



SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

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Images of the SFS Youth Orchestra, and Christian Reif are available for download in the [SFSYO Press Kit](#). Photo credit: Stefan Cohen

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES 2019 EUROPEAN TOUR, WITH PERFORMANCES AT THE BERLIN PHILHARMONIE; HAMBURG ELBPILHAMONIE; VIENNA MUSIKVEREIN; AND IN BUDAPEST, COPENHAGEN, AND ODENSE, JUNE 23–JULY 4, 2019

Tour repertoire including Mahler Symphony No. 1 and Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto is featured in two concerts at Davies Symphony Hall—May 19 and a June 16 “Bon Voyage” concert

SAN FRANCISCO, April 25, 2019—The **San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra** (SFSYO), led by Wattle Foundation Music Director **Christian Reif**, embarks on its 11th international tour this summer with concerts in Denmark, Germany, Austria, and Hungary. The 17-day tour includes six concerts: at the Odense Koncerthus in Odense, Denmark; the Tivoli Concert Hall in Copenhagen, Denmark; the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Germany; the Berliner Philharmonie in Berlin, Germany; the Musikverein in Vienna, Austria; and the Margaret Island Open-Air Stage in Budapest, Hungary.

Tour repertoire includes Mahler’s Symphony No. 1, Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto, and Prelude No. 1 from German composer Detlev Glanert’s *Three American Preludes*. Violinist Nicola Benedetti is soloist in concerts in Odense, Hamburg, Berlin, Vienna and Budapest, and Karen Gomyo is soloist in San Francisco (June 16) and Copenhagen.

“The young musicians of this Orchestra are boldly exploring and expanding their awareness of the world, and these are themes which Mahler also captured in his first Symphony. It’s truly exhilarating to hear them pour their enthusiasm and curiosity into this masterpiece,” comments Christian Reif. He explains further, “Both Nicola Benedetti and Karen Gomyo are deeply committed to youth education and to passing on the love for music to new generations. Exploring Tchaikovsky’s violin concerto with the Youth Orchestra and these fine soloists is an ideal combination.”

The SFSYO, composed of highly gifted young people ranging from age 12 to 21, is a hallmark of the San Francisco Symphony's commitment to Bay Area youth and music education. The tuition-free SFSYO tours internationally every three to four years. Because the average tenure of a Youth Orchestra musician is three to four years, this allows most members to experience the process of touring, ensemble building, and the once-in-a-lifetime experience of making music in some of the world's most venerable concert halls. A scholarship fund ensures that every student is able to participate.

The SFSYO embarked on its first European tour in 1986, where it was awarded the world's highest honor for a youth ensemble, the City of Vienna Prize, at the 15th International Youth and Music Festival. The orchestra made a tour of Asia in 1989 and has since made a total of nine European tours with performances at some of the most prestigious venues including the Berlin Philharmonie, the Mariinsky in St. Petersburg, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and Prague's Smetana Hall. The SFSYO's tour in 2012 won them the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming of American music on foreign tours. Their performance of Mahler's Symphony No. 1 at the Berlin Philharmonie was recorded live and released in 2013 on SFSMedia, their sixth recording.

SFSYO Music Director Christian Reif remarks: "Performing in these important venues and visiting these wonderful cities together creates experiences for the young musicians and myself that we will cherish all our lives. For most of them, this is their first trip to Europe, and I know that it will be life changing to walk the streets and breathe the air in places that were important in the lives of legendary composers themselves." He continues: "Showing the musicians of the Youth Orchestra my favorite spots and exploring the history and culture of these countries will be a culmination of our three years working together. I can't wait to make music with the SFSYO and to share their excellence with the European audiences!"

In advance of the tour, the SFSYO performs two concerts at San Francisco's Davies Symphony Hall led by Christian Reif. The Sunday, May 19 concert features music by Youth Orchestra alumnus Nathaniel Stookey, who was first commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony at age 17. The SFSYO performs Stookey's *Mahlerwerk*, a kaleidoscopic exploration of Mahler's music that pieces together fragments from each of the composer's nine symphonies. *Mahlerwerk* precedes the SFSYO's performance of Mahler's Symphony No. 1 on the May 19 concert, which opens with Mendelssohn's *Fingal's Cave* Overture.

On the eve of their 11th international tour, the SFSYO performs a "Bon Voyage" concert on Sunday, June 16 at Davies Symphony Hall, featuring Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto with Karen Gomyo. The program also includes Detlev Glanert's American Prelude No. 1, selections from Mahler's Symphony No. 1, and other repertoire.

