



SAN FRANCISCO  
SYMPHONY

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(High resolution images of Michael Tilson Thomas and Emanuel Ax are available for download from the San Francisco Symphony's [Online Photo Library](#). Photo credit L to R: Stefan Cohen, Lisa Marie Mazzucco)

## MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS LEADS THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY IN TWO CONCERT PROGRAMS IN JANUARY

SEASON-LONG CELEBRATIONS OF BERNSTEIN'S BIRTH CENTENNIAL CONTINUE WITH PERFORMANCES OF *CANDIDE*, JANUARY 18–21

*Candide* cast includes tenor Andrew Stenson in the role of Candide, soprano Meghan Picerno as Cunegonde, soprano Vanessa Becerra as Paquette, soprano Sheri Greenawald as The Old Lady, baritone Hadleigh Adams as Maximilian, and baritone Michael Todd Simpson as Narrator and voice of Voltaire/Pangloss

Emanuel Ax performs Schoenberg's Piano Concerto and Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 14, January 11–13

January 11–13 concerts also include R. Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks* and Beethoven's *Leonore Overture No. 3*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT) conducts the San Francisco Symphony (SFS) in two unique concert programs during the month of January. **January 11–13** concerts include **Beethoven's *Leonore Overture No. 3*** and **R. Strauss'** lively tone poem ***Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks***, which follows the story of a spirited and sometimes mischievous hero. The program also features internationally acclaimed pianist **Emanuel Ax** performing **Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 14** and **Schoenberg's Piano Concerto**. Schoenberg's 1942 Piano Concerto is written as a single-movement work with four sections and includes neoclassical elements similar to the large form music of Mozart, while still utilizing his iconic twelve-tone technique. The two concertos, though written nearly 200 years apart and harmonically very different, are both rooted in the Viennese tradition.

On **January 19–21** MTT and the SFS continue the season-long celebration of Bernstein's birth centennial with performances of a full concert version of the composer's satirical comic operetta ***Candide***, featuring an all-star cast that includes tenor **Andrew Stenson** as Candide, soprano **Meghan Picerno** as Cunegonde, soprano **Vanessa Becerra** as Paquette, soprano **Sheri Greenawald** as The Old Lady, baritone **Hadleigh Adams** as Maximilian, and baritone **Michael Todd Simpson** as Narrator and voice of Voltaire/Pangloss, as well as members of the **San Francisco Symphony Chorus** under the direction of **Ragnar Bohlin**. *Candide* is Bernstein's adaptation of Voltaire's 1759 novella *Candide, ou L'Optimisme*. The tale follows the wide-eyed hero Candide whose trips to distant points of the globe invariably turn into dismal misadventures, much though he may be assured by his idealistic tutor Doctor Pangloss that everything is for the best. It is a satirical coming-of-age narrative that explores issues of social justice, religion, politics, and the meaning of "optimism." The concert version of *Candide* presented in these performances was created for the Scottish Opera in 1988—the score carried the notation "Adapted for Scottish Opera by John Wells and John Mauceri"—and was unveiled by that company on May 19, 1988, at the Theatre Royal in Glasgow. This version of *Candide* has been performed by the SFS once before in April 1993, with David Zinman conducting.

**January 19–21 concerts include a special pre-concert "Informance,"** in lieu of the regular "Inside Music" lecture. Nina Bernstein Simmons and George Steele have created a unique pre-concert presentation with piano accompaniment to offer audiences greater insight into *Candide*. The presentation is designed to be informative and entertaining, an 'informance.' The work will run about 30 minutes in length and feature Leonard Bernstein's son, Alexander Bernstein, for the first two performances, and his daughter Nina Bernstein Simmons for the following two performances. Peter Grunberg will accompany all four performances on the piano. The "Informances" will begin at 7pm on January 18, 19, & 20, and 1pm on January 21.

**Nina Bernstein Simmons** is Leonard Bernstein's youngest daughter. After several years working as an actress, initially at the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, she turned her attention to tending her late father's legacy. In the earliest days of the internet, she worked with the Library of Congress on making the Bernstein Archives digitally available to the public. The fruits of that collaboration can be seen at the Library's American Memory website. From 2000 until 2005, Nina worked on a film about her sister, Jamie, and her remarkable journeys around the world bringing Bernstein's music and teaching legacy to new audiences. *Leonard Bernstein: A Total Embrace* premiered in Germany in December of 2005. Since 2008, Nina has been working as a food educator in underserved communities.

