



**SAN FRANCISCO
SYMPHONY**

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS • MUSIC DIRECTOR

Contact:

Public Relations

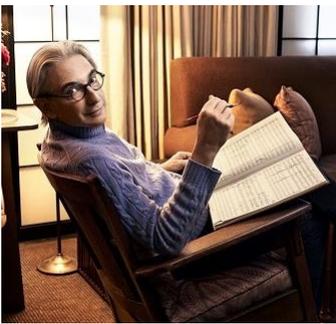
San Francisco Symphony

(415) 503-5474

publicrelations@sfsymphony.org

sfsymphony.org/press

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / UPDATED MARCH 16, 2017



SYMPHONY
PRIDE



**MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS AND THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY
PRESENT *SYMPHONY PRIDE*, APRIL 4, 2017 AT DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL**

**BENEFIT CONCERT IN SUPPORT OF THE BAY AREA LGBTQ COMMUNITY
FEATURES BROADWAY STAR AUDRA MCDONALD**

Ticket Proceeds Benefit Non-Profits that provide services to Bay Area LGBTQ Community

SAN FRANCISCO, February 27, 2017– On April 4, 2017, Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony, along with Broadway star Audra McDonald, celebrate the Bay Area’s spirit of inclusion and diversity with a special concert in Davies Symphony Hall recognizing and supporting the Bay Area LGBTQ community. *Symphony Pride* is scheduled on the eve of the Orchestra’s East Coast tour, which was to have included two concerts in North Carolina but cancelled in response to discriminatory legislation adopted by the state. Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony believe strongly in representing the values of the community it serves, offering *Symphony Pride* as an event which not only celebrates and affirms the Orchestra’s commitment to inclusion but also supports service organizations working towards equality for all.

“This special evening honors the essential contributions that LGBTQ composers have made in shaping the American musical sound,” stated Michael Tilson Thomas. “One of music’s greatest roles is to bring people together. I am proud to join with the musicians of the San Francisco Symphony and my dear friend Audra McDonald in presenting an evening that celebrates and honors the spirit of our community. This concert also offers me the opportunity to express my appreciation for the generous welcome extended to me and my husband Joshua Robison since our arrival here over 20 years ago.”

“We commend Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony for taking a stand in support of the LGBTQ community,” said Mayor Edwin M. Lee. “This great event reaffirms San Francisco’s commitment to equality for all, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Now, more than ever, San Francisco must exemplify what it means to be an inclusive city, devoted to protecting and advancing the rights of all who live here.”

The wide-ranging concert program features the voices of many LGBTQ musical mavericks that MTT has championed throughout his career, including Lou Harrison, Henry Cowell, Meredith Monk, and John Cage. Further illustrating the remarkable impact LGBTQ composers have made on the Broadway stage, Audra McDonald performs a selection of songs by Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim, and Kander and Ebb. McDonald also narrates Aaron Copland's iconic *Lincoln Portrait*, a hopeful work he wrote to capture "the magnificent spirit of our country." Concluding the concert is the extraordinary final movement of Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 1, a work the Orchestra will be performing in Carnegie Hall later in the week. Event Chairs of *Symphony Pride* are longtime California State Senator and civil rights advocate Mark Leno and Joshua Robison.

Broadway and television star **Audra McDonald** joins MTT in *Symphony Pride* as co-host, vocalist, and narrator of Copland's *A Lincoln Portrait*. Known for her powerful performances in musicals and dramas such as *Ragtime*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, and *Porgy and Bess*; for her solo tours and appearances with symphony orchestras nationwide; for her role on the ABC medical drama *Private Practice*; and for her many successful recordings, McDonald holds a record six acting Tony awards, two Grammy awards and an Emmy award. McDonald and Tilson Thomas have been friends and frequent collaborators for over two decades. This performance marks her 11th with the SFS and MTT since her debut with the Orchestra in their 1998 Gershwin Centennial Celebration broadcast nationally from Carnegie Hall. Throughout her career, Audra McDonald has been a passionate advocate and outspoken activist for equal rights and LGBTQ causes.

The majority of ticket proceeds from *Symphony Pride* will support organizations that provide services to the LGBTQ community in the Bay Area, including San Francisco LGBT Center, Larkin Street Youth Services, Transgender Law Center, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and The Trevor Project.

Celebrating 15 years in 2017, the **SF LGBT Center** is San Francisco's only organization working across the full spectrum of the LGBT community on a broad range of issues, by responding to emerging and critical needs while developing innovative strategies that create lasting change. The Center provides direct services that support the most vulnerable among us and feature cultural programs that celebrate our diversity: Our Economic Development program helps lift community members out of poverty; the Violence Prevention Collaborative helps make our community safer; Youth Services helps homeless clients get off the streets and build community; our Cultural programs and art exhibits celebrate our rich history. As our community's home, the Center is an extraordinary place where together we find connection to one another, resources, and opportunities that build a stronger and healthier LGBT community.

Larkin Street Youth Services has been at the forefront of meeting the unique needs of LGBTQ youth for decades. Throughout their continuum of services, from drop-in centers and shelters to education and employment programs, Larkin Street ensures that all programs are safe and welcoming places where LGBTQ youth are celebrated for who they are. Specialized initiatives for LGBTQ youth include HIV prevention, testing, and housing as well as their Castro Youth Housing Initiative, which provides supportive housing to homeless youth who identify as LGBTQ for up to 24 months.

Headquartered in Oakland, **Transgender Law Center** is the largest organization in the country dedicated to changing law, policy, and attitudes so that all people can live safely, authentically, and free from discrimination regardless of their gender identity or expression. The center envisions a future where gender self-determination and authentic expression are seen as basic rights and matters of common human dignity.

Located in San Francisco since 1977, the **National Center for Lesbian Rights** is a national legal organization committed to advancing the civil and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and their families through litigation, legislation, policy, and public education.

The Trevor Project is the leading and only accredited national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) young people under the age of 25. The Trevor Project offers a suite of crisis intervention and suicide prevention programs, including TrevorLifeline, TrevorText, and TrevorChat as well as a peer-to-peer social network support for LGBTQ young people under the age of 25, TrevorSpace. Trevor also offers an education program with resources for youth-serving adults and organizations, a legislative advocacy department, and conducts research to discover the most effective means to help young LGBTQ people in crisis and end suicide.

Symphony Pride is made possible through the generous support of Mr. Alvin Baum & Mr. Robert Holgate, Nancy & Joachim Bechtle, Mr. & Mrs. Owsley Brown, Susie Tompkins Buell & Mark Buell, Jack Calhoun & Trent Norris, Mr. Duncan L J Clark, Matt & Pia Cohler, Jeffrey Fraenkel & Alan Mark, Laurel & Vinod Gupta, James C. Hormel & Michael P. Nguyen, Mr. Thomas Horn, Mark Leno, Nellie & Max Levchin, Nion McEvoy & Leslie Berriman, Microsoft, Mark & Alison Pincus, Michael Tilson Thomas & Joshua Robison, The Bob A. Ross Foundation, Dr. & Mrs. Orville H. Schell, Diane B. Wilsey, and Jed & Danielle York. Wine for *Symphony Pride* is generously provided by Pine Ridge Vineyards and Seghesio Family Vineyards.

Calendar editors, please note:

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY, MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS CONDUCTING

[Tuesday, April 4 at 8 pm](#)

Davies Symphony Hall
201 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA

Michael Tilson Thomas conductor

Audra McDonald soprano and narrator

Peter Grunberg piano

Michael Hey organ

San Francisco Symphony

Members of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus

BERNSTEIN	<i>Overture to Candide</i>
COWELL	<i>Advertisement</i>
CAGE	Fall from <i>The Seasons</i>
Meredith MONK	Panda Chant II from <i>The Games</i>
HARRISON	Allegro (Finale) from Organ Concerto
Stephen SONDHEIM	"The Glamorous Life" from <i>A Little Night Music</i>
BERNSTEIN	"A Little Bit in Love" from <i>Wonderful Town</i>
Stephen SONDHEIM	"Not a Day Goes By" from <i>Merrily We Roll Along</i>
STYNE	"10,432 Sheep"
BERNSTEIN	"Somewhere" from <i>West Side Story</i>
NYRO	"Save the Country"
COPLAND	<i>Lincoln Portrait</i>
MAHLER	<i>Stürmisch bewegt</i> (4 th movement) from Symphony No. 1 in D major
WARD (arr. Dragon)	"America the Beautiful"

Broadcast: A broadcast of *Symphony Pride* will air Tuesday, April 11 at 8 pm 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.

Tickets: \$25/\$50

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.

(High resolution images *Symphony Pride* are available for download from the San Francisco Symphony's [Online Photo Library](#))

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.

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 -