



**SAN FRANCISCO  
SYMPHONY**  
MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS • MUSIC DIRECTOR



## ***ADVENTURES IN MUSIC***

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### ***What is AIM?***

*Adventures in Music* (AIM) is the San Francisco Symphony's (SFS) nationally acclaimed music education program for the elementary schoolchildren in San Francisco's public schools. AIM is produced by the SFS in partnership with the San Francisco Unified School District. Through AIM, every 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade student in the San Francisco Unified School District receives five years of music education experiences free of charge from the San Francisco Symphony. AIM introduces children to music from around the world and teaches about the role of music in everyday life. AIM was launched in 1988. In 2012-13, AIM celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its partnership with the San Francisco Unified School District.

Annually, more than 25,000 children attend a sequence of four music ensemble presentations at their school and a hallmark SFS concert in Davies Symphony Hall. The in-school performances and the Symphony concert are integral components of the AIM program, which also includes curriculum, orientation workshops (professional development) for teachers, a workbook journal for each student, and resource materials for classrooms (such as compact discs, books, simple instruments, maps, etc., depending on the curriculum area for each year). Each year more than 1,100 teachers implement the program in their classrooms in more than 90 schools—every San Francisco public elementary school plus a number of independent and parochial schools. Approximately 5,000 new students enter the *AIM* program each year.

#### ***What is the goal of AIM?***

The goal of AIM is to provide all elementary school students of the San Francisco Unified School District, 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, equal access to music education, free of charge, through an interdisciplinary program integrating live music performances and related music-learning experiences with everyday classroom curriculum. AIM is committed to introducing students to artistic excellence, increasing students' abilities to perceive and comprehend music, fostering an awareness of music in the context of everyday life, and enhancing children's appreciation for music of all cultures. The AIM program is designed to serve the curriculum needs of the San Francisco Unified School District as a way for teachers to incorporate music education into everyday classroom learning. AIM supports the Symphony's mission to set the highest possible standard for excellence in musical performance and to enrich, serve, and shape cultural life throughout Bay Area communities and beyond.

#### ***How does AIM work?***

*Adventures in Music* (AIM) is designed by the San Francisco Symphony Education Department to support many of the prescribed curricular goals of the San Francisco Unified School District. Each season, the AIM program is based on an overarching theme, rooted in a discipline such as language arts, history, geography, social studies, science, or the visual arts. The AIM program provides curriculum, teacher training (professional development), and resource materials exploring the year's theme linked to a series of in-school musical presentations and a special concert at Davies Symphony Hall by the San Francisco Symphony. Throughout the school year, every elementary school in the SFUSD receives eight visits by AIM music ensembles: four ensembles work with grades 1 and 2, and another four ensembles work with grades 3-5. The ensembles, selected and trained by the SFS Education Department, present music of different genres and cultural traditions integrating with the curricular theme for the year. Their presentations are developmentally appropriate for the particular age group—either early elementary or upper elementary. A central component of the AIM year is a trip to Davies Symphony Hall to hear the San Francisco Symphony in a private concert which incorporates the AIM concepts children have been learning in their classrooms.

#### ***How does the Symphony pay for AIM?***

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***On what is the AIM curriculum based?***

Since AIM's implementation in 1988, the program has been developed in alignment with the California State Visual and Performing Arts Framework and the SFUSD's Visual and Performing Arts Framework for elementary grades, plus the Frameworks for the curricular focus of each given year, either language arts, history, geography, social studies, science, or the visual arts. Teaching the AIM curriculum in the classroom reinforces many of the outlined goals. AIM supports the SFUSD's new Common Core Curriculum and addresses nationally prescribed content standards in music.

***How does AIM benefit children?***

AIM provides children and schools with comprehensive music education experiences that are tailored to the needs of the San Francisco Unified School District. The AIM program introduces children to music concepts and reinforces the idea that art is a fundamental part of society. The exposure to music of many cultures in an intimate school setting helps children feel connected to their own and other cultures. The SFUSD reports that more children are enrolling in elementary and middle school instrumental music programs as a consequence of the AIM program.