**Alexander Bernstein** is Leonard Bernstein's second child. He is president of Artful Learning, Inc., and founding chairman of The Leonard Bernstein Center For Learning. Prior to his full-time participation in the center, Bernstein taught for five years at the Packer-Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn, New York, first as a second grade teacher, then as a teacher of drama for the middle school. He has studied acting, performed professionally, and worked as a production associate at the ABC News Documentary Unit. Bernstein holds a Master's degree in English education from New York University and a Bachelor's degree from Harvard University.

#### About the cast:



(High resolution images of Sheri Greenawald, Vanessa Becerra, Michael Todd Simpson, Hadleigh Adams, Meghan Picerno, and Andrew Stenson are available for download from the San Francisco Symphony's [Online Photo Library](#). Photo credit L to R: Scott Wall, Gabriel Gastelum, Rebecca Fay, Dario Acosta, Fay Fox, Dario Acosta)

Hailed by the *New York Times* for her "attractive soprano voice," and for having "total control of the stage," (*Broadway World*) coloratura soprano **Meghan Picerno** is quickly gaining recognition for her exciting, crowd-pleasing performances on opera, theatre, and concert stages throughout the United States. Picerno was a quarterfinalist in Plácido Domingo's

prestigious Operalia International Vocal Competition in London at The Royal Opera House; received 1st prize in the Arkadi International Vocal Competition, New York Lyric Opera Vocal Competition, and Forte International Competition; 2nd prize in the American Prize Vocal Competition; and awards from the Alfredo Silipigni Competition, Benjamin Matthews Competition, and Career Bridges Grant Program. Picerno's portrayal of Cunegonde in New York City Opera's production of *Candide* in January 2017 garnered national critical acclaim. *The Huffington Post* applauded her performance saying, "The real beauty of the evening was Meghan Picerno, clear of voice and crisp of diction, who managed the challenging 'Glitter and Be Gay' with aplomb." Picerno reprises the role of Cunegonde in the upcoming performances of *Candide* with the San Francisco Symphony.

**Andrew Stenson** is quickly building a reputation as one of the United States' most exciting young tenors, with a brilliant tone, artistic intellect, and superb portrayals of a variety of roles. He is a graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. Stenson received 1st prize in the 2015 Giulio Gari International Vocal Competition and 2016 Gerda Lissner Foundation Competition, and 2nd prize in the 2013 Queen Sonja International Vocal Competition and the 2015 Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation. He is the 2011 recipient of a Sara Tucker Study Grant from the Richard Tucker Foundation, 2015 recipient of the Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshana Foundation (Lindemann Program), and a Major Award Winner in the 2015 Opera Index. His 2017–18 season includes debuts with Wexford Festival Opera as Ernesto in Foroni's *Margherita* and Opera Theatre of St. Louis, singing the role of Danny Chen in the world premiere of the two-act version of *An American Soldier*. Stenson also returns to the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*. He has appeared with the SFS once before in December 2012 as a soloist in performances of Handel's *Messiah*, and returns to Davies Hall in January to perform the title role of *Candide*.

Soprano **Sheri Greenawald** has had a distinguished international singing career, noted for her wide range of roles. In particular, Daniel Catan's *Florencia en el Amazonas*, singing the title role, and Dede in the world premiere of Leonard Bernstein's *A Quiet Place* in Houston in 1983. She subsequently toured with Maestro Bernstein and the Israel Philharmonic, singing Lukas Foss's *Song of Songs*. Greenawald has performed leading roles with all the major opera houses in the United States, including The Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Seattle Opera, and Santa Fe Opera, among many others. Her European appearances include Venice's La Fenice, Munich State Opera, Teatro San Carlo, Nederlands Opera Stichting, Wiesbaden, Opera North, Welsh National Opera, and Chatelet Theater in Paris. She currently serves as Opera Center Director for San Francisco Opera and Artistic Director for the Merola Opera Program, positions she has held since 2002. She taught voice at the Boston Conservatory of Music from 2000 to 2002. Sheri Greenawald made her SFS debut in 1979 and most recently performed the role of Madame Maude P. Dilly in the SFS's 2016 semi-staged production of Bernstein's *On the Town*.

Emerging soprano **Vanessa Becerra** has received acclaim for her "opulent" and "silvery" voice, and for her dynamic stage presence. A graduate of LA Opera's Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program, her performances during her tenure included Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*, Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Annina in *La traviata*. She was also featured as Gossip 2 in the Grammy-nominated recording of *The Ghosts of Versailles*. A native of Fort Worth, Texas, Becerra made her professional debut with Fort Worth Opera in 2014, in the highly acclaimed production of *With Blood With Ink*. The 2017–18 season brings a year of many debuts for Becerra, including debuts with the LA Phil, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Opera Omaha, Atlanta Opera, and the San Francisco Symphony as Paquette in *Candide*.

