

Public Relations  
 San Francisco Symphony  
 (415) 503-5474  
[publicrelations@sfsymphony.org](mailto:publicrelations@sfsymphony.org)  
[www.sfsymphony.org/press](http://www.sfsymphony.org/press)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / MAY 15, 2020**

Click [here](#) to access the Online Press Kit, which includes this press release, performance videos and photos, and headshots.



**MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS AND THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY RELEASE  
 TILSON THOMAS' *FROM THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK & MEDITATIONS ON RILKE* ON SFS  
 MEDIA JUNE 26, 2020**

**Album recorded in 24-bit/192kHz high-resolution and available for download and streaming via major  
 retailers worldwide June 26, 2020 and in 5.1 surround-capable SACD July 17, 2020**

**Available for pre-order now at [sfsymphony.org/tilsonthomas](https://www.sfsymphony.org/tilsonthomas)**

**SAN FRANCISCO – Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT) and the San Francisco Symphony announce the SFS Media release of Tilson Thomas' *From the Diary of Anne Frank & Meditations on Rilke*, available for pre-order now. Recorded live at Davies Symphony Hall in November 2018 and January 2020, respectively, this album represents the first SFS Media release of MTT's original compositions, juxtaposing his earliest orchestral work with his most recent one. This album will be available for download in high quality, 24-bit/192kHz Studio Master, and for streaming via all major retailers worldwide on **June 26** and in 5.1 surround-capable SACD on **July 17**. For more information, program notes, and performance video footage, and commentary from MTT, visit <https://www.sfsymphony.org/tilsonthomas>.**



Based on the historic diary kept by Anne Frank during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, *From the Diary of Anne Frank* is MTT's dramatic work for narrator and orchestra. Commissioned by UNICEF and originally written for Audrey Hepburn as a vehicle in her role as a UNICEF ambassador, the work received its premiere with Michael Tilson Thomas and the New World Symphony in 1990. The San Francisco Symphony first performed *From the Diary of Anne Frank* in November 2018, in concerts celebrating the 70th anniversary of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with [Isabel Leonard](#) as narrator. This was a breakthrough work for MTT, earning widespread praise for its dramatic persuasiveness and its mastery of orchestral possibilities. In *The Bay Area Reporter's* review of the 2018 performance, Phil Campbell wrote, "MTT provides a soundtrack that clearly shows his musical influences, ranging from Copland to Bernstein, but still makes a personal statement. The evocative score glistens and surges with emotion and convincing insight. One would have to be made of wood not to respond." Since its unveiling thirty years ago, *From the Diary of Anne Frank* has been translated and performed in many languages worldwide, including at the United Nations General Assembly Hall.

"While some of the words concern tragic events, so many of them reflect the youthful, optimistic, inquisitive, and compassionate spirit of their author. Above all, we wanted these qualities to come through in the piece, and so I have derived the themes...from turns of phrases in traditional Jewish music, especially the hymn to life, Kaddish."

—Michael Tilson Thomas

Completed more than three decades later, MTT's song cycle *Meditations on Rilke* is a musical setting of lyric poems by German modernist Rainer Maria Rilke, whose writings grapple with sentiments at the core of the human condition, including solitude, mortality, and the redemptive value of art. Mezzo-soprano [Sasha Cooke](#) and bass-baritone [Ryan McKinny](#) joined MTT and the San Francisco Symphony for the world premiere of *Meditations on Rilke* at Davies Symphony Hall in January 2020. MTT comments, "These *Meditations on Rilke* are reflections of the many moods the poems suggest. The motives and harmonies of these pieces have been with me for years, decades. This approach to music as a kind of lifelong journal, or confessional companion, was what my father, and as I now have learned, my grandfather, and even my great-grandfather, experienced. *Meditations on Rilke* is based on motives that recur, recombine, and morph differently in each song."



**Michael Tilson Thomas** concludes his remarkable 25-year tenure as the 11th music director of the San Francisco Symphony at the end of the 2019–20 season, a post he assumed in 1995, consolidating a relationship with the Orchestra that began with his debut here in 1974. In what is widely considered one of the most dynamic and productive partnerships in the orchestral world, Tilson Thomas and the SF Symphony have been praised for their 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. Tilson Thomas’s recordings have won numerous international awards, including 12 Grammys, 11 for San Francisco Symphony recordings. In 2014, he inaugurated SoundBox, the San Francisco Symphony’s alternative performance space and eclectic live music series. His television credits include the New York Philharmonic Young People’s Concerts and in 2004 he and the San Francisco Symphony launched *Keeping Score* on PBS-TV. In March 2020, the groundbreaking *Keeping Score* project was made available for unlimited free streaming on the San Francisco Symphony’s [YouTube](#) channel. His compositions include *From the Diary of Anne Frank*; *Meditations on Rilke*; *Shōwa/Shoah*; settings of poems by Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman; *Island Music*; *Notturmo*; and *Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind*. Tilson Thomas is a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres of France, was *Musical America*’s Musician and Conductor of the Year, and was inducted into the *Gramophone* Hall of Fame. He has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, was inducted in the California Hall of Fame, and was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Obama. Most recently, he was named a 2019 recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors.

