



Columbia Artists Management Salutes Michael Tilson Thomas!

**President Barack Obama today presented the
National Medal of Arts to Michael Tilson Thomas!**

**Ceremony Video: <http://arts.gov/news/news10/Medals.html>
News Link: <http://arts.gov/news/news10/Medals/thomas.html>**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 24 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ - *Speaker Nancy Pelosi released the following statement on Michael Tilson Thomas, Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony, who will be awarded the National Medal of Arts today by President Barack Obama. Speaker Pelosi nominated Thomas for the honor.*

"Michael Tilson Thomas has brought pride to all San Franciscans as President Obama honors him as a recipient of a National Medal of Arts. Thomas has been a remarkable mentor and supporter to many young artists, and he has educated millions about the joy of music. His tenure at the San Francisco Symphony has been marked by artistic excellence.

"President John F. Kennedy once said: 'The life of the arts - far from being an interruption in the life of a nation - is very close to the center of a nation's purpose.' As we recognize Michael Tilson Thomas and other artists, we honor them for enriching our lives, our country, and our world with their creativity."
SOURCE Office of the Speaker of the House

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MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS WINS NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS

Nation's Highest Award for Artistic Achievement Presented Thursday by President Barack Obama in White House Ceremony

(Washington, D.C.-February 25, 2010) Michael Tilson Thomas (MTT), Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony, Founder and Artistic Director of the New World Symphony, America's Orchestral Academy, and Principal Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, has been awarded the National Medal of Arts, the nation's highest award for artistic achievement. The award was presented by President Barack Obama at a ceremony in the East Room of the White House, where Tilson Thomas was recognized for his contributions to American culture.

"I am grateful to have the opportunity to share the deep and ongoing tradition of classical music with all Americans," said Tilson Thomas. "I receive this award with gratitude to President Obama, the National Endowment for the Arts and to my many musical colleagues throughout the country whose devotion makes all this possible. I especially want to thank the San Francisco Symphony and the New World Symphony families for our special collaborations over these many years."

Michael Tilson Thomas is acclaimed as a conductor, composer and educator. Currently in his 15th season as music director of the San Francisco Symphony, he is also the Founder and Artistic Director of the New World Symphony, the premier orchestral academy for gifted young musicians. With a background that includes grandparents, Boris and Bessie Thomashefsky, founding members of the

Yiddish Theater in America, and working relationships with legendary composers of the 20th century, such as Igor Stravinsky, Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein, MTT's wide ranging perspectives on music have won him respect and trust among musicians and audiences worldwide.

He conducts and has recorded musical works ranging from Bach, Tchaikovsky and Beethoven to Gershwin, Ives, Reich and Elvis Costello. The recordings of the complete Mahler symphony cycle by MTT and the San Francisco Symphony have been recognized with seven Grammys, including three this year for *Symphony No. 8*.

MTT's commitment to music education is longstanding. He was Director of the New York Philharmonic's *Young People's Concerts* from 1971 to 1977, helped to create the *Discovery Series* with the London Symphony Orchestra and is currently creating the *Keeping Score* Project with the San Francisco Symphony. *Keeping Score* includes the nationally televised PBS series, radio programming, interactive websites and a K-12 education program, all designed to make classical music more accessible to people of all ages and musical backgrounds. His *Keeping Score* radio series, *The MTT Files*, won a Peabody Award in 2008.

In 1987, he founded the New World Symphony (NWS) - an orchestral academy dedicated to the artistic, personal and professional development of outstanding young instrumentalists. There, in addition to a full season of master classes and concerts, he employs *Internet2* technology to bring conductors, soloists and coaches from across the globe into virtual collaboration with NWS fellows. Hundreds of NWS alumni are working in 175 professional orchestras around the world. A new Frank Gehry-designed campus will open in Miami Beach in January 2011.

MTT served as artistic director of the *YouTube* Symphony Orchestra (YTSO), a 96-member ensemble selected from 3,000 video auditions created by musicians from 30 countries and all walks of life and the first orchestra auditioned entirely online. He conducted the YTSO in April 2009 at a Carnegie Hall concert, which received global coverage.

He has won ten Grammys for his recordings and is a *Chevalier dans l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres* of France. He has been named by *Musical America* as both "Musician of the Year" and "Conductor of the Year" and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

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