

Contact:
Stephen Kougias
Director of Public Relations
619.615.3951
skougias@sandiegosymphony.org

May 4, 2016

San Diego Symphony Assistant Conductor Sameer Patel, One of 11 Young American Conductors, Receives the 2016 Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award

San Diego Symphony assistant conductor **Sameer Patel** is one of 11 young American conductors to receive the **2016 Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award**. The 2016 awards included the largest number of recipients to receive a Solti Foundation Career Assistance Award in one year surpassing last year's nine awards and bringing the number of such grants given by the Foundation in its 12-year history to 46.

The mission of the Solti Foundation U.S. is to identify, support and promote emerging young American conductors as they launch their classical careers. The Foundation is always interested in long-term development of its awardees. The Foundation nurtures relationships with all of its recipients, tracking their progress and offering support when it is merited. The Foundation also provides continuing support not only in the form of grants but in valuable access to mentors, door-opening introductions and opera residencies.

"I am honored by the Solti Foundation's recognition, and I am grateful to my colleagues at the San Diego Symphony whose continuing support made this award possible," stated Sameer Patel, assistant conductor of the San Diego Symphony.

In his role as assistant conductor for the San Diego Symphony, Sameer Patel is responsible for planning the music and script for the Young People's Concerts and Kinder Konzerts and conducting special performances that include donor concerts and *Tastings*, the annual season preview concert. Patel also assists music director Jahja Ling during rehearsals for the Symphony's Jacobs Masterworks concerts. As part of his personal mission to encourage young musicians, Patel visits high school orchestra classrooms to serve as guest conductor and to share his perspective of a career in music.

“The San Diego Symphony is extraordinarily proud of Sameer Patel for this outstanding award from the Solti Foundation U.S.,” stated **Martha Gilmer**, chief executive officer of the San Diego Symphony.

Gilmer continued: “Since joining the Symphony as assistant conductor last year, Sameer has been an invaluable asset to the orchestra. He is not only a fine musician but he is dedicated to bringing music to our community. Sameer has infused a great deal of energy and enthusiasm into our Young People’s Concerts with his innovative programming—and the students have responded in kind. His first performance with the orchestra was last summer’s surprise John Williams’ *Star Wars* concert for 7,000 exuberant fans—what a great way to begin his time with us. We are fortunate to have Sameer as part of the San Diego Symphony family and appreciate the wonderful contribution he has made in such a short period of time. We congratulate Sameer for this prestigious award.”

Patel previously spent three seasons as associate conductor of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, where he conducted the orchestra in more than 100 performances and invigorated the orchestra’s engagement with the community. In 2013, Patel was one of only six conductors selected by the League of American Orchestras for the Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, an event that showcases emerging and talented conductors to orchestra industry professionals. He was a 2011 Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Scholar, an honor given to him by former New York Philharmonic music director Kurt Masur. As part of this award, Patel traveled to Europe to study with and assist Maestro Masur with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Patel began his musical training as a pianist and received both his graduate and undergraduate degrees at the University of Michigan, where he studied conducting with Kenneth Kiesler. He furthered his training internationally with acclaimed conductors Bernard Haitink, Gianandrea Noseda, Paavo Järvi, JoAnn Falletta and Günther Herbig.

The other 2016 Solti award recipients include: **Christopher Allen**, John L. Magro resident conductor, Cincinnati Opera, and associate conductor, Los Angeles Opera; **Gene Chang**, assistant conductor, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and music director, Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra; **Ankush Kumar Bahl**, assistant conductor, National Symphony Orchestra (four year tenure just completed); **Joshua Gersen**, assistant conductor, New York Philharmonic Orchestra, and music director, New York Youth Symphony; **Daniel Black**, assistant conductor, and Rae and Ed Schollmaier Foundation Chair, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, and music

director of the Oshkosh Symphony Orchestra; **Keitaro Harada**, associate conductor, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, associate conductor, Arizona Opera, and associate conductor, Richmond (VA) Symphony Orchestra; **Yaniv Dinur**, assistant conductor, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra; **Stefano Sarzani**, conductor, Des Moines Metro Opera; **Stilian Kirov**, music director, Symphony in C (Philadelphia, PA), and music director, Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra; **Michelle Merrill**, assistant conductor and Phillip and Lauren Fisher Community Ambassador, Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

#

San Diego Symphony
Jacobs Music Center – Copley Symphony Hall
750 B Street
San Diego, CA 92101

Box Office: 619.235.0804

Website: www.sandiegosymphony.org

#