



SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS • MUSIC DIRECTOR

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / OCTOBER 11, 2019



Images of Daniel Stewart, Roger Xia, and the SFS Youth Orchestra are available for download in the [SFSYO Press Kit](#). Photo credit: Stefan Cohen

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA WELCOMES DANIEL STEWART AS WATTIS FOUNDATION MUSIC DIRECTOR IN 2019–20 SEASON

Season opening concert features the SFSYO's first performance of Michael Tilson Thomas' *Agnegram*, selections from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, and 2019 SFSYO Concerto Competition winner Roger Xia performing Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor, November 17 at 2pm

Other 2019–20 season SFSYO performances include annual holiday performance of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* with guest narrator Dulcé Sloan on December 15, the Bay Area Youth Orchestra Festival on January 19, a Music for Families program on April 4, and two additional concerts March 15 and May 10

SAN FRANCISCO — The [San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra](#) (SFSYO) and newly appointed Wattis Foundation Music Director [Daniel Stewart](#) open the 2019–20 season on Sunday, **November 17 at 2pm** in Davies Symphony Hall with a concert featuring selections from **Prokofiev's** dramatic ballet *Romeo and Juliet* and the SFSYO's first performance of a work by **Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT)**, *Agnegram*. Written in 1998 to celebrate the 90th birthday of the San Francisco Symphony's extraordinary patron and friend, *Agnegram* honors Agnes Albert, who was the inspiration for the creation of the SFSYO. Currently music director of the Santa Cruz Symphony, Daniel Stewart is an alumnus of both the SFSYO and the New World Symphony, where he studied conducting with Michael Tilson Thomas. Stewart comments: "The precious musical moments I spent as a musician with the SFSYO played a deeply influential role in my development as a musician and person. It's a special responsibility to help guide the next generation of young talent in their artistic development. It's very meaningful that we will begin our season with MTT's *Agnegram*, a rambunctiously playful work written as a tribute to SFSYO benefactor Agnes Albert. Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, the center of our first program, provides us with an ideal opportunity to shine and showcase the full expressive spectrum of the SFSYO and the musicians' ability to tackle technically and artistically demanding repertoire."

The November 17 concert also features 2019 San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition winner **Roger Xia** performing **Grieg's** popular **Piano Concerto in A minor**. Grieg's Piano Concerto symbolized the formation of his distinct Norwegian style and launched his reputation both internationally and domestically in Norway, where the

composer's major anniversaries were celebrated as national holidays. "I hope to bring out all of the prominent Norwegian styles in Grieg's piece, especially the auroras in the second movement and the folk dances in the third movement, which make Grieg's work unique," says SFSYO 2019 Concerto Competition winner and current Concertmaster Roger Xia.

The SFSYO's 2019–20 season continues with the annual holiday performance of **Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf***, featuring actress **Dulcé Sloan** as narrator, known for her role as a correspondent for *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* on Comedy Central, on **December 15, 2019**. On **April 4**, the SFSYO performs the **San Francisco Symphony's Music for Families** program for the first time in more than twenty years, guiding the audience through a program called "Meet the Orchestra." The Saturday afternoon Music for Families concerts are designed to bring children together with their parents to engage with classical music through fun pre-concert activities and interactive themed performances.

The **March 15, 2020** concert features works by **Smetana, Haydn, Britten**, and **Mason Bates**. The SFSYO will perform **Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra***, a joyous work that highlights each individual section of the orchestra through virtuosic variations based on a theme by Purcell. The SFSYO also performs the Davies Symphony Hall premiere of **Mason Bates' *Mothership***, which was commissioned by Michael Tilson Thomas and the YouTube Symphony. The SFSYO concludes its 2019–20 season on **May 10, 2020** with a program that includes **Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*** and **Brahms' *Symphony No. 2***, as well as **Steven Mackey's *Eating Greens***, a work inspired by artists and musicians such as Margaret Leonard, Henri Matisse, and Charles Ives, whose works Mackey describes as displaying "a spirit of rugged individualism and a healthy irreverence for the European masterpiece syndrome."

On **January 19**, the SFSYO hosts the **Bay Area Youth Orchestra Festival** at Davies Symphony Hall. Conceived in 2009, the festival showcases some of the Bay Area's most talented youth orchestral ensembles. Proceeds from the festival are divided among designated charitable organizations that serve homeless and underserved youth in each orchestra's local community.

About Daniel Stewart

Daniel Stewart succeeds Christian Reif as Wattis Foundation Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra in the 2019–20 season. An alumnus of the SFSYO himself, Stewart has concertized frequently as a viola soloist, performed as a violist with the San Francisco Symphony, and served as principal violist of numerous ensembles, including the New World Symphony, where he studied conducting with Michael Tilson Thomas. Stewart is an avid composer whose compositions have been performed at the Tribeca New Music Festival, the Verbier Festival, and the Aspen Music Festival, where he received the James Conlon Conducting Prize in 2010. Stewart has also worked closely with contemporary composers such as John Adams, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Thomas Adès, whom he assisted in preparing the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Aspects of Adès festival in 2011. Stewart is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied conducting with Otto Werner-Mueller, Simon Rattle, Christoph Eschenbach, and Alan Gilbert. During his tenure with the Metropolitan Opera, Stewart was appointed the first conductor of their Lindemann Young Artist Development Program in 2012 and made his Lincoln Center debut in 2013 in a Metropolitan Opera produced concert of comic operas by Stravinsky, Mozart, Donizetti, and Berlioz. He has also conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Saint Louis Symphony, hr-Sinfonieorchester, Frankfurt Opera-Orchestra, and the Boston Ballet. Stewart currently serves as music director of the Santa Cruz Symphony, where he has established a thriving chamber music series and expanded educational outreach programs.



