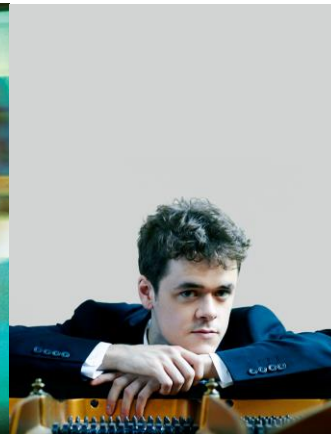


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(Images of Yuja Wang, Michael Tilson Thomas, Bonnie Raitt, and Benjamin Grosvenor are available for download from [SF Symphony Photo Library](#))

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY AND MUSIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS KICK OFF THEIR 20TH SEASON TOGETHER WITH THE 2014-15 OPENING NIGHT GALA WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Gala concert features special guest artists Bonnie Raitt singing American Songbook classics and pianist Yuja Wang performing Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*

Performance is preceded by a complimentary wine reception in Davies Symphony Hall and concludes with an indoor/outdoor after-party, both open to all ticketholders

All-San Francisco Concert on Thursday, September 4 pays tribute to the Bay Area's non-profit and social service organizations

MTT and the SFS round out Opening Week with two additional concerts September 5-6, with pianist Benjamin Grosvenor in Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major

SAN FRANCISCO, August 6, 2014 — The [San Francisco Symphony](#) (SFS) and Music Director [Michael Tilson Thomas](#) (MTT) kick off their 20th season together with the [Opening Night Gala](#) on Wednesday, September 3 at 8pm. Singer-songwriter Bonnie Raitt, a longtime friend of MTT, makes her debut with the Orchestra performing selected works from the American songbook of her father, Broadway singer John Raitt. Pianist Yuja Wang, a young artist championed by MTT for nearly a decade, joins the Orchestra to perform Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. The program also includes Stravinsky's *Scherzo à la russe*, excerpts from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*—a work which MTT and the Orchestra recorded in the

first three months of his tenure as Music Director, and which won the SFS its first Grammy with MTT in 1996—and Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy-Overture, drawn from the same Shakespearean subject.

On Thursday, September 4, MTT conducts the annual All-San Francisco Concert, a community event that celebrates the work of more than 100 social service and non-profit organizations that serve San Francisco and the Bay Area. The program includes Stravinsky's *Scherzo à la russe*, excerpts from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy-Overture, and Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major with 21-year-old English pianist Benjamin Grosvenor. MTT also leads Grosvenor and the SFS in the same program on Friday, September 5 and Saturday, September 6.

These opening concerts launch the 20th season of the San Francisco Symphony's partnership with Michael Tilson Thomas. Acclaimed for their achievements in enriching and broadening the American orchestral experience, MTT and the SF Symphony's 20-year partnership is the longest of any American orchestra and its Music Director today. The 2014-15 season builds on the ensemble's commitment to perform and record music by American composers; present masterworks of the core repertory in reimagined, creative settings; engage in multi-year explorations of works by Mahler and Beethoven; and cultivate new audiences through media, technology and community-based programs.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY OPENING NIGHT GALA WITH BONNIE RAITT AND YUJA WANG

The Opening Night Gala on Wednesday, September 3 at 8pm features the San Francisco Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas performing with artists that are near and dear to his heart. Singer-songwriter Bonnie Raitt, a longtime friend of MTT, makes her debut with the Orchestra performing favorite works from the American songbook of her father, Broadway singer John Raitt. Pianist Yuja Wang—who has been championed by MTT since her 2006 debut with the SFS and has appeared with Orchestra every year since then—performs Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Also on the Gala concert program is Stravinsky's *Scherzo à la russe*, excerpts from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, and Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy-Overture.

Celebrations begin prior the concert with a complimentary wine reception at 7pm in the Davies Symphony Hall lobby, free to all ticketholders. Following the Gala concert, all guests are invited to keep the festivities going at a lively indoor and outdoor party in the Tent Pavilion, which includes food, beverages, live entertainment and dancing.

Formal dinner packages are available for four separate dinners prior to the concert. The Patrons' Dinner consists of a 5pm cocktail reception in the Davies Symphony Hall Lobby and a 6pm dinner in the Louise M. Davies Tent Pavilion. The Symphony Supper and Symphonix Dinner Party take place in City Hall's Grand Rotunda and North Light Court, respectively, and begin with a joint cocktail reception in the South Light Court. The Wattis Room Dinner begins with the 5pm cocktail reception in Davies Symphony Hall with the Patrons' Dinner guests, and a 6pm dinner in the Wattis Room. Décor for the Tent Pavilion, City Hall, Grove Street, and Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall is provided by Blueprint Studios. All dinners are catered by McCall Associates.



Proceeds from the Opening Night Gala benefit the Orchestra's myriad community outreach and education programs, which provide music education to more than 75,000 Bay Area school children each year.

The 2014 Opening Night Gala is chaired by Lisa Goldman. Gorretti Lo Lui and Eliza Cash serve as the Patrons' Dinner Co-chairs, and the Symphony Supper is co-chaired by Rebecca Saroyan and Paula Blank. Libby Leffler and Blake Pearson co-chair the Symphonix Dinner Party, and the Gala After-Party is also chaired by Libby Leffler.

Wells Fargo is the Presenting Sponsor of the 2014 Gala. Additional support is provided by Patrons' Dinner Sponsor Kaiser Permanente and Men's Wearhouse, sponsor of the Symphonix Dinner Party. The Gala guest artists are generously underwritten by Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem.

[Bonnie Raitt](#) is a singer, songwriter and guitarist whose unique style blends blues, R&B, rock, and pop. After 20 years as a cult favorite, she came into mainstream popularity in the early 90s with her Grammy-award winning albums *Nick of Time* and *Luck of the Draw*, which featured hits such as "Something To Talk About" and "I Can't Make You Love Me." With ten Grammys under her belt and a long history of social activism, she tours regularly and incorporates many benefit concerts into her schedule. In the 2012-13 season, armed with a batch of new songs to perform along with her tried and true favorites, Raitt played over 170 shows in North America, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and Europe. In 2012 the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee released her nineteenth album, *Slipstream*, which earned Raitt her 10th Grammy Award (for Best Americana Album). *Slipstream* marked Raitt's first new album in seven years, and the debut for her newly-minted label, Redwing Records.

[Yuja Wang](#) has appeared with the SFS every season since her debut at the Orchestra's 2006 Chinese New Year concert. Her most recent performance with MTT and the SF was this past May in Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 1 and Litoff's Scherzo from *Concerto symphonique* No. 4, which was recorded for future release on SFS Media. She performed Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Orchestra in 2009, as well as on tour throughout Asia with MTT and the SFS in 2012. In the 2013-14 season the London Symphony Orchestra invited Wang to be their featured artist in the LSO Artist Portrait series, and together they toured China with Daniel Harding conducting. She also made her debut with the Hungarian National Philharmonic conducted by Zoltán Kocsis performing Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 2. Wang's frequent summer collaborations with violinist Leonidas Kavakos were extended further with multiple tours of Europe focusing on the great violin and piano sonatas of Brahms. In March 2014 she returned to the Los Angeles Philharmonic for concerts in Los Angeles and a subsequent U.S. tour with Gustavo Dudamel conducting, including a performance at Davies Symphony Hall. Her most recent recording was released in March 2014 and is titled *Brahms: The Violin Sonatas*, with Leonidas Kavakos on the Decca label.

**MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS AND PIANIST BENJAMIN GROSVENOR: SEPTEMBER 4-6
ANNUAL ALL-SAN FRANCISCO CONCERT ON SEPTEMBER 4
HONORS LOCAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**

To conclude the opening week of the season, MTT leads an additional three concerts September 4-6 that include Stravinsky's *Scherzo à la russe*, excerpts from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy-Overture, and Ravel's jazz-inspired Piano Concerto in G major performed by 21-year-old English pianist Benjamin Grosvenor.

The September 4 concert is the annual All-San Francisco Concert, a special Davies Symphony Hall performance for San Francisco social service and neighborhood organizations, as thanks for the work these groups do to enrich the lives of and serve the citizens of San Francisco. Volunteers and employees are invited to this concert from such organizations as Huckleberry Youth Program, La Casa de las Madres, the Boys and Girls Club, and others. Organized through the Orchestra's Volunteer Council, the annual All-San Francisco Concert has been underwritten by Wells Fargo for over 30 years.

The All-SF concert includes the presentation of the Ellen Magnin Newsman Award to honor an outstanding San Francisco community-servicing organization. The award is named after Ellen Newman, SF Symphony board member and founder of the All-SF committee. The Ellen Magnin Newman Award is presented each year to an outstanding community-based organization that strengthens the city's cultural fabric, serves the city's most vulnerable families and individuals, and creates a more just and equitable society for everyone who lives here.