Read more about the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra, download photos, and watch informational videos at sfsymphony.org/youthorchestra

About the SFSYO

Now in its 36th season, the [San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra](https://sfsymphony.org/youthorchestra) (SFSYO) is recognized internationally as one of the finest youth orchestras in the world. Founded by the [San Francisco Symphony](https://sfsymphony.org) in 1981, the SFSYO's musicians are chosen from more than 300 applicants in annual auditions. The SFSYO's purpose is to provide an orchestral experience of pre-professional caliber, tuition-free, to talented young musicians from the greater Bay Area. The more than 100 diverse musicians, ranging in age from 12 to 21, represent communities from throughout the Bay Area. The SFSYO rehearses and performs at Davies Symphony Hall under the direction of Wattis Foundation Music Director Christian Reif, whose first season with the Orchestra was 2016–2017, and who concludes his term after the Orchestra's 2018–19 season. Jahja Ling served as the SFSYO's first Music Director, followed by David Milnes, Leif Bjaland, Alasdair Neale, Edwin Outwater, Benjamin Schwartz, and Donato Cabrera, who stepped down at the conclusion of the 2015-16 season.

As part of the SFSYO's innovative training program, musicians from the San Francisco Symphony coach the young players each Saturday afternoon in sectional rehearsals, followed by full orchestra rehearsals with Reif. SFSYO members

also have the opportunity to work with many of the world-renowned artists who perform with the SFS each week. SFS Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas, SFS Conductor Laureate Herbert Blomstedt, Sir Simon Rattle, Kurt Masur, Valery Gergiev, Leonard Slatkin, Yo-Yo Ma, Isaac Stern, Yehudi Menuhin, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Midori, Joshua Bell, Gil Shaham, Sarah Chang, and many others have worked with the SFSYO. Of equal importance, the students are able to talk with these prominent musicians, asking questions about their lives, their professional and personal experiences, and about music. The SFSYO has toured internationally on ten different occasions, garnering rave reviews and critical acclaim for its artistry. Its alumni have won positions in many major orchestras throughout the US and in Europe.

About Christian Reif



German conductor Christian Reif joined the San Francisco Symphony as Resident Conductor and Wattis Foundation Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra (SFSYO) in the 16–17 season. Reif joined San Francisco Symphony's artistic staff after two years as Conducting Fellow with the New World Symphony, where he worked closely with Michael Tilson Thomas. Recent highlights in the 18–19 season include debuts with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Hong Kong Philharmonic. His 17–18 season included a debut with Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, where he led the International Contemporary Ensemble in John Adams's *Grand Pianola Music*, and concerts with the Orchestre National de Lyon, Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz, Bruckner Orchestra Linz, Lake Area Music, and Indianapolis and Berkeley symphonies. In the 16–17 season, Reif led the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz in Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with mezzo-soprano Michelle DeYoung and tenor Toby Spence for Heidelberg Spring International Music Festival. Previous performance highlights include leading The Juilliard School Orchestra, Israel Chamber Orchestra, Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra, Meiningen Court Orchestra, Georgian Chamber Orchestra, Salzburg Chamber Soloists and the Munich Chamber Opera in performances of Mozart's *La finta semplice*.

Reif is currently a member of Germany's prestigious Conductor's Forum (Dirigentenforum) and included on their list of "Maestros of Tomorrow." A dedicated and enthusiastic educator, he has also taught piano, coached instrumentalists and works with singers as a répétiteur. Reif completed his Master of Music in Conducting at The Juilliard School under Alan Gilbert in 2014, after studying with Dennis Russell Davies at the Mozarteum Salzburg. For his outstanding achievements at The Juilliard School, Reif received the Charles Schiff Conducting Award.

About Nicola Benedetti



One of the most celebrated and influential musicians of her generation, Scottish violinist Nicola Benedetti was appointed Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire earlier this year. She was the youngest-ever recipient of the Queen's Medal for Music in 2017 and was appointed as a member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 2013 in recognition of her international music career and work with musical charities throughout the United Kingdom. Her busy 2018–19 season featured her debut with the Philharmonie de Paris and tours with both the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. Benedetti has collaborated with renowned conductors and premier orchestras around the world, including the San Francisco Symphony last year. She is also a dedicated chamber musician, performing in a trio since 2008 with cellist Leonard Elschenbroich and pianist Alexei Grynuk, her regular duo partner for her frequent recitals in the world's leading concert halls and festivals. In addition to her extensive musical accolades, Benedetti is also passionate about education, holding key positions in several of Scotland's established youth organizations. She worked with more than 2,000 students and 500 teachers in 2018 alone through workshops, master classes, and school visits, and plans to formally launch The Benedetti Foundation this year, a charity that will focus 50% of its efforts on providing support for teachers. A two-time winner of the Classical BRIT Awards, Nicola's exclusive recordings for Decca (Universal) have received critical acclaim,

and she was the first solo British violinist since the 1990s to enter the Top 20 of the Official U.K. Albums Chart for *Homecoming: A Scottish Fantasy*.

