



San Diego Symphony

Rafael Payare | Music Director



PRESS RELEASE

San Diego Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Rafael Payare to Join Centro Cultural Tijuana's annual Día de los Muertos Festival

Free concert to feature works by Gabriela Ortiz, Richard Strauss and David Chesky

www.SanDiegoSymphony.org

San Diego, CA (September 7, 2023) - Today the San Diego Symphony announced an addition to its exciting 2023 fall schedule, which is marked by a return to [Carnegie Hall](#) as well as a lead role in the state-wide [California Festival: A Celebration of New Music](#). On November 2, the San Diego Symphony Orchestra will perform in Tijuana, Mexico at [Centro Cultural Tijuana](#) (CECUT) for a free community concert led by Music Director Rafael Payare. This performance will take place at the city's acclaimed cultural center and feature *Kaayumari* by Mexican composer Gabriela Ortiz, as well as works by Richard Strauss and GRAMMY-nominated composer, David Chesky. The program will mark the opening night of CECUT's annual Día de los Muertos celebration, which has deep roots in its Tijuana community and has become the largest of its kind in northern Mexico. Located less than two miles south of the Mexico-United States border, CECUT attracts more than one million visitors each year offering a range of



San Diego Symphony

Rafael Payare | Music Director

exhibitions, performances, and workshops that showcase the city's rich culture and heritage.

"We're beyond thrilled that we're going to be bringing the full orchestra to Tijuana on a very special day, which is Día de los Muertos in Mexico," said San Diego Symphony Music Director Rafael Payare. "The program is a dynamic mix of repertoire that will show off the wonderful abilities of our players and contribute to the celebratory spirit of the holiday. This will be an opportunity to bond with our friends across the border, and personally meaningful for me to celebrate something I have never been able to experience: Día de los Muertos in Mexico—on its own soil."

The free concert builds on San Diego Symphony's previous work engaging with communities throughout the region. In addition to previous concerts by the orchestra dating back to the 1960s, San Diego Symphony participated in a 2018 binational chamber performance at Friendship Park, located where San Diego meets Tijuana as well as offering a series of cross-border master classes, among other activities. These collaborations have been a priority for San Diego Symphony CEO Martha Gilmer since beginning her tenure almost a decade ago.

"This concert is a testament to the vibrant binational relationship that exists between our communities, and the power of music to bridge cultures," said San Diego Symphony CEO Martha Gilmer. "Our collaboration with CECUT underscores our shared commitment to fostering a rich, diverse, and inclusive artistic landscape. This event will not only showcase the unique artistic offerings of our region, but also serve as a beacon of unity, demonstrating the harmony that can be created when two cultures come together in a collective celebration. We are excited to see what other opportunities may be possible in the future."

CECUT, the Consulate General of Mexico in San Diego, and the San Diego Symphony are committed to building a collaborative partnership beyond the Orchestra's performance in November, taking advantage of the short distance between the two groups: Tijuana sits just 18 miles from the Orchestra's indoor home, Jacobs Music Center, which is set to open in early 2024 following an extensive renovation. On this project, the help and guidance of the Consulate General of Mexico in San Diego, through its cultural department, has been instrumental in connecting these institutions and facilitating the communication and exchange of ideas to materialize this binational artistic project.

"This is an important occasion for our binational border region in terms of cultural and artistic exchange and cooperation," said Carlos González Gutiérrez, Consul General of Mexico in San Diego. "We believe that this historical concert will open many opportunities to explore further cross-border cultural collaborations that will enrich the dialogue and mutual understanding between our two countries. Art and culture are, of course, excellent instruments of diplomacy, and this is a successful case. We're very pleased to have served as connectors between important cultural institutions such as the San Diego Symphony Orchestra and CECUT".



San Diego Symphony

Rafael Payare | Music Director

"As part of the 200th anniversary of the bilateral relationship between Mexico and the United States, various expressions of artistic and cultural life in our region represent significant projects that strengthen the binational relationship and have historical and cultural significance," said Dr. Vianka Robles Santa, General Director of CECUT. "They are part of an intangible but profoundly valuable heritage. Being one of the interlocutors in this cultural and artistic dialogue is a source of joy for CECUT. It is an extraordinary opportunity to reflect on the fundamental role of artists from both countries, who, on the one hand, create the symbol of the altar with flowers and candles and, on the other hand, masterfully perform classical music. We see each binational activity as a vehicle for understanding cultural diversity, ethnic plurality, and the multilingual dimension that enriches our humanity."

