



Herbert Blomstedt

Conductor Laureate of the San Francisco Symphony

Noble, charming, sober, modest. Such qualities may play a major role in human coexistence and are certainly appreciated. However, they are rather atypical for extraordinary personalities such as conductors. Whatever the general public's notion of a conductor may be, Herbert Blomstedt, Conductor Laureate of the San Francisco Symphony, is an exception, precisely because he possesses those very qualities which seemingly have so little to do with a conductor's claim to power. That he disproves the usual clichés in many respects should certainly not lead to the assumption that he does not have the power to assert his clearly defined musical goals. Anyone who has attended Mr. Blomstedt's rehearsals and experienced his concentration on the essence of the music, the precision in the phrasing of musical facts and circumstances as they appear in the score, the tenacity regarding the implementation of an aesthetic view, is likely to have been amazed at how few despotic measures were required to this end. Basically, Mr. Blomstedt has always represented that type of artist whose professional competence and natural authority make all external emphasis superfluous. His work as a conductor is inseparably linked to his religious and human ethos, and his interpretations combine great faithfulness to the score and analytical precision, with a soulfulness that awakens the music to pulsating life. In the more than 60 years of his career, he has acquired the unrestricted respect of the musical world.

Born in the United States to Swedish parents and educated in Uppsala, New York, Darmstadt, and Basel, Mr. Blomstedt gave his conducting debut in 1954 with the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra and subsequently served as chief conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic, the Swedish and Danish radio orchestras, and the Staatskapelle Dresden. Later, he became Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony, chief conductor of the NDR Symphony Orchestra, and music director of the Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig. His former orchestras in San Francisco, Leipzig, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Dresden, as well as the Bamberg Symphony and the NHK Symphony Orchestra, all honored him with the title of Conductor Laureate. Since 2019, he is an honorary member of the Vienna Philharmonic. Mr. Blomstedt holds several honorary doctorates, is an elected member of the Royal Swedish Music Academy, and was awarded the German Federal Cross of Merit. At the high age of 95, he continues to be at the helm of all leading international orchestras with enormous mental and physical presence, verve, and artistic drive.