



**SAN FRANCISCO  
SYMPHONY**

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS • MUSIC DIRECTOR

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(High resolution images of Renée Fleming, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Susan Graham are available for download from the San Francisco Symphony's [Online Photo Library](#))

**MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS AND THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY OPEN  
THE 2016-17 SEASON WITH THE OPENING NIGHT GALA ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7  
AT DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL**

**Opera superstars Renée Fleming and Susan Graham join  
MTT and the SFS in American and Italian songs**

**Opening Night Gala Concert kicks off a weeklong celebration of  
Steve Reich's 80th birthday with the composer's Three Movements**

**Concert is preceded by a complimentary wine reception in Davies Symphony Hall and concludes with  
an indoor-outdoor After-Party open to all ticketholders**

**SAN FRANCISCO, July 28, 2016** — Michael Tilson Thomas begins his 22nd season at the helm of the San Francisco Symphony at the [Opening Night Gala](#) on Wednesday, September 7, with longtime friends and artistic collaborators Renée Fleming and Susan Graham. The two acclaimed superstars of the opera world perform a program of Italian and American songs, including pieces written by MTT. The Orchestra's 105th opening also pays special tribute to Steve Reich's 80th birthday with a performance of the composer's Three Movements. Celebrations of Reich's immense impact on American music continue throughout the Opening Week concerts: the September 9–10 performances feature Three Movements alongside the Reich's Double Sextet performed by contemporary chamber ensemble Eighth Blackbird side-

by-side with SFS musicians, and celebrations culminate on September 11 with *Steve Reich: An American Maverick*, a special birthday celebration in honor of the composer's extraordinary musical contributions.

Other works on the Gala program are Rossini's Overture from *William Tell* and the Ballet Music from *William Tell*, a first performance for the SFS. While the Overture from *William Tell* is one of classical music's most recognizable works, Rossini's Ballet Music is rarely performed. As the story centers on a Swiss patriot who is opposed to the Austrian rule at the time, Rossini's Ballet Music draws on Swiss musical culture and traditions.

The Gala concert will be broadcast live on Classical KDFC 90.3/89.9/104.9 FM and streamed online at [kdfc.com](http://kdfc.com). Proceeds from the Opening Night Gala benefit the San Francisco Symphony's myriad artistic, education, and community programs.

Opening Night celebrations begin prior to 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-outdoor After-Party in the Tented Pavilion and on Grove Street, which includes entertainment from [DJLI](#) and [Notorious](#), as well as complimentary drinks and food from an array of local San Francisco establishments including Humphry Slocombe, Tacolicious, Top of the Mark, Presidio Social Club, Palm House, Pier 23 Cafe, and more.

Prior to the Gala Concert, the SF Symphony hosts four separate formal dinners, all beginning at 6pm, with cocktail receptions beginning at 5pm. The Patrons' Dinner is the largest and takes place in the Tented Pavilion next to Davies Symphony Hall. The Patrons' Dinner is preceded by a 5pm cocktail reception in Davies. The Wattis Room Dinner offers an elegant and intimate experience that shared the 5pm cocktail reception with the Patrons' Dinner. The Symphony Supper and Symphonix Dinner Party take place at City Hall and begin with a joint cocktail reception in the South Light Court at 5pm. The Symphony Supper takes place in City Hall's magnificent Grand Rotunda at 6pm. The Symphonix Dinner Party—hosted by the Symphony's young philanthropists group—takes place in the North Light Court. Décor and lighting design for the Tented Pavilion, City Hall, Grove Street, and Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall is provided by Blueprint Studios and GotLight, respectively. All dinners are catered by McCall Catering and Events.



The 2016 Opening Night Gala is chaired by Priscilla B. Geeslin. Ann Paras serves as the Wattis Room Dinner Chair, and the Symphony Supper is co-chaired by Ann Cavness Balajadia and Maryam Ghajar Milani. Whitney Hudak and Jesse Hunt co-chair the Symphonix Dinner Party, and the After-Party is chaired by Cate McDonough, Kuntal Goradia, and Kris E. Kolassa.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company is the Presenting Sponsor of the 2016 Opening Night Gala. Additional support is provided by Patrons' Dinner Sponsor Kaiser Permanente, After-Party Sponsor Valentino, and Signature Education Sponsor Neiman Marcus.

### **About the Artists**

Soprano [Renée Fleming](#) has appeared in virtually all of the world's greatest opera houses and concert halls. Ms. Fleming made her San Francisco Symphony debut in 2002 as soloist in Michael Tilson Thomas's *Poems of Emily Dickinson*, a cycle he composed for her. In 2013, President Obama awarded Renée Fleming the National Medal of Arts. She has sung at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, in HM Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee Concert in 2012, and was featured in the televised inaugural concert for President Obama in 2009. In 2014 she became the first classical singer ever to perform "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the Super Bowl.

Ms. Fleming won her fourth Grammy award in 2013 for her album *Poèmes*. She has recorded everything from complete operas and song recitals to indie rock, jazz, and the movie soundtrack of *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*.