***Why is it important to teach music in the schools?***

The San Francisco Symphony believes a well-rounded education for schoolchildren must include the study of music and the arts. Music is a core curriculum subject legislated at state and national levels. The AIM program ensures equity and access to music learning for all 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders in the SFUSD. AIM is particularly beneficial to San Francisco's multicultural children, since the program introduces them to a variety of musical styles that can be found in the City of San Francisco, many from outside the Western classical tradition. Exposure to a mix of diverse musical genres helps engender in children a heightened awareness of their own arts heritage and fosters an understanding and respect for other cultures.

***Is AIM only about providing a Western classical music education?***

No. The AIM program incorporates music of many cultures into its curriculum. AIM ensembles represent such cultural and musical styles as jazz, Afro-Cuban, Latin American, Caribbean, Asian, Middle Eastern, and many others, in addition to classically-based ensembles such as string quartets and woodwind quintets. These musical genres reflect the rich diversity of cultures in San Francisco.

***How does AIM benefit the San Francisco schools and communities?***

The San Francisco Symphony makes AIM available to teachers and schools at no charge. AIM makes it easy for teachers to implement a comprehensive and sequentially based music education program into their classrooms' curriculum. The AIM curriculum aligns with many of the National Music Standards, California State Visual and Performing Arts Framework, and the San Francisco Unified School District's educational guidelines in music. Additionally, programs also support the SFUSD's Common Core Curriculum, as well as content standards in language arts, physics, life science, geography, history and social studies or the visual arts.

***Who created AIM?***

AIM is designed and implemented under the direction of the San Francisco Symphony's Education Department.

***Will you be expanding AIM?***

The San Francisco Symphony has fulfilled its vision of providing free music education to every 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade student in the San Francisco Unified School District. The San Francisco Symphony is always looking at ways to improve and expand its efforts in serving its community.

***How does AIM benefit the San Francisco Symphony?***

AIM demonstrates the Symphony's firm commitment to serving its community. AIM enhances and raises awareness of the Symphony's overall education and community initiatives. The program has established the Symphony's role as a premier music education resource and a vital community partner.

***How is AIM different from other music education in the schools?***

AIM focuses on incorporating music learning into the everyday classroom curriculum through its interdisciplinary approach, while providing access to music education to every 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade student in the SFUSD. AIM has served this city's elementary school population without interruption since the program was launched in 1988. The SFS may possibly be the only arts institution partnering with an entire school district on this scale anywhere in the U.S.

***How is AIM different from what other orchestras do?***

No other orchestra's programs offer the scale and scope of AIM, covering every single elementary student in the public school system of its community with a comprehensive, curriculum-based program. AIM is the longest running partnership program of its kind nationwide among orchestras and their local school districts.

***Why was AIM created?***

AIM is a natural outgrowth of the San Francisco Symphony's extensive education and community efforts that began in 1911, the year the orchestra was founded. Today these programs include *Concerts for Kids*, established in 1919 and continuing today, the *San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra*, *Music for Families*, *Instrument Training and Support Program* for middle school and high school students, *SFSKids.org*, *Keeping Score*, and others. The San Francisco Symphony is committed to encouraging children's appreciation for and understanding of music.

***What are the benefits of music education?***

The benefits of music education are numerous and have been well documented by scientific studies. The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) groups these benefits in four areas: success in society, success in school, success in developing intelligence, and success in life.

***What other education and community-focused programs does the San Francisco Symphony provide?***

In addition to *Adventures in Music*, the San Francisco Symphony provides nearly 20 education and community programs including:

- Concerts for Kids
- Music for Families
- Keeping Score
- SFSKids.org
- San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra
- Instrument Training and Support Program
- Community of Music Makers for adult amateur musicians
- Howard Skinner Student Forum
- Free Concerts
- Free tickets for community constituencies
- Volunteer Council
- *Inside Music* talks (pre-concert lectures)
- Publications (Playbill)
- Program Notes available for download from [sfsymphony.org](http://sfsymphony.org)
- Audio Program Notes

Descriptions of these programs are included in the *Education and Community Programs* document and on the San Francisco Symphony's website: <http://www.sfsymphony.org/About-Us/Press-Room/Press-Kits/Education-Community>

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