



SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS • MUSIC DIRECTOR

Michael Tilson Thomas assumed his post as the San Francisco Symphony's 11th Music Director in 1995, consolidating a relationship with the Orchestra that began with his debut here in 1974. In what is widely considered one of the most dynamic and productive partnerships in the orchestral world, Tilson Thomas and the SF Symphony have been praised for their innovative programming, enhancing the orchestral concert experience with multimedia and creative staging, showcasing the works of American composers, and attracting new audiences to orchestral music, both at home at Davies Symphony Hall and through the Orchestra's extensive media projects. A Los Angeles native, he studied with John Crown and Ingolf Dahl at the University of Southern California, becoming Music Director of the Young Musicians Foundation Debut Orchestra at nineteen. He worked with Stravinsky, Boulez, Stockhausen, and Copland at the famed Monday Evening Concerts and was pianist and conductor for the Piatigorsky and Heifetz master classes. In 1969, Tilson Thomas was appointed Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony. Ten days later he came to international recognition, replacing Music Director William Steinberg in mid-concert at Lincoln Center. He went on to become the BSO's Principal Guest Conductor, and he has also served as Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic, and as a Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. With the London Symphony Orchestra he has served as Principal Conductor and Principal Guest Conductor; he is currently Conductor Laureate. He is Artistic Director of the New World Symphony, America's Orchestral Academy, which he co-founded in 1987. The NWS has helped launch the careers of more than 1,200 alumni worldwide, including more than 15 members of the SFS. Tilson Thomas's recordings have won numerous international awards, including 12 Grammys, 11 for SFS recordings. In 2014, he inaugurated SoundBox, the San Francisco Symphony's alternative performance space and eclectic live music series. His television credits include the New York Philharmonic Young People's Concerts and in 2004 he and the SFS launched *Keeping Score* on PBS-TV. His compositions include *From the Diary of Anne Frank*; *Shówa/Shoáh*; settings of poems by Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, and Rainer Maria Rilke; *Island Music*; *Notturmo*; and *Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind*. Tilson Thomas is a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres of France, was *Musical America's* Musician and Conductor of the Year, and was inducted into the *Gramophone* Hall of Fame. He has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, was inducted in the California Hall of Fame, and was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Obama. Most recently, he was named a 2019 recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors.