



SAN FRANCISCO
SYMPHONY

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS • MUSIC DIRECTOR

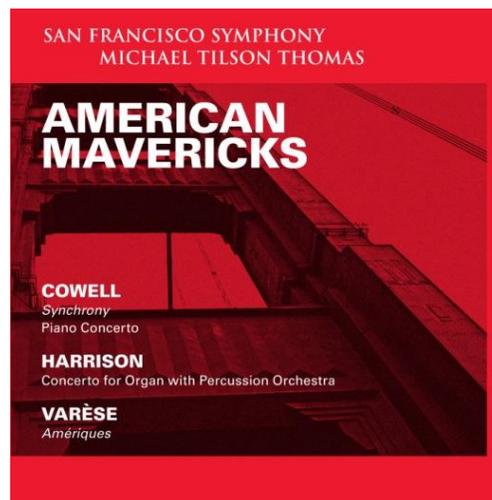


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(A high resolution version of this cover image is downloadable from the [SFS online press room](#).)

**MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS AND THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY RELEASE
AMERICAN MAVERICKS RECORDING OF MUSIC BY
HENRY COWELL, LOU HARRISON AND EDGARD VARÈSE
ON NOVEMBER 13, 2012**

**Digital download of album featuring music performed during the acclaimed March 2012 Festival
available for pre-order from the iTunes Store today**

SAN FRANCISCO October 23, 2012: On Tuesday, November 13, 2012, [Michael Tilson Thomas](#) (MTT) and the [San Francisco Symphony](#) (SFS) will release *American Mavericks*, a hybrid SACD recording featuring rarely recorded works by three American composers, Henry Cowell, Lou Harrison and Edgard Varèse on SFS Media, the Orchestra's in-house label. The album includes Henry Cowell's *Synchrony* and his Piano Concerto with Jeremy Denk, Lou Harrison's Concerto for Organ with Percussion Orchestra with Paul Jacobs, and Edgard Varèse's *Amériques*. The performances were all recorded live in concert at Davies Symphony Hall and feature

composers and works from the San Francisco Symphony's *American Mavericks* festival dedicated to America's innovative musical heritage of the 20th century. The *American Mavericks* album can be pre-ordered starting today, October 23, from the [iTunes Store](#) and on SACD from the San Francisco Symphony Store at sfsymphony.org/store. *American Mavericks* will be available for purchase at music retailers everywhere on Tuesday, November 13. A short 6-minute video about *American Mavericks* featuring concert footage and interviews with Michael Tilson Thomas and soloists Jeremy Denk and Paul Jacobs can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/AmMavRecording2012>.

The recording opens with Menlo Park native Henry Cowell's *Synchrony*, followed by his Piano Concerto featuring soloist [Jeremy Denk](#), who taps into the far-flung imagination of Cowell's signature forearm tone clusters. MTT says of Cowell's Piano Concerto, "The piece is fun, swashbuckling, and outrageous, and it takes a very special spirit such as Jeremy Denk to really put this over with the fervor with which it was meant to be played."

Bay Area composer Lou Harrison's Concerto for Organ and Percussion featuring soloist [Paul Jacobs](#) is a work fusing sounds both rich and brilliant. The 1972 concerto utilizes a variety of percussion instruments from glockenspiel, vibraphone, celesta, and tube chimes to oxygen tanks and wood drums built by Harrison's partner William Colvig. The solo organ part requires Henry Cowell-style tone clusters played with the palm of the hand and specially-cut wooden slabs. MTT calls this concerto "an overwhelming sonic spectacular!" MTT has a long history of performing Lou Harrison's works. In the fall of 1995, he opened his inaugural concert as Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony with the world premiere of Harrison's *Parade*, a composition MTT and the SFS commissioned for the occasion.

