Jean-Yves Thibaudet

Long Bio

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Through elegant musicality and an insightful approach to both contemporary and established repertoire, Jean-Yves Thibaudet has earned a reputation as one of the world’s finest pianists. He is especially known for his diverse interests beyond the classical world; in addition to his many forays into jazz and opera—including works which he transcribed himself for the piano—Thibaudet has forged profound friendships around the globe, leading to fruitful collaborations in film, fashion, and visual art. He is a devoted educator and the first-ever Artist-in-Residence at the Colburn School, which awards several scholarships in his name.

Thibaudet opens the 2025–26 season with Saint-Saëns’s Piano Concerto No. 5 with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam and in Bucharest; he later brings the piece to the Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège, Houston Symphony, National Arts Centre Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. He performs the Saint-Saëns, alongside Guillaume Connesson’s *The Shining One*—composed specifically for Thibaudet—with the Bern Symphony Orchestra. A major contemporary champion of Khachaturian’s Piano Concerto, which he recently recorded for Decca, Thibaudet performs the piece with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and New York Philharmonic in November.

In January, Thibaudet bookends the LA Phil’s *Body and Sound* festival with two multisensory works—Scriabin’s *Prometheus, the Poem of Fire* and Messiaen’s *Turangalîla-Symphonie—*before joining the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra for the world premiere of a new piano concerto by Aaron Jay Kernis. He journeys to Australia to perform Qigang Chen’s *Er Huang* and Gershwin’s *Variations on “I Got Rhythm”* with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, followed by Gershwin’s Concerto in F with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra—a piece he later brings to the Gothenburg Symphony. He joins the New World Symphony for Leonard Bernstein’s Symphony No. 2, “The Age of Anxiety” before closing his 2025–26 season with the piece at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

In addition to his orchestral dates, Thibaudet joins violinist Lisa Batiashvili and cellist Gautier Capuçon on a fall trio tour, with stops throughout western Europe; Thibaudet and Capuçon reunite in the spring for a duo recital in California. He also continues his multi-season focus on Debussy’s *Préludes*, performing both books in their entirety at recitals around the world.

A prolific recording artist, Jean-Yves Thibaudet has appeared on more than 70 albums and six film scores; his extensive catalog has received two GRAMMY® nominations, two ECHO Awards, the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik, the Diapason d’Or, the CHOC du Monde de la Musique, the Edison Prize, and *Gramophone* awards. Thibaudet’s recent recordings include *Khachaturian*, a celebration of the Armenian composer from his Piano Concerto to his cinematic solo piano works; *Gershwin Rhapsody*, a collection of Gershwin pieces recorded with Michael Feinstein, including four newly-discovered ones; *Night After Night*, a celebration of James Newton Howard’s scores for the films of M. Night Shyamalan; *and Carte Blanche*, a collection of deeply personal solo piano pieces never before recorded by the pianist, including a specially-commissioned suite of music from Dario Marianelli’s *Pride & Prejudice* score arranged by the composer himself.

Thibaudet has also had an impact on the worlds of film, fashion, and philanthropy. His first foray into film work was a pair of Schubert’s Impromptus, Op. 89, recorded for Jane Campion’s 1996 film *The Portrait of a Lady*. *Pride & Prejudic*e—recently reissued in a special 20th-anniversary edition, and certified Gold by the RIAA in 2025—marked his first performance as soloist on an original score; he would collaborate again with Marianelli on his Academy Award®-winning 2007 score for *Atonement*. Thibaudet can also be heard on Alexandre Desplat’s scores for *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2011) and *The French Dispatch* (2021) and Aaron Zigman’s score for *Wakefield* (2016). He also had a cameo in Bruce Beresford's film on Alma Mahler, *Bride of the Wind*, and his playing is showcased throughout. His concert wardrobe is designed by Dame Vivienne Westwood, with whom he shared a close friendship; among her final projects was a custom packaging for a limited vinyl reissue of Thibaudet’s recording of Debussy’s *Préludes*.

Jean-Yves Thibaudet was born in Lyon, France, where he began his piano studies at age five and made his first public appearance at age seven. He was educated at the Paris Conservatory, where he studied with Aldo Ciccolini and Lucette Descaves, a friend and collaborator of Ravel. Among his numerous commendations is the Victoire d’Honneur, a lifetime career achievement award and the highest honor given by France’s Victoires de la Musique. In 2010 the Hollywood Bowl honored Thibaudet for his musical achievements by inducting him into its Hall of Fame. Previously a Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, Thibaudet was awarded the title Officier by the French Ministry of Culture in 2012. In 2020, he was named Special Representative for the promotion of French Creative and Cultural Industries in Romania, and in 2025 he was named a Chevalier of the Ordre de la Légion d’honneur by the French government. He is a co-artistic advisor with Gautier Capuçon of the Festival Musique & Vin au Clos Vougeot in Burgundy.