

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / NOVEMBER 6, 2023



(High resolution images of the San Francisco Symphony's holiday performances and guest artists are available for download from the San Francisco Symphony's [Online Press Kit](#).)

THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES FULL 2023 HOLIDAY CONCERT SEASON, NOVEMBER 30–DECEMBER 23, 2023, AT DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL

Special guests include vocalists Oleta Adams, Peabo Bryson, Jennifer Holliday, and Ruben Studdard in *The Colors of Christmas*; Mariachi Sol de México® de José Hernández in *A Merry-Achi Christmas*; Troupe Vertigo in *Cirque Nutcracker*; and Peaches Christ, Rory Davies, Bianca Del Rio, Renée Lubin, Dylan Mulvaney, Edwin Outwater, Michael Phillis, Nikola Printz, Sister Roma from *The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence*, and the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus in *Holiday Gaiety*

Family-friendly performances include the Symphony's annual *Deck the Hall* celebrations, *Cirque Nutcracker*, *Peter and the Wolf* performed by the SF Symphony Youth Orchestra with guest narrator Tom Kenny, holiday films *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *Home Alone*, and *A Charlie Brown Christmas—Live!*

The SF Symphony performs live accompaniment to three iconic holiday films: *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Love Actually*, and *Home Alone*

Conductor Jonathan Cohen leads SF Symphony, Chorus, and vocal soloists in George Frideric Handel's *Messiah* and Symphony's popular *Holiday Brass* program returns

Tickets for holiday concerts available at sfsymphony.org/holiday

SAN FRANCISCO—The San Francisco Symphony's 2023 holiday season, November 30–December 23, 2023, features an array of festive programs, including performances of traditional Christmas classical music, family-friendly events, holiday-themed film presentations, and a star-studded lineup of guest artists. Throughout December, the lobbies of Davies Symphony Hall are transformed into a holiday wonderland, complete with towering trees decorated with handmade ornaments made by children and volunteers from local schools and nonprofit community organizations.

Visit sfsymphony.org/holidays for the full season lineup.

Deck the Hall (December 3)

Deck the Hall, a beloved family holiday tradition, brings the festive spirit to Davies Symphony Hall **December 3** with two kid-friendly matinee performances at 11am and 3pm. Conducted by the San Francisco Symphony's Resident Conductor of Engagement and Education Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser, this annual holiday children's concert and celebration features a lively array of musical performances from Symphony musicians and special guests. This year, the one-hour program highlights the talented young singers of the San Francisco Boys Chorus and the Young Women's Choral Projects of San Francisco in holiday classics, and features students from the San Francisco Ballet Training Program in selections from Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*. Also joining the Symphony for Deck the Hall is a quartet from the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, performing an arrangement of "Joy to the World"; klezmer ensemble Kugelplex, performing a Yiddish version of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer"; the all-female Mariachi ensemble Mariachi Bonitas de Dinorah Klinger, performing a selection of holiday mariachi melodies; and cast members from Presidio Panto Players' production of *Sleeping Beauty*, performing a selection of holiday songs. The concert ends with a holiday singalong complete with costumed characters.

To make the experience even more memorable, guests can purchase a [VIP Package](#) that includes premium concert seating, a preconcert VIP celebration, and other perks. Deck the Hall is chaired by Rachel Fishman and planned with the help of the San Francisco Symphony Junior Committee League, led by Junior Committee President Phoebe Schreiber. Proceeds from this event support Deck the Hall Community Day, which takes place this year on December 4 and invites 3,500 children from public programs to this holiday concert free of charge, providing many of them with their first opportunity to visit a concert hall and hear a live orchestral performance. Proceeds provide additional support for the Symphony's many artistic, education, and community programs.

The Louise M. Davies Foundation is Deck the Hall's Presenting Partner. Bank of America is Supporting Partner, and the J.C. Kellogg Foundation and the Levchin Family are Community Impact Partners.

Cirque Nutcracker (December 5–6)

On **December 5–6**, Los Angeles-based theatrical circus company Troupe Vertigo join the San Francisco Symphony and conductor Ming Luke for an awe-inspiring, family-friendly [Cirque Nutcracker](#) set to music from Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's famous ballet. Troupe Vertigo's acrobats, jugglers, and high-flying aerialists take to the stage—and above it—for a gravity-defying performance of circus feats that heighten the fantastical journey Clara takes in *The Nutcracker*.

