



**Michael Tilson Thomas**  
**Music Director Laureate of the San Francisco Symphony**

Michael Tilson Thomas is Co-Founder and Artistic Director of the New World Symphony, Music Director Laureate of the San Francisco Symphony, and Conductor Laureate of the London Symphony Orchestra. He is a twelve-time Grammy Award winner and has conducted the major orchestras of Europe and the United States.

Born in Los Angeles, he studied piano, conducting, and composition at the University of Southern California, and as a young musician worked with such artists as Igor Stravinsky and Aaron Copland. In his mid-20s, he became Assistant Conductor—and later Principal Guest Conductor—of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which he led in his New York debut. He subsequently served as Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic, Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Principal Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra.

In 1987, he co-founded the New World Symphony (NWS), a postgraduate orchestral academy in Miami Beach dedicated to preparing young musicians of diverse backgrounds for leadership roles in classical music. Since then, he has worked with more than 1,100 NWS Fellows, many of whom have gone onto careers with major orchestras.

He became Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony in 1995, and his tenure was a period of significant growth and heightened international recognition for the orchestra. In June 2020, he completed his remarkable 25-year tenure as Music Director, notable for innovative programming, enhancing the orchestral concert experience with multimedia and creative staging, showcasing the works of American composers, and attracting new audiences to orchestral music, both at home at Davies Symphony Hall and through the Orchestra's extensive media projects. He led the San Francisco Symphony in championing contemporary and American composers alongside classical masters, and as Music Director Laureate, he continues to lead the orchestra in four weeks of concerts annually, as well as in special projects.

Michael Tilson Thomas's discography includes more than 120 recordings, which have won numerous international awards, including twelve Grammys for San Francisco Symphony recordings. Throughout his career, he has been an active composer, with major works including *From the Diary of Anne Frank* (1990), commissioned by UNICEF and premiered with narrator Audrey Hepburn, and *Meditations on Rilke* (2019). Both works appear on a recent Grammy Award-winning recording of his music by the San Francisco Symphony. Other compositions by Tilson Thomas include *Shówa/Shoáh*; settings of poems by Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman; *Island Music*; *Notturmo*; and Four Preludes on *Playthings of the Wind*. His television work includes the New York Philharmonic's Young People's Concerts, series for the BBC and PBS, and numerous televised performances. In 2020, he was profiled on PBS's *American Masters*.

He is an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France, a member of the American Academies of Arts and Sciences and Arts and Letters, a National Medal of Arts recipient, a member of the California Hall of Fame, and a 2019 Kennedy Center Honoree.