

**SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY CHORUS**  
RAGNAR BOHLIN, DIRECTOR

One of America's most distinguished choruses, the 152-member San Francisco Symphony Chorus—which celebrated its 40th anniversary during the 2013-14 season—is known for its precision, power, and versatility. Led by Chorus Director Ragnar Bohlin, the Chorus performs more than 26 concerts each season and is comprised of 32 professional and 120 volunteer members. *San Francisco Chronicle* classical music critic Joshua Kosman recently praised the Chorus for its “welcomed blend of robust vigor and precisely shaded transparency.” Most recently, the SFS Chorus can be heard along with MTT and the SF Symphony on the November 2015 SFS Media release of Beethoven's *Mass in C major*. Prior to that, members of the chorus were featured on the Symphony's complete concert recording of Bernstein's score for *West Side Story*, released in June 2014 and nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Musical Theater Album.

Performances with the San Francisco Symphony in the 2017–18 season include Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* in September, Ives' *Psalm 90* and *Symphony No. 4* in November, and Bernstein's *Candide* in January, all conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. In December, Ragnar Bohlin conducts the SF Symphony and Chorus in performances of Handel's *Messiah*. Other appearances during the year include members of the Chorus joining the Orchestra in a live accompaniment to Miloš Forman's *Amadeus*, and for the Symphony's Oktoberfest celebration. In May 2018, the Chorus presents a solo concert, performing J.S. Bach's *Magnificat*. To close out the season, the SFS Chorus joins the Symphony in June for the final two concert programs of the season, both conducted by MTT—semi-staged performances of Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* and Mahler's *Symphony No. 3*, featuring the women of the Chorus.

During the recent 2016–17 season, the Chorus appeared with the SF Symphony in Verdi's *Te Deum* in September and Allegri's *Miserere* in October (a first SFS performance), both conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. In January 2017, the chorus performed along with the Orchestra in MTT's semi-staged version of Mahler's *Das klagende Lied*. The Chorus performed with Herbert Blomstedt in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, Joana Carneiro in John Adams's *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* (a first SFS performance), and Charles Dutoit in Berlioz's *Requiem*, and presented a solo concert in April 2017 that featured Orff's *Carmina burana* and David Conte's *Invocation and Dance*. Other appearances during the year included members of the Chorus joining the Orchestra in a live accompaniment to Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and women of the Chorus performing during the *Día de los Muertos* community concerts. The SFS Chorus concluded the 2016–17 season with the SF Symphony in Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette*, conducted by MTT.

Established in 1973 at the request of Seiji Ozawa, then the San Francisco Symphony's Music Director, the San Francisco Symphony Chorus has sung under the world's major conductors, including SFS Music Directors Michael Tilson Thomas, Herbert Blomstedt, Edo de Waart, and Seiji Ozawa; they have also performed with Kurt Masur, James Conlon, Valery Gergiev, David Robertson, Charles Dutoit, Sir Neville Marriner, Sir Roger Norrington, Yuri Temirkanov, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Wolfgang Sawallisch, and Robert Shaw. Louis Magor served as the Chorus's Director during its first decade, and in 1982 Margaret Hillis assumed the ensemble's leadership. The following year Vance George was named Director, serving through the 2005–06 season. Ragnar Bohlin assumed the position of Chorus Director in March 2007. In February 2001, the Chorus made its Carnegie Hall debut in two sold-out performances of music by Mahler and Stravinsky with MTT and the SFS.

Recordings featuring the SFS Chorus have won a total of eight Grammy awards, including three for Best Choral Performance. Most recently, 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.

The Chorus is also featured on recordings with MTT and the SFS in Beethoven's *Cantata on the Death of Emperor Joseph II* and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, Mahler's Symphony No. 2 and *Das klagende Lied*, Ives's *An American Journey*, and selections from Berlioz's *Lélio*. The Chorus may be heard under the direction of Conductor Laureate Herbert Blomstedt in Grieg's incidental music for *Peer Gynt*, its first recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 2, which was nominated for a Grammy; and a collection of choral works by Brahms. The Chorus has also recorded John Adams's *Harmonium* twice, on ECM under Edo de Waart's direction and on Nonesuch with the composer conducting; Gordon Getty's *Annabel Lee* and *Young America* with MTT and the SFS in live concerts for inclusion in a PentaTone Classics disc of Getty choral works; and Jerod Impichchaachaaha Tate's *Tracing Mississippi* and *Iholba* with the SFS for Thunderbird Records. The Chorus has released two solo recordings: *Christmas by the Bay*, which was released in 1998 on the Delos label and nominated for a Grammy in the Best Classical Crossover category, and *Voices 1900/2000*, released on the Delos label in 2001.

The Chorus appears in the second season of *Keeping Score*, the SFS's national television program, in Ives's *Holidays Symphony*. The episode aired nationwide on PBS in 2009 and is now available on DVD, Blu-ray, and streaming online at <http://www.pbs.org/keepingscore/ives-holidays-symphony.html>. The Chorus can be heard on the soundtracks of the films *Amadeus*, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, *Godfather III*, and on the video/DVD release of the Emmy-winning *Sweeney Todd* with the SFS.

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