SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY
MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS • MUSIC DIRECTOR

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(High resolution images of Gamelan Sekar Jaya, Robert Ward, Toby Spence, Stuart Skelton, and Tal Rosner's *Four Sea Interludes* are available for download from the San Francisco Symphony's Online Photo Library)

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS AND THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY CONCLUDE THE 2013-14 SEASON WITH THREE WEEKS OF CONCERTS CELEBRATING BENJAMIN BRITTEN'S CENTENARY

First concert week includes Britten's *Prince of the Pagodas* and a special appearance by the Balinese performing arts group Gamelan Sekar Jaya

Second week of concerts feature Britten's Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings with Toby Spence and SFS Principal Horn Robert Ward, along with works by Copland and Shostakovich

Season concludes with semi-staged production of *Peter Grimes,* the first SF Symphony performances of the complete opera, and *Four Sea Interludes* with an SFS co-commissioned video accompaniment by Tal Rosner

SAN FRANCISCO, May 19, 2014 – Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony conclude the 2013-14 season with three weeks of concerts June 12-29 that celebrate the centenary of English composer Benjamin Britten. These season-ending concerts explore Britten's works for opera, vocal music, ballet, and orchestra, and span the prolific career of a composer, conductor and pianist who died in 1976 at the age of 63. The Britten concerts begin June 12-15 with excerpts from the composer's ballet score *The Prince of the Pagodas*, along with an instrumental and dance work from the Balinese performing arts group Gamelan Sekar Jaya, and Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2 with Gil Shaham. Concerts on June 19-21 include works by Copland and Shostakovich—Britten's friends and colleagues—alongside Britten's Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, featuring tenor Toby Spence and SFS Principal Horn Robert Ward. MTT's 19th season as Music Director comes to a close with the June 26-29 semi-staged production of the composer's celebrated opera *Peter Grimes*, which the SF Symphony will be performing for the first time. During the week of the *Peter Grimes* performances, MTT leads an additional concert featuring Britten's *Four Sea Interludes* from *Peter Grimes*, with an original co-commissioned video by visual artist Tal Rosner.

On June 12-15, MTT leads the SFS in excerpts from *The Prince of the Pagodas,* a 1957 composed by Britten for The Royal Ballet. The score is heavily influenced by Balinese gamelan music, which Britten first heard during his time in the United States (1939-42), and again on a two-week vacation in Bali in 1956. Audiences will also experience first-hand the Balinese performing arts that influenced Britten's work, as the Bay Area-based group Gamelan Sekar Jaya opens the concerts with a traditional instrumental work, *Tabuh Pat Jagul*, on June 13 and 15, and a gamelan and dance work titled *Legong Pengleb* on June 12 and 14. The classical instrumental piece *Tabuh Pat Jagul* is from the lelambatan tradition, considered the true classical repertoire of Balinese gamelan music. The broad and stately architecture of lelambatan music, ranging in style from simple, older renditions to complex, modern kebyar-influenced arrangements, is considered an essential component of temple ceremonies. The dance piece *Legong Pengeleb* is a tribute to North Bali's leadership and a masterpiece of the *kebyar* genre, featuring dynamic rhythms, precise and ornamented connections between music and dance, and constant melodic shifts. This piece, originally created in the early 20th century, was part of the musical renaissance that has now thrived for nearly a century in Bali. Frequent SFS guest artist Gil Shaham also appears on this program in Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2.

The second week of concerts June 19-21 showcases Britten's Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, featuring tenor Toby Spence and SF Symphony Principal Horn Robert Ward. The Serenade is a setting of a selection of six poems by British poets on the subject of night, exploring both its calm and its sinister aspects. It was written in 1943, not long after Britten returned to England after a three-year stay in the United States, where he picked up musical influences from his friend and contemporary Aaron Copland. In recognition of the influence that the American sound had on Britten during these years, the program also includes Copland's *Danzón Cubano*. Music by another friend and colleague of Britten's, Dmitri Shostakovich, is included in these concerts with his Symphony No. 15 in A major.

The SF Symphony's Britten centennial celebration culminates June 26-29 with MTT leading a semi-staged production of the composer's most famous opera, *Peter Grimes*. These concerts are the first San Francisco Symphony performances of the complete work, and these are the only San Francisco presentations of *Peter Grimes* during his centenary season. Tenor Stuart Skelton returns to the SFS to perform the title role, which he has performed at the English National Opera, Opera Australia, and London Philharmonic, as well as with the Royal Opera House production at the National Theatre of Tokyo. The all-star cast includes soprano Elza van den Heever (Ellen Orford), baritone Alan Opie (Captain Balstrode), mezzo-sopranos Ann Murray (Auntie) and Nancy Maultsby (Mrs. Sedley), tenors Richard Cox (Bob Boles) and Kim Begley (Horace Adams), baritone Eugene Brancoveanu (Ned Keene), bass John Relyea (Mr. Swallow), and the SFS Chorus. Stage director and costume designer James Darrah and video designer Adam Larsen return to the SFS to provide staging, costumes and video projections to bring the drama to life. Specially-designed video by Larsen will be

projected onto a panoramic scrim that encompasses the stage. Darrah and Larsen's work was last seen at the SFS in January 2012 for the semi-staged production of *Peer Gynt*. Cameron Mock serves as the scenic and lighting designer, and Sarah Schuessler is associate costume designer.

A special concert with MTT and the SFS on June 28 features by Britten's *Four Sea Interludes* from *Peter Grimes*, which was published separately as its own orchestral suite, as well as excerpts from *The Prince of the Pagodas*. *Four Sea Interludes* is accompanied an SFS co-commissioned video interpretation of the work by artist Tal Rosner, whose work was last seen at the SFS in September 2011 in conjunction with Thomas Adès's *Polaris: Voyage for Orchestra,* also an SFS co-commission. Rosner's video for *Four Sea Interludes* was commissioned by the New World Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic. It received its world premiere at the New World Center in Miami with Michael Tilson Thomas the New World Symphony in October 2013. On designing the visuals for this commission, Rosner explains, "I decided to portray the piece only with footage of American places, from the four cities that commissioned the work. I was looking for a connecting theme among the four. They're all historically different, built differently. Then I hit on the idea of the bridge. Each city is on or near a large body of water, and I was drawn to the idea of places that were not destinations in themselves but were transitional places. So, bridges and underpasses." Rosner's San Francisco focus was on the Bay and Golden Gate Bridges. Rosner filmed the Bay Bridge from Treasure Island. From this unusual angle, the familiar structure turns into an abstraction, and as Rosner explains, "These structures themselves are pieces of art, as well as engineering." *Click here to watch a video of Tal Rosner talking about Four Sea Interludes at New World Symphony.*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Founded in 1979, **Gamelan Sekar Jaya** (GSJ) is a sixty-member company of musicians and dancers based in the San Francisco Bay Area that specializes in the performing arts of Bali. Gamelan Sekar Jaya's music and dance range from traditional Balinese repertoire to cutting-edge compositions. Gamelan Sekar Jaya comprises five unique gamelan orchestras and a company of dancers. Each orchestra is composed of bronze metallophones and/or bamboo marimbas, usually combined with tuned gongs, drums and flutes. In various combinations, these musical ensembles and dancers have presented hundreds of concerts in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, bringing an understanding and appreciation of Balinese performing arts to diverse audiences. Gamelan Sekar Jaya is the only foreign group to ever receive the *Dharma Kusuma*, Bali's highest award for artistic achievement. The company is renowned for its exploration of traditional and modern forms through long-term residencies with Bali's finest musicians and dancers.

