



## About the San Francisco Symphony

### Long biography

The San Francisco Symphony is among the most adventurous and innovative arts institutions in the United States, celebrated for its artistic excellence, creative performance concepts, award-winning recordings, and standard-setting education and community engagement programs. Since it was established in 1911, the Symphony has grown in acclaim under a succession of distinguished music directors: Henry Hadley, Alfred Hertz, Basil Cameron, Issay Dobrowen, Pierre Monteux, Enrique Jordá, Josef Krips, Seiji Ozawa, Edo de Waart, Herbert Blomstedt, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

The San Francisco Symphony presents more than 200 concerts and presentations annually for an audience of nearly 350,000 in its home of Davies Symphony Hall and around the Bay Area. As a cornerstone of the organization's mission, the San Francisco Symphony provides some of the most extensive education and community programs offered by any American orchestra. The Symphony's free music education experiences engage students in grades 1–12 throughout the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), serving more than 25,000 students annually. The Fisher Family Adventures in Music (AIM) program, one of the longest-running education programs of its kind in the country since its launch in 1988, serves every child in grades 1–5 in San Francisco's public schools. The Music and Mentors program supports SFUSD band and orchestra students in grades 6–12, offering weekly coaching sessions with professional musicians, as well as providing instrument supplies and concert tickets. The Symphony's online educational resources include a variety of digital programs that offer lessons and activities designed to support schools and promote music education at home.

The Symphony's Community Engagement programs aim to serve, enrich, and reflect the Bay Area community, with a robust lineup of year-round events and programs that are dynamic, diverse, and accessible to all. These include the All San Francisco Concert, a 45-year-strong tradition celebrating the people who work tirelessly to make the Bay Area a more just and equitable place; Music in the Wards, which brings SF Symphony musicians to UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital to perform monthly concerts; the free Community Chamber Concerts series, which partners with a broad range of organizations to bring small ensemble concerts to Bay Area communities; Día de los Muertos, an annual concert program of traditional and contemporary Latin American music, preceded by a festive array of family-friendly activities; and Deck the Hall Community Day, an annual holiday concert performed for young people in Davies Symphony Hall every December. The San Francisco Symphony's Community Ticket Program, which provides an average of more than 12,000 free tickets to community partners, essential workers, and fellow San Franciscans and Bay Area residents throughout the season, is designed to provide equitable access to the Orchestra's concerts for members of our San Francisco Bay Area community.

Innovation is a central theme of the San Francisco Symphony's artistic vision and programming initiatives. In 2001, the SF Symphony became the first American orchestra to launch its own in-house record label, SFS Media. Recorded live in concert and engineered at Davies Symphony Hall, SFS Media recordings showcase music by contemporary composers as well as core classical masterworks. San Francisco Symphony radio broadcasts, the first in the nation to feature symphonic music when they began in 1926, today carry the Orchestra's concerts across the country. In 2004, the SF Symphony launched the groundbreaking multimedia *Keeping Score* series on PBS-TV and the web; the series was made available for unlimited free streaming on the Symphony's YouTube channel in 2020. In 2014, the San Francisco Symphony inaugurated SoundBox, an experimental and eclectic live music series, which takes place in an alternative performance space located backstage at Davies Symphony Hall. In recent seasons the Symphony and Esa-Pekka Salonen expanded the Symphony's slate of original video content and experiences, producing all-new digital SoundBox programs, the CURRENTS series, chamber music performances, educational content, and other signature digital projects, such as Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* and *LIGETI: PARADIGMS*. For its adventurous programming, the Symphony has been honored 19 times by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, and the Symphony's recordings have garnered France's Grand Prix du Disque and Britain's *Gramophone* Award, as well as 17 Grammy® Awards.

During Esa-Pekka Salonen's tenure, the San Francisco Symphony released several digital audio recordings, including Nico Muhly's *Throughline*, released on SFS Media in August 2021 which featured San Francisco Symphony musicians and eight Collaborative Partners; and Kev Choice's *Movements*, released on SFS Media in September 2021. In 2023, Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony partnered with Apple for the launch of a new classical music streaming app, Apple Music Classical, and has since released 15 spatial audio recordings of live concert performances through the app. In September 2023, Salonen and the Symphony also released a new album recording of Béla Bartók's three piano concertos with Pierre-Laurent Aimard on PENTATONE, and in August 2024 they released the world premiere recording of Kaija Saariaho's *Adriana Mater* on Deutsche Grammophon, which won the 2025 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording.