



Michael Tilson Thomas

Music Director Laureate of the San Francisco Symphony

Michael Tilson Thomas is the Music Director Laureate of the San Francisco Symphony, conductor laureate of the London Symphony, and co-founder and artistic director laureate of the New World Symphony. He is a 12-time Grammy Award winner and has conducted the major orchestras of Europe and the United States.

Born in Los Angeles, he studied conducting and composition with Ingolf Dahl at the University of Southern California and, as a young musician, worked with artists including Igor Stravinsky and Aaron Copland. In his mid-20s, he became assistant conductor—and later principal guest conductor—of the Boston Symphony. He subsequently served as music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic, principal guest conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra.

In 1987, he co-founded the New World Symphony, a postgraduate orchestral academy in Miami Beach dedicated to preparing young musicians of diverse backgrounds for leadership roles in classical music. He has worked with more than 1,200 NWS Fellows, many of whom have gone on to major musical careers.

He became Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony in 1995, ushering in a period of significant growth and heightened international recognition for the orchestra. He led the SF Symphony in championing contemporary and American composers alongside classical masters, and as Music Director Laureate, he returns to conduct the orchestra each season.

His discography includes more than 120 recordings, and his television work includes series for the BBC and PBS, the New York Philharmonic's Young People's Concerts and numerous televised performances. His profile *Michael Tilson Thomas: Where Now Is* aired on PBS's *American Masters* series in fall 2020.

Throughout his career, he has been an active composer, with major works including *From the Diary of Anne Frank*, premiered with narrator Audrey Hepburn, and *Meditations on Rilke*. Both appear on SFS Media's Grammy Award-winning recording of his music. In September 2022 Avie Records released an album of solo piano works by John Wilson featuring the world premiere recording of Mr. Tilson Thomas's *Upon Further Reflection*, for which the album is named.

He is an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France, a member of the American academies of Arts and Sciences and Arts and Letters, a National Medal of Arts recipient, and 2019 Kennedy Center Honoree.