



**SAN FRANCISCO
SYMPHONY**

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS • MUSIC DIRECTOR



Contact:

Public Relations

San Francisco Symphony

Louisa Spier

(415) 503-5474

publicrelations@sfsymphony.org

www.sfsymphony.org/press

National Press Representation:

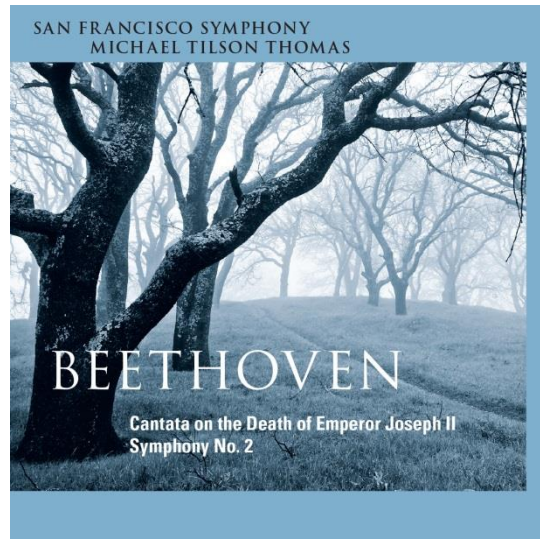
Shuman Associates

Lisa Jaehnig

(212) 315-1300

shumanpr@shumanassociates.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 15, 2013



(A high resolution version of this cover image is downloadable from the [SFS Media online press room](#).)

**MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS AND SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY RELEASE NEW
RECORDING OF BEETHOVEN'S CANTATA ON THE DEATH OF EMPEROR JOSEPH II
AND SYMPHONY NO. 2 ON NOVEMBER 12, 2013 ON SFS MEDIA**

Recording of early works by Beethoven features SF Symphony Chorus and soloists Sally Matthews, soprano; Tamara Mumford, mezzo-soprano; Barry Banks, tenor; and Andrew Foster-Williams, bass-baritone

Available to pre-order on iTunes now at iTunes.com/SFSymphony

SAN FRANCISCO, October 15, 2013 - On Tuesday, November 12, 2013, [Michael Tilson Thomas](#) (MTT), the [San Francisco Symphony](#) (SFS) will release a hybrid SACD recording and digital download of Beethoven's Cantata on the Death of Emperor Joseph II and Symphony No. 2 on SFS Media, the Orchestra's in-house label. The recording is part of MTT & the SFS' multi-season focus on performing and recording the music of Beethoven. It features the Grammy award winning San Francisco Symphony Chorus, and soloists Sally Matthews, soprano;

Tamara Mumford, mezzo-soprano; Barry Banks, tenor; and Andrew Foster-Williams, bass-baritone. The performance was recorded live at Davies Symphony Hall May 2-3, 2013 during Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony's two-week festival exploring Beethoven's early inspirations. The recording of Beethoven's Cantata on the Death of Emperor Joseph II and Symphony No. 2 can be pre-ordered on [iTunes](https://itunes.com/sfsymphony) at itunes.com/sfsymphony and on SACD [from the San Francisco Symphony Store at sfsymphony.org/store](https://sfsymphony.org/store). The album will be available for purchase at music retailers everywhere on Tuesday, November 12. A video about the recording featuring concert footage and interviews with Michael Tilson Thomas, Chorus Director Ragnar Bohlin, and SFS bassoon player Rob Weir can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/B2Cantata>.

Beethoven's Cantata on the Death of Emperor Joseph II is a work the composer wrote at the age of 19 and is arguably Beethoven's first masterpiece. It offers a glimpse into a young composer finding his musical voice. MTT describes the work as, "... powerful, dramatic, and full of very vivid contrasts, with a particular fresh simplicity which is unforgettable." On this recording it is paired with his Symphony No. 2, written in 1802. For Beethoven, the year of the Second Symphony was the beginning of a period of unparalleled creative fertility and, at the time, Beethoven spoke of setting out upon a fresh path. About this period of Beethoven's creativity MTT shared, "With Beethoven it's clear that at a very early age he had a certain kind of startling, sometimes confrontational, sometimes emotionally revelatory approach to music... as early as late teens, he's writing startlingly expressive music."