New Zealand baritone **Hadleigh Adams** is a graduate of London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama. His professional debut was made in 2012 at the Royal National Theatre as Jesus in Jonathan Miller's staged production of Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion*. A former Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera, Adams has performed in more than seventy five performances with the company. His most recent appearance was performing the role of Schaunard in *La Bohème*. During the 2017–18 season Adams makes his debuts with the Brooklyn Academy of Music, American Bach Soloists, American Repertory Theatre, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and Pacific Symphony, and returns to the Los Angeles Philharmonic for performances of Bernstein's *Mass*. Adams made his SFS debut in May 2016, performing Fauré's *Requiem* with the SFS Chorus.

Baritone **Michael Todd Simpson** has appeared all over the U.S. in opera houses such as the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, New York City Opera, Washington National Opera, Dallas Opera, Seattle Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Cleveland Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Portland Opera, and the Ft. Worth Opera, and internationally at Opera North

(U.K), Opera Australia (in Australia and Taiwan), and the NCPA in Beijing. He most recently made his European debut at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence as Escamillo in a new production of *Carmen* directed by Dmitri Tcherniakov. This season, Simpson returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Marcello in *La Bohème*. His many awards include regional winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, the Spanish Prize in the 2007 José Iturbi International Music Competition, 1st prize in the first annual Marguerite McCammon Voice Competition, the Sara Tucker Study Grant awarded by the Richard Tucker Foundation, the Richard F. Gold Career Grant, and 1st prize in the 1996 and 1999 South Carolina National Association of Teachers of Singing vocal competition. Simpson has appeared with the SFS once before in December 2011, as a soloist in performances of Handel's *Messiah*.

**Calendar editors, please note:**

**Tickets** are available at [sfsymphony.org](http://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-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.

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## **SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY, MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTING**

[Thursday, January 11, 2018 at 10 am \(Open Rehearsal\)](#)

[Thursday, January 11, 2018 at 8 pm](#)

[Friday, January 12, 2018 at 8 pm](#)

[Saturday, January 13, 2018 at 8 pm](#)

**Michael Tilson Thomas** conductor

[Emanuel Ax](#) piano

**San Francisco Symphony**

**BEETHOVEN**

*Leonore Overture No. 3, Opus 72a*

**MOZART**

Piano Concerto No. 14 in E-flat major, K.449

**SCHOENBERG**

Piano Concerto, Opus 42

**R. STRAUSS**

*Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks (Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche), Opus 28*

**Pre-Concert Talk:** Laura Stanfield Prichard 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, January 23 at 8 pm on Classical KDFC 90.3 San Francisco, 104.9 San Jose, 89.9 Napa, and [kdfc.com](http://kdfc.com) where it will be available for on-demand streaming for 21 days following the broadcast.

**Audio Program Notes:** Listen to a free podcast about R. Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*, hosted by [KDFC's Rik Malone](#). All podcasts are archived, and can be streamed from [sfsymphony.org/podcasts](http://sfsymphony.org/podcasts), and downloaded from the [iTunes store](#) and from [soundcloud.com/sfsymphony](http://soundcloud.com/sfsymphony).

**Tickets:** \$15–\$159.

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## **SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY, MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTING**

[Thursday, January 18, 2018 at 8 pm](#)

[Friday, January 19, 2018 at 8 pm](#)

[Saturday, January 20, 2018 at 8 pm](#)

[Sunday, January 21, 2018 at 2 pm](#)

**Michael Tilson Thomas** conductor

[Meghan Picerno](#) soprano (Cunegonde)

[Vanessa Becerra](#) soprano (Paquette)

[Sheri Greenawald](#) soprano (The Old Lady)

[Andrew Stenson](#) tenor (Candide)

[Hadleigh Adams](#) baritone (Maximilian)

[Michael Todd Simpson](#) bass (Narrator, Voltaire / Pangloss)

**Members of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Ragnar Bohlin** director  
**San Francisco Symphony**

**BERNSTEIN**

*Candide*, Scottish Opera Version (1989)

**Pre-Concert Talk:** Concerts include a special pre-concert “Informance,” a unique pre-concert presentation with piano accompaniment, created by Nina Bernstein Simmons and George Steele, designed to offer audiences greater insight into *Candide*. The presentation will run about 30 minutes in length and feature Alexander Bernstein for the first two performances and Nina Bernstein Simmons for the following two performances. Peter Grunberg will accompany all four performances on the piano. The “Informances” will begin at 7pm on January 18, 19, & 20, and 1pm on January 21. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open 15 minutes before.

**Tickets:** \$35–\$159.

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