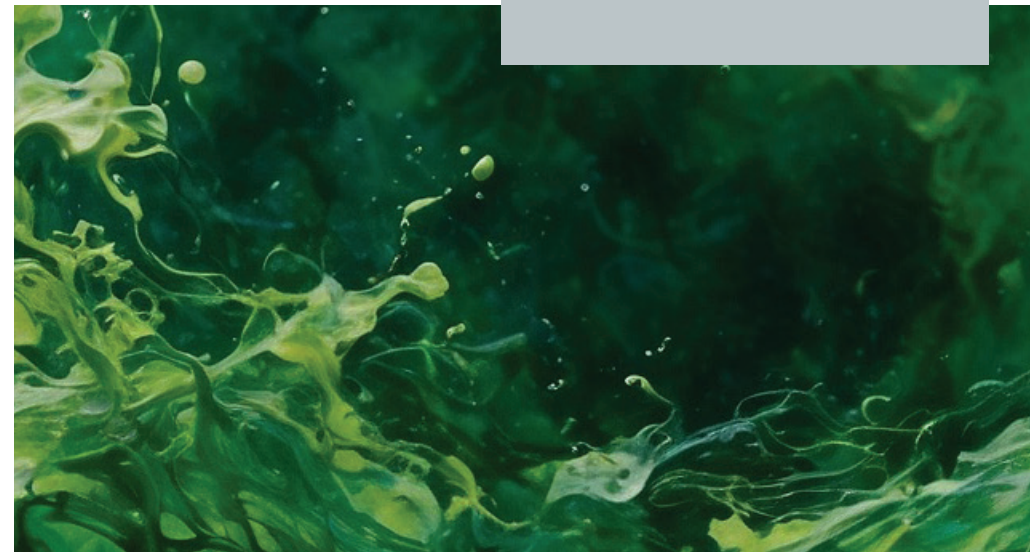
mired opening acquires something of its mysterious power by incorporating a minor-key inflection into the horn call’s simple, otherwise major-key harmonic palette, all set against a pregnant backdrop of trembling strings. The prominence of the horn is a hallmark of the rest of the symphony — the instrument appears almost as a protagonist in its own right.

The rest of the Fourth continues to carry out the implications of its vast opening design. Bruckner establishes a solemnly measured gait in the march-like Andante, developing this C-minor slow movement from three interconnected sections of material presented in succession. After this, the third-movement “hunting” Scherzo, with its overlapping “Bruckner rhythms” (a duplet-followed-by-triplet pattern) in horns and brass, instills a rush of energy to complement the slow motion of the preceding march.

The Finale’s titanic opening shows Bruckner at his most confident, evoking a sense of mystery similar to what we encountered at the beginning

of the work. The main theme coalesces against thundering timpani, while the fundamental contrast of epic against relaxed nature returns once more in the second theme group. By the time Bruckner arrives at the stunning final coda, writes Simpson, the effect is altogether different from that of “the accumulated energy of a vividly muscular process (as in the Classical symphony)” or of “the warring of emotive elements (as in the purely Romantic work)” but instead reveals “the final intensification of an essence.” ■

