



PRESS RELEASE

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San Diego Symphony Announces 2026-27 Season

Music and Artistic Director Rafael Payare leads eight programs during the season's 19-week Jacobs Masterworks Series

World-acclaimed guest artists and three SDSO principals make solo appearances, among them Yefim Bronfman, Daniil Trifonov, Simon Trpčeski, Sergey Khachatryan, Sasha Cooke, and Alisa Weilerstein as well as Jeff Thayer, Andrea Overturf, and Julie Phillips

Guest artists making San Diego Symphony debuts include nine soloists and six conductors

Works programmed include 15 SDS debuts, works by four living composers, and the U.S. premiere of a symphony by Composer-in-Residence Jimmy López, co-commissioned by the San Diego Symphony

Special concert: SDS presents the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal with conductor Rafael Payare and violinist Leonidas Kavakos

NEW: Coffee Concerts—three Friday mornings at 11am

Gilbert Castellanos curates three Jazz @ The Jacobs programs celebrating the legacies of legendary jazz artists

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 30, 2026

San Diego, CA (**EMBARGOED UNTIL January 30, 2026**) — The San Diego Symphony announces detailed programs of the **2026-27 Masterworks and Jazz @ The Jacobs series**, the third season in the Symphony's recently renovated indoor home, the Jacobs Music Center. Praised for its beauty and enhanced acoustics by several notable critics from outlets including the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, writer James Jolly from *Gramophone* magazine noted, “the sound is very impressive...the bloom and warmth, coupled with great precision, made for a very satisfying experience.”

Next season the San Diego Symphony brings **19 programs** of orchestral monuments, guest soloists’s show-stopping performances, and an exploration of a world of music of shimmering color

and intoxicating rhythms—all designed to share deeply human storytelling through sound. Programming features 13 symphonies, 15 concertos and five solo features, and 15 works new to the San Diego Symphony, including one U.S. premiere.

Works range from the heroic to fantastical, dramatic to atmospheric. Audiences will take sonic journeys to landscapes and waterscapes around the world—North Atlantic seas, Venezuelan plains, Nordic vistas, American prairies, and West Coast Monarch migration paths—and into the dances, songs, stories and cultures of the world, expressed through music.

The recently extended contract with **Music and Artistic Director Rafael Payare** ensures the continuation of his artistic vision and ambitions for the Symphony, shaping the **San Diego Sound** through an ongoing exploration of the hall's rich acoustic possibilities. Payare will open and close the season in heroic fashion, conducting Richard Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben* on opening weekend and presenting a season finale blockbuster of the U. S. premiere of **Jimmy López'** Symphony No. 6, *Monarch* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. In between, Payare continues his devoted survey of Shostakovich (10th) and Mahler (Sixth) symphonies, and he also leads performances of Bruckner's Ninth along with works of extraordinary artistic imagination including Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique*, Bartok's *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Stravinsky's *The Firebird Suite*, Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances*, and Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*.

Artists making their podium debuts with San Diego Symphony are the British conductors **Sir Mark Elder**—distinguished former music director of The Hallé orchestra—and **Edward Gardner**, principal conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra; Bulgarian-born **Delyana Lazarova**, principal guest conductor of both Utah Symphony and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra; Berlin-based Venezuelan conductor **Diego Matheuz**; Austrian polymathic virtuoso clarinetist and conductor **Andreas Ottensamer**; and Uzbek conductor **Aziz Shokhakimov**, music director of Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg.

Returning conductors are **Bernard Labadie**, **Ludovic Morlot**, **Matthias Pintscher**, **Osmo Vänskä**, and **Joshua Weilerstein**.

Soloist debuts include internationally acclaimed pianists **Alessio Bax**, **Benedetto Lupo**, **Aristo Sham**, and the highly anticipated **Daniil Trifonov**; clarinetist **Ricardo Morales**, a master of color and lyricism; virtuoso trombonist **Jörgen Van Rijen**; soloists for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony—mezzo-soprano **Nikola Printz** and baritone **Hansung Yoo**; and violinist **Joshua Brown**, a 2025 recipient of the Avery Fisher Career Grant.

