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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / NOVEMBER 14, 2023



Jean Yves-Thibaudet, Mathilde Laurent, and Esa-Pekka Salonen (Photo by Mynxii White)

**THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY AND CARTIER PRESENT A MULTISENSORY
PERFORMANCE OF ALEXANDER SRIABIN'S *PROMETHEUS, THE POEM OF FIRE*
MARCH 1-3, 2024**

**A COLLABORATION BETWEEN SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY'S MUSIC DIRECTOR ESA-
PEKKA SALONEN, PIANIST JEAN-YVES THIBAUDET, AND CARTIER IN-HOUSE PERFUMER
MATHILDE LAURENT**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—The San Francisco Symphony and Cartier are pleased to announce a multisensory performance of Alexander Scriabin's *Prometheus, The Poem of Fire*, [March 1-3, 2024 at Davies Symphony Hall](#) in San Francisco.

Devised by San Francisco Symphony Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen, pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and Cartier in-house perfumer Mathilde Laurent, this collaboration marks the world premiere of an immersive presentation of *Prometheus* that combines a dynamic musical and light performance with olfactory curation.

In ancient Greek mythology, the Titan Prometheus stole fire from his fellow gods on Mount Olympus and gifted it to humankind, thereby endowing mortals with the technology vital for civilization. Scriabin's 1910 tone poem, *Prometheus, The Poem of Fire*, captures the monumentality of this legend and its consequences for humanity.

Scriabin envisioned a total, consuming work of art, one that encapsulated his own synesthetic leanings (he reportedly *saw* sound in color), ultimately subliming his audiences to another plane of consciousness.

“Scriabin scored *Prometheus* for light and color as well as music, but one of his dreams was to add more senses to the score, including scent. This idea has always fascinated me, as somebody who has always loved working together with artists from a variety of disciplines,” says Thibaudet. “I am excited that we now have the technology to bring Scriabin’s dream to life, and to be a part of this project with Esa-Pekka and Mathilde. This project shows us what is possible when there is collaboration within the arts: how different art forms and different senses can enrich one another, and in doing so enrich our lives and our experiences both inside and outside of the concert hall.”

As it was, the technology required to translate Scriabin’s total vision did not exist in his lifetime. In fact, the final version of *Prometheus* was scored only for music and “color organ,” an instrument he conceived of which projected light of different colors linked to harmonic changes in music. In the last century, the piece has been performed internationally with an array of lighting accompaniments, some of which came closer to Scriabin’s original intentions than others. The San Francisco Symphony performances of *Prometheus* aim to go further in realizing Scriabin’s vision of a truly synesthetic work of art. Scent accords created specifically for the performance by Laurent in close collaboration with Thibaudet and Salonen will be delivered during key moments of the performance.

Laurent states, “For *Prometheus*, my task was to ensure that the scent stirred a primary, universal, and instinctive emotion, far removed from any aesthetic aim. I wanted to bolster and consolidate the feelings instilled by music, by focusing – through olfaction – on the animal nature of every spectator, to get them to physically engage with the piece, without ever overshadowing it or competing with its aesthetics.”

“*Prometheus* stole fire from the gods, and in doing so kickstarted a millennia-long process of technological development that has led to the civilization we have today,” says Salonen. “Looking at where we’ve ended up, in terms of our environmental crises and the proliferation of weapons of war, that seems to have been a mixed blessing. But this project is optimistic: it shows that technology can be used for very noble purposes, for art and enhancing people’s natural sensory experiences in this world. *Prometheus* paid dearly, but we don’t have to—it’s up to us to decide.”

Paired with state-of-the-art lighting technology, which will illuminate the concert hall in vibrant colors aligned with Scriabin’s color organ, the performances aspire towards transcendence, stirring our collective memory as the mortal beneficiaries of *Prometheus*’ brazen generosity.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAL SERIES*

Alexander Scriabin’s *Prometheus*, *The Poem of Fire*

Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor

Jean-Yves Thibaudet piano

Mathilde Laurent olfactory curation

San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Jenny Wong director

San Francisco Symphony

DATES:

- Friday, March 1, 2024, at 7:30 pm
- Saturday, March 2, 2024, at 7:30 pm
- Sunday, March 3, 2024, at 2:00 pm

*Please note that the full program March 1-3 includes a performance of *Prometheus* followed by a brief intermission before Béla Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*.

TICKETS:

Tickets for concerts at Davies Symphony Hall can be purchased via sfsymphony.org/prometheus or by calling the San Francisco Symphony Box Office at 415-864-6000.