About Roger Xia

San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra Concertmaster **Roger Xia** is the winner of the 2019 SFSYO Concerto Competition. Xia is a senior at Davies Senior High School (DSHS) and a pre-college scholarship student at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he is a violinist and founding member of the Locke String Quartet coached by Aena Keyes. He has been the Concertmaster for the SFSYO for the past two seasons, including during last season's European tour, and currently serves as the Concertmaster of the DSHS Symphony Orchestra. Xia's accolades include a top prize at the Mondavi Young Artist Competition (2015) and receiving a National Young Arts Foundation merit award (2018). Xia has also participated in the Boston University Tanglewood Institute (BUTI) Summer Music Program (2017), was featured on the From the Top show (2016), and he joined the National Youth Orchestra (NYO-USA) in the summer of 2019. In addition to studying the violin since he was seven, Xia started his piano studies at age five and currently studies with Natsuki Fukasawa and Richard Cionco.



Credit: Carlin Ma Photography

About the SFSYO



Credit: Stefan Cohen

Now in its 37th season, the [San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra](#) (SFSYO) is recognized internationally as one of the finest youth orchestras in the world. Founded by the [San Francisco Symphony](#) in 1981, the SFSYO's musicians are chosen from more than 300 applicants in annual auditions. The SFSYO's purpose is to provide an orchestral experience of pre-professional caliber, tuition-free, to talented young musicians from the greater Bay Area. The more than 100 diverse musicians, ranging in age from 12 to 21, represent communities from throughout the Bay Area. The SFSYO rehearses and performs at Davies Symphony Hall under the direction of Daniel Stewart, who joins the San Francisco Symphony as Wattis Foundation Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra for the 2019–20 season.

Jahja Ling served as the SFSYO's first Music Director, followed by David

Milnes, Leif Bjaland, Alasdair Neale, Edwin Outwater, Benjamin Shwartz, Donato Cabrera, and Christian Reif, who concluded his three-year tenure with the SFSYO's 11th international tour across six European cities in 2019.

As part of the SFSYO's innovative training program, musicians from the San Francisco Symphony coach the young players each Saturday afternoon in sectional rehearsals, followed by full orchestra rehearsals with Stewart. SFSYO members also have the opportunity to work with many of the world-renowned artists who perform with the SFS each week. SFS Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas, SFS Conductor Laureate Herbert Blomstedt, Sir Simon Rattle, Kurt Masur, Valery Gergiev, Leonard Slatkin, Yo-Yo Ma, Isaac Stern, Yehudi Menuhin, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Midori, Joshua Bell, Gil Shaham, Sarah Chang, and many others have worked with the SFSYO. Of equal importance, the students are able to talk with these prominent musicians, asking questions about their lives, their professional and personal experiences, and about music. The SFSYO has toured internationally on eleven different occasions, garnering rave reviews and critical acclaim for its artistry in some of Europe's most prestigious venues, such as the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berlin Philharmonie, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, Moscow Conservatory, Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg as part of the White Nights Festival, Vienna Musikverein, and others. Its alumni have won positions in many major orchestras throughout the US and in Europe.

Calendar editors, please note:

Tickets to the SF Symphony Youth Orchestra's 2019–2020 season are on sale at www.sfsymphony.org, (415) 864-6000, and at the Davies Symphony Hall Box Office, located on Grove Street between Franklin and Van Ness.

All concerts are at Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

[Sunday, November 17, 2019 at 2 pm](#)

Daniel Stewart conductor
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

Michael TILSON THOMAS
Agnegram

GRIEG
Piano Concerto in A minor, Opus 16

PROKOFIEV
Selections from *Romeo and Juliet*, Opus 64

Tickets: \$20–55

PETER AND THE WOLF with the YOUTH ORCHESTRA HOLIDAY CONCERT

[Sunday, December 15, 2019 at 2 pm](#)

Daniel Stewart conductor
Dulcé Sloan narrator
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

PROKOFIEV
Peter and the Wolf

Additional programming to be announced

Tickets: \$10–42.50

BAY AREA YOUTH ORCHESTRA FESTIVAL

[Sunday, January 19, 2020 at 3 pm](#)

San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

Program to be announced

Tickets: \$25–70

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

[Sunday, March 15, 2020 at 2 pm](#)

Daniel Stewart conductor
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

SMETANA
Vltava from *Má Vlast (My Country)*

HAYDN
Symphony No. 104 in D major, *London*

BRITTEN
Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, Opus 35

Mason BATES
Mothership

Tickets: \$20–55

MUSIC FOR FAMILIES: MEET THE ORCHESTRA

[Saturday, April 4, 2020 at 2 pm](#)

Daniel Stewart conductor
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

Program to be announced

Tickets: \$20–65

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

[Sunday, May 10, 2020 at 2 pm](#)

Daniel Stewart conductor
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

SCHUBERT
Symphony in B minor, D.759, *Unfinished*

Steven MACKEY
Eating Greens

BRAHMS
Symphony No. 2 in D major, Opus 73

Tickets: \$20–55

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.

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

Emirates is the Official Airline of the San Francisco Symphony.

Franklin Templeton Investments is a Season Partner of the San Francisco Symphony.

The San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra Concerts are supported by Bank of America

The Music for Families Series is sponsored in part by Chevron.

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.