Returning soloists performing with the orchestra include acclaimed vocalists **Viktor Antipenko**, tenor; **Sasha Cooke**, mezzo-soprano; and **Tasha Hokuao Koontz**, soprano; as well as pianists **Inon Barnatan** and **Yefim Bronfman**; and string soloists **Sergey Khachatryan** and **Blake Pouliot**, violin, and **Alisa Weilerstein**, cello. The season also features San Diego Symphony Orchestra principals stepping into the spotlight as soloists, including **Andrea Overturf**, English horn; **Julie Phillips**, harp; and **Jeff Thayer**, violin.

Renowned composer **Jimmy López** continues the second year of his two-season residency with both the San Diego Symphony and the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) as composer-in-residence. The Symphony will perform two of his works: ***Shift, Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra*** and his ***Symphony No. 6, Monarch (2025)***, co-commissioned by the San Diego Symphony and OSM. *Monarch* draws inspiration from the migration of monarch butterflies and reflects on the fragile harmony between life and environment.

The season also highlights music by three additional living composers, with works written in 2021, including **Gabriela Ortiz' *Kauyumari***, **Matthias Pintscher's *Assonanza for Violin and Chamber Orchestra***, and **Esa-Pekka Salonen's *kínēma*** for clarinet and string orchestra.

The San Diego Symphony will perform 15 works for the first time in the orchestra's history, spanning a wide range of styles and eras: Isaac Albéniz' *Rapsodia española*; Béla Bartók's Violin Concerto No. 1; Inocente Carreño's *Margariteña*; Antonín Dvořák's *The Wood Dove*; Alberto Ginastera's *Concierto argentino*; Sofia Gubaidulina's *Fairytale Poem*; Gideon Klein's *Partita for Strings*; Jimmy López' *Shift*, Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra, and Symphony No. 6, *Monarch* (U.S. premiere); Felix Mendelssohn's *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*, Op. 27; Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Chaconne from *Idomeneo*; Matthias Pintscher's *Assonanza for Violin and Chamber Orchestra*; Francis Poulenc's Suite from *Les biches (The Does)*; Maurice Ravel's *Tzigane*; and Esa-Pekka Salonen's *kínēma*.

"I always love the moment when we announce a new season of carefully crafted programs," says **Martha Gilmer, president and chief executive officer of the San Diego Symphony** and 2026 Musical America "Impresario of the Year." "A tremendous amount of thought, imagination, creativity, and laughter goes into our programming sessions. It's always hard to choose among the richness of the symphonic repertoire. This season has been created to inspire our orchestra in their ongoing desire to perform at an increasingly high level. It has also been created for you—our audience—to uplift, connect, and inspire you through music you know very well, and works that are new. Together we have much to experience in our beautiful Jacobs Music Center!"

"The Jacobs Music Center has become a truly inspiring place for our orchestra and community to come together for concerts," says **Rafael Payare**. "For the 2026-27 season, I am excited to continue this collaboration with the wonderful musicians of the San Diego Symphony—to bring moments of beauty to audiences who have embraced us so warmly. This connection is at the heart of our art form, and I am incredibly grateful and excited to share these incredible orchestral works with our fantastic audiences."

A San Diego Symphony special presentation of the **Orchestre symphonique de Montréal** will be performed at the Jacobs Music Center on **Thursday, October 29 at 8 p.m.**, led by **Music and Artistic Director Rafael Payare**, and featuring **violinist Leonidas Kavakos**. The program opens with *Elysium* (2021) by Canadian-German composer Samy Moussa, a luminous meditation on the afterlife envisioned as the ultimate reward for an ethical life, followed by Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D Major, one of the repertoire's most beloved works, renowned for its lyrical beauty, romantic intensity, and dazzling virtuosity. The evening concludes with Stravinsky's *The Firebird*, presented in its complete ballet form, promising a richly colored and imaginative night of music.

Curated by **Gilbert Castellanos**, three **Jazz @ The Jacobs** programs celebrate the enduring legacies of legendary jazz artists, with performances on Saturday evenings at 7:30 p.m. The series opens with **Miles Davis: Milestones** (November 28), honoring the centennial of Miles Davis, followed by **Billie Holiday: All or Nothing at All** (February 13), and concludes with **Lee Morgan: The Sidewinder** (April 3), each performed by Castellanos and his ensemble.