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.

BROADCAST / ARCHIVED STREAM: A broadcast of these performances will air Sunday, March 24, at 7:00 pm on Classical KDFC 90.3 San Francisco, 104.9 San Jose, 89.9 Napa, and kdfc.com, where it will be available for on-demand streaming for 21 days following the broadcast.

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ABOUT ESA-PEKKA SALONEN

Esa-Pekka Salonen is known as both a composer and conductor. He is the Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony, where he works alongside eight Collaborative Partners from a variety of disciplines, ranging from composers to roboticists. He is the Conductor Laureate of the Philharmonia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. As a member of the faculty of the Colburn School, he directs the pre-professional Negaunee Conducting Program. Salonen co-founded, and until 2018 served as the Artistic Director of, the annual Baltic Sea Festival.

Highlights from Esa-Pekka Salonen's 2023–24 San Francisco Symphony season include world premieres from Jesper Nordin, Anders Hillborg, and Jens Ibsen; projects by Collaborative Partners Pekka Kuusisto and Carol Reiley; the launch of the inaugural California Festival; a tour of California; and a program of Ravel and Schoenberg featuring choreography by Alonzo King and staging by Peter Sellars.

Salonen also conducts many of his own compositions around the world this season. Among them are *Tiu*, a new work commemorating the 20th anniversary of Walt Disney Concert Hall, premiered by the Los Angeles Philharmonic; *Karawane*, also with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; Salonen's Sinfonia Concertante for Organ and Orchestra with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Philadelphia Orchestra; and *kinēma* with the San Francisco Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra.

Salonen has an extensive and varied recording career. Releases with the San Francisco Symphony include recordings of Bartók's piano concertos, as well as spatial audio recordings of several Ligeti compositions. Other recent recordings include Strauss's *Four Last Songs*, Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin* and *Dance Suite*, and a 2018 box set of his complete Sony recordings. His compositions appear on releases from Sony, Deutsche Grammophon, and Decca; his Piano Concerto, Violin Concerto, and Cello Concerto all appear on recordings he conducted himself.

ABOUT JEAN-YVES THIBAUDET

Through elegant musicality and an insightful approach to contemporary and established repertoire, Jean-Yves Thibaudet has earned a reputation as one of the world's finest pianists. He is especially known for his diverse interests beyond the classical world, including numerous collaborations in film, fashion, and visual art. A

recording powerhouse, Thibaudet appears on more than 70 albums and six film scores. He is a devoted educator and is the first-ever Artist-in-Residence at the Colburn School, which awards several scholarships in his name.

Thibaudet appears as soloist in seven compositions this season, performed with nineteen orchestras: Gershwin's Concerto in F, Saint-Saëns's Piano Concerto No. 5, Khachaturian's Piano Concerto, Ravel's Concerto in G, Debussy's *Fantaisie*, Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie*, and Scriabin's *Prometheus*. In addition to his orchestral dates, Thibaudet joins longtime collaborators Gautier Capuçon and Lisa Batiashvili for a trio tour of the United States. He also continues his multi-season focus on Debussy's *Préludes*, performing both books in recitals throughout Europe. With Michael Feinstein, he continues the acclaimed program *Two Pianos: Who Could Ask for Anything More?* this season, presenting works by Gershwin, Rodgers, and more in new arrangements for piano, voice, and orchestra.

Thibaudet records exclusively for Decca. His most recent solo album, 2021's *Carte Blanche*, features a collection of deeply personal solo piano pieces never before recorded by the pianist. Other highlights from Thibaudet's catalog include a 2017 recording of Bernstein's *Age of Anxiety*, recordings of the complete solo piano music of Debussy and Satie, and Grammy-nominated recordings of Ravel's complete solo piano works and Saint-Saëns's Piano Concerti Nos. 2&5. He is the soloist on Wes Anderson's *The French Dispatch*; his playing can also be heard in *Pride and Prejudice*, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, *Wakefield*, and the Oscar-winning and critically acclaimed film *Atonement*. His concert wardrobe is designed by Dame Vivienne Westwood.

ABOUT MATHILDE LAURENT

To live is to breathe, to breathe is to smell.

Through her Corsican background, she inherited both a love of nature and the courage to fight for beautiful causes, such as the reconciliation of art with the sense of smell and perfumery.

The art of fragrance has been assimilated to the idea of scent and an animalistic facet of human beings. As a result, this craft has barely developed, leaving the industry to be the primary guiding force.

