SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY
MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS • MUSIC DIRECTOR

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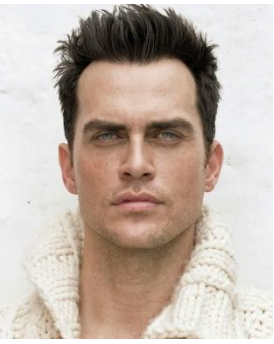

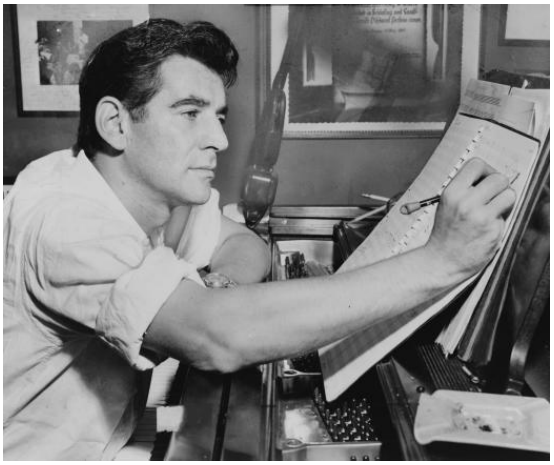

*(Images of **Cheyenne Jackson, Alexandra Silber, Jessica Vosk, Kevin Vortmann, Justin Keyes, Leonard Bernstein, and Michael Tilson Thomas** are available for download from the San Francisco Symphony's Online Photo Library)*

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTS CHEYENNE JACKSON, ALEXANDRA SILBER AND THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY AND CHORUS IN THE FIRST EVER COMPLETE CONCERT PERFORMANCES OF BERNSTEIN'S *WEST SIDE STORY* JUNE 27-30 & JULY 2, 2013

Performances to be recorded for future release on SFS Media in 2014

SAN FRANCISCO, April 30, 2013 – Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT) and the San Francisco Symphony (SFS) will be the first orchestra to perform Leonard Bernstein's complete music for the musical *West Side Story* live in concert in five performances June 27-30 and July 2 at Davies Symphony Hall. These complete concert performances include all of the music from the original Broadway musical. Making his San Francisco Symphony and San Francisco Bay Area debut in these performances will be Cheyenne Jackson (*Glee, 30 Rock*) singing the role of Tony. The cast includes a variety of exciting new talent all making their San Francisco Symphony debuts in these performances: Alexandra Silber will sing the role of Maria, Jessica Vosk as Anita, Kevin Vortmann as Riff, and Justin Keyes as Action. Additional vocalists

will be announced at a later date. These concerts will be recorded for release on the orchestra's in-house label SFS Media in 2014. MTT and the SFS are the first musical entity to have received permission from all four *West Side Story* rights-holders to perform it in its entirety in a concert setting.

Tilson Thomas first met Leonard Bernstein several years after the *West Side Story* premiere and has conducted the iconic composer/conductor's music frequently at the SFS. Highlights include semi-staged performances of *On the Town* in 1996 and, in 2008, Carnegie Hall's opening night all-Bernstein gala concert, celebrating the 90th anniversary of Bernstein's birth. The Carnegie concert was broadcast on PBS Great Performances and is available on DVD by SFS Media.

In 1957, Leonard Bernstein's collaboration with choreographer Jerome Robbins, writer Arthur Laurents, and lyricist Stephen Sondheim led to one of the most beloved musicals in American theater. *West Side Story* was inspired by William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*. The play is set in a blue-collar neighborhood on the West Side of New York City during the 1950's. The story explores the rivalry between two teenage street-gangs, the Sharks from Puerto Rico are taunted by the Jets, a Polish-American working-class group. The young protagonist, Tony, one of the Jets, falls in love with Maria, the sister of Bernardo, the leader of the Sharks. The dark theme and sophisticated music reflected the social issues of the time and marked a major turning point in American musical theater. Bernstein's score for the musical includes the songs "Something's Coming," "Maria," "America," "Somewhere," "Tonight," "Jet Song," "I Feel Pretty," "A Boy Like That," "One Hand, One Heart," "Gee, Officer Krupke" and "Cool".

