



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



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(Movie stills from the films presented as part of the San Francisco Symphony's Film Series are available for download from the [Online Photo Library](#))

**THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY PERFORMS LIVE MUSIC TO SCREENINGS OF  
*THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS*, *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE*, *VERTIGO* AND  
*E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRAL*, IN ITS THIRD ANNUAL FILM SERIES**

**The San Francisco Symphony Chorus joins the Orchestra in performing newly restored music for  
*It's a Wonderful Life***

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA (November 2, 2015)** – [The San Francisco Symphony](#)'s popular *Film Series* continues in the 2015-16 season with the Orchestra performing the live accompaniment to four films beginning with Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas* featuring the music of Danny Elfman November 25, 27-28. Justin Freer conducts the SF Symphony and Chorus in newly restored music composed by Dimitri Tiomkin accompanying the screening of Frank Capra's beloved holiday classic *It's a Wonderful Life* December 11-12. February 12-13 brings Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* back to Davies Symphony Hall, following the SFS's world premiere performance of the film to live accompaniment in November of 2013. The series concludes March 23-26 with the SF Symphony performing John Williams's Academy Award-winning score to *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*. The SFS *Film Series* was first launched in the 2013-14 season.

**More About the Films**

The 2015-16 SFS *Film Series* opens on Wednesday, November 25 with performances of Tim Burton's ***The Nightmare Before Christmas*** (1993). Composer Danny Elfman was the lead singer and songwriter for the Los Angeles rock band Oingo Boingo before scoring his first film in 1985, *Pee Wee's Big Adventure*. His partnership with Tim Burton was highly successful, notable for the "Batman" movies, and he created the main title theme for TV's *The Simpsons*. Elfman's score for *The Nightmare Before Christmas* was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for best original score, and won a Saturn Award for Best Music. It is the animated story of Jack Skellington, the pumpkin King of Halloween Town who is searching

for a new adventure. When he stumbles into Christmas Town, he becomes elated and tries to bring the new concept back to his citizens, with mixed results.

***It's a Wonderful Life*** (1946) directed by Frank Capra is arguably one of the most widely-known holiday films of all time. However, composer Dimitri Tiomkin was very unhappy with the treatment of his score in the film, even attempting to get his name removed from the credits. The conflicts arose when the studio made the commercial decision to release the film early, emphasizing its elements of Christmas in order to create a seasonal blockbuster. In doing so, many of Tiomkin's darker and drastic cues were cut or de-emphasized to lighten the atmosphere. In this new film production, the original music is restored, and Tiomkin's rich score of surreal Americana is fully realized. In the story, Clarence the angel saves the increasingly desperate businessman George from suicide by showing what life in Bedford Falls would have been like if he never existed.

***Vertigo*** (1958) is an iconic film shot on location primarily in San Francisco, and one of director Alfred Hitchcock's signature films. Bernard Herrmann composed the music in a mere six weeks but a musician's strike in Los Angeles prevented him from conducting and recording the score—instead, it was recorded in London and Vienna. Film author Steven Smith notes that in this particular score, “The Wagner-tinged love theme evokes the obsessive desire of James Stewart's character, and in the exhilarating opening credits, Herrmann's music and Saul Bass' visuals swiftly plant us in worlds of irrationality, fear and excitement.” Herrmann also composed music for Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* and Dimitri Tiomkin wrote soundtracks for his *Strangers on a Train* and *Dial M for Murder*. The San Francisco Symphony performed the world premiere of the uncut score to *Vertigo* as live film accompaniment in November 2013, and reprises it in 2016.

John Williams's score for ***E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*** (1982) was the fourth in history to win all four Oscar, Golden Globe, Grammy, and British Academy of Film and Television (BAFTA) awards. His music to *Star Wars* and *Jaws* received similar accolades making Williams the only composer to win the four awards more than once. *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* directors Stephen Spielberg and Kathleen Kennedy won the Oscar for Best Picture. In the film, Elliott, a troubled child, develops a special relationship with a friendly alien, and ultimately summons the courage to help him escape Earth and return to his home-world. Williams has scored over 100 films, many of them directed by Stephen Spielberg. His music is known for its Romantic style, rhythmic intensity and lush orchestration—the antithesis of synthesized film scores.

### About the Conductors



American composer/conductor and trumpeter [Justin Freer](#) (*It's a Wonderful Life*) was born and raised in Huntington Beach, CA. He has written music for world-renowned trumpeters Doc Severinson and Jens Lindemann and continues to be in demand as a composer and conductor for various genres from orchestral literature to chamber music. Freer has served as composer for several independent films and writes motion picture advertising music for some of 20th Century Fox Studios' biggest campaigns. He has been recognized with numerous grants and awards from organizations including ASCAP, BMI, the Society of Composers and Lyricists and the Henry Mancini Estate. As a classical record producer he has worked with the London Symphony Orchestra, Sir Neville Mariner, conductor, and the Pacific Symphony Orchestra, Carl St. Clair, conductor, on recordings of Paul Chihara's orchestral works. Freer is the Founder and President of CineConcerts, a company dedicated to the preservation and concert presentation of film, TV and media music set to picture. Highlights of his 2015-16 season include conducting the New York Philharmonic and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Freer made his SFS debut in January of 2015, leading the Orchestra in music for the film *The Godfather*.



