



Contact:

Public Relations

San Francisco Symphony

(415) 503-5474

publicrelations@sfsymphony.org

sfsymphony.org/press

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SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY AND ESA-PEKKA SALONEN ANNOUNCE 2020–21 SEASON: SALONEN'S INAUGURAL SEASON AS MUSIC DIRECTOR

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

New Collaborative Artistic Leadership Model

- The launch of a new artistic leadership model unique to the orchestral world and anchored by eight Collaborative Partners: Nicholas Britell, Julia Bullock, Claire Chase, Bryce Dessner, Pekka Kuusisto, Nico Muhly, Carol Reiley, and Esperanza Spalding
- Two-week season-opening Collaborative Partners Festival curated and performed by the partners
- Esa-Pekka Salonen's Inaugural Gala and All San Francisco Community Concert featuring the music of J.S. Bach reimagined by Salonen and the eight Collaborative Partners
- Special projects and performances by Collaborative Partners including Bryce Dessner and Pekka Kuusisto featured on San Francisco Symphony Orchestral Series concerts
- Four SoundBox programs, each curated and performed by a Collaborative Partner, including Claire Chase, Nico Muhly, and Esperanza Spalding

Myths and Mortals: A Festival of Greek Mythology

- Immersive three-week festival lead by Esa-Pekka Salonen dedicated to the fantastical world of Greek mythology
- Full concert performance of R. Strauss' opera *Elektra* featuring soprano Christine Goerke in the title role alongside soprano Emily Magee; contralto Anna Larsson; tenor Alan Oke; bass-baritone Peixin Chen; and the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, directed by Ragnar Bohlin
- San Francisco Symphony premiere of Esa-Pekka Salonen's newest composition, *Gemini*, depicting twin half-brothers Castor and Pollux, paired with a suite from Rameau's one-act opera *Castor and Pollux*, and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*
- Reimagination of Scriabin's color organ in the composer's *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire* featuring pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Beethoven's *Creatures of Prometheus*, and the world premiere of a new work by Fang Man blending Chinese and Greek mythology

On the Precipice: Music of the Weimar Republic

- Eclectic two-week journey led by Esa-Pekka Salonen through the music, ideas, and cultural revolution of Germany's Weimar Republic
- Semi-staged production of Weill and Brecht's *Die sieben Todsünden (The Seven Deadly Sins)* alongside Weill and Brecht's *Das Berliner Requiem (The Berlin Requiem)*; and Hindemith's *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen (Murderer, the Hope of Women)*, featuring soprano Nora Fischer, directed by Simon McBurney with dramaturge Gerard McBurney, and with sets designed by Anna Fleischle
- Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler (Mathis the Painter)* paired with the US Premiere of San Francisco Symphony Collaborative Partner Bryce Dessner's Violin Concerto performed by Collaborative Partner Pekka Kuusisto

Voices of Change: Reporting on the Human Condition

- San Francisco Symphony Orchestral Series concerts featuring works addressing social issues
- San Francisco Symphony Premiere of Florence Price's 1934 Piano Concerto paired with San Francisco Symphony co-commission *Her Story* by Julia Wolfe, written to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the ratification of women's suffrage in the United States and featuring the Lorelei Ensemble
- San Francisco Symphony Premiere of Gabriel Kahane's *emergency shelter intake form*, a song cycle exploring the perpetuation of systemic inequity and homelessness and featuring a local community chorus alongside mezzo-soprano Alicia Hall Moran and vocalists Holland Andrews, Gabriel Kahane, and Holcombe Waller
- Performances of Bartók Concerto for Orchestra, Britten *War Requiem*, Sibelius Symphony No. 1, and Shostakovich Symphony No. 15—works which reflect on turbulent times in history