The season's concerts are available through a variety of flexible subscription packages, including **Coffee Concerts** on three Fridays at 11 a.m.; a **five-concert Friday evening series** at 7:30 p.m.; **Saturday evening subscriptions** with 17 concerts at 7:30 p.m., available in full and fractional-package options of five, six, eight, and nine concerts; **Sunday matinee subscriptions** featuring 14

concerts at 2 p.m., offered as full or seven-concert packages; and Jazz @ The Jacobs, a three-concert series on Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.

For subscriptions, ticket prices, and more information on the San Diego Symphony's 2026-27 Jacobs Music Center season, please visit www.sandiegosymphony.org. Detailed listings of all programs follow below.

ABOUT RAFAEL PAYARE

With his innate musicianship, charismatic energy, gift for communication, and irresistibly joyous spirit, conductor Rafael Payare is "considerable grace and considerable swagger, making the two go unusually yet inexorably together" (*Los Angeles Times*). Payare conducted the San Diego Symphony (SDS) for the first time in 2018 and was subsequently named the orchestra's music director designate one month later, assuming the role of music director in January 2019. Currently in the seventh season of his transformative tenure as music and artistic director of the San Diego Symphony, Payare conducts a full roster of performances with the orchestra at the recently renovated Jacobs Music Center. In November 2025, the San Diego Symphony announced the extension of Rafael Payare's tenure through the 2028-29 season. Since his arrival in 2019, Payare's vision and artistry have elevated the Symphony's expressive range and strengthened its connection with audiences. He led the SDS in its commercial album debut with Shostakovich's Symphony No. 11, *The Year 1905*, its first appearance in a decade at Carnegie Hall, its first performance in Tijuana in nearly 20 years, and in three programs at the inaugural California Festival.

ABOUT THE SAN DIEGO SYMPHONY

The San Diego Symphony stands in the vanguard of California orchestras and among the nation's Tier 1 Orchestras. Under the leadership of President and Chief Executive Officer Martha Gilmer and Music and Artistic Director Rafael Payare, the Symphony's 82 full-time musicians—graduates of the world's most celebrated schools of music—perform for more than 250,000 people each season. Over the course of a century, the Symphony has grown into one of the region's most influential cultural institutions, earning national recognition for its artistry, innovation, and community impact. From the stunning waterfront venue of The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park to the revitalized Jacobs Music Center, the Symphony offers a dynamic range of experiences: Masterworks, Jazz, film-with-orchestra, Broadway and family concerts, and free Music Connects performances that bring music to neighborhoods across San Diego. As the musical heart of the city, the Symphony shapes and reflects the region's cultural vitality. Through its Learning and Community Engagement programs, the Symphony reaches more than 65,000 people annually, fostering connection through the shared power of music.

ABOUT JIMMY LOPEZ

Jimmy López' works have been performed by leading orchestras around the world, including all "Big Five" American orchestras, and in prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall, Royal Albert Hall (BBC Proms), Concertgebouw, Sydney Opera House, Gewandhaus Leipzig, Kennedy Center, Vienna's Musikverein, Konzerthaus Berlin, the Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Games, the Lima 2019 Pan American Games, and the Aspen, Tanglewood, and Grant Park music festivals. López is composer-in-residence at San Diego Symphony and Orchestre symphonique de Montréal during the 2025-26 and 2026-27 seasons. He previously served as composer-in-residence for the Houston Symphony from 2017-2020, and in the 2024-25 season López was Mead Composer-Curator with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. His violin concerto *Aurora*—recorded by Leticia Moreno, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, and the Houston Symphony—was nominated for a 2022 Latin Grammy in the "Best Classical Contemporary Composition" category. A native of Lima, he studied at the city's National

Conservatory of Music prior to graduating from the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki with a Master of Music degree. López completed his Ph.D. in Music at the University of California-Berkeley. He is published by Filarmonika and Birdsong.

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2026-27 SEASONS LISTINGS

Jacobs Masterworks and Jazz @ The Jacobs

Artists and programs are subject to change.