Handel's Messiah (December 8–9)

On **December 8–9**, conductor Jonathan Cohen leads the San Francisco Symphony and Chorus in performances of [George Frideric Handel's Messiah](#), featuring soprano Joëlle Harvey, mezzo-soprano Jennifer Johnson Cano, tenor Nicholas Phan, bass Michael Sumuel. Cohen makes his Orchestral Series debut with these performances. Handel's *Messiah* was an instant classic after its 1742 premiere and has been a holiday tradition around the world ever since. Through a dramatic series of arias, recitatives, and choruses, Handel offers a musical meditation on Christ's birth, life, and resurrection—and his message of redemption.

SF Symphony Youth Orchestra performs Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* with Tom Kenny (December 10)

On **December 10**, the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra presents its annual performance of Sergei Prokofiev's timeless musical fable [Peter and the Wolf](#), conducted by Wattis Foundation Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra Daniel Stewart and featuring Tom Kenny as narrator. Kenny is an actor, voice artist, and comedian most well-known for voicing the title character of Nickelodeon's hit TV show *SpongeBob SquarePants*. The program opens with Leroy Anderson's *A Christmas Festival*, followed by selections from Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*. After *Peter and the Wolf*, Stewart and the Youth Orchestra invite the audience to join them in a festive singalong of popular holiday tunes.

The Youth Orchestra's performance of *Peter and the Wolf* is an annual holiday favorite and has been a regular part of the Orchestra's season since 1985. Past narrators have included Richard Dreyfuss, John Lithgow, Bobby McFerrin, Rita Moreno, Kathy Najimy, Linda Ronstadt, Sharon Stone, W. Kamau Bell, SF Symphony Music Director Laureate Michael Tilson Thomas, and the late Leonard Nimoy and Robin Williams, among many other lauded actors, comedians, musicians, and public figures.

A Merry-Achi Christmas (December 10)

On **December 10**, Mariachi Sol de México® de José Hernández returns to Davies Symphony Hall for a festive musical tribute to Mexico's Christmas traditions, performing Mexican and American holiday favorites in [A Merry-Achi Christmas](#). *The San Francisco Symphony does not appear in this performance.*

The Colors of Christmas (December 13–14)

On **December 13–14**, [The Colors of Christmas](#) returns to Davies Symphony Hall for two evenings of pop hits and holiday favorites performed by vocalists Oleta Adams, Peabo Bryson, Jennifer Holliday, and Ruben Studdard with the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir. Gail Deadrick conducts the program. The Colors of Christmas was a holiday staple from 1993 to 2015 and made a welcome return to the San Francisco Symphony's winter schedule last season.

Holiday Gaiety with Peaches Christ & Edwin Outwater (December 15)

On **December 15**, the SF Symphony presents [Holiday Gaiety](#)—a festive holiday variety show co-emceed by conductor Edwin Outwater and San Francisco drag sensation Peaches Christ. The adult-themed program features a star-studded lineup including drag performer Bianca Del Rio, winner of *RuPaul's Drag Race*; vocalist Dylan Mulvaney; mezzo-soprano and aerialist Nikola Printz; vocalist Renée Lubin; drag artist Sister Roma of Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence; dancers Rory Davies and Michael Phillis from the cast of *Baloney*, San Francisco's gay all-male revue; and the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus. *Please be advised this show may contain adult content and explicit language.*

Holiday films: *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (November 30 & December 1), *Love Actually* (December 16), and *Home Alone* (December 22 & 23)

The holiday season includes screenings of three holiday-inspired films, featuring the San Francisco Symphony performing the scores live to picture as the films are projected onto a large screen above the stage. On **November 30–December 1**, Sarah Hicks conducts the Orchestra in director Henry Selick's [The Nightmare Before Christmas](#), which was produced by and conceived of Tim Burton and features music by Danny Elfman. On **December 16**, Thiago Tiberio conducts the SF Symphony in a special 20th-anniversary presentation of Richard Curtis' [Love Actually](#) with music by Craig Armstrong. On **December 22–23**, Joshua Gersen conducts the San Francisco Symphony, Pacific Boychoir, and Ragazzi Boys Chorus in performance of Chris Columbus' [Home Alone](#), featuring John Williams' iconic score.

Holiday Brass (December 21)

On **December 21**, members of the San Francisco Symphony brass, percussion, and timpani sections, conducted by Edwin Outwater, present a mix of classical and popular holiday favorites in [Holiday Brass](#).

A Charlie Brown Christmas—Live! (December 20–23)

On **December 20–23**, [A Charlie Brown Christmas—Live!](#) returns to Davies Symphony Hall with conductor Lawrence Loh leading the San Francisco Symphony and Chorus in four performances that bring the classic Christmas animated TV special to life. The presentation features Vince Guaraldi's delightful score, an animated backdrop, as well as singers, actors, and dancers that embody Charles Schulz's beloved Peanuts characters.

