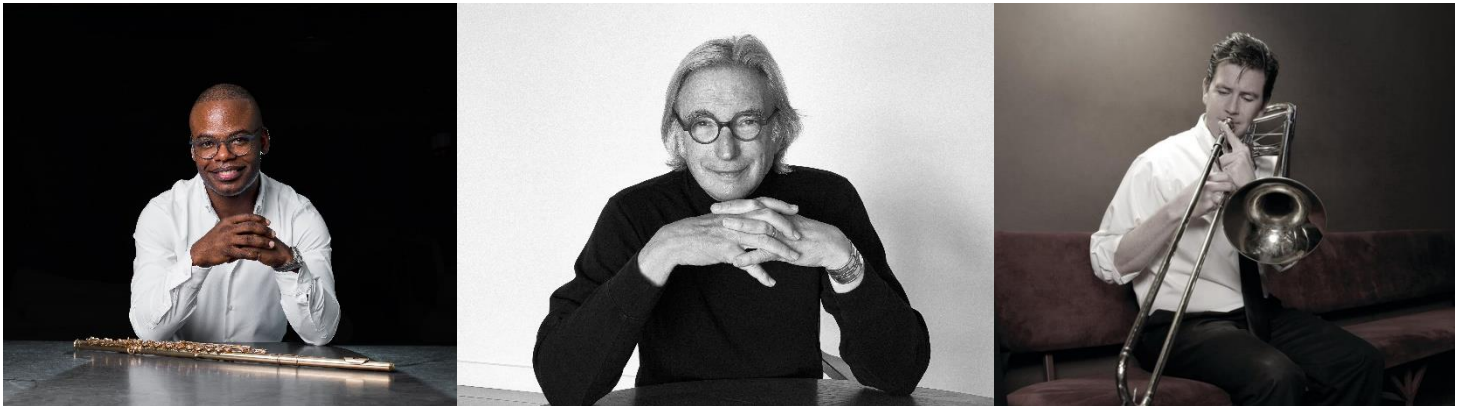




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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / OCTOBER 29, 2021



(High-resolution images of the San Francisco Symphony and guest artist headshots are available for download from the [Online Photo Library](#).)

MUSIC DIRECTOR LAUREATE MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTS THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY IN TWO CONCERT PROGRAMS AT DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL IN NOVEMBER 2021

November 12–14 concerts include Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *Three German Dances*, K.509, Robert Schumann’s *Symphony No. 1, Spring*, and Michael Tilson Thomas’ *Notturmo* featuring flutist Demarre McGill in his *Orchestral Series* debut

November 18–20 concerts feature the world premiere of SF Symphony Principal Trombone Timothy Higgins’ *Trombone Concerto*—an SF Symphony commission, the SF Symphony premiere of William Grant Still’s *Patterns*, and Aaron Copland’s *Appalachian Spring*

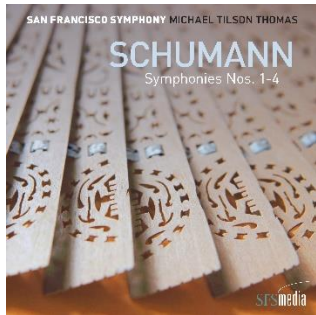
SAN FRANCISCO, CA—Music Director Laureate Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT) returns to conduct the San Francisco Symphony in two weeks of concerts at Davies Symphony Hall, November 12–14 and 18–20. These performances are the first time MTT will be on the podium in San Francisco since March 2020, when the pandemic interrupted his final season as San Francisco Symphony Music Director.

In a message recorded in Miami, where he is currently conducting the New World Symphony, MTT shares: “I’m so happy to be returning to the stage of Davies Symphony Hall for the first time in almost two years. What a great joy it’s going to be being together again. I want to especially thank all of you who’ve sent such good wishes to me during this time I’ve been recovering. For two weeks in November, we’ll be rebooting our special collaboration with works by Schumann, Mozart, William Grant Still, Copland, a new trombone concerto by our own Tim Higgins, and a nostalgic piece for flute and orchestra by me, MTT. I can’t wait to share all of this with you.”