During the 2013-14 season, violinist **Gil Shaham** takes his long-term exploration of "Violin Concertos of the 1930s" – recognized by *Musical America* as "one of the most imaginative programming concepts in years" – into a fifth season, with performances of Bartók's Second with the Los Angeles and Atlanta Symphonies, Prokofiev's Second with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony, Barber's with the Louisiana Philharmonic and Mexico National Symphony, and Berg's with the Berlin Radio Symphony and the Bavarian Radio Symphony in Munich, Paris, and at Carnegie Hall. Also this season, Shaham gives the world, Asian, and European premieres of a new concerto by Bright Sheng, with the symphony orchestras of Detroit, Singapore, and London's BBC, respectively. Gil Shaham already has more than two dozen concerto and solo CDs to his name, including bestsellers that have appeared on record charts in the U.S. and abroad. These recordings have earned prestigious awards, including multiple Grammys, a Grand Prix du Disque, Diapason d'Or, and *Gramophone*'s Editor's Choice. His recent recordings are produced on the Canary Classics label, which he founded in 2004. In 2012, he was named "Instrumentalist of the Year" by *Musical America*, which cited the "special kind of humanism" with which his performances are imbued.

Robert Ward joined the San Francisco Symphony in 1980 as Associate Principal Horn and has held the position of Principal Horn since 2007. A founding member of the symphonic brass group The Bay Brass, Ward has also engaged in a number of recording activities outside the orchestra, making music with such diverse performers as Paul McCandless, Spencer Brewer, Ed Bogas, Raquel Bitton, Lisa Vroman, and the heavy metal rock group Metallica. He has appeared at the Grand Teton Music Festival, the Peninsula Music Festival in Door County, Wisconsin, the Colorado Music Festival, and the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, where he gave the world premiere of Avram David's Sonata for Solo Horn, a performance which the *New York Times* called "formidable." Also at Tanglewood, he received the C.D. Jackson Master Award and the Harry Shapiro Award for outstanding brass player. A committed teacher, he is on the

faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and the University of California at Berkeley. A native of Schenectady, NY, he received his Bachelor of Music degree from the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music in 1977, studying with Robert Fries. His other interests include revising his first novel, trying to eat at each of the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s Top 100 Restaurants, and researching his family tree, which has 2,000 people, but no other musicians.

Toby Spence has sung with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, the Paris Opera, ENO, the Bavarian State Opera, the Teatro Real, Madrid, Theater an der Wien, the Hamburg Opera and at the Salzburg, Aix-en-Provence and Edinburgh festivals. On the concert stage he works with Sir Simon Rattle, Andris Nelsons, Thomas Adès, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Symon Bychkov. Operatic highlights of the 2013-14 season include Tom Rakewell and Tito in Vienna, and Tamino and Tito in Munich. In addition to this concert appearance with Michael Tilson Thomas and the SFS, Spence sings with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Vasily Petrenko and the Bayerischer Rundfunk and Edward Gardner.

Named Male Singer of the Year at the 2014 International Opera Awards, tenor **Stuart Skelton** is critically acclaimed for his outstanding musicianship, tonal beauty and intensely dramatic portrayals. Along with baritone Thomas Hampson, Skelton appeared on the San Francisco Symphony's 2008 recording of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, the tenth installment of their Grammy Award-winning Mahler recording project, on the orchestra's own SFS Media label. His operatic roles include the title roles in *Lohengrin*, *Rienzi*, *Parsifal*, *Dmitrij,* and *Peter Grimes* as well as Florestan in *Fidelio*, Laca in *Jenufa*, Erik in *Der fliegende Holländer*, The Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, The Prince in *Rusalka*, Max in *Der Freischütz,* Canio in *Pagliacci,* Gherman in *The Queen of Spades,* and Siegmund in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Skelton's 2013-14 engagements include his debut in the title role of *Otello* at English National Opera, Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* at the BBC Proms with Edward Gardner, *The Dream of Gerontius* with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, *Das Lied von der Erde* at the Zürich Opera, and Beethoven's 9th Symphony with both the Hamburg Philharmonic and BBC Scottish Symphony. Stuart has twice been honored with the Sir Robert Helpmann Award, for his performance of Siegmund in the State Opera of South Australia's 2005 production of the The Ring Cycle, and in 2010 for Best Male Performer in a Lead Role for his portrayal of Peter Grimes. He received a 2010 Green Room Award for *A Streetcar Named Desire* and was nominated for an Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera for his performances as Peter Grimes with the English National Opera.

