

SF SYMPHONY

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

MUSIC DIRECTOR ESA-PEKKA SALONEN LEADS THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY IN FOUR PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHTING THE PIANO AT DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL, FEBRUARY 17–MARCH 2, 2023

February 17-19 pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard performs Béla Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 2 on a program with Maurice Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and selections from Sergei Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*

February 20 Lang Lang joins the Orchestra for one evening, performing Edvard Grieg's Piano Concerto on a program with Jean Sibelius's Symphony No. 5

February 23, 25 & 26 pianist Conor Hanick makes his San Francisco Symphony debut as soloist in the world premiere of Samuel Adams' *No Such Spring*, on a program with Anton Bruckner's Symphony No. 6

March 1 & 2 features Gabriella Smith's *Tumblebird Contrails*, Salonen's *Nyx*, and Sergei Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 with soloist Yuja Wang

These four programs—along with Nico Muhly's SoundBox program, *Codes*, featuring Yuja Wang and Esa-Pekka Salonen—precede Salonen and the Orchestra's March 9–17 European residencies tour, featuring performances at the Philharmonie de Paris in France; the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Germany; and the Philharmonie Luxembourg

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen returns to Davies Symphony Hall February 17– March 2 for four San Francisco Symphony programs highlighting guest pianists Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Conor Hanick, Lang Lang, and Yuja Wang, as well as the world premiere of Samuel Adams’ *No Such Spring* and performances of a work by Bay Area composer Gabriella Smith. On March 4, Salonen also joins Collaborative Partner Nico Muhly and pianist Yuja Wang for a special SoundBox program.

These San Francisco performances precede Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony’s 2023 European residencies tour, March 9–17, with four concerts at the Philharmonie de Paris in France (March 9–12) and three nights at Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Germany (March 14–17), as well as a performance at the Philharmonie Luxembourg (March 13). The March 2023 residencies tour marks Salonen and the Orchestra’s first international concerts since he became Music Director in 2020, as well as the San Francisco Symphony’s first international performances since 2016.

February 17–19: Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet*

On February 17–19, pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard returns for Béla Bartók’s Piano Concerto No. 2, completing his cycle of performances of Bartók’s piano concertos with Salonen and the Orchestra that began in June 2022. Bartók completed his second concerto in 1931. Compared with his first concerto, he wrote that he intended it to be “less bristling with the difficulties for the orchestra,” with more audience-pleasing and recognizable themes. The concerto draws on Eastern European folk and Baroque music and features plenty of percussion while also highlighting the percussive elements of the piano. These performances of the Piano Concerto No. 2, like Aimard’s previous performances of Bartók’s Concertos Nos. 1 & 3, will be recorded for future audio release.

The program also includes Maurice Ravel’s *Le Tombeau de Couperin*—both a tribute to friends that Ravel lost in combat during World War I and an ode to French music of centuries past—and selections from Sergei Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet*, which depicts the fierce war of the Montagues and Capulets, set in contrast to the affair of the two titular star-crossed lovers.

February 20: Lang Lang Plays Grieg

On February 20, Lang Lang joins Salonen and the Orchestra for a special one-night-only performance of Edvard Grieg’s heroic Piano Concerto, one of the composer’s most popular works, written when he was 24 years old. Salonen also conducts Jean Sibelius’s rich and triumphant Symphony No. 5. Composed in 1915, Sibelius’s Fifth Symphony was commissioned by the Finnish government to celebrate the composer’s 50th birthday, which was declared a national holiday.

February 23, 25 & 26: Salonen Conducts Bruckner & Adams

February 23, 25 & 26, pianist Conor Hanick makes his Orchestral Series debut as soloist in the Salonen-led world premiere performances of *No Such Spring*, a new work for piano and orchestra by composer Samuel Adams. Adams recalled listening to Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* around the beginning of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, as he was writing the second movement of the piece. He said that the feeling of “coming out of a two-year period of collective wintering and bearing witness to a very violent spring, both abroad and here in America” influenced his concept. The work embodies the paradox that springtime itself entails, of being “both beautiful and brutally violent—think of Thoreau’s description of the pond booming and cracking free of ice in *Walden*.”

The new work shares the program with Anton Bruckner’s Symphony No. 6, written in 1879. Though it’s rarely performed, the composer considered it his boldest symphony, and the piece is highlighted by beautiful themes with a triumphant and joyous finale.

March 1 & 2: Yuja Wang Plays Rachmaninoff

On March 1 & 2, Yuja Wang joins Salonen and the Orchestra for two nights, performing Sergei Rachmaninoff’s epic and famously difficult Piano Concerto No. 3, composed in 1909. The program also includes Salonen’s *Nyx*, a symphonic poem

about the shadowy mythological Greek goddess. Salonen opens the program with the first San Francisco Symphony performances of Gabriella Smith's *Tumblebird Contrails*, a work inspired by the composer's experience hiking Point Reyes National Seashore. All three works will be performed on the San Francisco Symphony's upcoming European residencies tour, March 9–17.

March 4: SoundBox: Codes with Nico Muhly & Yuja Wang

On March 4, Nico Muhly curates a one-night-only SoundBox program, *Codes*, featuring Yuja Wang and members of the San Francisco Symphony. The program brings together works by Johann Sebastian Bach and François Couperin with those of current-day composers including Muhly and Esa-Pekka Salonen, Caroline Shaw, and Billy Childs. Salonen conducts two works on the program: Muhly's *Two Motets by William Byrd* and his own *FOG* for 13 instruments, which he wrote as a 90th birthday tribute to acclaimed architect Frank Gehry.