Premieres and Commissions

- World Premiere of San Francisco Symphony and Toulmin Foundation co-commission by Fang Man as part of the Women Composers Readings and Commissions program
- World Premiere of John Corigliano's Saxophone Concerto, a San Francisco Symphony commission
- World Premiere of Concerto for Trombone, written and performed by San Francisco Symphony Principal Trombone Timothy Higgins
- Performances of new San Francisco Symphony co-commissions: Julia Wolfe's *Her Story* and Bryce Dessner's Violin Concerto
- San Francisco Symphony Premieres of works by Luciano Berio, Inocente Carreño, Unsuk Chin, Valerie Coleman, Francisco Coll, Alberto Ginastera, Helen Grime, Paul Hindemith, Sofia Gubaidulina, Lou Harrison, Jake Heggie, Betsy Jolas, Gabriel Kahane, Texu Kim, Zhou Long, Wynton Marsalis, Younghi Pagh-Paan, Florence Price, Behzad Ranjbaran, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Caroline Shaw, Jörg Widmann, and Takashi Yoshimatsu

San Francisco Symphony Conducting Debuts

- San Francisco Symphony Orchestral Series debuts by nine visiting conductors: Elim Chan, Han-na Chang, Jonathan Cohen, Giancarlo Guerrero, Ludovic Morlot, Rafael Payare, Michael Sanderling, Perry So, and Nathalie Stutzmann

Music Director Laureate Michael Tilson Thomas

- Four weeks of programming conducted by Music Director Laureate Michael Tilson Thomas featuring performers and composers essential to his 25-year legacy with the Orchestra
- Concerts anchored by Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, Mahler Symphony No. 1, Bruckner Symphony No. 9, and Shostakovich Symphony No. 15

- World Premiere of Concerto for Trombone, written and performed by San Francisco Symphony Principal Trombone Timothy Higgins
- Featured soloists include pianists Yuja Wang and Emanuel Ax

Great Artists Perform with the San Francisco Symphony

- Conductor Laureate Herbert Blomstedt, Ragnar Bohlin, James Gaffigan, Jane Glover, Daniel Harding, Philippe Jordan, Cristian Măcelaru, Edwin Outwater, and Juraj Valčuha return to conduct the San Francisco Symphony
- Soloist and Conductor Rudolph Buchbinder joins the San Francisco Symphony to perform all five Beethoven piano concertos in one weekend
- Soprano Renée Fleming sings R. Strauss' Four Last Songs
- Ian Bostridge, Peixin Chen, Marianne Crebassa, Aaron Diehl, Jonas Hacker, Tim McAllister, Alicia Hall Moran, Víkingur Ólafsson, Iain Paterson, Antoine Tamestit, and Noa Wildschut make San Francisco Symphony debuts, among others
- Emanuel Ax, Joshua Bell, Yefim Bronfman, Hélène Grimaud, Hilary Hahn, Wu Man, Conrad Tao, Yuja Wang, and Alisa Weilerstein return to perform with the San Francisco Symphony, among others

Exceptional Visiting Orchestras and Recitals

- Visiting orchestras performing at Davies Symphony Hall include City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, China Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Long Yu, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Lahav Shani, Bach Collegium Japan conducted by Masaaki Suzuki, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional (National Orchestra of Mexico) conducted by Carlos Miguel Prieto, and the Mariinsky Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev
- Soloists presented by the Great Performers Series include violinists Joshua Bell and Itzhak Perlman; pianists Rudolf Buchbinder, Lang Lang, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Daniil Trifonov; and others

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—The San Francisco Symphony and Music Director Designate Esa-Pekka Salonen today announced plans for the inaugural season of Salonen's tenure as the 12th Music Director in the Orchestra's 108-year history. Through his many high-profile conducting roles, work as a leading composer, and as an advocate for wide-ranging musical voices, Esa-Pekka Salonen has shaped a unique vision for the present and future of the orchestral landscape. He joins an Orchestra equally celebrated for their creative and adventurous spirit to present a season that comprises multi-week immersive musical explorations, forges deep collaborative partnerships, welcomes a wealth of musical perspectives new to the San Francisco Symphony, and fosters unique conversations and narratives of music, culture, and social consciousness.

