



SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / SEPTEMBER 20, 2017



(High resolution images of Michael Tilson Thomas and Jeremy Denk are available for download from the San Francisco Symphony's [Online Photo Library](#). Photo credit L to R: Spencer Lowell, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation)

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTS THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY IN BERLIOZ'S *SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE* SEPTEMBER 28–OCTOBER 1

Pianist Jeremy Denk performs Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 2

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT) leads the San Francisco Symphony (SFS) in performances of **Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique***, September 28–October 1 at Davies Symphony Hall. Also on the program is **Bela Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 2**, performed by one of America's foremost pianists and recipient of the 2013 MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship, **Jeremy Denk**.

In the "*Berlioz Symphonie fantastique*" episode of the award-winning series *Keeping Score* MTT notes, "Composed in Paris in 1830, [*Symphonie fantastique*] set the mark for what a romantic symphony should be. With its overwhelming emotions and unabashed melodrama, it pours straight from the heart and soul of its composer, Hector Berlioz. Like his friends and contemporaries painter Delacroix and the novelist Victor Hugo, Berlioz set out to explore, proclaim, and glorify his own feelings. That's what made him a true romantic. The first big piece in which Berlioz confessed his unique artistic vision was *Symphonie fantastique*. He wrote it when he was 26 years old and it was an epic for huge orchestra. Long before its premiere, he began to circulate a so-called program, which explained what the symphony was about. It was about the life of an artist, his passions – particularly his self-destructive passion for a beautiful woman who has no idea he even exists. So unhappy is this artist that he eventually decides to kill himself by taking a lethal dose of opium. The symphony describes his last dreams, hallucinations, ecstasies, and despairs."

Bartók's complicated and technically difficult Second Piano Concerto was completed in 1931, a century after Berlioz finished his *Symphonie fantastique*. Pianist Jeremy Denk, hailed by the *New York Times* as someone "you want to hear no matter what he performs," returns to perform this virtuosic piano concerto. Denk made his San Francisco Symphony debut in 2006 and has appeared at Davies Hall frequently since then. He is the 2014 recipient of the Avery Fisher Prize,

Musical America's 2014 Instrumentalist of the Year award, and was recently elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Calendar editors, please note:

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY, MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTING

[Thursday, September 28, 2017 at 8 pm](#)

[Saturday, September 30, 2017 at 8 pm](#)

[Sunday, October 1, 2017 at 2 pm](#)

Davies Symphony Hall
201 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA

Michael Tilson Thomas conductor

[Jeremy Denk](#) piano

San Francisco Symphony

BARTÓK Piano Concerto No. 2
BERLIOZ *Symphonie fantastique*, Opus 14

Audio Program Notes: Listen to free podcasts about Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 2, hosted by [KDFC's Rik Malone](#). All podcasts are archived, and can be streamed from sfsymphony.org/podcasts, and downloaded from the [iTunes store](#) and from soundcloud.com/sfsymphony.

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, October 10 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.

Pre-Order Food and Drinks: Concertgoers may pre-order drinks and snacks [here](#) by 11am the day of a performance to arrange to have them ready at Davies Symphony Hall either before the concert or at intermission.

Tickets: \$35–\$159.

Tickets 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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