



Esa-Pekka Salonen, Music Director

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MATTHEW SPIVEY NAMED CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

San Francisco, CA—San Francisco Symphony President Priscilla Geeslin, on behalf of the Board of Governors and Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen, announces the appointment of Matthew Spivey as the organization's next Chief Executive Officer, effective immediately. Spivey has been Interim CEO for the SF Symphony since July 2021 and a member of the Symphony administrative team since 2015.

The announcement follows an extensive search led by Search Committee Chairs Alan May and Trine Sorensen in cooperation with Russell Reynolds Associates. The Search Committee included 12 members of the board, staff, and musicians who assessed candidates on a number of

key criteria across leadership, fundraising and advocacy, financial management, strategy and culture transformation, relationship building, and people and organizational development.

“Over several months, our committee conducted a global search including a rigorous assessment of a diverse slate of strong candidates,” said **Alan May** and **Trine Sorensen**. “Guided not only by the leadership requirements for this position but also the strategic needs of the San Francisco Symphony going forward, the committee recognized Matt as the right choice to lead the Symphony into a new era. Matt’s demonstrated commitment to artistic excellence, inclusive leadership, fiscal discipline, and community engagement were among the many factors that made him stand out as the ideal candidate.”

“Our committee was impressed by Matt’s thoughtful leadership, integrity, strategic mindset, and incredible work ethic,” said **Priscilla Geeslin**. “He’s also proven a deep personal commitment to furthering the organization’s diversity, equity, and inclusion work, making it an integral part of the Symphony’s day-to-day activities. It is these invaluable qualities that make him such an incredible partner to me and the board and will help guide the Symphony into a bright future. Matt is the right leader for the San Francisco Symphony at this pivotal moment in our history. I could not be happier with this outcome and look forward to continuing our work together.”

As Chief Executive Officer, Spivey will lead the San Francisco Symphony in close collaboration with the Board of Governors and Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen, supporting the creative vision of Salonen and the organization’s eight Collaborative Partners and continuing to broaden the Orchestra’s repertoire with voices new to the San Francisco Symphony. Spivey and the San Francisco Symphony will embark on a comprehensive strategic planning process, including a major audience development initiative focused on expanding new audiences through a wide range of concert experiences, and the development of a long-range financial plan aimed at providing greater stability into the future.

“The San Francisco Symphony is a phenomenally creative institution with an extraordinary history featuring one of the finest orchestras in the world,” said **Matthew Spivey**. “After working with the organization over the last seven years, I am especially honored and excited to step into this new role to help build the next chapter in partnership with Esa-Pekka and our Collaborative Partners. During my tenure with the San Francisco Symphony, I have been inspired by the Bay Area’s vibrant cultural landscape, intellectual curiosity, and passion for humanity. This is a place where imagination thrives and artistic potential is limitless.”

“Matt Spivey is in it for the music—it’s as simple as that,” said **Esa-Pekka Salonen**. “He’s a leader who appreciates the history of our art form and wants to be part of its future. He spends the time to build consensus across the organization because he knows our San Francisco Symphony is stronger as ‘us’ than ‘I.’ Where others react, he pre-acts. It’s been a pleasure and a privilege to work alongside Matt in many capacities since I started as Music Director, and I know the future with him in this position is bright. Let’s get to work.”

Widely considered to be among the most artistically adventurous and innovative arts institutions in the U.S., the San Francisco Symphony presents more than 220 concerts and presentations annually for an audience of nearly 450,000 in its home of Davies Symphony Hall and through its active national and international touring. A cornerstone of the organization’s mission is its education program, which is the most extensive offered by any American orchestra today,

providing free comprehensive music education to every first- through fifth-grade student in San Francisco public schools, and serving more than 75,000 children, students, educators, and families annually.

During his tenure as Interim CEO, Spivey worked closely with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Orchestra to bring audiences the first complete performance season since Salonen became Music Director in 2020. The 2021–22 season also saw the release of two of Salonen and the Orchestra’s signature digital projects led by Salonen—Igor Stravinsky’s *The Soldier’s Tale*, created in collaboration with acclaimed British director, designer, and video artist Netia Jones; and Ligeti: *Paradigms*, a performance merging avant-garde classical music and Artificial Intelligence (AI), created in partnership with media artist Refik Anadol, Dolby Laboratories, and SF Symphony Collaborative Partner Carol Reiley.

In Spring 2022, the San Francisco Symphony announced details of its first international tour with Esa-Pekka Salonen—and the Orchestra’s first international tour since 2016—with performances at the Philharmonie in Paris, Philharmonie Luxembourg, and the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Germany in March 2023. The international performances launch a new touring model, bringing the full breadth of the San Francisco Symphony’s innovative programming and educational initiatives to immersive four-day residencies in Paris (March 9–12) and Hamburg (March 14–17) as part of a multi-year symphonic and cultural exchange between the San Francisco Symphony and each of the cities.

In 2022, Spivey also oversaw the engagement of Black Women’s Blueprint as the San Francisco Symphony’s new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion consultants, responsible for working with the Symphony to shape its next phase of DEI work. DEI initiatives have been a focus throughout Spivey’s ongoing work with the organization. “I know in my heart that a commitment to a more inclusive and equitable culture can unlock enormous potential within the San Francisco Symphony to become more creative, soar to new heights of artistic growth, evolve and innovate in unimaginable ways, and to eventually become an important part of the cultural landscape for many, many more people,” said Spivey. “The San Francisco Symphony is uniquely positioned to move beyond traditional modes of thinking; embrace principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion; and evolve into an organization that is not only creative, but also humanitarian.”

Spivey joined the San Francisco Symphony in 2015. In his prior role as Chief Programming Officer, he was instrumental in the appointment and launch of Esa-Pekka Salonen as the Orchestra’s twelfth Music Director, shaping a new vision for the present and future of the orchestral landscape.

Since the introduction of the San Francisco Symphony’s groundbreaking artistic leadership model in 2020, Spivey has worked closely with Salonen and the Orchestra’s eight Collaborative Partners—Nicholas Britell, Julia Bullock, Claire Chase, Bryce Dessner, Pekka Kuusisto, Nico Muhly, Carol Reiley, and esperanza spalding—to explore and develop new ideas inspired by the Partners’ unique areas of expertise, including innovative digital projects, expansive and imaginative performance concepts in a variety of concert formats, commissions of new music, and projects that foster collaboration across artistic and administrative areas.

As San Francisco Symphony Director of Artistic Planning from 2015–2019, Spivey worked with Music Director Laureate Michael Tilson Thomas in setting the Orchestra’s artistic direction,

overseeing programming for the Orchestra's 31-week subscription season, recording projects, commissioning programs, the SF Symphony Chorus, tours and festivals, while providing artistic direction for the SF Symphony's 200+ concerts and presentations each season.

Spivey is only the sixth executive leader of the San Francisco Symphony since 1939, when the organization created its top management position (Howard Skinner served from 1939 to 1964, Joseph Scafidi from 1965 to 1978, Peter Pastreich from 1978 to 1999, Brent Assink from 1999 to 2017, and Mark Hanson from 2018 to 2021).

Before joining the San Francisco Symphony, Spivey served as the vice president and general manager of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, managing all aspects of artistic planning and concert production with oversight of Education and Public Relations activity. Prior to that, he served as the organization's vice president of artistic operations. Spivey previously held positions with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra. He studied clarinet at the New England Conservatory and received an Executive MBA from the University of Texas at Arlington.

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