"I was so attracted to the San Francisco Symphony because of the orchestra itself—this expressive, flexible, open, powerful group of players," says Esa-Pekka Salonen. "As we begin this new phase together, the 'what-ifs' of the orchestra world are on the table in a real way. This is a top symphony orchestra, located in the place in America where things begin, where the way things have always been done are reinvented, and where global problems are solved. I see big ideas being thought and actual work being done."

"Esa-Pekka Salonen has a sense of adventure and a hunger for innovation and experimentation," says San Francisco Symphony Assistant Principal Cello Amos Yang. "One of the reasons I'm most excited to work with Maestro Salonen is that he has an incredible humility that puts the music ahead of him at all times, while still maintaining full command of the music. The Orchestra has certainly enjoyed our time working with Maestro Salonen and we look forward to growing a much more in-depth relationship with him in the upcoming years."

Collaborative Partners: A New Artistic Leadership Model

In their inaugural season together, Esa-Pekka Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony introduce a new artistic leadership model new to the orchestral world, anchored by an extraordinary group of eight Collaborative Partners from a variety of cultural disciplines. This group of visionary artists, thinkers, and doers will join with Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony to embark on a future of experimentation by collaborating on new ideas, breaking conventional rules, and creating unique and powerful experiences. The San Francisco Symphony's Collaborative Partners comprise composer and pianist **Nicholas Britell**; classical vocalist and curator **Julia Bullock**, who has put social consciousness at the forefront of her work; flutist, educator, and creator of new and experimental music **Claire Chase**; composer, guitarist, and co-founder of The National **Bryce Dessner**; violinist, musical director, and artistic trailblazer **Pekka Kuusisto**; composer and multi-faceted collaborator **Nico Muhly**; artificial intelligence entrepreneur and roboticist **Carol Reiley**; and jazz bassist, vocalist, and undefinable artist **Esperanza Spalding**.

"I've never achieved anything on my own. Every achievement that I'm really proud of has been a result of collaboration," says Esa-Pekka Salonen. "This art form that we all love and respect needs new thinking, fresh thoughts and ideas, new ways to involve the community, and different ways to enhance the experience. I'm looking to create a different kind of framework, and these wonderfully creative people in the team will help me in that process."

"This is the first time that I know of where a major arts institution is implementing such a democratic mode of making decisions," says Julia Bullock. "Instead of just a few people contributing their voices to what repertoire is being presented to audiences, how it's being presented, and how the community will be engaging with the work, now those decisions will be coming from many places. I believe that in addition to Esa-Pekka and those of us who have been named collaborators, every single person who is behind the scenes at the San Francisco Symphony is going to have an important role to play in influencing this change in institutional dynamics."

The 2020–21 season begins with a three-week festival of events and concerts curated and performed by Collaborative Partners, working with each other and with the Orchestra in a variety of musical and conversational settings. The Festival culminates with the San Francisco Symphony's celebratory Season Opening Gala on September 30 and All San Francisco Community Concert on October 1, both celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the opening of Davies Symphony Hall in 1980. These season-opening concerts explore the music of J.S. Bach, examine how other composers have experienced Bach, and offer new interpretations of Bach reimaged by the eight Collaborative Partners. Full details of the Collaborative Partners Festival will be announced in July 2020.

In addition to the multi-week Festival, Collaborative Partners will also be involved in San Francisco Symphony projects and performances throughout the 2020–21 season, through Orchestral Series concerts, four SoundBox programs, and other special projects. June 17–20, Pekka Kuusisto performs Bryce Dessner's Violin Concerto, a new San Francisco Symphony co-commission. The Collaborative Partners are featured in all of the San Francisco Symphony's experimental SoundBox programs in the 2020–21 Season, with each of the four programs in the innovative performance space curated and performed by Collaborative Partners including Claire Chase, Nico Muhly, and Esperanza Spalding. Full details will be announced at a later date.

