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SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY JANUARY 2025 PROGRAMMING

Orchestral Series Concerts

January 9–11 James Gaffigan leads the Orchestra in a program featuring Samuel Barber's Violin Concerto, performed by Ray Chen, Missy Mazzoli's *Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)*, and Sergei Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5

January 16 & 18–19 David Robertson conducts the world premiere of John Adams' *After the Fall* with pianist Víkingur Ólafsson and Carl Orff's *Carmina burana* with soprano Susanna Phillips, tenor Arnold Livingston Geis, baritone Will Liverman, the San Francisco Girls Chorus, and the San Francisco Symphony Chorus

January 24–25 Mark Elder makes his Orchestral Series debut in a program featuring Richard Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra* and works by John Adams, Hector Berlioz, and Claude Debussy

January 30–February 1 Conductor Laureate Herbert Blomstedt returns to conduct Franz Schubert's Symphony No. 5 and Johannes Brahms' Symphony No. 1

Family-Friendly Programming

January 18 Resident Conductor of Engagement and Education Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser leads the Orchestra in a Music for Families concert

Chamber Music Series

January 26 SF Symphony musicians present a chamber program

SoundBox

January 31–February 1 SoundBox returns, curated by composer and pianist Courtney Bryan

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—The San Francisco Symphony’s January programming lineup features four Orchestral Series programs led by guest conductors. On January 9–11, James Gaffigan conducts the first San Francisco Symphony performances of Missy Mazzoli’s *Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)*, as well as Samuel Barber’s Violin Concerto with Ray Chen and Sergei Prokofiev’s Symphony No. 5. On January 16 & 18–19, David Robertson leads the Orchestra in Charles Ives’ *The Unanswered Question*, the world premiere of John Adams’ *After the Fall* with pianist Víkingur Ólafsson, and Carl Orff’s *Carmina burana* with soprano Susanna Phillips, tenor Arnold Livingston Geis, baritone Will Liverman, the San Francisco Girls Chorus, and the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. On January 24–25, Mark Elder makes his Orchestral Series debut conducting Hector Berlioz’s Overture to *Les frances-juges* and the first San Francisco Symphony performances of *Le roi Lear* Overture, Claude Debussy’s *Prélude à L’Après-midi d’un faune*, Richard Strauss’ *Also sprach Zarathustra*, and John Adams’ *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*. On January 30–February 1, Conductor Laureate Herbert Blomstedt returns to the San Francisco Symphony to conduct Franz Schubert’s Symphony No. 5 and Johannes Brahms’ Symphony No. 1.

The month also features Resident Conductor of Engagement and Education Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser conducting a sci-fi themed Music for Families concert on January 18. SF Symphony musicians perform a chamber program, featuring works by Arnold Bax, Benjamin Britten, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, and Camille Saint-Saëns on January 26. Composer and pianist Courtney Bryan curates a SoundBox concert with SF Symphony musicians on January 31–February 1.



Orchestral Series

January 9–11: James Gaffigan & Ray Chen

James Gaffigan, General Music Director of Komische Oper Berlin and Music Director of the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia, conducts the first San Francisco Symphony performances of Missy Mazzoli’s *Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)*, which the composer describes as “music in the shape of a solar system, a collection of rococo loops that twist around each other within a larger orbit.” Violinist Ray Chen joins Gaffigan and the Orchestra to perform Samuel Barber’s lyrical and openhearted Violin Concerto, perhaps the most enduring American violin concerto yet composed. The program closes with Symphony No. 5 by Sergei Prokofiev, written during the final phase of World War II. Prokofiev wrote about the piece, “I conceived of it as glorifying the grandeur of the human spirit, praising the free and happy man—his strength, his generosity, and the purity of his soul.”

January 16 & 18–19: *Carmina burana* & Adams’ Piano Concerto

David Robertson, Director of Conducting Studies, Distinguished Visiting Faculty at the Juilliard School and former Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony, leads the Orchestra in Charles Ives’ existential and experimental *The Unanswered Question*. Pianist Víkingur Ólafsson joins Robertson and the Orchestra to perform the world premiere of John Adams’ piano concerto

After the Fall, inspired in part by Ólafsson's Bach performances. This marks the ninth work that the San Francisco Symphony has commissioned from Adams, who has collaborated closely with the Orchestra for more than 45 years. "Vikingur has a special affinity for my music," said John Adams. "*After the Fall* was written with his extraordinary gifts in mind. He is one of the great Bach pianists of our time, so it's no surprise that a 'presence' of Bach prevails in parts of this new concerto." The concerto's title, *After the Fall*, is a nod to another piano concerto, *No Such Spring*, written by Adams' son Samuel Carl Adams. Esa-Pekka Salonen and the SF Symphony premiered *No Such Spring* with pianist Conor Hanick in 2023. "I was so overwhelmed by it that I really didn't think I could ever write another piano concerto," Adams recalls. "So the title is partly a tip of the hat to Sam's piece: there is no such spring after the fall."