French-born American composer Edgard Varèse is revered by musicians as diverse as Frank Zappa and Robert Lamm, keyboardist for the pop group Chicago. Closing the *American Mavericks* recording, his *Amériques* requires an enormous 129 piece orchestra and is instantly recognizable for its signature siren and 13-person percussion section. Varèse wrote it three years after his emigration to the US and meant it as "a meditation, or the impression of a stranger who asks himself about the extraordinary possibilities of our civilization." The work features a battery of percussion and overwhelming orchestral sonics to portray Varèse's images of his new home. In *New York* magazine, Justin Davidson enthusiastically described the Orchestra's performances of *Amériques* in New York City as "a rigorous evocation of a freak-out." A longtime favorite of MTT's, the SFS performed *Amériques* in both *American Mavericks* Festivals - in 2000 and 2012.

MTT and the SFS have been praised by critics for innovative programming and for bringing the works of American composers to the forefront. David Littlejohn, in the *Wall Street Journal*, called MTT, now in his 18th season as Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony, "an indefatigable champion of American music." In his first season as Music Director, Tilson Thomas included an American work on nearly every one of his San Francisco Symphony programs, and ended the season with *An American Festival*, a groundbreaking two-week celebration of American music and precursor to the 2000 and 2012 *American Mavericks* festivals. The *American Mavericks* festival has become an icon of American orchestral music. In Spring 2012, as part of the San Francisco Symphony's 2011-2012 Centennial Season, the festival featured, in addition to the works on this release, fully staged performances of John Cage's *Songbooks* with Meredith Monk, Jessye Norman, and Joan LaBarbara and four world premieres by composers Mason Bates, John Adams, Meredith Monk, and Morton Subotnick, in performances both in San Francisco and on tour to Ann Arbor, Chicago, and at Carnegie Hall in New York City. In the *New Yorker* Alex Ross opined, "Tilson Thomas's crusade on behalf of what he calls 'American Mavericks' tradition is among the finest things that he or any conductor has undertaken in recent years." Starring the work of composers whose art influenced and changed the face of American music-making, the spirit of the festival is a hallmark of the San Francisco Symphony's artistic values. Resources about the *American Maverick* composers is at americanmavericks.org and a blog documenting the 2012 festival can be found at americanmavericks.org/blog.

[A book about the first American Mavericks festival of 2000](#) published by the University of California Press is available from the San Francisco Symphony Store.

The San Francisco Symphony's recording series on SFS Media reflects the artistic identity of its programming, including its commitment to performing the work of maverick composers alongside that of the core classical masterworks. Later this season, MTT and the SFS are scheduled to release a new recording of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 recorded at the close of their Centennial Season in 2012.

All SFS Media recordings are available from the Symphony Store in Davies Symphony Hall and online at sfsymphony.org/store as well as other major retailers. The recordings can also be purchased as downloads from iTunes, Amazon and other digital outlets. SFS Media recordings are distributed by harmonia mundi U.S., SRI in Canada, Avie Records internationally, and by IODA to digital outlets.

Title: *American Mavericks*

Composers: Henry Cowell (1897-1965), Lou Harrison (1917-2003), Edgard Varèse (1883-1965)

Artists: Michael Tilson Thomas, Conductor
Jeremy Denk, piano
Paul Jacobs, organ
San Francisco Symphony

Recorded: Piano Concerto, Concerto for Organ with Percussion Orchestra and *Amériques* recorded at Davies Symphony Hall March 3-17, 2012. *Synchrony* recorded at Davies Symphony Hall, December 8-10, 2010.

Label: SFS Media

Catalogue Number: SFS0056

Release Date: November 13, 2012
Available for pre-order digitally from [Apple's iTunes Music Store](#) and on disc from the [Symphony Store](#) beginning October 23, 2012

Distribution: harmonia mundi (U.S.)
SRI (Canada)
Avie (International)
IODA (Digital)
Online: sfsymphony.org/store

Media copies: If members of the press would like a copy of the recording for review, please contact Shuman Associates at shumanpr@shumanassociates.net or Louisa Spier at lspier@sfsymphony.org.