Inaugural Weeks of Esa-Pekka Salonen's First Season as Music Director

The inaugural season of Esa-Pekka Salonen as Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony builds on the Orchestra's spirit of adventure, reinvention, and of questioning the status quo and celebrating the new. Following two weeks of concerts and activities planned, performed, and curated by the San Francisco Symphony Collaborative Partners, Esa-Pekka Salonen joins the Orchestra for the first time as Music Director

on September 30 for the Opening Night Gala in honor of Sakurako & William Fisher. Co-chaired by James C. Hormel and Michael P.N. Hormel, the evening's festivities include four distinct elegant pre-concert dinners; the opening night performance by the San Francisco Symphony, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and the Collaborative Partners; and an After-Party open to all ticketholders. The concert program celebrates the beginning of Salonen's partnership with the Orchestra through an exploration and reimagining of the music of J.S. Bach led by the Collaborative Partners. Salonen explains: "The reason why I thought Bach would be a good starting point for my collaboration with the San Francisco Symphony is that it allows us to take a look at how other composers have experienced Bach, how they created their own interpretations of Bach. We'll also be playing traditional Bach, going back to the source while also celebrating the fact that Bach has influenced everybody musicians and composers perhaps more than anybody else."

Inaugural season festivities continue with the 40th annual All San Francisco Community Concert on October 1, co-chaired by Andrea Ceseña and Selina Weiss. Featuring the same musical program as the Opening Night Gala and also led by Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Collaborative Partners, this special performance honors local social service and neighborhood organizations, in recognition of and gratitude for the work these groups do to enrich the lives of and serve the citizens of San Francisco. Invitations are extended to volunteers and employees from organizations such as La Casa de las Madres, Women's Audio Mission, First Exposures, and the Youth Law Center, among others.

Following the annual Opening Night Gala and All San Francisco Community Concert, Salonen's first set of Orchestral Series concerts with the San Francisco Symphony (October 2–3) feature fellow Finn Sibelius' Symphony No. 1. October 8–11, Salonen leads an all-Bartók program, including one-act opera *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, featuring bass-baritone Gerald Finley in the title role and mezzo-soprano Michelle DeYoung as Judith. The program opens with pianist Yefim Bronfman performing Bartók's exhilarating Piano Concerto No. 2. October 15–17, mezzo-soprano Marianne Crebassa joins Salonen and the Orchestra to perform the San Francisco Symphony premiere of Berio's Folk Songs and Ravel's *Shéhérazade*. The varied program also features *Ibéria* from Debussy's *Images pour orchestre*, and Respighi's *Pines of Rome*.

Myths and Mortals: A Festival of Greek Mythology

March 5–22, Esa-Pekka Salonen leads the San Francisco Symphony in an immersive three-week festival dedicated to the fantastical world of Greek gods, demi-gods, and mortals. Salonen comments, "Greek mythology has shaped culture. It is absolutely central in our experience of ourselves, our relationships, and our emotional lives. These powerful stories are a central part of traditions and all they have shaped."

The Festival's first program (March 5–7) features the San Francisco Symphony premiere of Esa-Pekka Salonen's newest composition, *Gemini*, depicting twin half-brothers Castor and Pollux—one a mortal, the other a demi-god. Paired with Salonen's new work is a suite from dramatic French composer Rameau's one-act opera *Castor and Pollux*—a 1737 work inspired by the same myth. The program concludes with Ravel's beloved musical interpretation of the famed Greek love story *Daphnis et Chloé*.

In week two of the Myths and Mortals Festival (March 11–13), pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet performs Scriabin's *Prometheus, The Poem of Fire*, in a modern-day exploration of sound-color synesthesia reimagining the concept of the *clavier à lumières* (color organ), an instrument Scriabin invented for this piece. The concert opens with Beethoven's *Creatures of Prometheus*, and also features the world premiere of a new work by Chinese-born American composer Fang Man that blends Chinese and Greek Mythology. This San Francisco Symphony and Toulmin Foundation co-commission is part of the Women Composers Readings and Commissions program, an initiative of the League of American Orchestras, in partnership with American Composers Orchestra.

