Edwin Outwater
Conductor / Curator / Producer

Edwin Outwater is redefining the concert experience as a groundbreaking conductor, curator, and producer, known for his dynamic approach and genre-blending collaborations. Working with a wide range of artists from Metallica to Wynton Marsalis, Renée Fleming, and Yo-Yo Ma, Outwater’s creative vision and ability to seamlessly navigate between musical worlds has made him one of the most sought-after conductors, with the legendary Michael Tilson Thomas aptly describing him as “one of the most innovative conductors on the scene today.”

Outwater currently serves as Music Director of San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he leads their ensembles and oversees the institution’s bold artistic initiatives. From September 2024, he takes on an additional role as Principal Guest Conductor and Curator of BBC Concert Orchestra, working closely with the orchestra’s Director to deliver an exciting range of concerts, community and education work over the next three seasons. His legacy as Music Director Laureate of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, where he served from 2007-2017, remains influential, marked by global recognition through international tours, collaborations, and the critically acclaimed recording *From Here On Out*.

Outwater’s recent high-profile engagements include appearances at major orchestras including New York Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Royal Philharmonic, where he headlined a multi-concert series at the grand opening of Steinmetz Hall in Florida. His collaborations extend to stars such as Diana Ross, Beck, Trey Anastasio, Leslie Odom Jr., and Lang Lang. As producer and Musical Advisor for National Symphony Orchestra’s 50th Anniversary Concert at the Kennedy Center, he shared the stage with artists including Audra McDonald, Christian McBride, and Common.

A regular at the iconic BBC Proms, Outwater made a memorable debut in 2022 alongside Cynthia Erivo. He has since returned to lead standout performances such as the Northern Soul Prom in 2023 and ‘Ultra Lounge: Henry Mancini and Beyond’ in 2024. His international presence has extended to top-tier orchestras including Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony, Mexico City Philharmonic, and Brussels Philharmonic, as well as key Canadian symphonies in Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, and beyond.

Outwater’s artistic reach transcends traditional classical performances. In collaboration with drag icon Peaches Christ, he co-hosts and conducts wildly inventive productions that combine pop culture, musical theater, and drag. Their Halloween-themed concert, *Symphony of Terror*, premiered with Vancouver Symphony in 2022, and their festive favorite *Holiday Gaiety* has become a staple at the San Francisco Symphony since 2018, with further premieres at Royal Albert Hall and the Glasshouse Gateshead. Since 2021, Outwater has been the lead conductor for Stewart Copeland’s *Police Deranged for Orchestra* concerts, conducting major ensembles such as San Diego Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, and Utah Symphony. He also spearheaded the ’Coltrane: Legacy for Orchestra’ project, which premiered with the Toronto Symphony in 2024, and will soon be performed with the BBC Concert Orchestra and Boston Symphony.

His long-standing partnership with San Francisco Symphony continues to flourish, with recent performances alongside Sting, Seth MacFarlane, and Ben Folds. Outwater’s prolific recording career includes the 2024 release of *Rhapsody in Blue Reimagined* with pianist Lara Downes, as well as his contributions to *GRACE: The Music of Michael Tilson Thomas* and his co-production on Stewart Copeland’s *Police Deranged for Orchestra* and *Police Beyond Borders*. His work on the GRAMMY-winning *Philharmonia Fantastique* with the Chicago Symphony and collaborations with Metallica’s Kirk Hammett on *Portals* highlight his versatile musicianship.

A native of Santa Monica, California, Outwater graduated cum laude from Harvard University, where he directed the Bach Society Orchestra and contributed music to the Hasty Pudding Theatricals. He later earned his conducting degree from UC Santa Barbara, studying under Heiichiro Ohyama and Paul Polivnick, alongside music theory and composition with noted figures like John Stewart and Leonard Stein.