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

On November 12–14, Michael Tilson Thomas leads the San Francisco Symphony in a program including Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s Three German Dances, K.509, composed all in one sitting in 1787 per the request of Count Johann Pachta; Robert Schumann’s Symphony No. 1, *Spring*, most recently performed under Tilson Thomas’s baton in November 2015—when it was also recorded for SFS Media; and Tilson Thomas’ own *Notturmo* featuring principal flute of the Seattle Symphony Demarre McGill in his SF Symphony Orchestral Series debut. Michael Tilson Thomas notes about his work, “*Notturmo* is a virtuoso piece evoking the lyrical world of Italian music. Its shape recalls concert arias, “études de concert,” and salon pieces—creations of a bygone world that I still hold in great esteem...The piece has a subtext. It’s about the role music plays in the life of a musician and the role we musicians play in life.”

In 2017, MTT and the San Francisco Symphony released a complete recording of Robert Schumann’s symphonies on the in-house SFS Media label, later nominated for a 2019 Grammy® Award in the category of Best Orchestral Performance. Recorded live at Davies Symphony Hall, Schumann: Symphonies Nos. 1–4 offers a nuanced approach that accentuates the lyrical and tender elements of the composer’s orchestral masterpieces. In an essay included in the extended liner notes, Michael Tilson Thomas comments, “Like so much classical music, Schumann’s is a preserve for endangered emotions. He’s talking about wistfulness, whimsy, ardency, longing, setting off recklessly in conflicting directions, losing your way, or just mulling things over... Schumann moves between many sound worlds in these symphonies.”



November 18–20 concerts include Aaron Copland’s *Appalachian Spring* and the SF Symphony premiere of William Grant Still’s *Patterns*—two pieces of quintessential American music. The program also features the world premiere of San Francisco Symphony Principal Trombone Timothy Higgins’ Trombone Concerto, commissioned by the SF Symphony and performed by Higgins. Timothy Higgins comments, “It was exciting to write a trombone concerto, but also to be able to write for the San Francisco Symphony and know the players.” The piece makes broad use of the orchestra’s virtuosic resources, providing highlighted passages and solo turns for many instruments apart from the soloist. “Why wouldn’t you take advantage of all this incredible talent on the stage? I would have hated for the piece to be just a trombone with some accompaniment the whole time. I would much rather that the audience could focus on hearing the soloist play or on hearing the orchestra play. I want people to notice both.” Higgins adds, “I want people in the audience to hear how versatile the trombone is,” he said. “Whether it’s something rhythmic or angular or broad and lyrical, I want them to hear how varied our expressive palette is. I think that really effective solo writing for trombone is able to use both sides of the coin, both angular playing and lyrical playing, and meld them together into something compelling. This piece incorporates a lot of technical challenges, but it’s all done with a lyrical line.”

About Michael Tilson Thomas

Michael Tilson Thomas is Co-Founder and Artistic Director of the New World Symphony, Music Director Laureate of the San Francisco Symphony, and Conductor Laureate of the London Symphony Orchestra. He is a twelve-time Grammy Award winner and has conducted the major orchestras of Europe and the United States.

Born in Los Angeles, he studied piano, conducting, and composition at the University of Southern California, and as a young musician worked with such artists as Igor Stravinsky and Aaron Copland. In his mid-20s, he became Assistant Conductor—and later Principal Guest Conductor—of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which he led in his New York debut. 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 (NWS), a postgraduate orchestral academy in Miami Beach dedicated to preparing young musicians of diverse backgrounds for leadership roles in classical music. Since

then, he has worked with more than 1,100 NWS Fellows, many of whom have gone onto careers with major orchestras.

He became Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony in 1995, and his tenure was a period of significant growth and heightened international recognition for the orchestra. In June 2020, he completed his remarkable 25-year tenure as Music Director, notable for innovative programming, enhancing the orchestral concert experience with multimedia and creative staging, showcasing the works of American composers, and attracting new audiences to orchestral music, both at home at Davies Symphony Hall and through the Orchestra's extensive media projects. He led the San Francisco Symphony in championing contemporary and American composers alongside classical masters, and as Music Director Laureate, he continues to lead the orchestra in four weeks of concerts annually, as well as in special projects.