HISTORY OF *WEST SIDE STORY* ON RECORDING

Many singers and musicians have performed the songs and *Symphonic Dances* from *West Side Story*. The first recording was of the 1957 original Broadway cast, with Carol Lawrence as Maria, Larry Kert as Tony and Chita Rivera as Anita. The 1961 movie soundtrack recording, with Marni Nixon singing Maria's role (played in the film by Natalie Wood) and Tony sung by Jimmy Bryant (played in the film by Richard Beymer) won the Grammy Award for Best Sound Track Album or Recording of Original Cast from Motion Picture or Television. In 1984, Bernstein recorded the score from the musical. It featured Kiri Te Kanawa as Maria, José Carreras as Tony, Tatiana Troyanos as Anita, Kurt Ollmann as Riff, and Marilyn Horne as the offstage voice who sings "Somewhere." The recording won a Grammy Award for Best Musical Show Album in 1985 and the recording process was filmed as a documentary. Bernstein recorded the *Symphonic Dances* suite with the New York Philharmonic in 1961, and with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1983. The *Symphonic Dances* have entered the repertoire of many major world orchestras, and been recorded by many including the San Francisco Symphony under the direction of Seiji Ozawa. The 2009 new Broadway cast album, with Josefina Scaglione as Maria, Matt Cavenaugh as Tony and Karen Olivo as Anita won the 2009 Grammy Award for Best Musical Show Album.

MTT AND BERNSTEIN

Michael Tilson Thomas's commitment to the music of Leonard Bernstein runs deep, for he and Bernstein worked together closely and remained friends and colleagues until Bernstein's death in 1990. Besides their impassioned championing of Mahler and their work as music educators, attention first focused on each of these artists in similar ways. In November 1943, Leonard Bernstein was an assistant conductor with the New York Philharmonic when Bruno Walter took ill and was unable to lead a concert. Bernstein stepped in, conducting brilliantly in a performance that was broadcast nationally. He was twenty-five, and an American in a field dominated by Europeans. In October 1969, Michael Tilson Thomas, then a 24 year-old assistant conductor with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, stepped in for the ailing William Steinberg in a New York concert. While many revere Leonard Bernstein primarily as a conductor, MTT has long believed Bernstein will be remembered for his music. "It's a very authentic voice," Tilson Thomas says, a voice that expresses "the cares and concerns and hopes of a whole generation of American society."

SOLOISTS

Cheyenne Jackson (Tony) is an actor, singer, and songwriter currently working with SONY/ATV on an album of original music scheduled for 2013 release. In the fall of 2012, he starred on Broadway opposite Henry Winkler, Ari Graynor, and Alicia Silverstone in David West Read's play *The Performers*. He recently completed filming Steven Soderbergh's movie *Behind The Candelabra*, a Liberace biopic, with Michael Douglas and Matt Damon as well as the NBC TV pilot *Mockingbird Lane*. In September 2012, Cheyenne appeared in the PBS concert special *From Dust To Dreams*. He has