The Myths and Mortals Festival culminates March 18–22 with a full concert performance of R. Strauss' opera *Elektra*—a 20th-century masterpiece inspired by the classic ancient Greek revenge parable. Salonen states, “Elektra is one of the greatest operatic scores in the entire literature. I have conducted it many times and it is an exhilarating journey. There are some moments of incredible tenderness and beauty mixed with moments of aggression and despair.” The all-star vocal cast is headlined by soprano Christine Goerke in the title role, alongside soprano Emily Magee (Chrysothemis); contralto Anna Larsson (Klytemnestra); tenor Alan Oke (Aegisth); bass-baritone Peixin Chen (Orest), and the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, directed by Ragnar Bohlin.

On the Precipice: Music of the Weimar Republic

June 17–26, Esa-Pekka Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony present *On the Precipice: Music of the Weimar Republic*, an eclectic two-week journey through the music, ideas, and cultural revolution of one of the world's most inventive and decadent cultural periods. Bringing to life a bold and beguiling period of European cultural history, the festival utilizes orchestral music, cabaret, film, and discussions to explore a period of great political and creative turbulence at the dawn of fascist Germany.

Salonen explains: “I think perhaps we are living through something that is very similar to the Weimar Republic without knowing it. We witnessed a number of years of relative prosperity, calm, rationality, optimism, and growth. And very suddenly things started unravelling, with the financial crash and rise of populist movements around the world. Everything seemed to happen within a very short timeframe, which makes you think about Europe in the 1930s. I have been always interested in the Weimar period in terms of the artistic invention and the general aesthetic, but now I feel it has new and urgent relevance.”

In *Make Art, Not War* (June 17–20), Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Orchestra join with a pair of Collaborative Partners to perform the US premiere of San Francisco Symphony Collaborative Partner Bryce Dessner's new Violin Concerto, performed by fellow Collaborative Partner Pekka Kuusisto. The program continues with Hindemith's controversial *Mathis der Maler* (*Mathis the Painter*). Among Hindemith's most acclaimed works, *Mathis der Maler* was roundly criticized and denounced as degenerate art by the Nazi government because the plot reflected an artist who decides his duty is to pursue his vision regardless of political consideration.

June 24–26, Esa-Pekka Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony conclude their 2020–21 season together with *Weimar Nightfall*, an extraordinary semi-staged evening of expressionist and satiric musical theater featuring Weill and Brecht's *Die Sieben Todsünden* (*The Seven Deadly Sins*), directed by Simon McBurney with dramaturg Gerard McBurney, and sets designed by Anna Fleischle. Soprano Nora Fischer and the San Francisco Symphony Chorus join with the San Francisco Symphony for this immersive showcase, also featuring Hindemith's *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen* (*Murderer, the Hope of Women*), a blunt commentary on sexual repression; and Weill's *Das Berliner Requiem* (*The Berlin Requiem*), a setting of six Brecht poems about the dark realities of war.

Voices of Change: Reporting on the Human Condition

San Francisco Symphony Orchestral Series concerts throughout the season feature works that address social issues, giving voice to the human spirit. November 12 & 14, conductor Giancarlo Guerrero leads the San Francisco Symphony, joined by the Lorelei Ensemble, in Pulitzer Prize-winner Julia Wolfe's highly anticipated new work *Her Story*, a San Francisco Symphony co-commission written to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the ratification of women's suffrage in the United States. *Her Story* captures the passion and perseverance of women refusing subordination, demanding representation, and challenging the discrimination and power structures that have limited women's voices. The program also features a one-movement piano concerto by pioneering American composer Florence Price, who in the 1930s became the

first African-American woman to be recognized as a symphonic composer. Price's inventive concerto, performed in these concerts by pianist Aaron Diehl, is testament to a composer who infused her music with a range of influences to find a voice that was all her own.

February 4 & 6 performances, conducted by Edwin Outwater, feature the San Francisco Symphony premiere of Gabriel Kahane's *emergency shelter intake form*—a song cycle exploring the perpetuation of systemic inequity and homelessness. Anchored by mezzo-soprano Alicia Hall Moran and vocalists Holland Andrews, Gabriel Kahane, and Holcombe Waller—four soloists beloved in new music and avant-pop spaces—*emergency shelter intake form* also features a local community chorus whose members' lived experiences bear witness to the subject matter.

