



SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS • MUSIC DIRECTOR

Contact:

Public Relations

San Francisco Symphony

(415) 503-5474

publicrelations@sfsymphony.org

sfsymphony.org/press

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / UPDATED SEPTEMBER 7, 2017



(Michael Tilson Thomas and Leonard Bernstein at the 1988 premiere of Bernstein's *Arias and Barcarolles*. Photo Courtesy of the San Francisco Symphony)

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS AND THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY KICK OFF SEASON-LONG CELEBRATION OF LEONARD BERNSTEIN'S BIRTH CENTENNIAL, SEPTEMBER 22–24 AT DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL

September program includes Bernstein's *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*; *Chichester Psalms*; *Arias and Barcarolles*; and Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*

Concerts feature mezzo-soprano Isabel Leonard, SFS Principal Clarinet Carey Bell, and bass-baritone Ryan McKinny making his SFS debut

Season-long celebrations continue with Bernstein's *The Age of Anxiety*, Symphony No. 2 November 2, 3, and 5; *Candide* January 18–21; the *West Side Story* film with live orchestra February 1–3; and *Divertimento and Serenade* February 22–24

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT) and the San Francisco Symphony (SFS) launch a season-long celebration of American icon Leonard Bernstein's birth centennial with concerts September 22–24. Over the course of five concert programs in the coming season, the SFS presents highlights from Bernstein's multifaceted catalog spanning diverse genres, musical styles, and thematic topics. Michael Tilson Thomas first met Leonard Bernstein after spending a summer at the Tanglewood Music Center in 1968 and they became longtime friends and colleagues. MTT, who has championed Bernstein's music throughout his career, curated this season's centennial tributes to showcase the breadth and depth of the composer's musical genius. [Click here to watch a video featuring MTT on the Bernstein Celebration.](#)

MTT shared, "It is a joy to celebrate my friend and longtime colleague Leonard Bernstein's spirit and legacy through his music next season. The programs I have planned throughout the season showcase widely varying sides of Bernstein's work, from his comic operetta *Candide* and groundbreaking musical *West Side Story*, to his narrative symphony *The Age of Anxiety* and song cycle *Arias and Barcarolles*. *Arias and Barcarolles* is especially dear to me because I was involved in its premiere in 1988. Bernstein was a great friend to many people, and gifted us all his tremendously adventurous spirit."



(High resolution images of Leonard Bernstein, Michael Tilson Thomas, Isabel Leonard, Ryan McKinny, and Carey Bell are available for download from the San Francisco Symphony's [Online Photo Library](#). Photo credit L to R: Library of Congress, Spencer Lowell, Becca Fay, Simon Pauly, Terrence McCarthy)

The September 22–24 concerts include performances of jazz ensemble showpiece *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs* with SFS Principal Clarinet [Carey Bell](#); the liturgical choral and orchestral work *Chichester Psalms*, showcasing the [San Francisco Symphony Chorus](#) under the direction of [Ragnar Bohlin](#); the personal and humorous song cycle *Arias and Barcarolles* featuring mezzo-soprano [Isabel Leonard](#) and bass-baritone [Ryan McKinny](#) in his SFS debut; and *Symphonic Dances* from *West Side Story*.

This concert program combines works that illustrate the brilliant diversity and wide scope of Bernstein's compositions. His *Chichester Psalms* is a surprising combination of Broadway-inspired melodies and sacred texts for chorus and orchestra. *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*, written for a jazz ensemble and featuring solo clarinet, cleverly combines elements of classical music and jazz. *Arias and Barcarolles* is Bernstein's brooding song cycle, which MTT and Bernstein premiered in 1988 in New York City. The title of the piece came to the composer following the performance of one of his works at the White House in 1960 when President Eisenhower remarked, "You know, I liked that last piece you played: it's got a theme. I like music with a theme, not all them arias and barcarolles." Finally, the vibrant *Symphonic Dances* from *West Side Story* relies on intricate rhythms and a skillful blending of classical and jazz melodies to bring to life a story of star-crossed lovers in 1950s New York City.

Acclaimed opera singer Isabel Leonard last appeared with the SF Symphony in May 2016 as part of the Symphony's semi-staged production of Bernstein's *On the Town*. In his Los Angeles Times review, Mark Swed wrote, "Isabel Leonard (Clair the racy anthropologist) demonstrated she can dance, act, wise-crack and sing Broadway with the best of them." Leonard is a recent Grammy Award-winner for Thomas Adès' *The Tempest* (Best Opera Recording) and is the recipient of the 2013 Richard Tucker Award. In addition to a busy performing schedule both in the opera house and on the concert stage, she is in constant demand as a recitalist and is on the Board of Trustees at Carnegie Hall.

American bass-baritone Ryan McKinny joins Isabel Leonard for a performance of Bernstein's *Arias and Barcarolles*. In addition to his SFS debut, this season McKinny makes his debut at the San Francisco Opera in the world premiere of John Adams' *Girls of the Golden West* in a production by Peter Sellars and will sing his first performances of Mandryka in a new production of *Arabella* directed by Uwe Laufenberg at Staatstheater Wiesbaden. McKinny was the first recipient of the Birgit Nilsson Prize for singing Wagner at Plácido Domingo's Operalia Competition and received the Kirsten Flagstad/George London Award from the George London Foundation. He also represented the United States in the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, where he was a finalist in the Rosenblatt Recital Song Prize, and was a Grand Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Ryan McKinny is featured in the film *The Audition*, released by Decca on DVD.

The SFS's Bernstein celebrations continue with concerts November 2, 3, and 5, in which MTT leads the Orchestra and pianist [Jean-Yves Thibaudet](#) in Bernstein's *The Age of Anxiety, Symphony No. 2*—a musical representation of W.H. Auden's narrative poem of the same name. This is followed by performances of a full concert version of the composer's satirical comic operetta *Candide* January 19–21, also conducted by MTT and featuring Broadway stars [Jay Armstrong Johnson](#) as Candide and [Meghan Picerno](#) as Cunégonde, as well as the SFS Chorus. The SFS presents *West Side Story* as part of its popular Film Series, February 1–3. A winner of ten Academy Awards, the film version of Bernstein's iconic musical is presented on the big screen with the SFS performing the score live. February 22–24, guest conductor

[Andrey Boreyko](#) wraps up the season-long centennial celebration with a program featuring Bernstein's lighthearted and joyful **Divertimento**, and the lyrical **Serenade**, performed by violinist [Vadim Gluzman](#).

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.

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

Calendar editors, please note:

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY AND CHORUS, MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTING

[Friday, September 22, 2017 at 8 pm](#)

[Saturday, September 23, 2017 at 8 pm](#)

[Sunday, September 24, 2017 at 2 pm](#)

Michael Tilson Thomas conductor

[Isabel Leonard](#) mezzo-soprano

[Ryan McKinny](#) bass-baritone [SFS debut]

Nicholas Hu boy soprano

Matt Herrero actor

Jack O'Reilly actor

[Carey Bell](#) clarinet

San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Ragnar Bohlin director

San Francisco Symphony

BERNSTEIN	<i>Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs</i>
BERNSTEIN	<i>Chichester Psalms</i>
BERNSTEIN (arr. Coughlin)	<i>Arias and Barcarolles</i>
BERNSTEIN (orch. Kostal, Ramin)	<i>Symphonic Dances from West Side Story</i>

Audio Program Notes: Listen to a free podcast about Bernstein's *West Side Story*, 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: **Humphrey Burton**, well-known Leonard Bernstein scholar and biographer, will give an "Inside Music" talk from the stage 6:30–7:30pm prior to each concert. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open 15 minutes before.

Tickets: \$45–\$159.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY, MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTING

[Thursday, November 2, 2017 at 10 am \(Open Rehearsal\)](#)

[Thursday, November 2, 2017 at 8 pm](#)

[Friday, November 3, 2017 at 8 pm](#)

[Sunday, November 5, 2017 at 2 pm](#)

Michael Tilson Thomas conductor

[Jean-Yves Thibaudet](#) piano

San Francisco Symphony

BERNSTEIN	<i>The Age of Anxiety, Symphony No. 2</i>
R. STRAUSS	<i>Ein Heldenleben, Opus 40</i>

Audio Program Notes: Listen to a free podcast about Bernstein's *The Age of Anxiety, Symphony 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.

Tickets: \$15–\$155.

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

[Jay Armstrong Johnson](#) (Candide)

[Meghan Picerno](#) (Cunégonde)

San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Ragnar Bohlin director

San Francisco Symphony

BERNSTEIN

Candide

Audio Program Notes: Listen to a free podcast about Bernstein's *Candide*, 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.

Tickets: \$35–\$159.

WEST SIDE STORY with the SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

➤ *Film Series*

[Thursday, February 1, 2018 at 8 pm](#)

[Friday, February 2, 2018 at 8 pm](#)

[Saturday, February 3, 2018 at 8 pm](#)

San Francisco Symphony

BERNSTEIN

West Side Story

Jerome ROBBINS & Robert WISE directors

Lyrics by **Stephen Sondheim**; Book by **Arthur Laurents**; Screenplay by **Ernest Lehman**

Tickets: \$46–\$166.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY, ANDREY BOREYKO CONDUCTING

[Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 8 pm](#)

[Friday, February 23, 2018 at 8 pm](#)

[Saturday, February 24, 2018 at 8 pm](#)

[Andrey Boreyko](#) conductor

[Vadim Gluzman](#) violin

San Francisco Symphony

BERNSTEIN

Divertimento

BERNSTEIN

Serenade

SHOSTAKOVICH

Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Opus 47

Audio Program Notes: Listen to a free podcast about Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5, 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.

Tickets: \$15–\$159.

Connect with the San Francisco Symphony on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Tumblr](#), [Instagram](#), and [Soundcloud](#):



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

September 22–24 concerts are made possible through the generosity of Franklin Templeton Investments.

September 23 and January 19 concerts are presented in partnership with the San Francisco Arts Commission.

January 19–21 concerts are generously sponsored by Bernard and Barbro Osher.

February 3 concert is made possible through the generosity of the Koret Foundation.

Andrey Boreyko's appearance is supported by the Louise M. Davies Guest Conductor Fund.

Emirates is the Official Airline of the San Francisco Symphony.

San Francisco Chronicle / SFGATE.com is the Official Media Partner of the San Francisco Symphony.

The San Francisco Symphony's Official Radio Partner is KDFC, The Bay Area's Radio Home for Classical Music and the Arts

- SFS -