

**SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY CHORUS**  
RAGNAR BOHLIN, DIRECTOR

One of America's most distinguished choruses, the 158-member San Francisco Symphony Chorus is known for its precision, power, and versatility and celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the 2013-14 season. Highlights of the recent 2012-13 season include the SF Symphony's first ever full concert performance by an orchestra of *West Side Story*, performances of Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* and *Cantata on the Death of Emperor Joseph II* with Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT) and the SFS as part of the Beethoven Exploration in May 2013, Bach's *Clavierübung III* performed in its entirety with organist Paul Jacobs, Berlioz' seldom performed *Te Deum* with Charles Dutoit, the U.S. premiere of Levon Atovmian's arrangement of Prokofiev's *Ivan the Terrible* under the baton of Vladimir Jurowski, and the first SFS performances of Kyrie, Gloria, and Agnus Dei from Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli* conducted by SFS Chorus Director Ragnar Bohlin. A recording of the Chorus' performances of Beethoven's *Cantata on the Death of Emperor Joseph II* will be available on SFS Media in November 2013 and their recording of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT) and the SFS was released in April 2013. Led by Chorus Director Ragnar Bohlin, the Chorus performs more than twenty concerts each season and is comprised of 30 professional and 128 volunteer members.

Established in 1973 at the request of Seiji Ozawa, then the San Francisco Symphony's Music Director, the San Francisco Symphony Chorus has sung under the world's major conductors, including SFS Music Directors Michael Tilson Thomas, Herbert Blomstedt, Edo de Waart, and Seiji Ozawa; they have also performed with Kurt Masur, James Conlon, Valery Gergiev, David Robertson, Charles Dutoit, Sir Neville Marriner, Sir Roger Norrington, Yuri Temirkanov, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Wolfgang Sawallisch, and Robert Shaw. Louis Magor served as the Chorus's Director during its first decade, and in 1982 Margaret Hillis assumed the ensemble's leadership. The following year Vance George was named Director, serving through the 2005-06 season. Ragnar Bohlin assumed the position of Chorus Director in March 2007. In February 2001, the Chorus made its Carnegie Hall debut in two sold-out performances of music by Mahler and Stravinsky with MTT and the SFS.

Recordings featuring the SFS Chorus have won a total of eight Grammy awards, including three for Best Choral Performance. Most recently, they were featured on the SFS Media's recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with MTT and the SFS, which won three 2010 Grammys, including the award for Best Choral Performance, under the direction of Ragnar Bohlin. Previous Grammys awarded to the SFS Chorus include Best Choral Performance for Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* in 1995; Best Choral Performance for Orff's *Carmina burana* in 1992; Best Classical Album with the SFS for Mahler's Symphony No. 3 and *Kindertotenlieder* in 2004; and Best Classical Album for their performance of *Perséphone* as part of a collection of Stravinsky's music in 2000.

The Chorus is also featured on recordings with the SFS under MTT's direction in Mahler's Symphony No. 2 and *Das klagende Lied*, Ives's *An American Journey*, and selections from Berlioz's *Lélio*. The Chorus may be heard under the direction of Conductor Laureate Herbert Blomstedt in Grieg's incidental music for *Peer Gynt*, its first recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 2, which was nominated for a Grammy; and a collection of choral works by Brahms. The Chorus has also recorded John Adams's *Harmonium* twice, on ECM under Edo de Waart's direction and on Nonesuch with the composer conducting; Gordon Getty's *Annabel Lee* and *Young America* with MTT and the SFS in live concerts for inclusion in a PentaTone Classics disc of Getty choral works; and Jerod Impichchaachaaha Tate's *Tracing Mississippi* and *Iholba* with the SFS for Thunderbird Records. The Chorus has released two solo recordings: *Christmas by the Bay*, which was released in 1998 on the Delos label and nominated for a Grammy in the Best Classical Crossover category, and *Voices 1900/2000*, released on the Delos label in 2001.

The Chorus is featured in the second season of *Keeping Score*, the SFS's national television program, in Ives's *Holidays Symphony*. The episode aired nationwide on PBS in 2009 and is now available on DVD, Blu-ray, and streaming online at <http://video.pbs.org/video/1295300727>. The Chorus can be heard on the soundtracks of the films *Amadeus*, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, *Godfather III*, and on the video/DVD release of the Emmy-winning *Sweeney Todd* with the SFS.

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