



**SAN FRANCISCO
SYMPHONY**
MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS • MUSIC DIRECTOR



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(High resolution images of Michael Tilson Thomas and Leonidas Kavakos are available for download from the San Francisco Symphony's [Online Photo Library](#))

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS AND THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY BEGIN YEAR-LONG SCHUMANN CYCLE WITH SYMPHONY NO. 3, *RHENISH*, NOVEMBER 13-15 AT DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL

Violinist Leonidas Kavakos joins MTT and the SFS to perform Sibelius's Violin Concerto

SAN FRANCISCO, October 19 – Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT) and the San Francisco Symphony (SFS) begin a season-long performance and recording cycle of Schumann's four symphonies with the composer's Symphony No. 3, *Rhenish*, November 13-15 at Davies Symphony Hall. The program also features two works by Sibelius: the Violin Concerto with guest artist Leonidas Kavakos, and the tone poem *The Swan of Tuonela*. Concert programs throughout the 2015-16 season celebrate the music of Jean Sibelius in honor of the 150th anniversary of the composer's birth – December 8, 1865. "Sibelius is an immensely fascinating composer," MTT says. "He is one of those artists whose life work is of a piece, whose major statements are in conversation with one another, extending, confirming, arguing, contradicting, but always continuing."

Leonidas Kavakos made his Davies Symphony Hall debut in a March 1994 recital as part of the SFS's series "Debuts at Davies." He debuted with the Orchestra in April 2005, performing Dvořák's Violin Concerto with Herbert Blomstedt conducting. He last appeared with the SFS in January 2011, performing Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2 with David Robertson.

Over the course of the 2015-16 season, MTT and the SFS will perform Robert Schumann's four completed symphonies. Each of the four concert programs features a Schumann symphony paired with multiple works by a single composer:

Brahms, R. Strauss, Sibelius, and Copland. The symphonic cycle will be recorded for release on the Orchestra's Grammy Award-winning in-house label SFS Media.

"Robert Schuman's music has captivated me since I became a musician," says Michael Tilson Thomas. "His symphonic music requires great imagination, attention, and sensitivity on the part of the orchestra and conductor alike. This project comes at an outstanding moment in the Orchestra's history and in our relationship. I'm looking forward to sharing our fresh perspective on this songful music with our audiences."

MTT and the SFS perform Schumann's Symphony No. 1 in B-flat major, (*Spring*), along with works by Richard Strauss November 19-22; the composer's Symphony No. 2 in C major March 30-April 8, paired with works by Copland; and Symphony No. 4 in D minor May 19-22 with works of Brahms.

[Leonidas Kavakos](#) was born and brought up in a musical family in Athens, and by the age of 21, he had already won three major competitions: the Sibelius Competition in 1985, and the Paganini and Naumburg competitions in 1988. This success led to his recording the original Sibelius Violin Concerto (1903/4), the first recording of the work in history. The recording won the Gramophone Concerto of the Year Award in 1991. Kavakos cites Stelios Kafantaris, Josef Gingold, and Ferenc Rados as the three important mentors in his life. He is an exclusive recording artist with Decca Classics. His first release for the label, the complete Beethoven Violin Sonatas with Enrico Pace in January 2013, resulted in the ECHO Klassik award 'Instrumentalist of the Year.' He also recorded the Brahms Violin Concerto with the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig and Riccardo Chailly in October 2013, and Brahms's Violin Sonatas with Yuja Wang in March 2014. In 2014, he was named Gramophone's Artist of the Year.

Recently, Leonidas Kavakos has built a strong profile as a conductor, working with the London and Boston symphony orchestras, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Wiener Symphoniker (VSO), and Budapest Festival orchestras. This season, Kavakos makes his conducting debuts with the Bamberger Symphoniker, Danish National Symphony, Netherlands Radio Symphony and Rotterdam Philharmonic orchestras, and the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. He returns as conductor to the VSO, Chamber Orchestra of Europe and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

Kavakos curated a chamber music series for 15 years at the Megaron Athens Concert Hall, which welcomed such artists as Mstislav Rostropovich, Heinrich Schiff, Menahem Pressler, Emanuel Ax, Nikolai Lugansky, Yuja Wang, and Gautier Capuçon, among others. He presently curates an annual violin and chamber music masterclass in Athens that attracts violinists and ensembles from all over the world, reflecting his deep commitment to passing on musical knowledge and traditions to future generations. Kavakos plays the 'Abergavenny' Stradivarius violin of 1724 and owns modern violins made by F. Leonhard, S.P. Greiner, E. Haahti and D. Bagué.

Calendar editors, please note:

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS AND LEONIDAS KAVAKOS

[Thursday, November 12, 2015 at 8 pm \(UC Davis\)](#)

[Friday, November 13, 2015 at 8 pm](#)

[Saturday, November 14, 2015 at 8 pm](#)

[Sunday, November 15, 2015 at 2 pm](#)

Michael Tilson Thomas conductor

Leonidas Kavakos violin

San Francisco Symphony

SIBELIUS *The Swan of Tuonela*, Opus 22, no. 2

SIBELIUS Violin Concerto in D minor, Opus 47

SCHUMANN Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Opus 97, *Rhenish*

Audio Program Notes: Listen to a free podcast about Schumann's Symphony No. 3, *Rhenish*, hosted by [KDFC's Rik Malone](#). All podcasts are archived, and can be downloaded or streamed from sfsymphony.org/podcasts and from the

[iTunes store.](#)

Pre-Concert Talk: Scott Foglesong 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, November 24 at 8pm on Classical KDFC 90.3 San Francisco, 104.9 San Jose, 89.9 Napa, and kdfc.com where it will be available for on-demand streaming for 21 days following the broadcast.

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.

Tickets: \$15-\$165.

Tickets to Davies Symphony Hall performances 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. Tickets for the UC Davis performance on November 12 are available at tickets.mondaviarts.org or by calling the Mondavi Center Ticket Office at 866-754-2787.

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