



ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE  
DE MONTRÉAL

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Season presenting partner



## THE ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE MONTRÉAL AND RAFAEL PAYARE UNVEIL THEIR 2026–2027 SEASON



**Montreal, March 31, 2026** — The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal is thrilled to unveil its **2026–2027 season** today. As Rafael Payare begins his **5<sup>th</sup> season** as Music Director, this **93<sup>rd</sup> season** of OSM concerts offers breathtaking programming for all tastes and budgets. Through an array of **major symphonic concerts**, **express-format concerts**, **music and film concerts**, **festive events** that break the mould, **POP** concerts, and concerts for **young spectators**, you'll discover or rediscover works by Mahler, Stravinsky, Beethoven, Cassandra Miller or Mozart, with distinguished guest artists, including Renée Fleming, Lang Lang, Alisa Weilerstein, Leonidas Kavakos, and the grand return of OSM Conductor Emeritus Zubin Mehta. Collaborations continue for a second season with Dina Gilbert as Associate Conductor and Jimmy López as composer-in-residence.

*Every new season with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal opens a door on another musical adventure. In 2026–2027, music becomes storytelling, as each work tells its own story, stirs the imagination and draws out the Orchestra's colours. This season promises to be just like Montreal: vibrant, ambitious, teeming with life, and unique. Music invites us to hear the world differently ... immerse yourselves in the best it has to offer.*

— Rafael Payare, OSM Music Director

## A SPECTACULAR SEASON GUIDED BY THE VISION OF RAFAEL PAYARE



Rafael Payare and the OSM will open the season in grand style with the expressive power of Mahler, continuing the **cycle begun in 2022**. This opening concert on September 16 and 17 will bring together *Das klagende Lied* (*Song of Lamentation*), an early work based on an epic tale, and excerpts from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (*The Youth's Magic Horn*) with its highly refined instrumentation and musical exploration of the folk-tale universe.

On September 23, for the first time in over a decade, the OSM will welcome the astonishing pianist **Lang Lang** in a performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto no. 5 under Rafael Payare's direction. On October 21 and 22, one of the greatest violinists of our time, **Leonidas Kavakos**, will join the Orchestra on stage to play Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, op. 35, in a program conducted by Rafael Payare, completed by *Elysium* by Canadian composer **Samy Moussa** and Igor Stravinsky's *The Firebird*. In December, Stravinsky's *Petrushka* features in a program where the OSM welcomes German violinist **Veronika Eberle**, whom we will hear in Mozart's Violin Concerto no. 5.

On January 12 and 13, Rafael Payare and the OSM will usher in the year 2027 in living colour by welcoming celebrated soprano **Renée Fleming**, who will perform *Voice of Nature: The Anthropocene*, the product of Fleming's collaboration with *National Geographic*. This multimedia concert explores humanity's relationship with its environment. The first movement of Composer-in-residence **Jimmy López's** Symphony no. 4 will also be a feature of this concert's program.

April brings the return of the **Mozart Festival**, which threads together three different programs. On April 8 and 11, the piano takes centre stage as Rafael Payare and the OSM join with award-winning performers **Charles Richard-Hamelin**, **Meagan Milatz** and **Kevin Chen** for a rare event: a performance of the Concerto no. 7 for three pianos. In the week after, Mozart's vocal and operatic works will take the spotlight, in two programs. First, make way for the *Great Mass in C minor*, the *Exsultate, jubilate* and the serenade *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*. Then, on April 15 and 17, the cycle of Mozart/Da Ponte operas will reach its

conclusion with *Don Giovanni*, featuring, among others, Michèle Lozier, Gustavo Castillo and Jenny Daviet.

In May, the sublime cellist **Alisa Weilerstein** will join the OSM and Rafael Payare in three programs exploring the symphonic imagination of Richard Strauss. Finally, a resounding season finale is planned for May 25 and 26, with Beethoven's Symphony no. 9 and the world premiere of Jimmy López's Symphony no. 6, "Monarch," co-commissioned by the OSM and the San Diego Symphony.

*In a world where everything accelerates, we want everyone to be able to enjoy an interlude of beauty, to unplug and revel in off-the-clock contentment with the OSM. Every week of this new season offers moments of splendour and high emotion that are not to be enjoyed in moderation. We have designed programming with simply no such thing as an ordinary week, one that appeals to all tastes and budgets, thanks in part, and especially, to our **new \$30 mystery tickets**. More than just a concert, the OSM offers a true experience, a special moment with some of the greatest conductors and soloists, the greatest works, and your inimitable Orchestra.*

— Mélanie La Couture, OSM President and CEO

## **HALLOWEEN, THE HOLIDAYS AND MARCH BREAK WITH THE OSM**



OSM's Associate Conductor and the OSM at Halloween 2025 ©Gabriel Fournier

This year again, the OSM will offer specially themed programming for **Halloween**. Shivers are guaranteed on October 29 when we present a horror film classic, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's *Nosferatu*, with a live improvised soundtrack at the organ by Jason Roberts. On November 5, the festive event *Symphonic Superheroes & Villains* will be an opportunity to don your finest costumes. For cinephiles, the original long and restored version of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* is also programmed for January 19.