Mathilde Laurent strives to balance this preeminence by adding a touch of poetry, art, and the sacred to each of her creations to encourage a love of olfaction and perfume, with all they awaken and elevate in us, just as we would explore art through music, painting, or sculpture.

She has devoted herself to this research within various leading Maisons: first Guerlain, followed by Cartier – a Maison that values art and is driven by a desire for timelessness and style – where she has been Perfumer and Creative Director since 2005.

Mathilde Laurent seeks to translate Cartier's imaginative and daring style into fragrance and elevate perfumery to its highest level. Her creations are not bound by any consensus and soulfully relate the art of perfume to the history of the Maison. What sets Mathilde Laurent apart is also the way she considers molecular perfumery as a noble discipline. For her, beauty is not limited to nature. Synthetic compounds are responsible for some of the greatest masterpieces of modern and contemporary perfumery.

Convinced of the intrinsic link between perfume and art, she led the opening of new fields of experimentation for Cartier: "USO" or "Unidentified Scented Objects" – experimental installations, born out of a desire to "take perfume out of its bottle and allow the public to experience the unexpected power of olfaction." The first iteration was created in 2017 outside the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, before being exhibited at the Louvre Abu Dhabi in 2019 as part of the *10,000 Years of Luxury* exhibition. In 2022, "USO 2," entitled "The Scented Myth," was presented in Paris.

Mathilde Laurent's creations include *La Treizième Heure* (2009) from the collections *Les Heures de Parfum*, honored with the Creative Perfumers Award and the Specialist Award by the Fragrance Foundation France; *Baiser Volé* (2011); *La Panthère* (2014), for which she was awarded the Olfactorama Prize in 2015; *Les Epures de*

Parfum (2020); and Rivières de Cartier (2021) – a collection awarded two prizes for responsible innovation by the Fragrance Foundation France and the Accademia del Profumo – Italy (2022), among others.

ABOUT THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

The San Francisco Symphony is among the most adventurous and innovative arts institutions in the United States, celebrated for its artistic excellence, creative performance concepts, active touring, award-winning recordings, and standard-setting education programs. In the 2020–21 season, the San Francisco Symphony welcomed conductor and composer Esa-Pekka Salonen as its twelfth Music Director, embarking on a new vision for the present and future of the orchestral landscape.

In their inaugural season together, Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony introduced a groundbreaking artistic leadership model anchored by eight Collaborative Partners from a variety of cultural disciplines: Nicholas Britell, Julia Bullock, Claire Chase, Bryce Dessner, Pekka Kuusisto, Nico Muhly, Carol Reiley, and esperanza spalding. This group of visionary artists, thinkers, and doers, along with Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony, have set out to explore and develop new ideas inspired by the Collaborative Partners' unique areas of expertise, including innovative digital projects, expansive and imaginative performance concepts in a variety of concert formats, commissions of new music, and projects that foster collaboration across artistic and administrative areas.

Shaped by the dynamic partnership and shared vision of Mr. Salonen, the Collaborative Partners, and the Orchestra and Chorus, the San Francisco Symphony's 2023–24 season reflects a spirit of collaboration, experimentation, and renewed dialogue through live music.

ABOUT CARTIER

A reference in the world of luxury, Cartier, whose name is synonymous with open-mindedness and curiosity, stands out with its creations and finds beauty wherever it may lie.

The Maison has several areas of expression. From jewelry to high jewelry, from watchmaking to fragrances, and leather goods and accessories, Cartier's creations symbolize the convergence between exceptional craftsmanship and a timeless signature. Santos de Cartier and Tank watches, Trinity rings, Love and Juste un Clou bracelets, Panthère de Cartier, and Ballon Bleu designs are all born from a unique vision and a singular style.

Founded in 1847 in Paris, the Maison has a strong living heritage and is deeply committed to taking care of and enriching it. Cartier Collection (1983) and Cartier Tradition (1996) participate in this mission.

A fully committed Maison in tune with its time, Cartier supports artistic and cultural creation through the Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art (1984), female entrepreneurs through the Cartier Women's Initiative program (2006), and vulnerable communities, especially women and children, with Cartier Philanthropy (2013). Cartier is also committed to protecting the environment and biodiversity with Cartier for Nature (2020).

In addition, the Maison operates in a responsible manner and aims to drive a sustainable industry, via the co-founding of the Responsible Jewellery Council (2005) and the launch of the Watch & Jewellery Initiative with Kering (2022).

Today, Cartier is part of the Richemont Group and has a worldwide presence through its network of flagships and boutiques, authorized retail partners, and online at www.cartier.com.

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