Jacobs Masterworks

Payare Leads Strauss' A Hero's Life

Saturday, Oct 3 at 7:30pm

Sunday, Oct 4 at 2pm

Rafael Payare, conductor

Yefim Bronfman, piano

SOFIA GUBAIDULINA *Poema-Skazka (Fairytale Poem)*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART Piano Concerto No. 24 in C Minor, K. 491

RICHARD STRAUSS *Ein Heldenleben (A Hero's Life)*, Op. 40

Khachaturian's Exuberant Violin Concerto

Saturday, Oct 10 at 7:30pm

Sunday, Oct 11 at 2pm

Rafael Payare, conductor

Sergey Khachatryan, violin

ARAM KHACHATURIAN Violin Concerto

ANTON BRUCKNER Symphony No. 9 in D Minor

Spain Through French Glasses: Ravel & Debussy

Friday, Oct 16 at 11am

Saturday, Oct 17 at 7:30pm

Ludovic Morlot, conductor
Jörgen van Rijen, trombone
CLAUDE DEBUSSY “Nuages” and “Fêtes” from *Nocturnes*
JIMMY LÓPEZ *Shift*, Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra
MAURICE RAVEL *Alborado del gracioso*
FRANCIS POULENC Suite from *Les biches* (*The Does*)
MAURICE RAVEL *Rapsodie espagnole*

Brahms and Shostakovich: Tragedy through Music

Saturday, Nov 14 at 7:30pm
Sunday, Nov 15 at 2pm
Rafael Payare, conductor
Daniil Trifonov, piano
JOHANNES BRAHMS Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15
DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No. 10 in E Minor, Op. 93

Voices of Destiny: Liszt's Concerto & Mahler's Sixth

Friday, Nov 20 at 7:30pm
Sunday, Nov 22 at 2pm
Rafael Payare, conductor
Inon Barnatan, piano
FRANZ LISZT Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major
GUSTAV MAHLER Symphony No. 6 in A Minor, “Tragic”

Youthful Visions: Carreño, Prokofiev & Sibelius

Friday, Dec 4 at 7:30pm
Saturday, Dec 5 at 7:30pm
Diego Matheuz, conductor
Aristo Sham, piano
INOCENTE CARREÑO *Margariteña*
SERGEI PROKOFIEV Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 16
JEAN SIBELIUS Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 43

Russian Elegance, American Lyricism: Rachmaninoff & Rorem

Saturday, Jan 16 at 7:30pm
Sunday, Jan 17 at 2pm
Delyana Lazarova, conductor
Andrea Overturf, English horn
MIKHAIL GLINKA Overture to *Ruslan and Ludmilla*
NED ROREM English Horn Concerto
SERGEI RACHMANINOFF Symphony No. 2 in E Minor, Op. 27

From Prague to Buenos Aires: Dvořák & Albéniz

Saturday, Jan 23 at 7:30pm
Sunday, Jan 24 at 2pm
Aziz Shokhakimov, conductor
Simon Trpčeski, piano

BEDŘICH SMETANA Overture to *The Bartered Bride*
ALBERTO GINASTERA *Concierto argentino*
ISAAC ALBÉNIZ *Rapsodia española*
ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88

Alisa Weilerstein Plays Elgar's Cello Concerto

Friday, Jan 29 at 7:30pm
Saturday, Jan 30 at 7:30pm
Rafael Payare, conductor
Alisa Weilerstein, cello
EDWARD ELGAR Cello Concerto in E Minor, Op. 85
HECTOR BERLIOZ *Symphonie fantastique*, Op. 14

Elegy to Exaltation: Ravel, Rota, & Shostakovich

Friday, Feb 5 at 11am
Saturday, Feb 6 at 7:30pm
Andreas Ottensamer, conductor
Julie Phillips, harp
MAURICE RAVEL Rigaudon from *Le tombeau de Couperin*
NINO ROTA Harp Concerto
DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No. 5 in D Minor, Op. 47

Pintscher Conducts Copland & Pintscher

Saturday, Feb 20 at 7:30pm
Sunday, Feb 21 at 2pm
Matthias Pintscher, conductor
Blake Pouliot, violin
MATTHIAS PINTSCHER *Assonanza* for Violin and Chamber Orchestra
MAURICE RAVEL *Tzigane, rapsodie de concert*
AARON COPLAND Symphony No. 3