Soprano **Elza van den Heever** was born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa and received her musical training at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She participated in San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program and Adler Fellowship, where she portrayed Mary Custis Lee in the world premiere of Philip Glass's *Appomattox* and Donna Anna in the company's 2007 *Don Giovanni,* performances which were seen nationwide through the company's Grand Opera Cinema Series and broadcast on Northern California's KQED Public Television. She is a featured soloist on Michael Tilson Thomas the SF Symphony's Grammy Award-winning recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 8 on SFS Media. Ms. van den Heever made three major role debuts in her 2013-14 season. First was her U.K. debut as Ellen Orford in a new David Alden production of Britten's *Peter Grimes* at English National Opera. She collaborated again with Alden at Hamburgische Staatsoper as Giselda in a new production of Verdi's *I Lombardi*. And on the heels of her successful Metropolitan Opera debut as Elisabetta in *Maria Stuarda*, Ms. van den Heever added a second Donizetti queen to her repertoire in a role debut as Anna Bolena for Marie-Louise Bischofberger's new production at Opéra National de Bordeaux. In addition to Chicago Lyric Opera and The Met, critically acclaimed appearances in North America include Leonora in *Il trovatore* for Canadian Opera Company; Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* with Dallas Opera; and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with Santa Fe Opera. Winner of the 2008 Seattle Opera International Wagner Competition, she continues to study with soprano and master teacher Sheri Greenawald.

Los Angeles based director, designer and visual artist **James Darrah** is committed to collaborative projects within theater, music, and video and has been recognized as "a gifted young American director" delivering "fresh and stimulating productions" (*Chicago Tribune*). In the past year he has collaborated on new genre-bending productions with conductors Michael Tilson Thomas, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Gustavo Dudamel, and John Adams. In addition to directing the semi-staged production of *Peer Gynt* at the SF Symphony in January 2013, his work includes projects with The Juilliard School and Juilliard Opera, San Francisco Opera, Central City Opera, Opera Omaha, The Theater @ Boston Court, Pacific MusicWorks, The Broad Stage, Chicago Opera Theater, and four projects with the Los Angeles Philharmonic including the world premiere of Frank Zappa's *200 Motels* for the 10th Anniversary of Walt Disney Concert Hall. Additional upcoming projects include a new production of *Don Giovanni* for the Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera, the U.S.

premiere of Olga Neuwirth's *Hommage à Klaus Nomi* with John Adams conducting for the LA Philharmonic, a world premiere with the experimental LA-based company The Industry, and a new production of Adams's *A Flowering Tree for* Opera Omaha. He has taught performance and theater for the Adler Fellowship of San Francisco Opera, Cornish College of the Arts, and the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, and has also directed and designed six new productions for the University of California, Los Angeles. He received his MFA from the UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television, where he was the recipient of the George Burns/Gracie Allen Directing Fellowship. He has also been awarded the James Pendleton Foundation Grant and national Princess Grace Award in Theater.