While traces of pumpkins and fallen leaves still adorn our walkways, and the first snowflakes start falling, a cult music and film concert awaits you on November 27. To break out of the grey November doldrums, the OSM proposes **Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas – In concert live to film*** with the mysterious and marvellous music of Danny Elfman.

For the **winter holidays**, Bach will be celebrated in two concerts. On December 8 and 9, Conductor Emeritus **Kent Nagano** and the Orchestra will perform four cantatas from the *Christmas Oratorio*'s, in collaboration with the Festival International Bach Montréal, which celebrates its 20th edition in 2026. This same work was presented by the OSM and Kent Nagano during the first edition of the Bach Festival. On December 10, Organist Emeritus **Olivier Latry** will give a program whose focus is transcriptions of works that Bach himself created, as well as those by great organists of the 19th and 20th centuries. Then, to close the year, join us for a New Year's Eve celebration at the Maison symphonique on December 17 with **Le Vent du Nord**.

On March 2, for **March break**, the whole family is invited to discover the Orchestra in *Peter and the Wolf*, Prokofiev's famous musical tale, presented with narration in a version for organ four-hands, with OSM organist-in-residence **Jean-Willy Kunz** joined by **Isabelle Demers**. On March 5, the sounds of **prog rock legends** Genesis, Mike Oldfield, Emerson Lake, and Palmer and Yes will take the Maison symphonique by storm as **Trio RCM** takes you on a trip back to the 1970s with organ, electric guitar and percussion.

## **EXPRESS CONCERTS: THE MUSIC EVENT OF THE MOMENT**

Engulfed in the maelstrom of life? Nothing beats a moment with the OSM to escape the daily grind. These concerts feature programs lasting about **one hour, without intermission**, but no less **phenomenal**. This year, the OSM will offer **three evening concerts and four matinees** in this express format. From *Sheherazade* to *The Moldau*, to Sibelius, Mendelssohn, and other symphonic audience favourites, join Rafael Payare, Osmo Vänskä, Tianyi Lu, Andrew Wan, Bernard Labadie or Dina Gilbert for a single hour of musical bliss.

## **A LATE-NIGHT EPIC: SUPERPOWERS, GIGUE AND FIERY PASSION**



Le Vent du Nord with the OSM in December 2024 ©Antoine Saito

Three new brief and themed **late-night concerts**, followed by a festive evening in the Foyer await you in 26–27. On November 5, to extend the Halloween fun, don your capes and masks for ***Symphonic Superheroes & Villains***, an epic tribute to these musical themes,

featuring iconic versions from the 1960s to symphonic orchestrations and compositions that live up to major Hollywood productions. After their huge success in 2024, **Le Vent du Nord** will return on December 17 to give a concert filled with festivity, gigue and reels, under the direction of Associate Conductor **Dina Gilbert**. Finally, on April 29, a warm Argentinian breeze will blow through the Maison symphonique for the concert **Dance with Piazzolla** conducted by **Gemma New**. A vibrant immersion, where passion, haunting rhythms and vivid emotion converge in the hands of two bandoneon masters, **William Sabatier** and legendary Quebec tango figure, **Rómulo Larrea**.

## OSM POP: JAW-DROPPING COLLABORATIONS



On October 8 and 10, **Apashe** will join the ranks of the OSM! An artist and producer with a unique sound signature, he has fast become a forerunner, blending electro, hip-hop and orchestral influences. This Belgian-born Montrealer whose career took a meteoric rise has performed on many prestigious stages. He crosses an important milestone in presenting for the **first time** a symphonic version of his repertoire with the OSM, crafting an immersive experience of **rare intensity**.

On January 6 and 7, two monuments of Quebec culture, the **Cirque du Soleil** and the **OSM**, join forces. With acclaimed productions all over the world, more than 40 years of history, and numerous albums from emblematic shows like *Alegría*, *“O,”* *LUZIA* and *Quidam*, not to mention 600 pieces of music, the Cirque du Soleil and its music are indissociable. You can rediscover this magic as **legendary melodies** from the Cirque du Soleil’s rich repertoire comes to life in a **breathtaking symphonic performance**. This special collaboration comes with its share of surprises, both in the foyers of the Maison symphonique and on stage...

**Another artist will be announced later. Stay tuned!**

## THE OSM AT THE HEART OF YOUNG PEOPLE’S MUSICAL DISCOVERY

Education and the sharing of music have been integral to the OSM’s mission since its founding. Each year, more than 20,000 young people discover the magic of the orchestra

through programming designed to spark curiosity and ignite the imagination.

