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SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY AND MUSIC DIRECTOR ESA-PEKKA SALONEN ANNOUNCE JENNY WONG AS NEXT SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY CHORUS DIRECTOR

Wong is the San Francisco Symphony Chorus's fourth Director in the Chorus's 50-year history

The San Francisco Symphony Chorus celebrates its 50th year during the 2023–24 season

Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony announce Jenny Wong as the San Francisco Symphony Chorus's next Director, beginning in her new role as part of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus's performances of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Music Director Laureate Michael Tilson Thomas on October 19, 21–22, 2023. Wong's appointment as Chorus Director is the result of a search led by Esa-Pekka Salonen that began in Fall 2021.

As San Francisco Symphony Chorus Director, Jenny Wong will be responsible for ensuring the artistic excellence of the Chorus in all facets of performance. She will conduct the Chorus in the

annual Chorus concert, prepare the Chorus for performances with the Orchestra, and collaborate closely with Esa-Pekka Salonen and guest conductors. She will also recruit, audition, and select new chorus members to join the 152-person ensemble.

As a guest conductor, Wong conducted the San Francisco Symphony Chorus in its May 2022 performance of Carl Orff's *Carmina burana*. She also prepared the Chorus and worked with Esa-Pekka Salonen on three programs during the 2022–23 season: Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 2 in October 2022, and Kaija Saariaho's *Adriana Mater* and Ferruccio Busoni's Piano Concerto in June 2023.

During her first season as San Francisco Symphony Chorus Director, Jenny Wong will prepare the Chorus for four Orchestral Series performances, including Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Michael Tilson Thomas (October 19, 21–22, 2023); Steven Stucky's orchestration of Igor Stravinsky's *Les Noces* with Esa-Pekka Salonen (November 17–18, 2023); the Symphony's annual holiday performances of George Frideric Handel's *Messiah* with Jonathan Cohen (December 8 & 9, 2023); and the season-ending performances of Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 3 with Salonen (June 28–30, 2024). She will also prepare the Chorus for performances of Hans Zimmer's score to *Gladiator* conducted by Justin Freer, part of the San Francisco Symphony's Film Series (May 22–23, 2024) and for Distant Worlds: music from FINAL FANTASY with conductor Arnie Roth (May 31–June 1, 2024). On March 23, 2024, Wong will conduct the San Francisco Symphony Chorus's performance of Carl Orff's *Carmina burana*.

“Working with Jenny last season on the Orchestra and Chorus's performances of Mahler's Symphony No. 2, Kaija Saariaho's *Adriana Mater*, and the Busoni Piano Concerto was musically inspiring, and I hugely enjoyed her thoughtful and collaborative approach,” said Esa-Pekka Salonen. “I know she's going to bring a great deal of energy, expertise, and joy to the Chorus in her new role and I look forward to working with her as she quickly becomes an integral part of the San Francisco Symphony.”

“I am thrilled and honored to be the San Francisco Symphony's new Chorus Director, and equally excited to be working with Esa-Pekka Salonen,” said Wong. “The San Francisco Symphony is renowned for its dynamic artistic programming, its championing of a wide range of music and stellar artists, and its exemplary musicianship. I have witnessed not only the Chorus's legacy of excellence and versatility, but also their tremendous openness and warmth of community. I look forward to leading the Symphony Chorus in raising our voices together in exceptional, harmonious, and meaningful ways.”

Wong is the fourth Chorus Director of the SF Symphony Chorus since its founding in 1973, following Louis Magor (1974–1982), Vance George (1983–2007), and Ragnar Bohlin (2007–2021). Margaret Hillis also served as Interim Chorus Director during the 1982–83 season.

San Francisco Symphony Chorus celebrates 50th year in 2023–24 season

Jenny Wong joins the San Francisco Symphony Chorus as the ensemble celebrates its 50th year during the 2023–24 season. Established in 1973 at the request of Seiji Ozawa—the San Francisco Symphony's Music Director at the time—the San Francisco Symphony Chorus has sung under the world's major conductors, including SF Symphony Music Directors Esa-Pekka Salonen, Michael Tilson Thomas, Herbert Blomstedt, Edo de Waart, and Seiji Ozawa; as well as guest

conductors including Vladimir Ashkenazy, James Conlon, Valery Gergiev, Sir Neville Marriner, Kurt Masur, Sir Roger Norrington, David Robertson, Robert Shaw, and Yuri Temirkanov, among others.

One of America's most distinguished choruses, the 152-member SF Symphony Chorus comprises 32 professional and 120 non-professional members, who will perform in more than 26 concerts this season. The Chorus celebrates its 50th anniversary in October with performances of Beethoven Symphony No. 9, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas (October 19, 21–22, 2023).

During the 2023-24 season, the Chorus will also perform Gustav Holst's *The Planets*; Igor Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, arranged by Steven Stucky; George Frideric Handel's *Messiah*; Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 3; and Carl Orff's *Carmina burana*. The Chorus will also perform on two film programs—*The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* and *Gladiator*—and in *A Charlie Brown Christmas—Live!* and *Distant Worlds: music from FINAL FANTASY*. [Click here](#) for a calendar of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus's 2023–24 season programs.

[Explore a timeline of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus's first 50 years.](#)

Jenny Wong, San Francisco Symphony Chorus Director

A native of Hong Kong, Jenny Wong is the newly appointed Chorus Director of the San Francisco Symphony, as well as the Associate Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Recent conducting engagements include the Los Angeles Philharmonic Green Umbrella Series, the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, The Industry, Long Beach Opera, Pasadena Symphony and Pops, Phoenix Chorale, and the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles. This season, Wong will make her debut with the Los Angeles Opera Orchestra. Under Wong's baton, the Los Angeles Master Chorale's performance of Frank Martin's Mass for Double Choir was named by Alex Ross as one of ten "Notable Performances and Recordings of 2022" in the *New Yorker*. In 2021, Wong was one of nine national recipients of OPERA America's inaugural Opera Grants for Women Stage Directors and Conductors. She has conducted Peter Sellars' staging of Orlando di Lasso's *Lagrime di San Pietro* (Melbourne International Arts Festival, the Festival Internacionale Cervantino, Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico, and in the U.S.), the opera *Sweet Land* by Du Yun and Raven Chacon (2021 Award for Best New Opera by the Music Critics' Association), and Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and Kate Soper's *Voices from the Killing Jar* with Long Beach Opera in collaboration with WildUp.

As chorus master, Wong has prepared choruses for the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel, including Mahler's Symphony No. 8, winner of the 2022 Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance; San Francisco Symphony and Esa-Pekka Salonen, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Susanna Mälkki, Osmo Vänskä, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and Jaime Martin, Maria Guinand, Eric Whitacre, and Music Academy of the West, and the U.S. premiere of Tan Dun's *Buddha Passion*. Wong was Assistant Producer of the Master Chorale's latest album, Eric Whitacre's *The Sacred Veil* with Signum Classics.

Wong received her Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music from the University of Southern California. She earned her undergraduate degree in voice performance from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She has been a conducting fellow for the Oregon Bach Festival, Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Distinguished Concerts International New York, and Hong Kong SingFest. She won two consecutive World

Champion titles at the World Choir Games 2010 and the International Johannes Brahms Choral Competition 2011, conducting the Diocesan Girls' School Choir from Hong Kong.

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