The program will travel with the San Francisco Symphony in the Orchestra's first-ever international SoundBox performances in [Paris](#) and [Hamburg](#) on March 9 and 17, respectively.

SoundBox is an experimental late-night live music series that's a laboratory for the exploration of new musical ideas and immersive audience experiences, continuously pushing the envelope with adventurous programming and innovative design. Each performance is unique—encompassing shifting stage settings, art installations, projection screens, and unexpected elements, featuring original lighting design by Luke Kritzeck and video design by Adam Larsen.

Lead support for SoundBox is provided by The Barbro and Bernard Osher SoundBox Fund.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Tickets

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.

Location

Davies Symphony Hall is located at 201 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

Health & Safety Information

Davies Symphony Hall is currently operating at full audience capacity. Based on the advice of the San Francisco Symphony's Health and Safety Task Force, a face covering and vaccination against COVID-19 are strongly recommended but no longer required for entry into Davies Symphony Hall. These policies are subject to change.

Visit sfsymphony.org/safety for the San Francisco Symphony's complete up-to-date health and safety protocols.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAL SERIES

Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*

[Friday, February 17, 2023 at 7:30pm](#)

[Saturday, February 18, 2023 at 7:30pm](#)

[Sunday, February 19, 2023 at 2pm](#)

Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor

Pierre-Laurent Aimard piano

San Francisco Symphony

MAURICE RAVEL *Le Tombeau de Couperin*

BÉLA BARTÓK Piano Concerto No. 2

SERGEI PROKOFIEV Selections from *Romeo and Juliet*

Tickets: \$20–\$166

Ticket link: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2022-23/Prokofievs-Romeo-and-Juliet>

Broadcast / Archived Stream: A broadcast of these performances will air Tuesday, February 28, at 8pm 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.

SPECIAL EVENT

Lang Lang Plays Grieg

[Monday, February 20, 2023 at 7:30pm](#)

Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor

Lang Lang piano

San Francisco Symphony

EDVARD GRIEG Piano Concerto

JEAN SIBELIUS Symphony No. 5

Tickets: \$190–\$350

Ticket link: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2022-23/Lang-Lang-Plays-Grieg>

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAL SERIES

Salonen Conducts Bruckner & Adams

[Thursday, February 23, 2023 at 10am](#) [Open Rehearsal]

[Thursday, February 23, 2023 at 7:30pm](#)

[Saturday, February 25, 2023 at 7:30pm](#)

[Sunday, February 26, 2023 at 2pm](#)

Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor

Conor Hanick piano [Orchestral Series Debut]

San Francisco Symphony

SAMUEL ADAMS *No Such Spring* [San Francisco Symphony Commission, World Premiere]

ANTON BRUCKNER Symphony No. 6

Tickets: \$35–\$165

Ticket link: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2022-23/Salonen-Conducts-Bruckner-Adams>

Pre-rehearsal talk: A pre-concert talk, hosted by Sarah Cahill, will be presented from the stage one hour before the Open Rehearsal on Thursday, February 23, from 9–9:30am. Free to all ticketholders; doors open 15 minutes before.

Pre-Concert Q&A: A pre-concert audience Q&A session with composer Samuel Adams will be presented from the stage one hour prior to the concert on Thursday, February 23, from 6:30-7pm. Free to all ticket holders; doors open 15 minutes before.

Broadcast / Archived Stream: A broadcast of these performances will air Tuesday, March 7, at 8pm 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.

GREAT PERFORMERS SERIES

Yuja Wang Plays Rachmaninoff

[Wednesday, March 1, 2023 at 7:30pm](#)

[Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 7:30pm](#)

Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor

Yuja Wang piano

San Francisco Symphony

GABRIELLA SMITH *Tumblebird Contrails* [First San Francisco Symphony performances]

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN *Nyx*

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No. 3

Tickets: \$125–300

Ticket link: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2022-23/Yuja-Wang-Plays-Rachmaninoff>

Broadcast / Archived Stream: A broadcast of these performances will air Tuesday, March 14 at 8pm 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.

SOUNDBOX

Codes

[Friday, March 4, 2023 at 9pm](#)

Nico Muhly curator

Yuja Wang piano

Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor

Ross Jamie Collins conductor

San Francisco Symphony

Tickets: \$250

Ticket link: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2022-23/Soundbox-Nico-Muhly-Yuja-Wang>

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The February 17 and February 23 concerts are presented in partnership with the San Francisco Arts Commission.

The February 17–19 and March 1–2 concerts are generously sponsored by the Athena T. Blackburn Endowed Fund for Russian Music.

The February 20 concert is generously supported by Andy and Teri Goodman.

The world premiere of Samuel Adams' No Such Spring is sponsored by Michèle and Larry Corash.

Open rehearsals are endowed by a bequest from The Estate of Katharine Hanrahan.

Chevron is the Presenting Sponsor of the Great Performers Series.

The March 1–2 concerts are generously sponsored by Nellie and Max Levchin.

Lead support for SoundBox is provided by The Barbro and Bernard Osher SoundBox Fund.

The March 4 performance curated by Nico Muhly is supported by the Paul L. and Phyllis Wattis Endowment for New Music.

Additional support for SoundBox is provided by Bernadino J. Pistillo, Jr. and Paul Upham & Michael Vosika.

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