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(High resolution images of Michael Tilson Thomas, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, and the San Francisco Symphony are available for download from the San Francisco Symphony's [Online Photo Library](#).)

## **MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTS THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY IN WORKS BY DEBUSSY, LIGETI, AND MAHLER IN MAY, 2019**

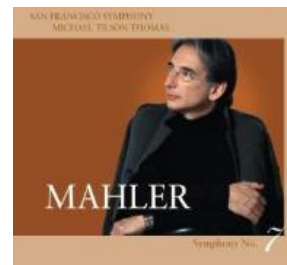
**May 9–11 concerts feature Debussy's *Prélude à L'Après-midi d'un faune*, *Nocturnes*, and *La Mer*—all to be recorded live for future release on SFS Media; and Ligeti's Piano Concerto performed by pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard**

**On May 16–18, MTT leads the Orchestra in Mahler's Symphony No. 7**

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA**—Music Director **Michael Tilson Thomas** (MTT) leads the **San Francisco Symphony** (SFS) in two transcendent programs this May at Davies Symphony Hall. **May 9–11** concerts feature the whimsical and expressive music of **Debussy**, composed during the luminous Belle Époque—***Prélude à L'Après-midi d'un faune* (*Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun*)**, a work which helped define the composer's distinctive voice by reinventing the way colors and emotions can be expressed through sound; the exquisite ***Nocturnes***; and his churning sea picture, ***La Mer***, inspired by the beauties of the sea. These performances of Debussy's works will be recorded live for future release on SFS Media, following on the heels of the 2016 Grammy Award-nominated SFS Media all-Debussy album featuring *Images pour orchestre*, *Jeux*, and *La plus que lente*—praised by *The Guardian* for its “superlative state-of-the-art sound” and “astonishing rapport that Tilson Thomas has developed with the San Francisco [Symphony] during his 20 years as its music director.” Completing the program is **Ligeti's** complex **Piano Concerto**, featuring one of today's great musical visionaries, piano virtuoso [Pierre-Laurent Aimard](#). Widely

acclaimed as a uniquely significant interpreter of piano repertoire from every age, Aimard was awarded the prestigious 2017 International Ernst von Siemens Music Prize in recognition of a life devoted to the service of music.

On **May 16–18**, Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the SF Symphony in **Mahler's** profound **Symphony No. 7**. Sometimes referred to as *Song of the Night*, Mahler's Seventh Symphony depicts a journey from night to day—searing to joyful, intimate to haunting. MTT and the SFS's 2006 recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 7 was recognized with Grammy Awards for Best Classical Album and Best Orchestral Performance, making up two of seven Grammy Awards received by MTT and the SFS for their self-produced Mahler recording project on the SFS Media label. Launched in 2001 and concluded in 2010, MTT and the SFS's Mahler cycle encompasses all of Mahler's symphonies and works for voice, chorus and orchestra.



### **About the San Francisco Symphony**

The San Francisco Symphony is widely considered to be among the most artistically adventurous and innovative arts institutions in the U.S. Under the artistic direction of Michael Tilson Thomas since 1995, the Orchestra is a leading presence among American orchestras at home and around the world, celebrated for its artistic excellence, creative performance concepts, active touring, award-winning recordings, and standard-setting education programs. In December 2018, the San Francisco Symphony announced Esa-Pekka Salonen as its Music Director Designate. Salonen will begin his appointment as the SFS's 12th Music Director in September 2020, at which time Michael Tilson Thomas will become the Orchestra's first Music Director Laureate, following his remarkable 25-year tenure as Music Director.

The San Francisco Symphony presents more than 220 concerts and presentations annually for an audience of nearly 450,000 in its home of Davies Symphony Hall and through its active national and international touring. A cornerstone of the organization's mission, the San Francisco Symphony's education programs are the most extensive offered by any American orchestra today, providing free comprehensive music education to every first-through fifth-grade student in the San Francisco public schools, and serving more than 75,000 children, students, educators, and families annually. The SFS has won such recording awards as France's Grand Prix du Disque and Britain's *Gramophone* Award, as well as 15 Grammy Awards. In 2004, the SFS launched the multimedia *Keeping Score* on PBS-TV and the web. In 2014, the SFS inaugurated SoundBox, a new experimental performance venue and music series located backstage at Davies Symphony Hall. SFS radio broadcasts, the first in the nation to feature symphonic music when they began in 1926, today carry the Orchestra's concerts across the country.

### ***Calendar editors, please note:***

All concerts take place at Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

**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 food and beverages by calling 415-252-1937 or emailing Global Gourmet Catering staff at [davieshallpreorder@ggcatering.com](mailto:davieshallpreorder@ggcatering.com) before the performance to place an order.

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

[Thursday, May 9, 2019 at 8 pm](#)

[Friday, May 10, 2019 at 8 pm](#)

[Saturday, May 11, 2019 at 8 pm](#)

**Michael Tilson Thomas** conductor  
[Pierre-Laurent Aimard](#) piano  
**Women of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Ragnar Bohlin** director  
**San Francisco Symphony**

**DEBUSSY**

*Prélude à L'Après-midi d'un faune* [To be recorded live for future release on SFS Media]

**LIGETI**

Piano Concerto

**DEBUSSY**

*Nocturnes* [To be recorded live for future release on SFS Media]

**DEBUSSY**

*La Mer* [To be recorded live for future release on SFS Media]

**Tickets:** \$35–170

**Audio Program Notes:** Listen to a free podcast about Debussy's *La Mer*, hosted by [KDFC's Rik Malone](#). All podcasts are archived, and can be streamed from [sfsymphony.org/podcasts](https://sfsymphony.org/podcasts), and downloaded from the [iTunes store](#) and from [soundcloud.com/sfsymphony](https://soundcloud.com/sfsymphony).

**Pre-Concert Talk:** Peter Grunberg will give an "Inside Music" talk from the stage one hour prior to the Open Rehearsal on February 7. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open 15 minutes before.

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

[Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 8 pm](#)

[Friday, May 17, 2019 at 8 pm](#)

[Saturday, May 18, 2019 at 8 pm](#)

**Michael Tilson Thomas** conductor  
**San Francisco Symphony**

**MAHLER**

Symphony No. 7 in E minor

**Tickets:** \$20–185

**Audio Program Notes:** Listen to a free podcast about Mahler's Symphony No. 7, hosted by [KDFC's Rik Malone](#). All podcasts are archived, and can be streamed from [sfsymphony.org/podcasts](https://sfsymphony.org/podcasts), and downloaded from the [iTunes store](#) and from [soundcloud.com/sfsymphony](https://soundcloud.com/sfsymphony).

**Pre-Concert Talk:** Peter Grunberg will give an "Inside Music" talk from the stage one hour prior to the Open Rehearsal on February 7. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open 15 minutes before.

**Broadcast / Archived Stream:** A broadcast of these performances will air Tuesday, May 28 at 8 pm on Classical KDFC 90.3 San Francisco, 104.9 San Jose, 89.9 Napa, and [kdfc.com](https://kdfc.com) where it will be available for on demand streaming for 21 days following the broadcast.

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The San Francisco Symphony receives support from over 10,000 individual donors and 150 partner institutions.

*May 9–11 concerts are generously sponsored by the William and Gretchen Kimball Fund.*

*The May 10 concert is presented in partnership with the San Francisco Arts Commission.*

*These performances of Ligeti's Piano Concerto are supported by the Phyllis C. Wattis Fund for New Works of Music.*

*May 16–18 concerts are made possible through the generosity of Trine Sorensen and Michael Jacobson in honor of Michael Tilson Thomas and the musicians of the SF Symphony.*

*The Matthew Kelly Family Foundation generously supports May 16–18 performances in memory of Matthew Kelly.*

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