The second half of the program is devoted to Carl Orff's iconic choral work *Carmina burana* with soprano Susanna Phillips, tenor Arnold Livingston Geis, baritone Will Liverman, the San Francisco Girls Chorus, and the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. Geis and Liverman both make their Orchestral Series debuts in this program.

January 24–25: *Also sprach Zarathustra*

Mark Elder, Conductor Emeritus of the Hallé, makes his Orchestral Series debut conducting Richard Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra*, known for its instantly recognizable opening trumpet fanfare. The program also includes Overture to *Les frances-juges*, from an unfinished opera by Hector Berlioz; Claude Debussy's sensual symphonic poem *Prélude à L'Après-midi d'un faune*; and the first San Francisco Symphony performances of Berlioz's *Le roi Lear* Overture. The program closes with John Adams' thrilling *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*.

January 30–February 1: Blomstedt Conducts Schubert & Brahms

Conductor Laureate Herbert Blomstedt returns to the San Francisco Symphony to conduct Franz Schubert's optimistic Symphony No. 5, inspired by the works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Joseph Haydn. The program also features Johannes Brahms' Symphony No. 1, which the composer worked on for more than 20 years. The Symphony reflects Brahms' deep admiration for Ludwig van Beethoven.



Family-Friendly Programming

January 18: Music for Families

Resident Conductor of Engagement and Education Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser conducts a sci-fi themed Music for Families program, featuring programming to be announced. This concert is best suited for children ages 5–12.

Chamber Music Series

January 26: Chamber Music at Davies Symphony Hall

In this chamber music concert, San Francisco Symphony musicians perform Arnold Bax's Quintet for Oboe and String; Camille Saint-Saëns' *Fantaisie* for Violin and Harp; Benjamin Britten's Two Pieces for Violin, Viola, and Piano; and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's Clarinet Quintet.

SoundBox

January 31–February 1: SoundBox: Courtney Bryan

Composer and pianist Courtney Bryan presents a SoundBox concert of music by contemporary Afrodiasporic composers from the United States, the Caribbean, South America, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. Bryan writes, "There is a wide range of musical voices represented in the program, and many of the works reference moments of history within the African diaspora, honor Black writers and other cultural figures, or include topics of race, immigration, and other sociopolitical concerns." Taking place in a backstage rehearsal space at Davies Symphony Hall, each SoundBox performance is unique—encompassing shifting stage settings, art installations, projection screens, and unexpected elements, featuring original lighting design by Luke Kritzeck and video design by Adam Larsen. Since its debut in 2014, SoundBox has been widely recognized for its creative approach to the orchestral medium and its ability to galvanize a diverse demographic.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Tickets:

Tickets for concerts at Davies Symphony Hall can be purchased via sfsymphony.org or by calling the San Francisco Symphony Box Office at 415.864.6000.

Location:

Davies Symphony Hall is located at 201 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAL SERIES

James Gaffigan & Ray Chen

Thursday, January 9, 2025, at 10:00am [Open Rehearsal]

Thursday, January 9, 2025, at 7:30pm

Friday, January 10, 2025, at 7:30pm

Saturday, January 11, 2025, at 7:30pm

James Gaffigan conductor

Ray Chen violin

San Francisco Symphony

MISSY MAZZOLI *Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)* [First San Francisco Symphony Performances]

SAMUEL BARBER Violin Concerto

SERGEI PROKOFIEV Symphony No. 5

Tickets: \$30–199

Ticket link: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2024-25/JamesGaffigan-RayChen>

Prerehearsal talk: Thursday, January 9 from 9:00am–9:30am: A prerehearsal talk by Laura Prichard will be presented from the stage. Free to all ticketholders.

Broadcast / Archived Stream: A broadcast of these performances will air Sunday, February 2, at 7:00pm on Classical KDFC 90.3 San Francisco, 104.9 San Jose, 89.9 Napa, and [kdfc.com](https://www.kdfc.com) where it will be available for on-demand streaming for 21 days following the broadcast.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAL SERIES

***Carmina burana* & Adams' Piano Concerto**

Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 10:00am [Open Rehearsal]

Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 7:30pm

Saturday, January 18, 2025, at 7:30pm

Sunday, January 19, 2025, at 2:00pm

David Robertson conductor

Víkingur Ólafsson piano

Susanna Phillips soprano

Arnold Livingston Geis tenor [Orchestral Series Debut]

Will Liverman baritone [Orchestral Series Debut]

San Francisco Girls Chorus, Valérie Sainte-Agathe artistic director

San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Jenny Wong director

San Francisco Symphony

CHARLES IVES *The Unanswered Question*

JOHN ADAMS *After the Fall* [San Francisco Symphony Commission and World Premiere]

CARL ORFF *Carmina burana*

Tickets: \$49–199

Ticket link: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2024-25/carmina-burana>

Prerehearsal talk: Thursday, January 16 from 9:00am–9:30am: A prerehearsal talk by Sarah Cahill will be presented from the stage. Free to all ticketholders.