The San Francisco Symphony's recordings on SFS Media reflect the artistic identity of the orchestra's programming, highlighting a commitment to performing works by maverick composers alongside the core classical masterworks. A recording of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 released in April of this year joined previous SFS Media releases of MTT and the SFS performing Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 paired with his Piano Concerto No. 4 featuring Emanuel Ax in 2011 and in 2012, Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 and *Leonore* Overture No. 3. Of MTT and the SFS' Beethoven exploration Blair Sanderson wrote in [All Music.com](http://AllMusic.com) "Michael Tilson Thomas' super audio recordings of Beethoven's symphonies with the San Francisco Symphony deserve attention for their superb musicianship and extraordinary sound quality." In fall 2012 SFS Media released *American Mavericks* featuring music by Lou Harrison, Henry Cowell and Edgard Varèse. This year MTT and the SFS garnered both a Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Recording and an Echo Klassik award from Germany's Music Critics' Association for their 2012 recording of John Adams' *Harmonielehre* and *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*. In the 2013-14 season SFS Media will record performances of two works by composer Mason Bates: *Liquid Interface*, and *Alternative Energy*.

One of America's most distinguished choruses, the 158-member [San Francisco Symphony Chorus](https://www.sfsymphony.org/chorus) is known for its precision, power, and versatility and celebrates its 40th anniversary in the 2013-14 season. Led by Chorus Director [Ragnar Bohlin](https://www.sfsymphony.org/ragnar-bohlin), the Chorus performs more than twenty concerts each season and is comprised of 30 professional and 128 volunteer members. Recordings featuring the SFS Chorus have won a total of eight Grammy awards, including three for Best Choral Performance. They were featured on the SFS Media's recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with MTT and the SFS, which won three 2010 Grammys, including the award for Best Choral Performance. Most recently, a recording of the Chorus' performances of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Michael Tilson Thomas and the SFS was released in April 2013.

Soprano [Sally Matthews](https://www.sfsymphony.org/sally-matthews) made her SFS debut in 2009 performances of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe* in the role of Phyllis. Mezzo-soprano [Tamara Mumford](https://www.sfsymphony.org/tamara-mumford), tenor [Barry Banks](https://www.sfsymphony.org/barry-banks), and bass-baritone [Andrew Foster-Williams](https://www.sfsymphony.org/andrew-foster-williams) all made their SFS debuts in these performances of Beethoven's Cantata on the Death of Emperor Joseph II.

All SFS Media recordings are available from the Symphony Store in Davies Symphony Hall and online at sfsymphony.org/store as well as other major retailers. The recordings can also be purchased from [iTunes](https://itunes.com/sfsymphony),

Amazon and other digital outlets. SFS Media recordings are distributed by harmonia mundi in North America, Avie Records internationally, and by The Orchard to digital outlets.

Title: Beethoven's Cantata on the Death of Emperor Joseph II and Symphony No. 2

Composer: Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

Artists: Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor
Sally Matthews, soprano
Tamara Mumford, mezzo-soprano
Barry Banks, tenor
Andrew Foster-Williams, bass-baritone
San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Ragnar Bohlin, Director
San Francisco Symphony

Recorded: Recorded live at Davies Symphony Hall May 2-3, 2013

Label: SFS Media

Catalogue Number: SFS 0058

Release Date: November 12, 2013
Available for pre-order from the [iTunes Music Store](#) and on disc from the [Symphony Store](#).

Distribution: harmonia mundi (North America)
Avie (International)
The Orchard (Digital)
Online: sfsymphony.org/store

Media copies: If members of the press would like a copy of the recording for review, please contact Shuman Associates at shumanpr@shumanassociates.net or Louisa Spier at lspier@sfsymphony.org.

Connect with the San Francisco Symphony through social media:



The San Francisco Symphony receives support from over 10,000 individual donors and 150 partner institutions.

Emirates is the Official Airline of the San Francisco Symphony.

William Hill® Estate Winery is the Official Wine of the San Francisco Symphony.

San Francisco Chronicle / SFGate.com is the Official Media Partner of the San Francisco Symphony.