— Thomas May



SYMPHONY NO. 4 AT A GLANCE

Born

September 4, 1824, in Ansfelden, Upper Austria

Died

October 11, 1896, in Vienna

World Premiere

February 20, 1881, with Hans Richter conducting the Vienna Philharmonic

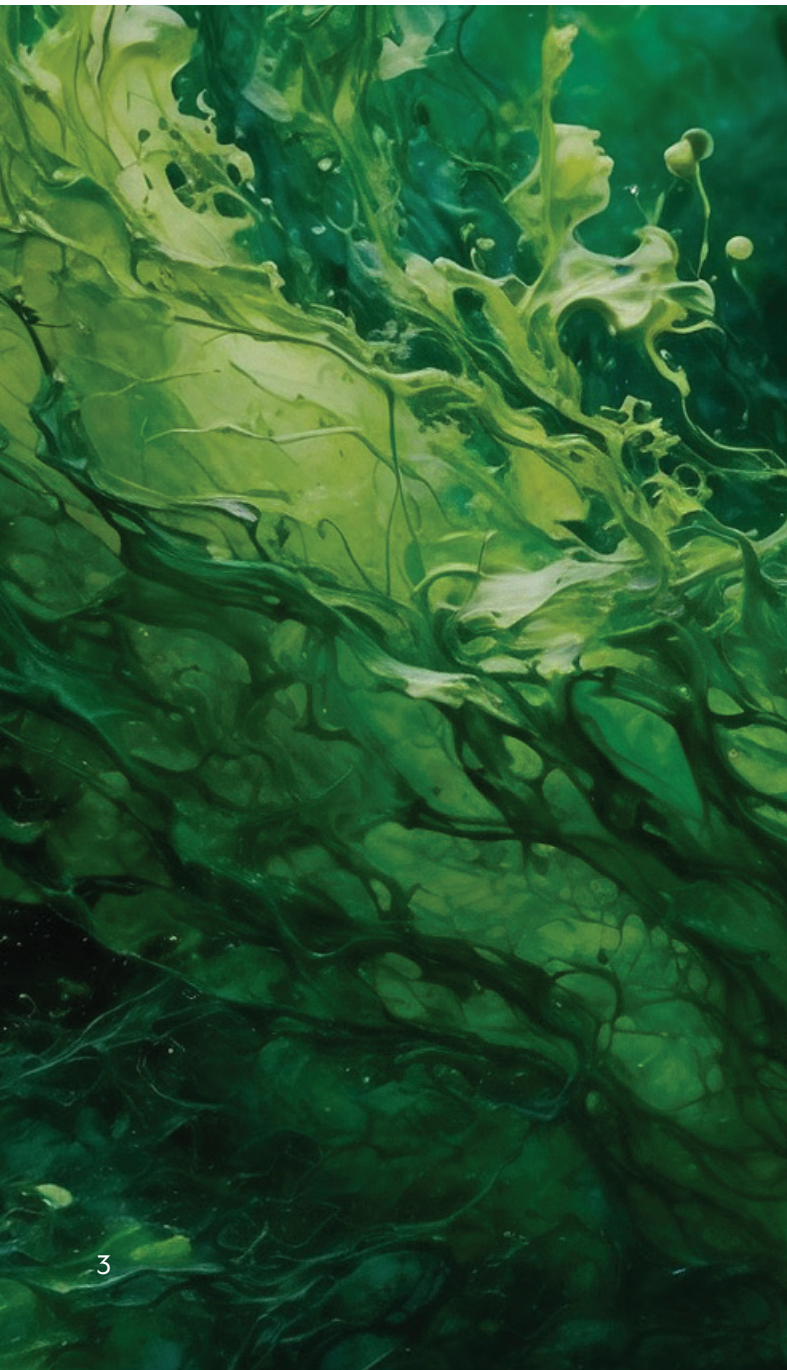
Cleveland Orchestra Premiere

April 12, 1945, led by Erich Leinsdorf

Orchestration

2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings

The Recording



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

ANTON BRUCKNER
Symphony No. 4 in E-flat major, “Romantic”
(1878/80 version, ed. Benjamin M. Korstvedt)

Track 1 – I. Bewegt, nicht zu schnell.....19:06
Track 2 – II. Andante quasi Allegretto 13:26
Track 3 – III. Scherzo: Bewegt..... 11:15
Track 4 – IV. Finale: Bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell..... 20:45

*Recorded live in Mandel Concert Hall
at Severance Music Center
in Cleveland, Ohio,
on March 14, 16, and 17, 2024*

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

About the Orchestra

Now 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 broadcast series *In Focus*, 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 earned unprece-

dentented 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.

