



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

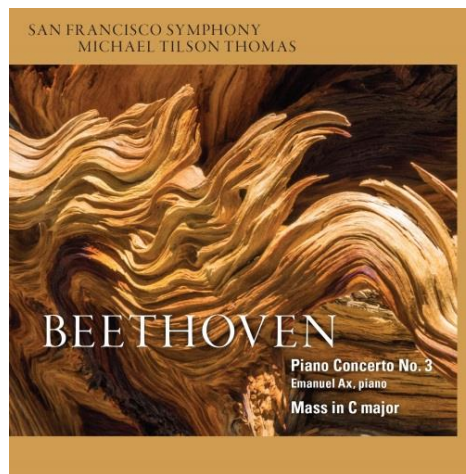


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(A high resolution image of the cover art is available for download from the SFS Media's [Online Press Kit](#))

**MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS AND THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY RELEASE  
NEW RECORDING OF BEETHOVEN'S PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3 FEATURING EMANUEL AX  
AND MASS IN C MAJOR ON SFS MEDIA NOVEMBER 13, 2015**

Pre-order now on [iTunes.com/SFSymphony](https://iTunes.com/SFSymphony) and [SFSymphony.org/Beethoven-Ax](https://SFSymphony.org/Beethoven-Ax)

**SAN FRANCISCO, October 13, 2015** – Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT) and the San Francisco Symphony (SFS) will release a live recording of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 featuring Emanuel Ax and Mass in C major on the Orchestra's Grammy Award-winning SFS Media Label on Friday, November 13, 2015. This is the fifth all-Beethoven album released by MTT and the SFS. Of this journey through Beethoven's music, MTT states, "In our performances we have been exploring a lyrical, transparent approach to the music. This gives us an opportunity to hear the remarkable qualities of the players of the San Francisco Symphony." The recording will be available as a hybrid [SACD](#) compatible with conventional CD players, and as a digital download — including as high-resolution 24-bit downloads — and on all major streaming services. The album is available for pre-order starting today on iTunes with [Mastered for iTunes](#) audio quality at [iTunes.com/SFSymphony](https://iTunes.com/SFSymphony) and on the SF Symphony's e-store at [sfsymphony.org/Beethoven-Ax](https://sfsymphony.org/Beethoven-Ax). A promotional video about the recording featuring performance footage and interviews with the artists can be viewed at [bit.ly/Beethoven-AxVideo](https://bit.ly/Beethoven-AxVideo). Piano Concerto No. 3 was recorded in 96kHz/24-bit audio September 26-28, 2013 and Mass in C major was recorded in PCM 192kHz/24-bit audio January 15-18, 2014, both in Davies Symphony Hall.

On recording with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony, Emanuel Ax shared, “I have known MTT for 40 years now since we first played together. I’m a total fan of his mind, and his musical approach. I feel very privileged to be part of a recording project with this orchestra and with Michael.”

Beethoven wrote Mass in C major in 1808, and later described it as “especially close to my heart.” MTT says of this work, “Mass in C unfolds in a way that says, ‘Please come inside and we’ll spend time together listening to something beautiful.’ It’s enveloping and comforting. The soloists – Joelle Harvey, Kelley O’Connor, William Burden and Shenyang – are all lyric voices who can float phrases in a way that I’m sure Beethoven must have been imagining when he wrote them.”

This new recording joins four previous SFS Media recordings of Beethoven’s music by MTT and the San Francisco Symphony, and a *Keeping Score* documentary and concert of the composer’s Symphony No. 3, *Eroica*, available on DVD and Blu-ray. Of their recording of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5 and Piano Concerto No. 4 with Emanuel Ax in 2011, Donald Rosenberg wrote in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, “Tilson Thomas leads a forceful, nuanced account of Beethoven’s Fifth that shows his San Francisco Symphony to be in prime health. But the highlight of the disc is the performance of the Fourth Piano Concerto with Ax at his most crystalline and poetic. The relationships between piano and orchestra are beautifully defined, the music’s grace, drama and joy bountifully conveyed.” MTT and the SFS also recorded and released Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7 and *Leonore Overture No. 3*. Beethoven recordings featuring the Grammy Award-winning San Francisco Symphony Chorus include Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 and his Cantata on the Death of Emperor Joseph II and Symphony No. 2. Of MTT and the SFS’s Beethoven exploration, Blair Sanderson wrote on *All Music.com*, “Michael Tilson Thomas’s super audio recordings of Beethoven’s symphonies with the San Francisco Symphony deserve attention for their superb musicianship and extraordinary sound quality.”

A frequent guest soloist and longtime friend of the San Francisco Symphony, [Emanuel Ax](#) made his San Francisco Symphony debut in 1979, performing Grieg’s Piano Concerto under conductor Walter Weller. In 1992, during the San Francisco Symphony’s Beethoven Festival, Ax performed the complete cycle of Beethoven’s five piano concertos within a two-week span. Those performances were the only previous time Ax played Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 3 with the SFS.