Adam Larsen is a New York based artist, projection designer and filmmaker. Larsen has designed projections twice before for MTT and the SFS, first in January 2012 for Debussy's *Le martyre de Saint Sébastien*, with stage direction by Anne Patterson; and again in January 2013 for a semi-staged production of *Peer Gynt* directed by James Darrah, with whom he collaborates again on these performances of *Peter Grimes*. He holds a B.F.A. in cinematography from North Carolina School of the Arts and is currently self-producing a feature documentary on autism entitled *Neurotypical*. He has designed projections for Hal Prince's *LoveMusik* (Broadway), *The Gospel at Colonus* (Herod Atticus, Athens), world premieres of *The Women of Brewster Place* (Alliance/Arena Stage) and *Christmas Carol* 1941 (Arena Stage) and recently *The Wind Up Bird Chronicle* (Ohio Theater) and *Love Lies Bleeding*, a ballet based on the life of Elton John (Alberta Ballet).

Tal Rosner has worked closely with musicians for almost ten years, combining multiple layers of sound and visuals to create a new language of classical and contemporary music videos. His work was last seen at the SFS in September 2011 in conjunction with Thomas Adès's *Polaris: Voyage for Orchestra,* a co-commission between the New World Symphony, the San Francisco Symphony, and Los Angeles Philharmonic. In January 2011, *Polaris* inaugurated the Miami New World Symphony building designed by Frank Gehry. *Chronograph*, a site-specific digital art mural that he created in collaboration with American artist Casey Reas, was commissioned for the opening of the same building, and has been screened daily on its 7,000-square-foot exterior projection wall ever since. Rosner's work will be featured again with the SF Symphony in March 2015, when Thomas Adès conducts the SFS premiere of his piece *In Seven Days*. Additional projects include collaborations with Katia and Marielle Labèque on Stravinsky and Debussy's music for two pianos (released on DVD, KLM Recordings 2007), an interpretation of Conlon Nancarrow's *Player-Piano Study No. 7* (Barbican Festival 2007 and Serpentine Summer Pavilion 2008), and *Lachen Verlernt*, with Jennifer Koh and Esa-Pekka Salonen (commissioned by Cedille Records, Oberlin Conservatory, 92nd Street Y and Carolina Performing Arts).

Calendar editors, please note:

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY, MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTING

Thursday, June 12 at 2 pm
Friday, June 13 at 8 pm
Saturday, June 14 at 8 pm
Sunday, June 15 at 2 pm

Michael Tilson Thomas conductor
Gil Shaham violin
Gamelan Sekar Jaya gamelan ensemble
San Francisco Symphony

Legong Pengleb Gamelan and dance work **(June 12 & 14)**
Tabuh Pat Jagul Gamelan instrument work **(June 13 & 15)**
Prokofiev Violin Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Opus 63
Britten Excerpts from *The Prince of the Pagodas*, Opus 57

Tickets: $15-$85. Available at sfsymphony.org, by phone at 415-864-6000, and at the Davies Symphony Hall Box Office, on Grove Street between Van Ness Avenue and Franklin Street in San Francisco.

Audio Program Notes: Listen to a free podcast about *The Prince of the Pagodas*, hosted by KDFC's Rik Malone. All podcasts are archived, and can be downloaded or streamed from sfsymphony.org/podcasts and from the iTunes store.

Pre-Concert Talk: Peter Grunberg will give an "Inside Music" talk from the stage one hour prior to each concert. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open 15 minutes before.

Broadcast / Archived Stream: A broadcast of these performances will air Tuesday, June 24 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, MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTING

Thursday, June 19 at 8 pm
Friday, June 20 at 8 pm
Saturday, June 21 at 8 pm

Michael Tilson Thomas conductor
Toby Spence tenor
Robert Ward horn
San Francisco Symphony

Copland *Danzón Cubano*
Britten Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings, Opus 31
Shostakovich Symphony No. 15 in A major, Opus 141

Tickets: $15-$85. Available at sfsymphony.org, by phone at 415-864-6000, and at the Davies Symphony Hall Box Office, on Grove Street between Van Ness Avenue and Franklin Street in San Francisco.

Audio Program Notes: Listen to a free podcast about Shostakovich's Symphony No. 15, hosted by KDFC's Rik Malone. All podcasts are archived, and can be downloaded or streamed from sfsymphony.org/podcasts and from the iTunes store.

