

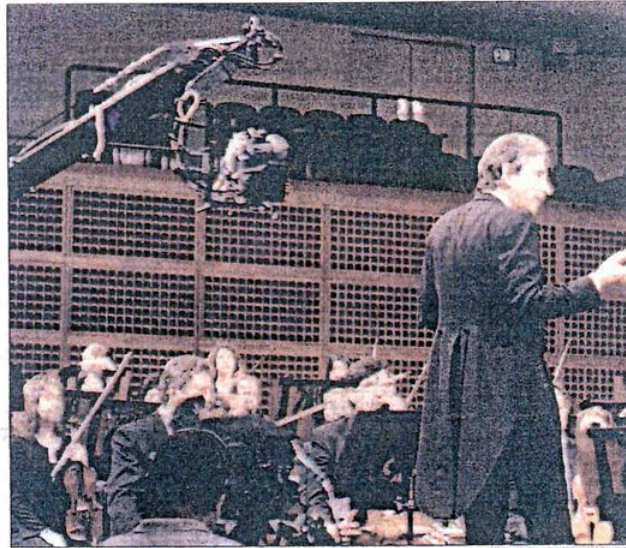
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Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony during the filming of a segment of "Keeping Score," which combines TV, the Web and school classes to widen knowledge of classical music.

STEFAN COHEN — SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

Getting classics into the classroom

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY GOES ONLINE, ON TV TO WIDEN MUSIC APPRECIATION

By Mark de la Vito
Mercury News

Roll over Beethoven and e-mail Tchaikovsky the news. Classical music has entered the digital age and conductor Michael Tilson Thomas is leading the charge.

Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony are embarking on the latest, most ambitious leg of a multimedia program called "Keeping Score." The goal is to make classical music accessible to everyone, and they are spreading the message through TV, radio, the Internet and an educational program in schools.

The latest phase of "Keeping Score" makes its season premiere at 10 p.m. Thursday on KQED (Ch. 9). The KQED-sponsored show will air on 230 PBS stations. San Jose-based KTEH (Ch. 54), now in fundraising mode, will broadcast "Keeping Score" in December or January.

"Keeping Score" expands on the San Francisco Symphony's family concerts and its longstanding tradition of reaching out to novices as much as experienced listeners, Tilson Thomas says.

"It came out of the notion of taking that further, of using the media in



A page at www.keeping-score.org helps users explore the musical notation of Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major.

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SCORE | Expanding classical knowledge

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a creative way and building up an archive or destination where it was possible for people to explore ideas in the music at their own pace," says Tilson Thomas, music director of the San Francisco Symphony.

The first of three episodes focuses on Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony. The show, shot in Austria, charts how the composer's deafness and Vienna's aristocratic culture shaped what became a rule-shattering piece of enduring music. Upcoming episodes will look at Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring" and explore how composer Aaron Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man" influenced American music.

A San Francisco Symphony concert performance of "Eroica" will air at 1 p.m. Sunday on KQED.

The "Keeping Score" Web site (www.keeping-score.org) operates

like a multimedia encyclopedia. Users can deconstruct the measures on a page of sheet music, listen to orchestra members explain musical keys and motifs, and examine the stories and historical context of the piece.

Click the "markup" button on a Web page about the first movement of "Eroica," and a clip of Tilson Thomas materializes, asking, "What can a chord like this be saying? It's saying anger. It's saying sadness. It's saying something like this can be lost."

Bill Meredith, director of the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies at San Jose State University, is among the musicians, academics and authorities featured on this illuminating Web site.

The "Keeping Score" initiative also includes:

■ Eight one-hour radio episodes co-produced by American Public Me-

dia, which will air in January.
■ DVD releases of the TV episodes, with corresponding concert videos, available at www.sfsymphony.org.
■ An educational program that several school districts, including San Jose Unified, have made available to students this year.

Rick Carreiro, a science and math teacher for the San Jose High Plus

Program at San Jose High Academy, is one of eight instructors in the district who have incorporated "Keeping Score" into their teaching. He uses the curriculum in a lesson on earthquakes, which shows students how they can develop a tune by placing musical notes at points on the printout of a seismographic reading.

"The energy and the positive quality of it all was just infectious," Carreiro says of "Keeping Score." "As a teacher, I need to recharge my batteries, and it recharged my interest in music."

"Keeping Score" began in 2004 as an episode of PBS's "Great Performances." Tilson Thomas, playing the music-appreciation role, dissected Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. Paired with a broadcast of the San

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SCORE | Symphony reaches out to novices

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Francisco Symphony performing the piece, it began what was initially a five-year project that since has expanded to include three new episodes in 2005 and three more in 2010.

Tilson Thomas, who has been actively involved with every aspect of the project, says the TV episodes are the first step for the curious to delve into the deeper meaning of Beethoven, Stravinsky and Copland's music. Regardless of the media he and the symphony use to reach out, they all have allowed him to expand his four-decades-long commitment to spreading the classical music gospel.

"I'm trying to intensify the identification that people have with this great tradition," he says. "As a classical musician, I really do feel I'm part of a very long tradition of people caring about this music and growing it and developing it and passing its message on. This is a moment for me to pass it on."

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KEEPING SCORE

Concerts of "Keeping Score" include:
■ The PBS series, which airs at 10 p.m. Thursdays on KQED (Ch. 9). Upcoming episodes will examine Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony (Nov. 2), Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring" (Nov. 9) and the legacy of Aaron Copland (Nov. 16).

■ Broadcast concert performances by the San Francisco Symphony on KQED. "Eroica" will air at 1 p.m. Sunday and Copland and Stravinsky in concert will air at 1 p.m. Nov. 12.

■ The Web site, which uses an expansive, multimedia approach to dig deeper into the subjects of the three episodes, at www.keeping-score.org.

■ Eight one-hour radio episodes co-produced by American Public Media, which begin airing in January 2007.

■ The DVDs of both the "Keeping Score" series and the concerts are available at www.sfsymphony.org.

■ An educational program for students, from live performances to seven-year-to-high school. School districts in San Jose, Milpitas, Cupertino, Fremont, Redwood City, and other cities have adopted it.

— Mark de la Vito