Soprano [Joëlle Harvey](#), a native of Bolivar, New York, first appeared with the San Francisco Symphony in 2009, singing the role of Leila in the semi-staged production of *Iolanthe*. Her most recent appearances with the SFS were during the Orchestra’s 2015 Beethoven Festival, in which she performed *Missa solemnis* and the role of Marzelline in a concert setting of *Fidelio*. Prior to that she performed the role of Solveig in the SFS’s January 2013 semi-staged production of *Peer Gynt*. Tenor [William Burden](#) made his San Francisco Symphony debut in 2012, and can be heard on the SFS Media recording of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony. Mezzo soprano [Kelley O’Connor](#) made her SFS debut in 2008 in Haydn’s *Mass in Time of War*. Her most recent appearances were in this recording’s Mass in C performances in January 2014. She returns to perform with MTT and the SFS in June 2016, in Mahler’s Symphony No. 2, *Resurrection*. Born in Tianjin, China, bass-baritone [Shenyang](#) made his San Francisco Symphony debut in 2011, and most recently performed with MTT and the Orchestra in the June 2015 semi-staged production of *Missa solemnis*.

One of America’s most distinguished choruses, the 156-member [San Francisco Symphony Chorus](#) is known for its precision, power, and versatility. Led by Chorus Director Ragnar Bohlin, the Chorus performs more than twenty concerts each season and is comprised of 32 professional and 124 volunteer members. Recordings featuring the SFS Chorus have won a total of eight Grammy awards, including three for Best Choral Performance. They were featured on the SFS Media’s recording of Mahler’s Symphony No. 8 with MTT and the SFS, which won three 2010 Grammys, including the award for Best Choral Performance.

[The San Francisco Symphony](#) is widely considered to be among the most artistically adventurous and innovative arts institutions in the US. Led by Music Director [Michael Tilson Thomas](#), the SFS presents more than 220 concerts annually, and reaches an audience of nearly 600,000 in its home of Davies Symphony Hall, through its multifaceted education and community programs, and a global audience through its media initiatives, national, and international tours.



SFS Media is the San Francisco Symphony's in-house label, launched in 2001. SFS Media records and releases audio and visual material reflecting the Orchestra and Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas's commitment to showcasing music by maverick composers as well as core classical masterworks. The recordings reflect the broad range of programming that has been a hallmark of the MTT/SFS partnership. Recorded live in concert and engineered at

Davies Symphony Hall, the audio recordings are released on hybrid SACD and in high-resolution digital formats. SFS Media has garnered eight Grammy awards. SFS Media also produces and releases documentary and live performance videos, including the SFS's national public television series and multimedia project *Keeping Score*, which included three seasons of television episodes, eight documentaries, and eight concert films designed to make classical music more accessible to people of all ages and musical backgrounds. The *Keeping Score* series is available on DVD and Blu-ray. Other videos of the San Francisco Symphony available from SFS Media include *A Celebration of Leonard Bernstein: Opening Night at Carnegie Hall 2008* and *San Francisco Symphony at 100*, a documentary about the Symphony's history, which won a Northern California Emmy Award.

All SFS Media recordings are available from the Symphony Store in Davies Symphony Hall and online at [sfsymphony.org/store](http://sfsymphony.org/store), digitally on [itunes.com/sfsymphony](http://itunes.com/sfsymphony), and from all major retailers and other digital outlets worldwide. SFS Media recordings are distributed by harmonia mundi in the U.S., Canada, and France, through Avie Records internationally, and by The Orchard to digital retailers.

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<b>Title:</b>	Piano Concerto No. 3 featuring Emanuel Ax, Mass in C major
<b>Composer:</b>	Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
<b>Artists:</b>	San Francisco Symphony Michael Tilson Thomas Music Director Emanuel Ax, piano Joëlle Harvey, soprano Kelley O'Connor, mezzo-soprano Shenyang, bass William Burden, tenor San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Ragnar Bohlin Director
<b>Recorded:</b>	Piano Concerto No. 3 was recorded in 96kHz/24-bit audio September 26-28, 2013 and Mass in C major was recorded in PCM 192kHz/24-bit audio January 15-18, 2014, both in Davies Symphony Hall.
<b>Label:</b>	SFS Media
<b>Catalogue Number:</b>	SFS 0064
<b>Release Date:</b>	November 13, 2015 Pre-order a digital download on iTunes at <a href="http://iTunes.com/SFSymphony">iTunes.com/SFSymphony</a> or on disc from <a href="http://SFSymphony.org/Beethoven-Ax">SFSymphony.org/Beethoven-Ax</a> .
<b>Distribution:</b>	harmonia mundi (U.S., Canada, and France) Avie (International) The Orchard (Digital) Online: <a href="http://sfsymphony.org/store">sfsymphony.org/store</a>
<b>Media copies:</b>	Members of the press may request a copy of the recording for review from Shuman Associates at <a href="mailto:shumanpr@shumanassociates.net">shumanpr@shumanassociates.net</a> or the San Francisco Symphony Public Relations Department at <a href="mailto:publicrelations@sfsymphony.org">publicrelations@sfsymphony.org</a>

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