appeared in films including the 2006 Academy Award nominated *United 93*, as Mark Bingham; *The Green,* opposite Julia Ormond and Ileana Douglas; *Price Check* with Parker Posey, and *Lola Versus*. On and Off Broadway, Jackson has starred in *8*, *Finian's Rainbow* (Drama Desk nomination), *Damn Yankees*, *Xanadu* (Drama League and Drama Desk nominations) *The Agony & the Agony*, *All Shook Up* (Theater World Award, Drama League, Outer Critics Circle nominations) the premiere cast of *Altar Boyz*, *Aida*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *On the 20th Century*, and *The 24 Hour Plays*. On television he can be seen on NBC's *30 Rock* portraying series regular Danny Baker, and recently he portrayed Dustin Goolsby, the new coach of Vocal Adrenaline on the TV series *Glee*. Other television credits include *Family Practice, Life on Mars, Ugly Betty, It Takes a Village, Curb Your Enthusiasm*, and *Local Talent.* In concert, he has sold out Carnegie Hall twice, in "The Power of Two" in 2010 with Michael Feinstein followed by his solo debut concert with the New York Pops, in "Music of the Mad Men Era" in 2011. Jackson plays an active role in a variety of charities and social issues, including LGBT rights, marriage equality, animal welfare, and HIV/AIDS research. He is an international ambassador for The Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR) and he serves as the national ambassador and spokesperson for The Hetrick-Martin Institute and the Harvey Milk High School. Cheyenne Jackson was recently named *Out Magazine*'s "Entertainer of the Year." For his upcoming album he is collaborating with Sia, Stevie Aiello, and Charlotte Sometimes. In 2012 he released his first three singles, "Drive," the Top 40 hit "Before You," and "Don't Wanna Know," all produced by Thomas "Tawgs" Salter. Cheyenne Jackson will be the grand marshal of San Francisco's Gay Pride Parade on Sunday, June 30 before his 2:00 pm San Francisco Symphony performance in *West Side Story* that day.

Alexandra Silber (Maria) was born in Los Angeles and grew up outside Detroit. She graduated from Interlochen Center for the Arts with a Young Artist Award and continued her training at The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow. She garnered the Faculty Student of the Year award just days before her West End debut as Laura Fairlie in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Woman in White*. Silber made her feature film debut in Stephen King's *1408*, before portraying Hodel in The Sheffield Crucible's 2007 production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, and its subsequent West End production. She also appeared in *Fiddler on the Roof* and as Julie Jordan in *Carousel* at The Savoy Theatre in London's West End, for which she received the TMA Award for Best Performance in a Musical. Silber made her American acting debut in a revival of her Ovation-nominated portrayal of Julie Jordan for Reprise Theatre Company in Los Angeles under the artistic directorship of Jason Alexander, and joined Tony Award winner Tyne Daly in Terrence McNally's *Master Class* at The Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, directed by Stephen Wadsworth. Silber made her Broadway debut in the same production with Manhattan Theatre Club in the spring of 2011. She made her New York theater debut portraying The Young Wife in the Transport Group's Revival of Michael John LaChiusa's *Hello Again*, for which she was nominated for a Drama League Award. Silber debuted two solo cabaret performances at Feinstein's in New York, and was part of Barbara Cook's Spotlight Series at The Kennedy Center in December 2011. She has appeared as a guest on all three franchises of the *Law & Order* series - *SVU, Criminal Intent* and the original. In April 2013 she makes her Carnegie Hall debut with the American Symphony Orchestra, followed by an engagement at Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts with The Orchestra of St. Luke's.

Jessica Vosk (Anita) makes her debut with the San Francisco Symphony in these performances. Her recent credits include *Man of La Mancha* (TUTS) and New York City Center *Encores!'* productions of *Merrily We Roll Along* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. She also performed in Roundabout's *Death Takes a Holiday* and *She Loves Me*. Vosk has performed with the New York Philharmonic in Stephen Sondheim's *Company*, and has also had the pleasure of performing in the new musical *Kristina* by ABBA's Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson at Carnegie Hall and Royal Albert Hall.

Kevin Vortmann (Riff) makes his San Francisco Symphony debut in *West Side Story.* Vortmann appeared in the Broadway revival of *A Little Night Music* starring Catherine Zeta Jones and Angela Lansbury. His other New York City theater credits include *On the Town*, *Applause, Face the Music* (including the Original Cast Recording)*, Lost in the Stars, Fiorello!, Stairway to Paradise* and *Juno* with New York City Center's critically acclaimed *Encores!* series and the Off-Broadway productions of *Death Takes a Holiday* and *For Lovers Only.* He performed at Carnegie Hall, and at the Kennedy Center with the Baltimore Symphony, in performances of Leonard Bernstein's *Mass* ("Non Credo" soloist), the recording of which received a Grammy nomination for Best Classical Album. He also performed at Carnegie Hall in *Showboat* and *Mother Russia.* He appeared in the national tour of *Camelot* with Robert Goulet, and regionally in *Miss Saigon as* Chris at Drury Lane Oakbrook and The Arvada Center, in *Guys and Dolls* as Sky Masterson at North Shore Music Theatre, *Next to Normal* as Dan at Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, *Les Misérables* as Enjolras at Pioneer Theatre Company, *She Loves Me* as Steven Kodaly at Alpine Theatre Project, and *Glory Denied* as Young Thompson at UrbanArias. Vortmann was soloist with the Omaha Symphony in their annual *Christmas with the Symphony* concert and is

