

## SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

### FACTS ABOUT THE SYMPHONY

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- Founded in 1911 and performing its 108th season in 2019–20, the San Francisco Symphony (SFS) is widely considered to be among the country's most artistically adventurous and financially stable arts institutions.
- Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT) celebrates his 25th and final season as Music Director of the SFS during the Orchestra's 2019–20 season.
- MTT is currently the longest-tenured music director at any major American orchestra, and has surpassed Pierre Monteux as the longest-tenured San Francisco Symphony Music Director. MTT assumed his post as the SFS's 11th Music Director in September 1995.
- Nearly 500,000 people hear more than 200 concerts and presentations of the SFS each year.
- More than 60,000 people hear the SFS at no cost each season.
- More than 10,000 individual donors from throughout the region join businesses and foundations in supporting the SFS.
- Throughout its history, the SFS has presented almost 300 world premieres, commissioned over 150 new works, and received 19 awards from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) for adventurous programming and/or commitment to American music.
- The SFS acts as a cultural ambassador for the Bay Area through its more than 60 national and international concert tours, nearly 280 recordings, including commercial videos on DVD and Blu-ray, and, through its radio broadcasts, heard on more than 300 stations nationally and internationally.
- The San Francisco Symphony donates approximately 6,000 complimentary tickets annually. These tickets go to community groups and underserved populations, and are offered as auction items for charity fundraisers.
- The low-priced All-San Francisco Concert, held for more than 30 years, welcomes more than 100 local social service and neighborhood organizations.
- The SF Symphony's renowned education programs date back to 1919 and are the most comprehensive of any U.S. orchestra. The SF Symphony's second concert, in 1911, was a concert for children.
- The SFS's *Adventures in Music* (AIM) program is a comprehensive music education program designed specifically for San Francisco's public elementary schools, in partnership with the San Francisco Unified School District. Now in its 32nd year of partnership with the SFUSD during the 2018–19 season, AIM serves every child in grades one through five in every San Francisco public elementary school, as well as a number of the City's parochial and independent schools. AIM reaches 24,500 children and their teachers annually, and is presented to schools absolutely free of charge. Since its inception in 1988, more than 150,000 children have gone through the AIM program.
- More than 18,500 Bay Area school children, teachers, and chaperones attend *Concerts for Kids* each season.

- The SFS launched its *Music and Mentors* program (formerly called *Instrument Training & Support*) in 2006, designed to assist all of San Francisco's public middle and high school music programs with professional coaching, instruments and supplies, sheet music, and free concert tickets for students and their families.
- The SFS and MTT launched *Keeping Score* in 2006, an unprecedented multimedia program designed to make classical music more accessible to people of all ages and musical backgrounds. *Keeping Score* is a national PBS television series comprising eight composer documentaries and eight live concert films; an interactive web site, [www.keepingcore.org](http://www.keepingcore.org), to explore and learn about music; a national radio series; documentary and live performance DVDs and Blu-rays; and an education program for K-12 schools to further teaching through the arts by integrating classical music into core subjects. To date, more than six million people have seen the *Keeping Score* television series in the U.S. and episodes have been broadcast in countries around the world. The radio series has been broadcast on more than 400 stations nationally. The Mahler episode won the prestigious German *Preis der Deutschen Schallplatten Kritik* award in 2011.
- *SFSkids.org*, launched in 2002, is a free online educational resource designed to teach children and families about music through interactivity, animation, and game-based learning. A new version of the site, developed in partnership with the University of California, Irvine's Institute for Software Research, was launched in 2014. *SFSkids.org* has now reached more than five million users and averages 1,500–2,000 visits per day.
- In 1981, the SFS founded the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra, now led by Wattis Foundation Music Director Daniel Stewart. The young musicians perform annually for audiences of more than 10,000. MTT and SFS musicians coach these young players, and master classes are offered by renowned visiting guest artists, including Yo-Yo Ma, Sir Simon Rattle, David Robertson, and Midori.
- The SFS Chorus, founded in 1973, is comprised of 32 professional and 120 volunteer singers. The SFS is one of only a handful of major orchestras in the U.S. with its own chorus. Led by Chorus Director Ragnar Bohlin, the Chorus has been recognized for its excellence with multiple Grammy awards, most recently in 2010 for its performance with MTT and the SFS in Mahler's Symphony No. 8.
- The SFS Volunteer Council is an organization of approximately 1,500 committed volunteers, whose purpose is to support the SFS in areas of fundraising, audience development, and community outreach.
- Davies Symphony Hall, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2010, was built at a cost of \$27.5 million. Named for Louise M. Davies, the largest individual contributor, the building is owned by the City of San Francisco, which contributed \$10 million toward its construction. Davies Symphony Hall underwent a successful \$10 million acoustic renovation in 1992.
- The San Francisco Symphony has won 15 Grammy Awards, including seven for its Mahler recording cycle of all of the composer's symphonies and his works for voice, orchestra and chorus.
- The San Francisco Symphony was an early pioneer of the Composer-in-Residence concept. John Adams was the first composer to assume that role, in 1982.

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### FIFTEEN FIRSTS

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1. The first San Francisco Symphony Music Director was American composer and conductor Henry Hadley (1911–1915).
2. The Orchestra performed its first concert on December 8, 1911. The program included Wagner's *Prelude to Die Meistersinger*, Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 6*, Haydn's *Theme and Variations from the Emperor Quartet*, and Liszt's *Les Preludes*. The Orchestra rehearsed for this performance 16 times.
3. The San Francisco Symphony's second concert was a concert for young people held on December 29, 1911, and the first series of concerts for young people began in 1922.
4. In 1924, the San Francisco Symphony was the first major American orchestra to hire women as full-time musicians other than as harpists.
5. The first San Francisco Symphony recording was of Auber's *Fra Diavolo* Overture and the Prelude and Good Friday Spell from Wagner's *Parsifal*. It was led by SFS Music Director Alfred Hertz and recorded in 1925 by the Victor Talking Machine Company, precursor to RCA Victor.
6. The San Francisco Symphony was the first orchestra with its own syndicated radio show. The Standard Symphony Hour began broadcasting in 1926 and continued as the Standard Hour until 1955.
7. The San Francisco Symphony performed the first concert held at Sigmund Stern Grove in 1932.
8. The San Francisco Symphony's first tour was to Los Angeles in 1928. Its first U.S. tour was in 1947, and its first overseas tour, to Japan, was in 1968.
9. The Symphony held its first Black and White Ball fundraiser in 1956.
10. Seiji Ozawa led the Orchestra on its first European tour in 1973. On that tour, the first radio signal ever relayed live via satellite broadcast the opening performance in Paris back home in San Francisco. The Orchestra also performed in the USSR with cellist Mstislav Rostropovich.
11. The San Francisco Symphony's first Composer-in-Residence was John Adams, in 1982. Prior to that appointment he held the position of New Music Advisor with the SFS, starting in 1978.
12. The opening concert in Davies Symphony Hall was a San Francisco Symphony performance led by then-Music Director Edo de Waart on September 13, 1980.
13. The San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra performed its first season of concerts in 1981, led by their first Music Director, SFS Associate Conductor Jahja Ling.
14. The San Francisco Symphony won its first Grammy award in 1993, for a recording of Orff's *Carmina burana*, led by then-Music Director Herbert Blomstedt and featuring the San Francisco Symphony Chorus led by Vance George. As of January 2015, the San Francisco Symphony has won a total of 15 Grammy awards.
15. Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas's first performances with the San Francisco Symphony took place in 1974. He led the Orchestra as a guest conductor in performances of Mahler's *Symphony No. 9*.