[SFS Media](#) is the San Francisco Symphony’s award-winning in-house media label, launched in 2001. SFS Media releases reflect MTT and the San Francisco Symphony’s artistic vision of showcasing music by American composers as well as core classical masterworks and embody the broad range of programming that has been a hallmark of the MTT/San Francisco Symphony 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 has also produced and released documentary and live performance videos, including the San Francisco Symphony’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 as a digital download and on DVD and Blu-ray and was made available for unlimited free streaming on the San Francisco Symphony’s [YouTube](#) channel. 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 storied history, which won

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS, MUSIC DIRECTOR

a Northern California Emmy Award. In celebration of MTT's 25th and final season as Music Director, SFS Media recently launched a digital concert series and dynamic season playlist on Apple Music and all major streaming and download platforms that includes live concert recordings from 2019–20 season concerts featuring composers that MTT and the San Francisco Symphony have championed throughout their decades together. Visit [warnerclassics.com/sfs-digital-concert-series](http://warnerclassics.com/sfs-digital-concert-series) for more information.

For more information, performance video, program notes, and photos, visit [sfsymphony.org/tilsonthomas](http://sfsymphony.org/tilsonthomas). To request a digital review copy of the recording, email the San Francisco Symphony Public Relations Department at [publicrelations@sfsymphony.org](mailto:publicrelations@sfsymphony.org).

*From the Diary of Anne Frank & Meditations on Rilke* will be available June 26 through digital outlets worldwide, including iTunes, Amazon, AppleMusic Spotify, Primephonic, HDTracks and IDAGIO, and in 5.1 surround-capable SACD July 17. All SFS Media physical recordings are also available from the Symphony Store in Davies Symphony Hall, as well as from all major retailers. Global distribution of all SFS Media products is managed by [Warner Classics Label Services](#).

---

**Title:** *From the Diary of Anne Frank & Meditations on Rilke*

**Composer:** Michael Tilson Thomas

**Artists:** San Francisco Symphony

Michael Tilson Thomas Music Director and conductor

Isabel Leonard narrator (*From the Diary of Anne Frank*)

Sasha Cooke mezzo-soprano (*Meditations on Rilke*)

Ryan McKinny bass-baritone (*Meditations on Rilke*)

**Works:** *From the Diary of Anne Frank*

*Meditations on Rilke*

**Recorded:** November 15–18, 2018 and January 9–12, 2020. All works recorded in PCM and 24-bit/192kHz audio live in Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco.

**Label:** SFS Media

**Catalogue Number:** SFS 0079

**Release Date:** Digital on June 26, 2020 and SACD on July 17, 2020

**Total Run Time:** 01:21:08

**Description:** In celebration of Michael Tilson Thomas' 25th and final year as Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony, SFS Media presents the premiere recordings of MTT's first and most recent compositions for voice and orchestra. MTT's *From the Diary of Anne Frank* and *Meditations on Rilke* feature narrator Isabel Leonard, mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke, and bass-baritone Ryan McKinny. Inspired by and based on the words and compassionate spirit of Anne Frank, *From the Diary of Anne Frank* opens with a flourish and culminates in a solemn yet hopeful vision for the future. *Meditations on Rilke* takes listeners on an emotional and evocative journey befitting the lyrical sweep of Rainer Maria Rilke's poems. This album will be available June 26, 2020 as a digital download, and via streaming and as a studio master-quality SACD on July 17, 2020. Learn more [sfsymphony.org/tilsonthomas](http://sfsymphony.org/tilsonthomas).

**Media copies:** Members of the press may request physical and digital review copies, high-res live performance photos, and a digital CD booklet from San Francisco Symphony Public Relations Department at [publicrelations@sfsymphony.org](mailto:publicrelations@sfsymphony.org).

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS, MUSIC DIRECTOR

---

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



*The San Francisco Symphony receives support from more than 8,500 individual donors and 250 partner institutions.*

*Chevron is the inaugural Second Century Partner of the San Francisco Symphony.*

*Emirates is the Official Airline of the San Francisco Symphony.*

*Franklin Templeton and Fiduciary Trust International are Season Partners 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.*

*San Francisco Chronicle is the Official Media Partner of the San Francisco Symphony.*

- SFS -