October 2–3, Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts the San Francisco Symphony in Sibelius' Symphony No. 1, a symphony written during the political turmoil of Russian rule in Finland that became a patriotic rallying cry against the czar and stood as a powerful declaration that Finnish culture was worth fighting for. On October 19, as part of the San Francisco Symphony's Great Performers Series, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla conducts the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra—written in 1943 following Bartók's move to the United States from Hungary and believed to express the composer's reaction to the Second World War—and Weinberg's dramatically charged Violin Concerto featuring violinist Gidon Kremer.

January 27–30, Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the Orchestra in Shostakovich's Symphony No. 15—the composer's final symphony, which references societal upheavals in Russia. With a solemn brass chorale at the start of the Adagio alluding to “Bloody Sunday” in January 1905, Shostakovich writes about tyranny and turmoil, despairing for the thousands of unarmed civilians killed by police during a peaceful petition before Czar Nicholas II.

May 13–15, Philippe Jordan leads the San Francisco Symphony, Chorus, San Francisco Boys Chorus, tenor Ian Bostridge, and baritone Iain Paterson in Britten's *War Requiem*—the composer's poignant take on the cruelty of war. Combining contrasting texts from the traditional Latin mass with poems written in the trenches of World War I, this masterpiece embodies Britten's deeply held pacifist beliefs. When it premiered in 1962 during increased US involvement in Vietnam, a year after the Bay of Pigs and the construction of the Berlin Wall, *War Requiem* stood as a weighty musical statement on a subject Britten felt was of urgent concern to humankind.

Premieres and Commissions

October 30–November 1, Michael Tilson Thomas leads the Orchestra in the world premiere of a trombone concerto composed and performed by Principal Trombone Timothy Higgins, commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony. The San Francisco Symphony is joined by the Lorelei Ensemble to perform the West Coast premiere of Julia Wolfe's new work *Her Story*, a San Francisco Symphony co-commission, in concerts conducted by Giancarlo Guerrero, November 12 & 14. On January 14–16, Cristian Măcelaru conducts the Orchestra in the world premiere of another San Francisco Symphony commission—Pulitzer Prize-winning composer John Corigliano's Saxophone Concerto, featuring saxophonist Tim McAllister in his San Francisco Symphony debut.

June 17–20, Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Orchestra team up with a pair of Collaborative Partners—composer Bryce Dessner and Finnish violinist Pekka Kuusisto—in the US premiere of Dessner's imaginative Violin Concerto. Salonen and the Orchestra also perform the world premiere of a San Francisco Symphony and Toulmin co-commission by Fang Man—a work blending Chinese and Greek myths—as part of the Myths & Mortals Festival on March 11–13. Fang Man was one of three women to receive an orchestral commission as

part of the 2018 Women Composers Readings and Commissions program, an initiative of the League of American Orchestras, in partnership with American Composers Orchestra and supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation.

The 2020–21 Season includes many San Francisco Symphony Premieres of works never before performed by the Orchestra, including Luciano Berio's Folk Songs, Inocente Carreño's *Margariteña*, Unsuk Chin's *Frontispiece* for Orchestra, Valerie Coleman's *Umoja*, Francisco Coll's Four Iberian Miniatures, Alberto Evaristo Ginastera's Violin Concerto, Helen Grime's *Virga*, Sofia Gubaidulina's *Fairy Tale Poem (Märchen-Poem)*, Lou Harrison's Concerto for Pipa with String Orchestra, Cristian Măcelaru's arrangement of Jake Heggie's *Moby-Dick Suite*, Paul Hindemith's *Murderer, the Hope of Women (Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen)*, Betsy Jolas' *A Little Summer Suite*, Gabriel Kahane's *emergency shelter intake form*, Texu Kim's *Bounce!!*, Zhou Long's *Rhyme of Taigu*, Wynton Marsalis' Selections from *Blues Symphony*, Florence Price's Piano Concerto, Younghi Pagh-Paan's *NIM*, Behzad Ranjbaran's Violin Concerto, Esa-Pekka Salonen's *Gemini*, Caroline Shaw's *Entr'acte*, Kurt Weill's *The Berlin Requiem (Das Berliner Requiem)*, Jörg Widmann's Viola Concerto—also a US Premiere, and Takashi Yoshimatsu's *The Age of Birds*.

San Francisco Symphony Conducting Debuts

San Francisco Symphony's 2020–21 season features an array of international guest conductors bringing fresh insights and viewpoints to the podium as they make their San Francisco Symphony Orchestral Series debuts. Making their conducting debuts are Giancarlo Guerrero, six-time Grammy-winning conductor now in his tenth season as Music Director of the Wrocław Philharmonic at the National Forum of Music in Poland and Principal Guest Conductor of the Gulbenkian Orchestra in Portugal, November 12 & 14; Music Director of the San Diego Symphony Rafael Payare, November 20–22; Jonathan Cohen, Founder and Artistic Director of the Arcangelo ensemble, December 11–12; Perry So, who made his debut under San Francisco Symphony auspices in 2020 conducting the annual Chinese New Year concert, February 11 & 13; Artistic Leader and Chief Conductor of Norway's Trondheim Symfoniorkester Han-Na Chang, April 8–10; Michael Sanderling, who starts his position as Chief Conductor of the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra in the 2020–21 season, May 20–22; Conductor Emeritus of the Seattle Symphony Ludovic Morlot, May 27–29; Chief Conductor of the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra Elim Chan, June 3–5; and Nathalie Stutzmann, Chief Conductor of the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra in Norway and Principal Guest Conductor of the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, June 10 & 12–13.

Music Director Laureate Michael Tilson Thomas

Music Director Laureate Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT) conducts the San Francisco Symphony in four concert programs, featuring artists and composers that showcase the essence of his remarkable 25-year legacy with the Orchestra. On October 30–November 1, the multi-Grammy-winning combo of MTT and the San Francisco Symphony reunite to perform one of their signature works, Mahler's Symphony No. 1, and present the world premiere of a new Concerto for Trombone composed and performed by Principal Trombone Timothy Higgins. Then on November 5–6 & 8, MTT leads the San Francisco Symphony and Chorus, a guest children's chorus, and world-renowned vocalists in performances of Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*—the composer's awe-inspiring, optimistic musical monument that celebrates art and its ability to bring humanity closer to the divine. January 21–23 concerts feature Bruckner's Symphony No. 9, *Unfinished*, in addition to Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 17 performed by longtime MTT friend and collaborator, legendary pianist Emanuel Ax. On January 28–30, MTT leads the Orchestra in Shostakovich's Symphony No. 15 and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 featuring superstar pianist Yuja Wang.

Celebrations of the Lunar New Year

The San Francisco Symphony expands its celebration of the Lunar New Year this season with a set of Orchestral Series subscription concerts February 11 & 13 featuring and inspired by music from throughout Asia. Conducted by Perry So—who made his debut under San Francisco Symphony auspices in 2020’s Chinese New Year Concert—the rich and varied program comprises the San Francisco Symphony premieres of Texu Kim’s *Bounce!!*, Takashi Yoshimatsu’s *The Age of the Birds*, Younghi Pagh-Paan’s *NIM*, Zhou Long’s *The Rhyme of Taigu*, and Lou Harrison’s Concerto for Pipa with String Orchestra featuring Wu Man.

On February 20, the San Francisco Symphony’s celebrations of the Lunar New Year continue with the 21st annual Chinese New Year Concert and Banquet. An elegant and colorful celebration, festivities begin with a pre-concert Festival Reception open to all ticketholders and featuring an array of entertainment and activities, such as lion dancing, Chinese calligraphy, “lucky” red envelopes, and complimentary desserts, wine, and tea bars. The San Francisco Symphony concert performance highlights vibrant Asian traditions through Eastern and Western repertoire and multimedia presentations. Tickets can be purchased separately for a glamorous Banquet, which follows the concert. Proceeds from the Banquet benefit the Symphony’s education and community programs.