Michael Tilson Thomas's discography includes more than 120 recordings, which have won numerous international awards, including twelve Grammys for San Francisco Symphony recordings. Throughout his career, he has been an active composer, with major works including *From the Diary of Anne Frank* (1990), commissioned by UNICEF and premiered with narrator Audrey Hepburn, and *Meditations on Rilke* (2019). Both works appear on a recent Grammy Award-winning recording of his music by the San Francisco Symphony. Other compositions by Tilson Thomas include *Shówa/Shoáh*; settings of poems by Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman; *Island Music*; *Notturmo*; and *Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind*. His television work includes the New York Philharmonic's Young People's Concerts, series for the BBC and PBS, and numerous televised performances. In 2020, he was profiled on PBS's *American Masters*.

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, a member of the California Hall of Fame, and a 2019 Kennedy Center Honoree.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

- Davies Symphony Hall is located at 201 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.
- Tickets for concerts at Davies Symphony can be purchased via sfsymphony.org or by calling the San Francisco Symphony Box Office at 415-864-6000. Ticket prices range from \$20 to \$135.
- Davies Symphony Hall is currently operating at full audience capacity. The San Francisco Symphony requires proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 for everyone ages 12 and up entering Davies Symphony Hall—including patrons, performers, volunteers, and staff. Full vaccination is defined as completion of the two-dose regimen of Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or one dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine administered two weeks or more in advance of the concert. Audience members under age 12 must show proof of a negative COVID-19 test (PCR test within 72 hours of the event, or antigen [rapid] test within 24 hours of the event). All patrons are required to wear a face mask while attending performances. Details about health and safety protocols at Davies Symphony Hall can be found [here](#).

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAL SERIES

MTT: Mozart, MTT & Schumann

[Friday, November 12, 2021 at 7:30pm](#)

[Saturday, November 13, 2021 at 7:30pm](#)

[Sunday, November 14, 2021 at 2pm](#)

[Michael Tilson Thomas](#) conductor

[Demarre McGill](#) flute [Orchestral Series Debut]

San Francisco Symphony

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART Three German Dances, K.605

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS *Notturmo*

ROBERT SCHUMANN Symphony No. 1

Tickets: \$20–135.

Pre-Concert Talk: Scott Foglesong will give an “Inside Music” talk from the stage one hour prior to the November 12–14 performances. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open 15 minutes before.

Broadcast / Archived Stream: A broadcast of these performances will air Tuesday, November 23 at 8 pm on Classical KDFC 90.3 San Francisco, 104.9 San Jose, 89.9 Napa, and kdfc.com where it will be available for on-demand streaming for 21 days following the broadcast.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAL SERIES

MTT: Still, Higgins & Copland

[Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 10am \[Open Rehearsal\]](#)

[Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 7:30pm](#)

[Friday, November 19, 2021 at 7:30pm](#)

[Saturday, November 20, 2021 at 7:30pm](#)

[Michael Tilson Thomas](#) conductor

[Timothy Higgins](#) trombone

San Francisco Symphony

WILLIAM GRANT STILL *Patterns* [San Francisco Symphony Premiere]

TIMOTHY HIGGINS Trombone Concerto [San Francisco Symphony Commission, World Premiere]

AARON COPLAND *Appalachian Spring*

Tickets: \$20–135.

Pre-Concert Talk: Peter Grunberg will give an “Inside Music” talk from the stage one hour prior to the November 18–20 performances. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open 15 minutes before.

Off-The-Podium: A post-concert audience Q&A session with moderator Peter Grunberg will be presented from the stage immediately following the concert on November 20. Free to all ticket holders.

Broadcast / Archived Stream: A broadcast of these performances will air Tuesday, November 30 at 8 pm on Classical KDFC 90.3 San Francisco, 104.9 San Jose, 89.9 Napa, and kdfc.com where it will be available for on-demand streaming for 21 days following the broadcast.

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