For its milestone 2023-24 season, San Diego Symphony will offer a season of wide-ranging programs in addition to its concert in Mexico—from Mahler's staggering "Resurrection" Symphony to staged performances of Prokofiev's music for *Romeo and Juliet*—to reintroduce audiences to Jacobs Music Center following a \$100+ million renovation and restoration. The Orchestra's season will begin outdoors at the Rady Shell at Jacobs Park with programmatic highlights that include *The Ring Without Words*, a symphonic journey through Richard Wagner's Ring cycle, conducted by Rafael Payare as an homage to his mentor, Lorin Maazel; World Premieres of compositions by Carlos Simon, Vladimir Tarnopolsky, and Juan Colomer; and the West Coast premieres of works by Mason Bates, Gabriela Ortiz, and Billy Childs.

More information on the San Diego Symphony's free concert at CECUT can be found at www.cecut.gob.mx. For full details on the entire San Diego Symphony 2023-24 season, please visit www.SanDiegoSymphony.org

SAN DIEGO SYMPHONY at CECUT

Thursday, November 2, 7PM

Sala de Espectáculos, CECUT

Rafael Payare, Conductor

San Diego Symphony Orchestra

RICHARD STRAUSS *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Op. 30

DAVID CHESKY Abreu Danza No. 4

DAVID CHESKY Abreu Danza No. 5

GABRIELA ORTIZ *Kauyumari*

About Rafael Payare

One of today's most sought-after conductors, renowned for his profound musicianship, technical brilliance, and charismatic presence, Rafael Payare assumed the leadership of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra as its Music Director on July 1, 2019.

Mr. Payare served as Principal Conductor and Music Director of the Ulster Orchestra from 2014 through



San Diego Symphony

Rafael Payare | Music Director

2019 and was named Conductor Laureate in recognition of his artistic contributions. He also has served as Principal Conductor of the Castleton Festival and Honorary Conductor of the Sinfonietta Cracovia.

In 2022, Mr. Payare assumed the role of Music Director of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. As a guest conductor, he has led many of the world's great orchestras, including the Vienna Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, and Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks. As an opera conductor, Mr. Payare made his acclaimed debut at the Glyndebourne Festival in 2019 and has conducted at the Royal Swedish Opera and Malmo Opera.

Born in Venezuela in 1980 and a graduate of El Sistema, Mr. Payare began his formal conducting studies in 2004 with José Antonio Abreu. He has conducted all the major orchestras in Venezuela, including the Simón Bolívar Orchestra, in which he served as Principal Horn and took part in many tours and recordings with conductors including Giuseppe Sinopoli, Claudio Abbado, Sir Simon Rattle, and Lorin Maazel. In May 2012, Rafael Payare was awarded first prize at the Malko International Conducting Competition.

About San Diego Symphony

Founded in 1910, the San Diego Symphony is the oldest orchestra in California and one of the largest and most significant cultural organizations in San Diego. The Orchestra performs for more than 250,000 people each season, offering a wide variety of programming at its two much-loved venues, Copley Symphony Hall at Jacobs Music Center in downtown San Diego (now under renovation) and The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park in San Diego Bay. In early 2018, the San Diego Symphony announced the appointment of Rafael Payare as music director. Payare leads the orchestra's 82 full-time musicians and graduates from the finest and most celebrated music schools in the United States and abroad. The San Diego Symphony also serves as the orchestra for the San Diego Opera each season, as well as performing at several regional performing arts and community centers. For more than 30 years, the San Diego Symphony has provided comprehensive learning and community engagement programs reaching more than 65,000 students annually and bringing innovative programming to San Diego's diverse neighborhoods and schools. For more information, visit sandiegosymphony.org.

About CECUT

CECUT is a national Mexican cultural center on the border, founded on October 20, 1982. It is the institution that concentrates the widest and most diverse cultural offerings in the northwest region, and the only infrastructure of the Mexico Ministry of Culture outside the country's capital. It is committed to meeting the artistic and cultural needs of this population, through programs that include various artistic manifestations and themes of traditional and contemporary culture. Additional information is available at <https://www.cecuto.org.mx>

MEDIA CONTACTS

Kristen Turner, San Diego Symphony



San Diego Symphony

Rafael Payare | Music Director

(713) 817-3219 | kturner@sandiegosymphony.org

Todd Bentjen, Polskin Arts

(714) 931-0875 | todd.bentjen@finnpartners.com