

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS

Conductor

Michael Tilson Thomas is Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony, Founder and Artistic Director of the New World Symphony and Principal Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra. Born in Los Angeles, he is the third generation of his family to follow an artistic career. He began his formal studies at the University of Southern California where he studied piano with John Crown and conducting and composition with Ingolf Dahl. He worked with Stravinsky, Boulez, Stockhausen and Copland on premieres of their compositions at Los Angeles' Monday Evening Concerts. During this same period he was the pianist and conductor for Gregor Piatigorsky and Jascha Heifetz.

In 1969, after winning the Koussevitzky Prize at Tanglewood, he was appointed Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. That year he also made his New York debut with the Boston Symphony and gained international recognition after replacing Music Director William Steinberg in mid-concert. He was later appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra where he remained until 1974. He was Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic from 1971 to 1979 and a Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic from 1981 to 1985.

As Principal Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra from 1988 to 1995, Mr. Tilson Thomas led the orchestra on regular tours in Europe, the United States and Japan as well as at the Salzburg Festival. He has toured with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in Denmark and Germany, in addition to performing with them in Vienna. He has performed and recorded with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and opened the Schleswig Holstein Festival with NDR Hamburg. In Europe this year he will appear with the London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, the Munich and Stockholm Philharmonics and Accademia di Santa Cecilia.

His recorded repertoire of more than 120 discs includes works by composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Mahler, Prokofiev and Stravinsky as well as his pioneering work with the music of Charles Ives, Carl Ruggles, Steve Reich, John Cage, Ingolf Dahl, Morton Feldman, George Gershwin, John McLaughlin and Elvis Costello. He is currently recording the complete orchestral works of Gustav Mahler with the San Francisco Symphony.

Mr. Tilson Thomas's extensive television work includes a series with the London Symphony Orchestra for BBC Television, the television broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic Young People's Concerts from 1971 to 1977 and numerous productions on PBS Great Performances. Starting in 2004 Mr. Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony have embarked on a multi-tiered media project – *Keeping Score* – which includes television, web sites, radio programs and programs in the schools, all designed to make classical music more accessible to a new audience.

In February 1988 he inaugurated the New World Symphony, an orchestral academy for the most gifted graduates of America's music conservatories. New World Symphony graduates have gone on to major positions in orchestras worldwide. In 1991 Mr. Tilson Thomas and the orchestra were presented in a series of benefit concerts for UNICEF in the United States, featuring Audrey Hepburn as narrator of *From the Diary of Anne Frank*, composed by Mr. Tilson Thomas and commissioned by UNICEF. This piece has since been translated and performed in many languages worldwide.

Among his compositions he has written pieces for Renee Fleming (Poems of Emily Dickinson) Thomas Hampson (Poem of Walt Whitman), for the Empire Brass Quintet (Street Song) and the Pacific Music Festival Orchestra (*Showa/Shoah*, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.)

Mr. Tilson Thomas is a Chevalier dans l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France, has won seven Grammy Awards for his recordings and in 2008 received the Peabody Award for his radio series "The MTT Files."

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