The program opens with a select of holiday favorites performed by Loh, the San Francisco Symphony, and the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, including Edward Pola and George Wyle's "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the

Year,” Irving Berlin’s *White Christmas*, John Debney’s *Elf Suite*, *’Twas the Night Before Christmas* with dancers and narrator Michael Covert, and more.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Tickets

Tickets for concerts at Davies Symphony can be purchased via sfsymphony.org or by calling the San Francisco Symphony Box Office at 415.864.6000.

Patrons have the option of saving up to 25% over full-priced single tickets by selecting three or more holiday concerts. [Click here](#) for more information.

Tickets for children under 18 are 50% off for performances of *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Home Alone*, *A Charlie Brown Christmas—Live!*, and *Peter and the Wolf*.

Location:

Davies Symphony Hall is located at 201 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

Health & Safety Information

Davies Symphony Hall is currently operating at full audience capacity. Proof of COVID-19 vaccination and masking are no longer required for entry to Davies Symphony Hall. However, patrons are encouraged to wear masks and maintain up-to-date COVID vaccinations to protect themselves. These policies are subject to change. Visit sfsymphony.org/safety for the San Francisco Symphony’s complete up-to-date health and safety protocols.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY’S 2023 HOLIDAY CONCERTS

HOLIDAY

The Nightmare Before Christmas—Film with Live Orchestra

[Thursday, November 30, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)

[Friday, December 1, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)

Sarah Hicks conductor
San Francisco Symphony

The Nightmare Before Christmas

DANNY ELFMAN composer

HENRY SELICK director

SPECIAL EVENT

Deck the Hall

[Sunday, December 3, 2023, at 11am & 3pm](#)

Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser conductor
San Francisco Ballet Training Program, Patrick Armand director
San Francisco Boys Chorus, Ian Robertson director
Young Women’s Choral Projects, Matthew Otto director
Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir Quartet, Terrance Kelly director
Mariachi Bonitas de Dinorah Klinger, Dinorah Klingler director
Kugelplex Klezmer Ensemble
Cast members from Presidio Panto Players’ production of *Sleeping Beauty*

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

San Francisco Symphony

LEROY ANDERSON *Sleigh Ride*

IRVING BERLIN AND JULE STYNE (arr. EMERSON and MARKS) It's the Holiday Season

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY Spanish Chocolate from *The Nutcracker Suite*

JOHNNY MARKS (arr. KUGELPLEX) Yiddish Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

TRADITIONAL (arr. ROBERTSON) The Festival of Lights

TRADITIONAL Holiday Mariachi melodies

Campaña Sobre Campana

Arte Borriquito

Los Peces en el Rio

Burrito Sabanero

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY Russian Dance (Trepak) from *The Nutcracker Suite*

TRADITIONAL (arr. KELLY) Joy to the World

VARIOUS Selections with Presidio Panto Players

HOLIDAY

Cirque Nutcracker

[Tuesday, December 5, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)

[Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)

Ming Luke conductor

Troupe Vertigo

San Francisco Symphony

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY Selections from *The Nutcracker*

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAL SERIES

Handel's *Messiah*

[Friday, December 8, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)

[Saturday, December 9, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)

Jonathan Cohen conductor [Orchestral Series Debut]

Joëlle Harvey soprano

Jennifer Johnson Cano mezzo-soprano

Nicholas Phan tenor

Michael Sumuel bass

San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Jenny Wong conductor

San Francisco Symphony

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL *Messiah*

HOLIDAY

***Peter and the Wolf* with the SF Symphony Youth Orchestra**

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

[Sunday, December 10, 2023, at 2pm](#)

Daniel Stewart conductor
Tom Kenny narrator
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

LEROY ANDERSON *A Christmas Festival*

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY Selections from *The Nutcracker Suite*

SERGEI PROKOFIEV *Peter and the Wolf*

JAMES PIERPONT Jingle Bells

JOHNNY MARKS Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

TRADITIONAL We Wish You a Merry Christmas

HOLIDAY

A Merry-Achi Christmas

[Sunday, December 10, 2023, at 8pm](#)

Mariachi Sol de México® de José Hernández guest artist

**The San Francisco Symphony does not appear in this concert.*

HOLIDAY

The Colors of Christmas

[Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)

[Thursday, December 14, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)

Gail Deadrick conductor
Oleta Adams vocalist
Peabo Bryson vocalist
Jennifer Holliday vocalist
Ruben Studdard vocalist
Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, Terrance Kelly director
San Francisco Symphony

Program to be announced

HOLIDAY

Holiday Gaiety

[Friday, December 15, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)

Edwin Outwater conductor and co-emcee
Peaches Christ co-emcee
Bianca Del Rio drag performer
Dylan Mulvaney vocalist
Nikola Printz mezzo-soprano and aerialist
Renée Lubin vocalist
Sister Roma from **The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence**

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Rory Davies dancer
Michael Phillis dancer
San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, Jacob Stensberg director
San Francisco Symphony

Program to be announced

HOLIDAY

Love Actually—Film with Live Orchestra
[Saturday, December 16, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)

Thiago Tiberio conductor
San Francisco Symphony

Love Actually

CRAIG ARMSTRONG composer

RICHARD CURTIS director

Love Actually is a copyright of WT Venture LLC. Licensed by Universal Studios. All Rights Reserved.

HOLIDAY

A Charlie Brown Christmas—Live!
[Wednesday, December 20, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)
[Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 2pm](#)
[Friday, December 22, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)
[Saturday, December 23, 2023, at 2pm](#)

A Charlie Brown Christmas—Live!

Lawrence Loh conductor
San Francisco Symphony Chorus, David Xiques Assistant Director

A Charlie Brown Christmas Cast:

Liza Gennaro director and choreographer
Carmina de Dios costume designer
Tristan Raines costume designer
Elena Zahlmann répétiteur

Narrators

Michael Covert (narrator)
Jonah Daugavietis (Charlie Brown)
Hailey Matta (Lucy)
Henry Wu (Linus)

Dancers

Michael Starr (Charlie Brown)
Natasha Adorlee Johnson (Snoopy)
Kelsey McFalls (Lucy)
Marco Ramos (Linus)
Juliann Witt (Sally)

Isolde Lin (Sad Tree)

Nicolas Korkos, Erik Debono, Keon Saghari (Charlie's Gang)

Keon Saghari, Mia J. Chong, Allie Papazian, Jenelle Gaerlean (Christmas Trees)

'Twas the Night Before Christmas/We Need a Little Christmas Cast

Michael Covert (narrator)

Michael Starr (dancer)

Marcos Ramos (dancer)

Erik Debono (dancer)

Nicholas Korkos (dancer)

Mia. J. Chong (dancer)

Keon Saghari (dancer)

Allie Papazian (dancer)

Jenelle Gaerlean (dancer)

Santas

Michael Starr

Erik Debono

Nicholas Korkos

Mia. J. Chong

Allie Papazian

Jenelle Gaerlean

Reindeer Dancers

Ciara McCarthy

Frances Jarrold

Martha Helbekkmo

Harmony Chung

Prajna Chung

Emme Strahs

Lilia Bernstein

Sara Ortegon

EDWARD POLA & GEORGE WYLE *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year*

IRVING BERLIN *White Christmas*

MATTHEW JACKFERT *I Saw Three Ships*

JOHN DEBNEY (arr. VICTOR PRESARENTO) *Elf Suite*

JOHN WILLIAMS *Harry's Wondrous World*

TRADITIONAL (arr. RANDOL BASS) *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*

JERRY HERMAN (arr. ROBERT WENDEL) "We Need a Little Christmas" from *Mame*

VINCE GUARALDI *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

HOLIDAY

Holiday Brass

[Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Edwin Outwater conductor
Members of the San Francisco Symphony

HOLIDAY

Home Alone—Film with Live Orchestra

[Friday, December 22, 2023, at 3pm](#)

[Saturday, December 23, 2023, at 7:30pm](#)

Joshua Gersen conductor
Pacific Boychoir
Ragazzi Boys Chorus
San Francisco Symphony

Home Alone

JOHN WILLIAMS composer

CHRIS COLUMBUS director

© 1990 Twentieth Century Fox

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



The San Francisco Symphony receives support from more than 9,500 individual donors and 160 partner institutions.

San Francisco Arts Commission is Lead Municipal Partner of the San Francisco Symphony.

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

Grants for the Arts is a Season Partner of the San Francisco Symphony.

Performances of Peter and the Wolf on December 10 and The Colors of Christmas on December 14 are presented in partnership with San Francisco Arts Commission.

The December 8 & 9 performances of Handel's Messiah are supported in part by the James Schwabacher Vocal Artists Fund and the Brian P. McCune & Darlene P. Vian Fund for Vocal Performance.

The Music for Families Series is supported by Chevron.

The Youth Orchestra concerts are made possible by the Bernard Osher Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and Alexander M. & June L. Maisin Foundation.

The Youth Orchestra concerts are supported by Bank of America.

The San Francisco Symphony's Official Radio Partner is KDFC, The Bay Area's Radio Home for Classical Music and the Arts.

- San Francisco Symphony -