Broadcast / Archived Stream: A broadcast of these performances will air Sunday, February 9, at 7:00pm on Classical KDFC 90.3 San Francisco, 104.9 San Jose, 89.9 Napa, and [kdfc.com](https://www.kdfc.com) where it will be available for on-demand streaming for 21 days following the broadcast.

MUSIC FOR FAMILIES

Saturday, January 18, 2025, at 2:00pm

Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser conductor
San Francisco Symphony

Tickets: \$22.50–79

Ticket link: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2024-25/music-for-families-jan>

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAL SERIES

Also sprach Zarathustra

Friday, January 24, 2025, at 7:30pm

Saturday, January 25, 2025, at 7:30pm

Mark Elder conductor [Orchestral Series Debut]
San Francisco Symphony

HECTOR BERLIOZ Overture to *Les francs-juges*

CLAUDE DEBUSSY *Prélude à L'Après-midi d'un faune*

HECTOR BERLIOZ *Le roi Lear* Overture [First San Francisco Symphony Performances]

RICHARD STRAUSS *Also sprach Zarathustra*

JOHN ADAMS *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*

Tickets: \$30–179

Ticket link: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2024-25/zarathustra>

Broadcast / Archived Stream: A broadcast of these performances will air Sunday, February 16, at 7:00pm on Classical KDFC 90.3 San Francisco, 104.9 San Jose, 89.9 Napa, and [kdfc.com](https://www.kdfc.com) where it will be available for on-demand streaming for 21 days following the broadcast.

CHAMBER SERIES

Davies Symphony Hall

Sunday, January 26, 2025, at 2:00pm

Dan Carlson violin

Olivia Chen violin

Florin Parvulescu violin

Polina Sedukh violin

Katarzyna Bryla viola

Leonid Plashinov-Johnson viola

Sébastien Gingras cello

Davis You cello
Yubeen Kim flute
Yuhsin Galaxy Su clarinet
Russ de Luna oboe
Katherine Siochi harp
Marc Shapiro piano

ARNOLD BAX Quintet for Oboe and Strings

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS *Fantaisie* for Violin and Harp

BENJAMIN BRITTEN Two Pieces for Violin, Viola, and Piano

SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR Clarinet Quintet, Opus 10

Tickets: \$50

Ticket link: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2024-25/Chamber-at-Davies-Jan>

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAL SERIES

Blomstedt Conducts Schubert & Brahms

Thursday, January 30, 2025, at 2:00pm

Friday, January 31, 2025, at 7:30pm

Saturday, February 1, 2025, at 7:30pm

Herbert Blomstedt conductor
San Francisco Symphony

FRANZ SCHUBERT Symphony No. 5

JOHANNES BRAHMS Symphony No. 1

Tickets: \$30–179

Ticket link: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2024-25/blomstedt-brahms1>

Preconcert talk: Thursday, January 30 from 1:00pm–1:30pm: A preconcert talk by Scott Foglesong will be presented from the stage. Free to all ticketholders.

Broadcast / Archived Stream: A broadcast of these performances will air Sunday, February 23, at 7:00pm on Classical KDFC 90.3 San Francisco, 104.9 San Jose, 89.9 Napa, and [kdfc.com](https://www.kdfc.com) where it will be available for on-demand streaming for 21 days following the broadcast.

SOUNDBOX

Friday, January 31, 2025, at 8:30pm

Saturday, February 1, 2025, at 8:30pm

Courtney Bryan curator
San Francisco Symphony

Tickets: \$80

Ticket link: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2024-25/soundbox-courtney-bryan>

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Open rehearsals are endowed by a bequest from The Estate of Katharine Hanrahan.

The Music for Families Series is supported by Chevron.

The commissioning of John Adams' After the Fall for Víkingur Ólafsson is supported by the Ralph I. Dorfman Commissioning Fund.

The January 16 & 18-19 concerts are generously sponsored by Claudine Cheng.

Susanna Phillips' performance is made possible by the Mrs. George J. Otto Memorial Vocalist Fund.

Thursday matinee concerts are endowed by a gift in memory of Rhoda Goldman.

SoundBox concerts curated by Courtney Bryan are generously sponsored by the Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Endowment for New Music.

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