the recipient of the Colorado Theatre Guild's Henry Award and the Detroit's Oscar Wilde Award. He holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Northwestern University.

Justin Keyes (Action) makes his San Francisco Symphony debut in *West Side Story*. Keyes was born and raised in San Jose, and these performances mark his first in the Bay Area. Keyes' Broadway credits include *How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying* and *The Apple Tree*. He has performed on national tours of *Mary Poppins* and the *25th Annual Putman County Spelling Bee* as Chip. Keyes' regional theater credits include performing at the Dallas Theatre Center, Kansas City Starlight, the Great Lakes Theatre Festival, The Muny in St. Louis, and Pittsburgh CLO. Keyes appeared on television in *Gossip Girl*.

THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY CHORUS

The 150-member San Francisco Symphony Chorus is prized for its precision, power, and versatility. Highlights of recent seasons include the world premiere of Mason Bates's *Mass Transmission* in 2012 as part of the San Francisco Symphony's *American Mavericks* Festival, the first SFS performances of Ligeti's *Requiem,* and performances of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas and the SFS, which were recorded and recently released on SFS Media. Led by Chorus Director Ragnar Bohlin, the Chorus performs more than twenty concerts each season and is comprised of 30 professional and 120 volunteer members. Recordings featuring the SFS Chorus have won a total of eight Grammy awards, including three for Best Choral Performance. They were featured on the SFS Media's recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with MTT and the SFS, which won three 2010 Grammys, including the award for Best Choral Performance, under the direction of Ragnar Bohlin. Previous Grammys awarded to the SFS Chorus include Best Choral Performance for Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* in 1995, Best Choral Performance for Orff's *Carmina burana* in 1992, Best Classical Album with the SFS for Mahler's Symphony No. 3 and *Kindertotenlieder* in 2004, and Best Classical Album for their performance of *Perséphone* as part of a collection of Stravinsky's music in 2000. More information about the San Francisco Symphony Chorus can be found in their online press kit here.

POST-CONCERT EVENT

Immediately following the concert on Friday, June 28, **Squid Inc**. performs at *Davies After Hours*, a post-concert music event taking place in the Second Tier lobby-turned-lounge. Artwork by Jerry Ross Barrish will be on display courtesy of Vessel Gallery, Oakland. Squid Inc. is made up of Bay Area string players Hrabba Atladottir and Jory Fankuchen on violin, Darcy Rindt on viola, and Elizabeth Vandervennet on cello. Fun, fiery, and fully engaging, they play original tunes and unusual arrangements of known songs. Free to June 28 ticketholders.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY, MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTING

Thursday, June 27 at 8 pm
Friday, June 28 at 8 pm*
Saturday, June 29 at 8 pm
Sunday, June 30 at 2 pm
Tuesday, July 2 at 8 pm

Michael Tilson Thomas conductor
Cheyenne Jackson vocalist (Tony)
Alexandra Silber vocalist (Maria)
Jessica Vosk vocalist (Anita)
Kevin Vortmann vocalist (Riff)
Justin Keyes vocalist (Action)
San Francisco Symphony
San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Ragnar Bohlin, Director

Bernstein *West Side Story*

PRE-CONCERT TALK
There will be an “Inside Music” talk given from the stage one hour prior to each concert. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open 15 minutes before.

AUDIO PROGRAM NOTES
A free audio “Program Notes” podcast about Bernstein’s *West Side Story*, hosted by KDFC’s Rik Malone, will be available from sfsymphony.org/podcasts and from the iTunes store.

TICKETS
Tickets are $47-$160 and are 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.

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