



SAN FRANCISCO  
SYMPHONY  
MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS • MUSIC DIRECTOR



**BRENT ASSINK**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

Brent Assink, Executive Director of the San Francisco Symphony (SFS), leads one of North America's most forward-looking arts organizations with a distinctive combination of business skills and musical passion. He brings over 32 years of experience in orchestra management to his role at the SFS helm as he continues to steer the organization in new directions, forging a path for classical music in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A native of Washington State, Mr. Assink has been a pianist since childhood and is an accomplished organist. After taking a master's degree in musicology and business administration from the University of Minnesota, he joined the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra's (SPCO) artistic operations department in 1981 and six years later was named SPCO Manager. In 1990, he was named SFS General Manager, then returned to the SPCO in 1994 as the organization's President. He was named SFS Executive Director in March 1999.

Now in his fifteenth year as Executive Director of the San Francisco Symphony, Brent Assink heads an institution that presents more than 220 concerts each year with an annual budget of more than \$69 million. He has implemented a broad range of artistic, media, and community building initiatives that have put the SFS into the front ranks of the world's most innovative and successful orchestras. His passion for music has spearheaded education projects and community engagement activities, award-winning television, radio, and recording projects, and the Orchestra's reputation has assumed new dimensions through its national and international tours, with annual performances at Carnegie Hall.

Under his leadership, the San Francisco Symphony has become a global leader in the digital arena. Among the high-profile projects the Symphony has launched under Mr. Assink's leadership is the establishment in 2001 of its own audio and video recording label, SFS Media. The label's releases have featured Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas and the Orchestra in an acclaimed Mahler cycle that won seven Grammy Awards and garnered widespread international acclaim. The label continues to offer reference recordings of the highest standards featuring albums of the core repertoire alongside adventurous and infrequently recorded contemporary material from Beethoven to John Adams to West Side Story

Assink spearheaded the Orchestra's *Keeping Score* project, an unprecedented global multimedia endeavor designed to make classical music accessible to people of all ages and musical backgrounds. *Keeping Score*'s components include television documentaries and concert programs seen by over 9 million Americans on PBS television, a Peabody Award-winning national radio series, interactive web sites and an education program that has trained elementary school teachers nationwide to incorporate

music instruction into core subjects. The educational Web site for children [sfskids.org](http://sfskids.org), first introduced in 2002, relaunched earlier this year using the latest web-based learning tools and gaming techniques. Under Brent Assink's leadership, the SFS has expanded *Adventures in Music*, the longest running and most comprehensive education program among U.S. orchestras, now bringing music to every child in grades one through five in all San Francisco public elementary schools, and reaching more than 23,000 students. Its Instrument Training and Support program covers every public San Francisco middle and high school with a music program, with professional musicians teaching and coaching at schools and helping provide students with music supplies, instrument repairs, and other needed resources.

Other successful programs initiated during Mr. Assink's tenure, and designed to serve San Francisco's uniquely diverse community, include an annual *Chinese New Year Concert* that celebrates Asian and Western musical traditions; the popular *Deck the Hall* holiday celebration for children from local community organizations; an annual *Día de los Muertos* community concert and celebration; and Community of Music Makers, a program promoting active, lifelong participation in music-making by engaging amateur adult musicians in workshops led by SFS musicians on the stage of Davies Symphony Hall

As SFS General Manager from 1990 to 1994, Brent Assink oversaw a major acoustical modification of Davies Symphony Hall, launched several new concert series, expanded ticket revenue, and augmented its education and community activities.

As SPCO President from 1994 to 1999, he recruited new board leadership, appointed Bobby McFerrin and Nicholas McGegan to the artistic staff, launched an educational initiative in partnership with St. Paul and Minneapolis public schools, and solidified the ensemble's program of national and international touring, including the SPCO's first tour of Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. The SPCO presented annual balanced budgets, retired its accumulated deficit, and launched a new endowment campaign that raised more than \$14 million under his direction.

Brent Assink holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and piano performance from Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. He is a regular faculty member for the Orchestra Leadership Academy, sponsored by the League of American Orchestras and Co-Director of the League's Essentials of Orchestra Management Seminar. He serves on the board of the League of American Orchestras and on the Advisory Council for the University of Minnesota's School of Music, and is a regular panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts. He has published articles on church music, is a published composer, and has been recognized as a distinguished alumnus by Dordt College. He and his wife, Jan, have three children.

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