The Genius of Mozart

Saturday, Feb 27 at 7:30pm
Sunday, Feb 28 at 2pm
Bernard Labadie, conductor
Benedetto Lupo, piano
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART Chaconne from *Idomeneo*
MOZART Piano Concerto No. 23 in A Major, K. 488
MOZART Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K. 551, "Jupiter"

Music of Sea and Story: La mer & Shéhérazade

Friday, Mar 5 at 7:30pm
Sunday, Mar 7 at 2pm
Edward Gardner, conductor
Sasha Cooke, mezzo-soprano
FELIX MENDELSSOHN *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*
PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY *The Tempest* Fantasy-Overture, Op. 18

MAURICE RAVEL *Shéhérazade*
CLAUDE DEBUSSY *La mer*

Payare Leads Stravinsky's Firebird Suite

Saturday, Mar 20 at 7:30pm

Sunday, Mar 21 at 2pm

Rafael Payare, conductor

Joshua Brown, violin

GABRIELA ORTIZ *Kauyumari*

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH Violin Concerto No. 1 in A Minor, Op. 99

BÉLA BARTÓK Suite from *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Op. 19

IGOR STRAVINSKY *The Firebird Suite* (1919 version)

Symphonic Dances: Rachmaninoff, Bernstein, & Salonen

Friday, Mar 26 at 11am

Saturday, Mar 27 at 7:30pm

Rafael Payare, conductor

Ricardo Morales, clarinet

ANTONIO ESTÉVEZ *Mediodía en el llano* (*Midday on the Plains*)

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN *kínēma*

LEONARD BERNSTEIN Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF *Symphonic Dances*, Op. 45

Stories in Symphony: Prokofiev, Dvořák & Janáček

Saturday, Apr 10 at 7:30pm

Sunday, Apr 11 at 2pm

Sir Mark Elder, conductor

SERGEI PROKOFIEV Symphony No. 7 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 131

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK *The Wood Dove*, Op. 110, B.198

LEOŠ JANÁČEK *Taras Bulba*: Rhapsody after Gogol

Northern Lights: Sibelius, Grieg & Nielsen

Saturday, May 22 at 7:30pm

Sunday, May 23 at 2pm

Osmo Vänskä, conductor

Alessio Bax, piano

JEAN SIBELIUS *Pohjola's Daughter*

EDVARD GRIEG Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16

CARL NIELSEN Symphony No. 5, Op. 50

From the New World: Dvořák's 9th

Saturday, May 29 at 7:30pm

Sunday, May 30 at 2pm

Joshua Weilerstein, conductor

Jeff Thayer, violin

GIDEON KLEIN Partita for Strings

BELÁ BARTÓK Violin Concerto No. 1

ANTONÍN DVORŽÁK Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, Op. 95, "From the New World"

Ode to Humanity: Beethoven's 9th & López' Monarch

Friday, Jun 4 at 7:30pm

Saturday, Jun 5 at 7:30pm

Sunday, Jun 6 at 2pm

Rafael Payare, conductor

Tasha Hokuao Koontz, soprano

Nikola Printz, mezzo-soprano

Viktor Antipenko, tenor

Hansung Yoo, baritone

San Diego Symphony Chorus

JIMMY LÓPEZ Symphony No. 6, "Monarch"

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125, "Choral"

Special Concert

Orchestre symphonique de Montréal

Thursday, Oct 29 at 8pm

Rafael Payare, conductor

Leonidas Kavakos, violin

SAMY MOUSSA *Elysium*

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

IGOR STRAVINSKY *The Firebird* (full ballet)

Jazz @ The Jacobs

Miles Davis: *Milestones*

Saturday, Nov 28 at 7:30pm

Gilbert Castellanos and ensemble perform

Celebrating Miles Davis' Centennial

Billie Holiday: *All or Nothing at All*

Saturday, Feb 13 at 7:30pm

Gilbert Castellanos and ensemble perform

Lee Morgan: *The Sidewinder*

Saturday, Apr 3 at 7:30pm

Gilbert Castellanos and ensemble perform