[Joshua Gersen](#) (*The Nightmare Before Christmas*; *Vertigo*) is currently the Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic, as well as the Music Director of the New York Youth Symphony. He was previously the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation Conducting Fellow of the New World Symphony, where he served as the assistant conductor to the symphony's Artistic Director Michael Tilson Thomas, and led the orchestra in various subscription, education, and family concerts, including the orchestra's renowned PULSE concert series. He made his conducting debut with the San Francisco Symphony in the fall of 2013 and has been invited back numerous times, including in January 2015 where led a program in the brand new

SoundBox venue and conducted a West Coast premiere by Cynthia Lee Wong in the main concert hall. Mr. Gersen was the winner of the Aspen Music Festival's prestigious 2011 Aspen Conducting Prize and the 2010 Robert J. Harth Conducting Prize, and served as the festival's assistant conductor for the 2012 summer season under Robert Spano. He served as the principal conductor of the renowned Ojai Music Festival in 2013, and also has conducted the Indianapolis Symphony, Alabama Symphony, Jacksonville Symphony, and members of the Pittsburgh Symphony.



Conductor [Sarah Hicks](#) (*E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*) was named Principal Conductor, Pops and Presentations of the Minnesota Orchestra in 2009. In addition to conducting most pops and special presentations there, she concurrently holds the position of Staff Conductor of the Curtis Institute of Music. Throughout her career Hicks has collaborated with diverse artists, from Jamie Laredo and Hilary Hahn to Josh Groban and Smokey Robinson and Sting. In June of 2012 she conducted the opening concert of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, in a program featuring Dmitri Hvorostovsky. Hicks has guest conducted extensively both in the States and abroad, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Detroit Symphony, National Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Phoenix Symphony and Prime Philharmonic (Seoul, Korea), and the Orchestra of la Teatro Fenice. She has been a frequent guest conductor for San Francisco Symphony pops and film concerts since 2009, most recently conducting the Orchestra accompanying the films

*Home Alone* (2014), *Back to the Future* (2015) and *Star Trek* (2015).

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

Tickets are available at the Davies Symphony Hall Box Office (on Grove Street between Van Ness and Franklin), online at [www.sfsymphony.org](http://www.sfsymphony.org) and by phone at 415-864-6000.

All performances are at Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

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***DISNEY IN CONCERT: TIM BURTON'S THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS***  
**featuring the music of DANNY ELFMAN**

[Wednesday, November 25, 2015 at 8 pm](#)

[Friday, November 27, 2015 at 8 pm](#)

[Saturday, November 28, 2015 at 8 pm](#)

**Joshua Gersen** conductor  
**San Francisco Symphony**

**Danny ELFMAN** *The Nightmare Before Christmas*  
Directed by Henry Selick

The San Francisco Symphony accompanies the screening of Tim Burton's Academy Award-nominated film *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, featuring the Grammy-nominated music by Danny Elfman. Joshua Gersen, Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic, and Music Director of the New York Youth Symphony leads the Orchestra in their first performances of this music.

Note: This concert is performed with a 20-minute intermission

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**Tickets:** \$25-\$160

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## **IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE LIVE**

[Friday, December 11, 2015 at 8:00 pm](#)

[Saturday, December 12, 2015 at 8:00 pm](#)

**Justin Freer** conductor

**San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Ragnar Bohlin** director

**San Francisco Symphony**

**TIOMKIN**

*It's a Wonderful Life* [first SFS performances]

Directed by Frank Capra

The SF Symphony's accompaniment to *It's a Wonderful Life* brings Frank Capra's holiday classic to the concert hall for the first time, including newly restored music composed by Dimitri Tiomkin (*High Noon*, *Dial M For Murder*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*). Nominated for five Academy Awards when it was released, *It's a Wonderful Life* has become one of the most well-known holiday films ever made. Tiomkin's music score is regarded as one of the composer's great accomplishments, highlighting the fanciful and uplifting spirit of the film.

**Tickets:** \$45-\$160

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## **VERTIGO**

[Friday, February 12, 2016 at 8 pm](#)

[Saturday, February 13, 2016 at 8 pm](#)

**Joshua Gersen** conductor

**San Francisco Symphony**

**HERRMANN**

*Vertigo*

Directed by Alfred Hitchcock

Shot on location in San Francisco, *Vertigo* is considered one of the defining works of director Alfred Hitchcock's career. The psychological thriller boasts a gripping soundtrack by Bernard Herrmann, following a San Francisco detective (James Stewart) through a web of deceit and despair. Joshua Gersen conducts the San Francisco Symphony in its live accompaniment of the film.

**Pre-concert conversation with legendary actress Kim Novak, 7:00 – 7:30pm**

**Tickets:** \$30-\$160

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## **E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL**

[Wednesday, March 23, 2016 at 7:30 pm](#)

[Thursday, March 24, 2016 at 7pm \(UC Davis Mondavi Center\)](#)

[Friday, March 25, 2016 at 7:30 pm](#)

[Saturday, March 26, 2016 at 7:30 pm](#)

**Sarah Hicks** conductor

**San Francisco Symphony**

**John WILLIAMS**

*E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* [first SFS performances]

Directed by Steven Spielberg

Universally acclaimed as a cinematic masterpiece, Steven Spielberg's magical film about a boy and his newfound alien friend captured the imagination of the world. Now audiences of all ages can experience *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* as never before... with John Williams' Academy Award-winning score performed live by the full San Francisco Symphony in sync to the film projected on a huge HD screen.

**Tickets:** \$30-\$160

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