Pre-Concert Talk: Scott Foglesong will give an "Inside Music" talk from the stage one hour prior to each concert. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open 15 minutes before.

Broadcast / Archived Stream: A broadcast of these performances will air Tuesday, July 1 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, MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTING

Thursday, June 26 at 8 pm
Friday, June 27 at 8 pm
Sunday, June 29 at 2 pm

Michael Tilson Thomas conductor
Stuart Skelton tenor (Peter Grimes)
Elza van den Heever soprano (Ellen Orford)
Alan Opie baritone (Captain Balstrode)
Ann Murray mezzo-soprano (Auntie)
Nancy Maultsby mezzo-soprano (Mrs. Sedley)
Nikki Einfeld soprano (Niece 1)
Abigail Nims mezzo-soprano (Niece 2)

Richard Cox tenor (Bob Boles)
Kim Begley tenor (Horace Adams)
Eugene Brancoveanu baritone (Ned Keene)
John Relyea bass (Mr. Swallow)
Kevin Langan bass (Hobson)
Rafael Karpa-Wilson John (silent role)
San Francisco Symphony Chorus, **Ragnar Bohlin** director
San Francisco Symphony

John Bischoff bass (1st Fisherman)
Chung-Wai Soong bass (2nd Fisherman)
Peg Lisi mezzo-soprano (Fisherwoman)
Adam Cole bass (1st Burgess)
David Varnum bass (Dr. Crabbe)
Matthew Peterson baritone (2nd Burgess)
Jimmy Kansau tenor (3rd Burgess/A Lawyer)
Steven Rogino baritone (4th Burgess)
Kevin Gibbs tenor (5th Burgess)
Michael Taylor baritone (6th Burgess)
Cindy Wyvill soprano (A Woman)

James Darrah stage director and costume designer
Cameron Jaye Mock scenic and lighting designer
Adam Larsen video designer
Michael Egan stage manager
Sarah Schuessler associate costume designer
Emily Anne MacDonald associate scenic design

Britten *Peter Grimes* (semi-staged, enhanced concert production)

Tickets: $50-$85. Available at sfsymphony.org, by phone at 415-864-6000, and at the Davies Symphony Hall Box Office, on Grove Street between Van Ness Avenue and Franklin Street in San Francisco.

Audio Program Notes: Listen to a free podcast about *Peter Grimes,* hosted by KDFC's Rik Malone. All podcasts are archived, and can be downloaded or streamed from sfsymphony.org/podcasts and from the iTunes store.

Pre-Concert Talk: Peter Grunberg will give an "Inside Music" talk from the stage one hour prior to each concert. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open 15 minutes before.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY, MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTING

Saturday, June 28 at 8 pm

Michael Tilson Thomas conductor
Tal Rosner video artist
San Francisco Symphony

Britten *Four Sea Interludes* from *Peter Grimes,* Opus 33a [with video]
Britten Excerpts from *The Prince of the Pagodas*

Tickets: $50-$85. Available at sfsymphony.org, by phone at 415-864-6000, and at the Davies Symphony Hall Box Office, on Grove Street between Van Ness Avenue and Franklin Street in San Francisco.

Pre-Concert Talk: Laura Stanfield Prichard will give an “Inside Music” talk from the stage one hour prior to the concert. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open 15 minutes before.

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Gil Shaham's appearance is supported by the Phyllis C. Wattis Fund for Guest Artists.

The June 19-21 concerts are generously supported by John and Paula Gambs.

Toby Spence's appearance is supported by the Phyllis C. Wattis Fund for Guest Artists.

Ragnar Bohlin’s work in the San Francisco Symphony Chorus’s 40th Anniversary Season is supported by a grant from The Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation.

The Peter Grimes *concerts are supported by the Barbro and Bernard Osher Staged Production Fund.*

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