

Schumann: Symphonies 1-4

Released November 10, 2017

Critical Acclaim

"The San Franciscans...display their virtuosity and discipline in a movement such as the Scherzo of the Second, following with pinpoint accuracy MT's subtle ritards and organic tempo changes for the various episodes..."

"The playing throughout is one of the joys of this set, with characterful woodwind soloists aided by a recording of remarkable clarity. Again and again the ear is caught by a detail—an inner string motif or a little wind commentary—that is so often swamped."

David Threasher, [Gramophone](#), November 2017

"...stand alongside the complete Mahler recordings as one of the cornerstones of Thomas' legacy with the orchestra."

"These are simply glorious performances, boasting all the sonic depth and rhythmic spontaneity that the San Francisco Symphony players can muster at their finest, and shaped with a wondrous spirit of adventure."

"There are surprises and revelations in abundance, from the combination of elegance and urgency in Thomas' reading of the First Symphony to the big sweeping gestures and expressive clarity of the Fourth."

"And through it all, the balances and instrumental textures of Schumann's orchestral writing — always, famously, the Achilles' heel of these works — are rendered with a fearless delicacy that retains both the excitement and the tenderness of the composer's voice."

Joshua Kosman, [San Francisco Chronicle](#), November 2, 2017

"MTT's account of the four Schumann symphonies is unmannered, straightforward and caring for details. The genuinely warm sound and the beautiful, homogeneous and aesthetic playing of the San Francisco Symphony make this a rewarding release."

"These extremely beautiful performances are remarkable.... [MTT] takes care to make the music supple and colorful and to bring out the expansive bel canto lines. It is this harmonic flow that makes the recordings so appealing, and their high quality is also defined by the holistic approach of the interpretations."

Remy Franck, [Pizzicato](#), November 9, 2017

"Tilson Thomas has the measure of this music. His orchestra, which he has been in charge of now for twenty-two years, respond really well to him, and the sound is excellent...A first class issue in every way."

David Mellor, [Classic FM](#), November 27, 2017

"...the conductor delved into these scores with a remarkable sense of the composer's expressive range. Tilson Thomas calls Schumann's music "a preserve for endangered emotions," and the results are tender and vivacious, shapely and affecting."

Georgia Rowe, [The Mercury News](#), December 6, 2017

"Not bothered about following any performance trend or practice, MTT simply gives us the four symphonies in beautifully crafted performances that are particularly striking for some very classy orchestral playing (above all, from the woodwinds)."

James Jolly, [Gramophone](#), December 15, 2017

"Under Michael Tilson Thomas, San Francisco Symphony is on outstanding form, playing exquisitely with gratifying tonal refinement and satisfying energy."

Michael Cookson, [MusicWeb International](#), December 19, 2017

"MTT hits a well-judged center, coaxing chamber details to a place of prominence amidst the rich sonorities of a modern orchestra. The musicians are on top form, and the technical engineering is breathtaking. It is hard not to binge-listen. Both discs, heard in succession, make a singularly triumphant marathon."

[on Symphony No. 1]: "Tilson Thomas signals an absorbing journey through the emotive landscape of Schumann's mind"

Philip Campbell, [Bay Area Reporter](#), December 21, 2017

"...this year found Thomas and his forces illuminating familiar works with new energy and finesse. The complete recorded set of the Schumann symphonies, released this year after a two-year rollout in live concerts, conjures up all the composer's dramatic subtlety and vigor."

Joshua Kosman, [San Francisco Chronicle](#), December 29, 2017

"...Tilson Thomas seems to be moving in an idyllic, streamlined world. The singular fluidity he has achieved over twenty-two years of conducting favors his subtly organic phrasing....Although the orchestra sounds ample and broad, it is never heavy: the slow movements move, even glide, forward; the nuances in the scherzos are smoothly and elegantly articulated."

Remy Louis, [Diapason magazine](#), January 2018

"Symphony No 1's intro is button-bright, Schumann's "world turning green" magically realised. The pick of the bunch is this team's Symphony No 2, the uneasy mixture of heartbreak and ecstasy balanced to perfection. This "Adagio espressivo" plumbs the depths, the clouds lifting in an exultant, effervescent finale. Trumpets and horns are excellent throughout. Especially in the affable Third Symphony, its scherzo a bucolic, stately romp. There's no bludgeoning bombast in the last movement's closing minutes but plenty of exuberance. No 4's darker moments

aren't shied away from: the grinding brass pileups roar, and the last movement's Brucknerian intro is spine-tingling."

"Everything falls into place: this is a supremely intelligent, affectionate set of performances, immaculately played."

Graham Rickson, [TheArtsDesk.com](#), January 6, 2018

[On Symphony No. 1]: "... full, rich, and warm, characteristics emphasized by the recording."

"...this romantically luxurious San Francisco cycle might be just the thing for you, and you'll want to join the applause at the end of each symphony. You won't feel shortchanged by the recorded sound on two hybrid SACDs. The notes, all the packaging, and this new Schumann cycle is on the orchestra's own label, SFS Media."

Andrew McGregor, [BBC Radio 3 Record Review](#), January 6, 2018

"The broad and bold introduction to the 'Spring' Symphony at once demonstrates that the recorded sound is of exceptional quality."

[On Symphony No. 2]: "The outer movements are given with panache and the weighty scoring is clear in detail – timpani are exceptionally well-balanced, never clouding the lower lines and making much dramatic impact."

[On Symphony No. 4]: "With this realistic recorded quality, the San Francisco Symphony in full cry makes a thrilling sound and the work ends in great excitement."

Antony Hodgson, [Classical Source](#), January 2018

"...when it comes to balances and textures, everything's comprehensively thought through...In practical terms, that often means performances of chamber-like sensitivity and remarkable transparency. Tilson Thomas's lengthy essay in the liner notes reveal a connection with the symphonies that dates back nearly fifty years and suggests an understanding of the music that is steeped in the conductor's own experience of the world as much as it is Schumann's time and work."

Jonathan Blumhofer, [The Arts Fuse](#), February 2, 2018

"Grammy winner Michael Tilson Thomas knows how to thrill the audience to a remarkable degree. He skillfully combines his passion for precision with wellproportioned balance in Schumann's works."

***HiFi-Stars* magazine, March 2018**

"How, then, do I sum up this San Francisco cycle of the Schumann symphonies? There's a good deal to admire, not least the consistently fine playing of the San Francisco Symphony. Michael Tilson Thomas's engagement with the music is never in doubt and much of what he does is persuasive."

John Quinn, [MusicWeb International](#), April 2018