

## Daniel Reith to lead the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra and Youth Chorus on Friday

by Mike Telin



What are the duties of an assistant conductor of a major orchestra? “Every day is an experience,” Daniel Reith said during a recent telephone conversation. Since assuming that position with The Cleveland Orchestra this season, Reith has had a lot on his plate. In addition to his involvement with numerous educational activities, he has led the Orchestra’s family concerts and the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Concert. Earlier this month he stepped in on very short notice for an ailing Klaus Mäkelä to lead three subscription concert performances.

“It’s a great pleasure to work with The Cleveland Orchestra,” the German-born conductor said. “During my first few weeks I would think about all the great conductors who had walked through

these halls. I would just stare at the walls and ceiling in Mandel Hall imagining all the amazing musical interpretations those walls had heard over the years. It is one of the best halls in the world. After a tour, everybody is happy to come back to Severance — it’s great to have such a hall as your musical home.”

On Friday, February 24 at 8:00 pm at Severance Music Center, Reith will wear another hat when he leads the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra and Youth Chorus in works by Wagner, Schubert, and Brahms. Tickets are available [online](#).

Mentoring young musicians is a passion of Reith’s. “It’s a pleasure to work with COYO, and it’s fun to watch them grow both socially and musically,” he said. “Being able to

come to Severance each week is an amazing opportunity for them — young musicians don't necessarily have a great space to rehearse in. When I think back to my time in a youth orchestra, we rehearsed in a gymnasium which had the most terrible acoustics you could imagine. And to be coached by members of the Orchestra — to learn first-hand from the musicians in one of the world's best orchestras."

We began our discussion of Friday's program with Schubert's *Mass No. 2*. "It's a lovely piece. The Cleveland Orchestra just performed his *Mass No. 6* and this one is much like that one but on a smaller scale. It's interesting to think that Schubert composed it when he was only eighteen years old — just a year older than the oldest musicians in COYO. It will also be great to work with the Youth Chorus."

Reith said that Brahms is his favorite composer. "His First Symphony — especially when I was the same age as the COYO musicians — had a great influence on me. And it was interesting to hear that most of the young musicians feel the same way. They were so happy to see it on the program and have been very eager to study and rehearse it."

He noted that it took Brahms fourteen years to complete the work. "He started writing it when he was 29, which is an age when people change so much, and I think you can hear those changes in the music."

The conductor said that the Brahms pairs nicely with Wagner's Prelude to Act I of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. "*Meistersinger* has a youthful spirit. It is very fresh, and has both a majestic, bright sound and playful passages. All of this makes it a nice contrast to the Brahms, which — and I mean this in the most positive way — is a heavy piece."

Bringing our conversation to a close, Reith said that he's looking forward to Friday's concert. "It's fun to see the young musicians having a great time with all of the pieces."

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