Ms. Fleming was the subject of an HBO *Masterclass* documentary, and has been a frequent guest on *Prairie Home Companion* on National Public Radio. In 2013, she joined with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to present the American Voices festival. Her book *The Inner Voice* was published by Viking Penguin in 2004.

Recently appointed Artistic Advisor-at-Large for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, she also serves as creative consultant at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Among her awards are the Fulbright Lifetime Achievement Medal, the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, Germany's Cross of the Order of Merit, Honorary Membership in the Royal Academy of Music, Sweden's Polar Music Prize, and honorary doctorates from Duke University, Harvard University, Carnegie Mellon University, the Eastman School of Music, and the Juilliard School.

Mezzo-soprano and Texas native [Susan Graham](#) enjoyed early success in "trouser" roles such as Mozart's Cherubino, before taking on the title roles of Handel's *Ariodante* and *Xerxes*, and later, R. Strauss's Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* and the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. She also created the female leads in the Metropolitan Opera's premiere productions of John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby* and Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy*. Ms. Graham made her musical theater debut in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

She appeared in Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédict* in Lyon and Massenet's *Chérubin* at Covent Garden, and later inaugurated new productions of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*, Massenet's *Werther*, and Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène* and *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein* in New York, London, Paris, Chicago, San Francisco, Santa Fe, and elsewhere. She has performed Berlioz with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, London Symphony, and the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique. Last season she sang the role of Dido in Berlioz's *Les Troyens* at San Francisco Opera.

Ms. Graham's extensive discography features oratorios and song cycles by Berlioz, Ravel, and Chausson, as well as a Grammy award-winning recording of Ives songs. She recorded Mahler songs with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony for SFS Media. Among her additional honors are *Musical America's* Vocalist of the Year and an *Opera News* Award, and she was awarded the French government's Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. Susan Graham made her San Francisco Symphony debut in 1991.

### **MTT LEADS ANNUAL ALL SAN FRANCISCO CONCERT ON SEPTEMBER 8 IN RECOGNITION OF LOCAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**

The Symphony's annual All San Francisco Concert will take place on Thursday, September 8, featuring Michael Tilson Thomas leading the SF Symphony in Copland's *Billy the Kid* Ballet Suite and Rossini's Overture and Ballet Music from *William Tell*. Concertmaster Alexander Barantschik takes center stage in a performance of Winter from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, and soprano Susanna Phillips joins MTT and the Orchestra in a selection of American songs.

The All San Francisco concert is a special Davies Symphony Hall performance for San Francisco social service and neighborhood organizations, in recognition and gratitude 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 La Casa de las Madres, Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, California Lawyers for the Arts, and others. Organized through the SF Symphony's Volunteer Council, the annual All San Francisco Concert has been underwritten by Wells Fargo for over 30 years.

The All San Francisco concert includes the presentation of the Ellen Magnin Newman Award to honor an outstanding local community-service organization. The award is named after Ellen Magnin Newman, SF Symphony board member and founder of the All San Francisco concert. 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 [Bay Area Girls Rock Camp](#) (BAGRC), a non-profit organization that empowers girls through music and promotes an environment that fosters self-confidence, creativity, and collaboration. BAGRC cultivates a new generation of creative and confident young girls and women by empowering them to pursue their dreams in music and beyond. BAGRC's innovative programs offer girls an opportunity to build musical

skills, develop their unique voices, and challenge gender stereotypes. BAGRC confronts these challenges head-on by providing a supportive and challenging atmosphere where girls build the skills and confidence necessary to realize their full potential.

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](mailto:volunteercouncil@sfsymphony.org).

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**FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY 2016 OPENING NIGHT GALA**

[Wednesday, September 7](#)

**Michael Tilson Thomas** conductor

**Renée Fleming** soprano

**Susan Graham** mezzo-soprano

**San Francisco Symphony**

**STEVE REICH**

Three Movements

**TBA**

Selection of American songs

**ROSSINI**

Overture from *William Tell*

**ROSSINI**

Ballet Music from *William Tell* [first SFS performance]

**TBA**

Selection of Italian songs

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, Tented 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, Tented Pavilion and Grove Street

Formal dinner packages begin at \$425 and include a 5pm cocktail reception, 6pm dinner, the After-Party in the Tented 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](http://www.sfsymphony.org/gala).

Concert tickets are \$180 and \$300 and include a complimentary pre-concert wine reception, as well as access to the after-party in the Tented Pavilion. These tickets can be purchased by calling the box office at 415-864-6000, at [www.sfsymphony.org/gala](http://www.sfsymphony.org/gala), or at the box office located on Grove Street between Van Ness Avenue and Franklin Street.

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**ALL SAN FRANCISCO CONCERT WITH MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS**

Thursday, September 8, 2016 at 8pm

**Michael Tilson Thomas** conductor

**Susanna Phillips** soprano

**Alexander Barantschik** violin

**San Francisco Symphony**

<b>COPLAND</b>	<i>Billy the Kid</i> Ballet Suite
<b>TBA</b>	Selection of American songs
<b>VIVALDI</b>	Winter from <i>The Four Seasons</i> , Opus 8, no. 4
<b>ROSSINI</b>	Ballet Music from <i>William Tell</i>
<b>ROSSINI</b>	Overture from <i>William Tell</i>

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

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