Music’s Biggest Stars Perform with the San Francisco Symphony

Guest conductors returning to conduct the San Francisco Symphony in the 2020–21 season include Conductor Laureate Herbert Blomstedt, Director of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus Ragnar Bohlin, James Gaffigan, Jane Glover, Daniel Harding, Philippe Jordan, Cristian Măcelaru, Edwin Outwater, and Juraj Valčuha. Additionally, Rudolph Buchbinder joins the San Francisco Symphony as conductor and soloist to perform all five Beethoven piano concertos in one weekend, October 23–24.

Guest artists making their San Francisco Symphony debuts include pianists Aaron Diehl, Víkingur Ólafsson, and Conrad Tao; violinists Pekka Kuusisto and Noa Wildschut; saxophonist Tim McAllister; violist Antoine Tamestit; tenors Ian Bostridge, Jonas Hacker, and Alan Oke; soprano Nora Fischer; mezzo-sopranos Alicia Hall Moran and Marianne Crebassa; contralto Anna Larsson; baritone Iain Paterson; bass-baritones Peixin Chen and Gerald Finley; vocalists Holcombe Waller, Holland Andrews, and Gabriel Kahane; and the Lorelei Ensemble.

Returning guest artists include pianists Emanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman, Chick Corea, Hélène Grimaud, Louis Lortie, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and Yuja Wang; violinists Joshua Bell, Julia Fisher, and Hilary Hahn; cellist Alisa Weilerstein; pipa player Wu Man; sopranos Renée Fleming, Christine Goerke, Joëlle Harvey, and Emily Magee; mezzo-soprano Elizabeth DeShong; baritone Tyler Duncan; and tenor Nicholas Phan.

Exceptional Visiting Orchestras and Recitals

Visiting orchestras performing at Davies Symphony Hall include City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, China Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Long Yu, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Lahav Shani, Bach Collegium Japan conducted by Masaaki Suzuki, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional (National Orchestra of Mexico) conducted by Carlos Miguel Prieto, and the Mariinsky Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev.

Soloists presented by the Great Performers Series include violinists Joshua Bell and Itzhak Perlman, and pianists Rudolf Buchbinder, Lang Lang, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and Daniil Trifonov. On December 6, cellist Gautier Capuçon, violinist Lisa Batiashvili, and pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet present a Chamber Music Recital.

New Visual Identity

Echoing the artistic partnership of incoming Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen, the Collaborative Partners, and the San Francisco Symphony, the Orchestra commissioned the San Francisco brand experience company,

COLLINS, to help us build an evolved visual identity that matches the dynamic nature of its new direction. Leveraging new creative technology including a custom variable font called “Symphony”, the new visual language—of which a new logo is just the beginning — uses typography itself to bring the nature of sound and music to life. The identity juxtaposes the traditional with the contemporary — introducing new, dynamic, behavior for classical letterforms. The vision is to create a memorable visual expression as rich in emotional range as the music itself. Visual identity elements will continue to build towards Esa-Pekka Salonen’s first season as Music Director in September 2020.

On-Sale Dates

Subscription packages for the San Francisco Symphony’s 2020–21 season go on sale **TUESDAY, February 18 at 10 am** at www.sfsymphony.org/subscribe, (415) 864-6000, and at the Davies Symphony Hall Box Office, located on Grove Street between Franklin and Van Ness. For additional details and questions visit www.sfsymphony.org/subscribe.

For a limited time, patrons have the option to get 2 additional DSH concerts free when buying a Davies Symphony Hall 6-concert or more subscription package; 4 additional DSH concerts free when buying a 12-concert or more package; or 6 additional DSH concerts, an additional seat upgrade, and 2 complimentary drink vouchers when subscribing to 18 or more concerts. **Offer ends March 20, 2020.**

Single tickets for individual 2020–21 concerts will go on sale July 10, 2020.

Connect with the San Francisco Symphony on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#) and [Soundcloud](#):



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