About Karen Gomyo



Internationally acclaimed violinist Karen Gomyo's 2018–19 season includes debuts with London's Philharmonia Orchestra and the Royal Sinfonia in England, as well as the world premiere performance of Samuel Adams' Chamber Concerto, which was written for Gomyo and commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra with Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting. Her 2018–19 season also features a recital performance at the Sydney Opera House, a tour with the New Zealand Symphony, her annual chamber music project at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark, an impromptu stand-in with the Polish National Radio Symphony performing the Britten Violin Concerto, and performances of Shostakovich's Violin Concerto with the San Francisco Symphony. Strongly committed to contemporary works, Gomyo performed the North American premiere of Mattias Pinstcher's Concerto No. 2 "Mar'eh" with the National Symphony Orchestra, and Peteris

Vasks' "Vox Amoris" with the Lapland Chamber Orchestra. Her recital and chamber music performances have brought her to festivals around the world, and she recently toured with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. A Tokyo native, Gomyo also participated as a violinist, host, and narrator in "The Mysteries of the Supreme Violin," a documentary film produced by NHK Japan about Antonio Stradivarius, who built in 1703 the "Aurora, exFoulis" violin she plays.

Calendar editors, please note:

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

[Sunday, May 19, 2019 at 2 pm](#)

Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness Ave. San Francisco

Christian Reif conductor
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

MENDELSSOHN
Fingal's Cave Overture

Nathaniel STOOKEY
Mahlerwerk

MAHLER
Symphony No. 1 in D major

Tickets: \$55 reserved seating, \$20 general admission.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA / BON VOYAGE

[Sunday, June 16, 2019 at 8 pm](#)

Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness Ave. San Francisco

Christian Reif conductor
Karen Gomyo violin
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

Detlev GLANERT
Prelude No. 1, from Three American Preludes

TCHAIKOVSKY

Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35

MAHLER

Selections from Symphony No. 1 in D major

Tickets: \$55 reserved seating, \$20 general admission.

2019 EUROPEAN TOUR

ODENSE, DENMARK

[Sunday, June 23, 2019 at 3 pm](#)

Odense Koncerthus – Carl Nielsen Hall
Odense, Denmark

Christian Reif conductor
Nicola Benedetti violin
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

Detlev GLANERT
Prelude No. 1, from Three American Preludes

TCHAIKOVSKY
Violin Concerto in D Major, Opus 35

MAHLER
Symphony No. 1 in D Major

Tickets: Free Admission

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

[Monday, June 24, 2019 at 7:30 pm](#)

Tivoli Concert Hall
Copenhagen, Denmark

Christian Reif conductor
Karen Gomyo violin
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

Detlev GLANERT
Prelude No. 1, from Three American Preludes

TCHAIKOVSKY
Violin Concerto in D Major, Opus 35

MAHLER
Symphony No. 1 in D Major

Tickets: 50 DKK at the entrance to the concert hall, free admission for Tivoli Card Holders

HAMBURG, GERMANY

[Wednesday, June 26, 2019 at 8 pm](#)

Elbphilharmonie
Hamburg, Germany

Christian Reif conductor
Nicola Benedetti violin
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

Detlev GLANERT
Prelude No. 1, from Three American Preludes

TCHAIKOVSKY
Violin Concerto in D Major, Opus 35

MAHLER
Symphony No. 1 in D Major

Tickets: Sold Out, remaining tickets occasionally available at venue 90 minutes before start

BERLIN, GERMANY

[Saturday, June 29 at 8 pm](#)

Berliner Philharmonie
Berlin, Germany

Christian Reif conductor
Nicola Benedetti violin
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

Detlev GLANERT
Prelude No. 1, from Three American Preludes

TCHAIKOVSKY
Violin Concerto in D Major, Opus 35

MAHLER
Symphony No. 1 in D Major

Tickets: €11.35–33.90

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

[Tuesday, July 2 at 3:30 pm](#)

Musikverein – Goldener Saal
Vienna, Austria

Christian Reif conductor
Nicola Benedetti violin
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

Detlev GLANERT

Prelude No. 1, from Three American Preludes

TCHAIKOVSKY

Violin Concerto in D Major, Opus 35

MAHLER

Symphony No. 1 in D Major

Tickets: €10–20

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

[Thursday, July 4 at 8 pm](#)

Margaret Island Open-Air Stage
Budapest, Hungary

Christian Reif conductor
Nicola Benedetti violin
San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra

Detlev GLANERT

Prelude No. 1, from Three American Preludes

TCHAIKOVSKY

Violin Concerto in D Major, Opus 35

MAHLER

Symphony No. 1 in D Major

Tickets: 3900–8500 Ft

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

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Support for the Youth Orchestra's 2019 European Tour is provided by the Barbro and Bernard Osher Youth Orchestra Touring Fund, the Caroline H. Hume Youth Orchestra Touring Fund, with additional support from Carol and Lyman Casey, the Phyllis C. Wattis Youth Orchestra Fund, and many other generous donors.

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