This year's recipient of the Ellen Magnin Newman Award is [First Exposures](#), a San Francisco-based, nationally recognized youth mentoring program that strives to make a difference in the lives of high-need, underserved San Francisco Bay Area youth. Each First Exposures student is matched one-to-one with a photographer who provides individualized guidance and serves as a volunteer mentor and positive adult role model. Photography is the catalyst by which these students acquire vital life skills and it is the vehicle through which they deepen their intellectual, academic and developmental experiences.

Described by *Gramophone Magazine* as a “talent not heard since Kissin’s teenage Russian debut,” [Benjamin Grosvenor](#) first appeared with the SF Symphony in July 2013, performing Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue* with conductor Teddy Abrams. He first came to prominence at the age of 11 as the outstanding winner of the Keyboard Final of the 2004 BBC Young Musician Competition. Since then, he has become an internationally regarded pianist performing with such orchestras as the London Philharmonic, RAI Torino, New York Philharmonic, Philharmonia, Tokyo Symphony, and in venues such as the Royal Festival Hall, Barbican Centre, Singapore’s Victoria Hall, The Frick Collection and Carnegie Hall (at the age of thirteen). At just nineteen, Grosvenor performed with the BBC Symphony Orchestra on the First Night of the 2011 BBC Proms to a sold-out Royal Albert Hall. Also in 2011, he signed to Decca Classics, and in doing so has become the youngest British musician ever to sign to the label, and the first British pianist to sign to the label in almost 60 years. His most recent recording for Decca includes Saint Saëns’s *Piano Concerto No. 2*, Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue* and Ravel’s *Piano Concerto in G Major* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and James Judd.

The All-San Francisco Concert is not available for general purchase, and all invitations have been awarded for this year. Community groups that would like to be considered for next year’s concert should email volunteercouncil@sfsymphony.org.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY 2014 OPENING NIGHT GALA WITH BONNIE RAITT AND YUJA WANG

[Wednesday, September 3 at 8pm](#)

Michael Tilson Thomas conductor
Bonnie Raitt vocalist
Yuja Wang piano
San Francisco Symphony

Tchaikovsky	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Fantasy-Overture
Gershwin	<i>Rhapsody in Blue</i>
Stravinsky	<i>Scherzo à la russe</i>
Various	Songs from the American Songbook [Raitt]
Prokofiev	Excerpts from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>

5pm	Cocktail Reception for Patrons’ Dinner and Wattis Room Dinner, Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall Lobby
5pm	Cocktail Reception for Symphony Supper and Symphonix Dinner Party, South Light Court - City Hall
6pm	Patrons’ Dinner, Louise M. Davies Tent Pavilion
6pm	Wattis Room Dinner, Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall
6pm	Symphony Supper, Grand Rotunda - City Hall
6pm	Symphonix Dinner Party, North Light Court - City Hall
7pm	Complimentary wine reception for all concert guests, Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall
8pm	Gala Concert, Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall
10pm	After-party for all concert guests, Louise M. Davies Tent Pavilion and outdoor party

Formal dinner packages begin at \$395 and include a 5pm cocktail reception, 6pm dinner, the after-party in the Tent Pavilion and on Grove Street, and premium seating for the concert. Dinner packages are available by contacting the Volunteer Council at (415) 503-5500 or online at www.sfsymphony.org/gala.

Concert tickets are \$160 and \$295 and include a complimentary pre-concert wine reception, as well as access to the after-party in the Tent Pavilion and on Grove Street. These tickets can be purchased by calling the box office at 415-864-6000, at www.sfsymphony.org/gala, or at the box office located on Grove Street between Van Ness Avenue and Franklin Street.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY WITH MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS AND BENJAMIN GROSVENOR

[Friday, September 5 at 8pm](#)

[Saturday, September 6 at 8pm](#)

Michael Tilson Thomas conductor

Benjamin Grosvenor piano

San Francisco Symphony

Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy-Overture

Ravel Piano Concerto in G major

Stravinsky *Scherzo à la russe*

Prokofiev Excerpts from *Romeo and Juliet*

Tickets are \$15-\$158 and 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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Wells Fargo is the Presenting Sponsor of the 2014 Opening Night Gala.

Kaiser Permanente is the sponsor of the 2014 Opening Night Gala Patrons' Dinner.

Men's Wearhouse is the sponsor of the 2014 Opening Night Gala Symphonix Dinner Party.

Maserati of San Francisco is the Vehicle Sponsor of the 2014 Opening Night Gala.

Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem are the underwriters of the Gala guest artists.

Opening Night Gala production partners are Blueprint Studios, Classic Party Rentals, Got Light, McCall Associates, and Patina Catering.

The All-San Francisco Concert is underwritten by Wells Fargo.

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

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