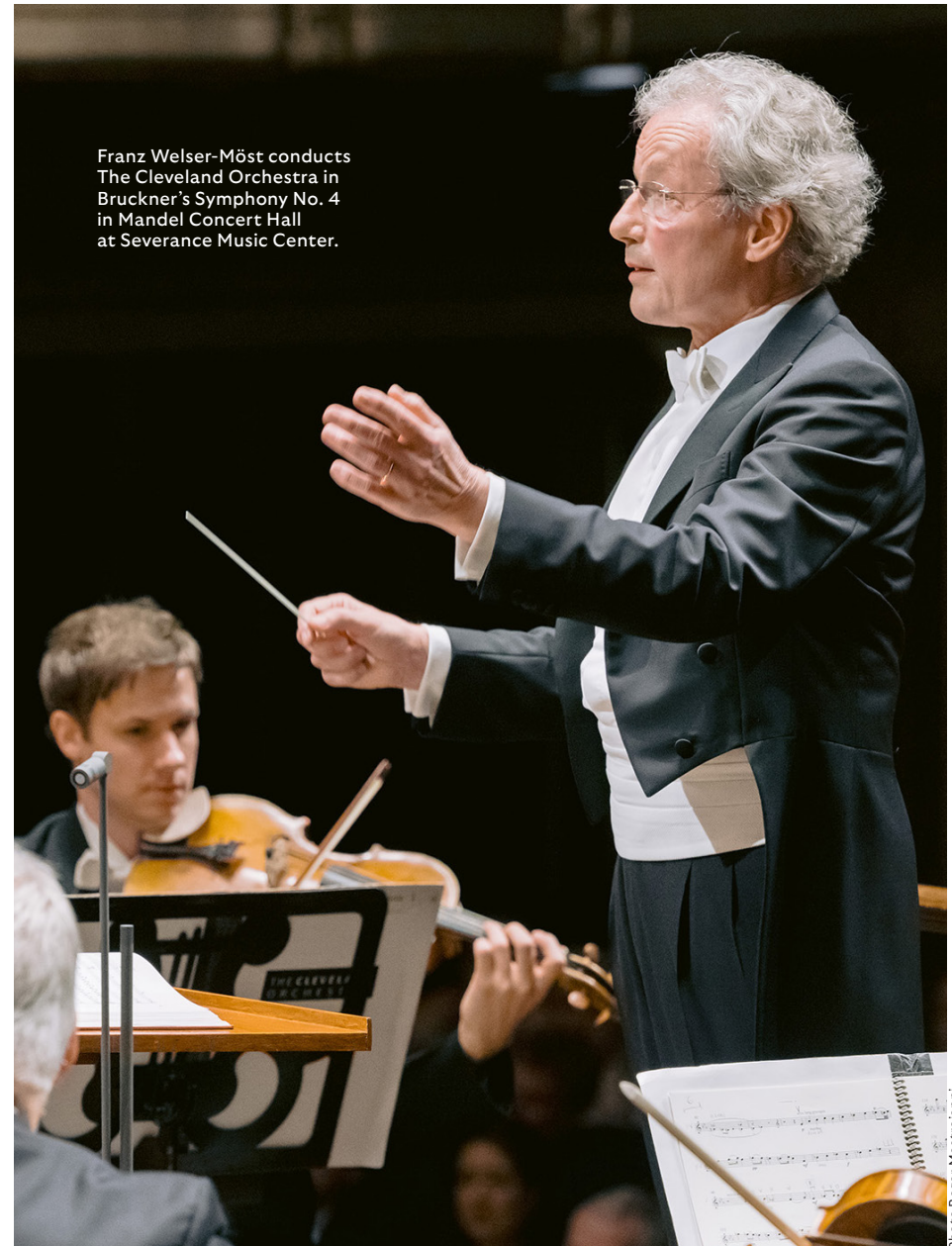
With Welser-Möst, The Cleveland Orchestra has been praised for its inventive programming, ongoing support of new music, and innovative work in presenting operas. To date, the Orchestra and Welser-Möst have been showcased around the world in 20 international tours together. In 2020, the ensemble launched 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 Giacomo 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 Bruckner's Symphony No. 4 in Mandel Concert Hall at Severance Music Center.

Photo Roger Mastroianni

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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