This season, the *Children's Corner* series will offer concerts created for the whole family, where music, illustration, and staging come together to bring marvelous worlds to life. Young and old alike will dive into fabulous adventures such as ***Wild symphony*** by renowned author and composer **Dan Brown**, conducted by our Music Director **Rafael Payare**. On January 24, families will join Associate Conductor Dina Gilbert to discover **Roch Carrier's** beloved story ***The Hockey Sweater***, presented in a musical version by Canadian composer **Abigail Richardson-Schulte**. March Break will feature its second edition with a rich program of free workshops and activities, as well as two concerts dedicated to ***Peter and the Wolf*** in a four-hand organ arrangement performed by **Jean-Willy Kunz** and **Isabelle Demers**. On March 21, the relaxed **OSMose** concert will bring an inclusive format to a wide audience. The final youth event of the season will take place on April 18 with an adaptation of ***Beauty and the Beast***, where characters and objects come to life in an imaginative staging.

Alongside these concerts, the 87th edition of the **OSM Competition**, dedicated this year to piano, twelve school matinees, and numerous outreach activities in schools and at the Maison symphonique will punctuate the season, reaffirming the Orchestra's commitment to sharing the passion for music with new generations.

## THE OSM RESONATES AROUND THE WORLD

A leading cultural ambassador throughout Quebec, Canada, and internationally, the OSM is committed to sharing its art across borders and around the world. Throughout the 2026-27 season, the OSM will embark on **two international tours**, will be broadcast in partnership with **Mezzo**, **Medici.tv** and **Symphony.live**, see the release of its album pairing Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* and Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, and record a new album.

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*Subscriptions and single tickets for all concerts*

**March 31 at 10 a.m.**

**osm.ca | 514-842-9951 | 1-888-842-9951**

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BMO is honored to once again partner with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal for its 93rd season, an edition that promises to celebrate boldness, openness, and the richness of music in all its forms. By continuing this year to emphasize accessibility and cultural outreach, the OSM enables an ever-growing audience from the curious to the passionate to experience memorable musical moments. BMO is proud to support an orchestra whose creativity, talent, and commitment, conducted by the inspiring leadership of Rafael Payare, continue to resonate throughout our community.

— **Grégoire Baillargeon**, President, BMO Financial Group, Quebec

[CLICK HERE TO DISCOVER THIS NEW SEASON WITH OUR PLAYLIST](#)

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**THE OSM THANKS ITS PARTNERS, SUBSCRIBERS AND ITS PUBLIC**

Contributions from the Orchestra's public-sector partners are essential to carrying out its mission. The OSM gratefully acknowledges its main partner, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, as well as the Canada Council for the Arts, the Government of Quebec, and the Conseil des arts de Montréal. The OSM is proud to have the support of its loyal partners and wishes to thank Hydro-Québec, its presenting sponsor and BMO Financial Group, its season presenter.

We also wish to extend our thanks to Power Corporation of Canada, Fondation J.A. DeSève, IG Wealth Management, Air Canada, Canada Life, National Bank, Spinelli, BFL Canada, Cogeco, Iris, Volvo, Long & McQuade Musical Instruments, DoubleTree by Hilton, Clarins, Solotech, Bière Boréale, Distillerie de Montréal (Rosemont), Robert Alexis Traiteur, DX-Mobilier événementiel, Festival International Bach Montreal, Symphony.live, Medici.tv, La Presse, PWC and McKinsey & Company. The OSM likewise thanks its other partners and donors, as well as its subscribers and its public, who in various ways provide essential support to its activities.

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## **PRESS RELATIONS:**

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### **THE ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE MONTRÉAL**

Founded in 1934 by Antonia Nantel, Wilfrid Pelletier and Athanase David, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) is a distinguished leader in the musical life of Quebec and Canada and is internationally recognized as one of the finest orchestras in the world. A frontline cultural ambassador, the OSM welcomes the world's greatest conductors and soloists to the Maison symphonique de Montréal each year. Under the direction of Venezuelan conductor Rafael Payare, the OSM continues to fulfill many rich traditions that stem from the Orchestra's history of social involvement, far-reaching projects, world-class tours, and superb recordings. Rooted in today's world, through its innovative programming, both in concert and in recording, the OSM refreshes the symphonic repertoire while consolidating its place at the heart of Quebec's great metropolis. Over the years, the OSM has toured extensively in Northern Quebec, the United States, and Latin America, as well as in several countries in Europe and Asia. Its discography includes more than one hundred recordings on the Decca, Analekta, CBC Records, ECM, EMI, Philips, Sony, and Pentatone labels, earning the Orchestra over 120 national and international awards.

### **RAFAEL PAYARE, OSM MUSIC DIRECTOR**

Known for his innate musicianship, gift for communication, and irresistibly joyous spirit, conductor Rafael Payare began playing the horn at age 14 in Venezuela's *El Sistema* program, before beginning his formal conducting studies



in 2004 under José Antonio Abreu. Since winning first prize at Denmark's Malko Competition for Young Conductors in 2012, his career has seen a rapid ascent. He served as the Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Ulster Orchestra (2014–2019) and has been the Principal Conductor of the Castleton Festival since 2015, founded by his late mentor Lorin Maazel; he became music director of the San Diego Symphony in 2019, and three years later, Music Director of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. In recent years, Payare has conducted many of the world's most prestigious orchestras, including those of the cities of New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Zurich, Berlin, Vienna, London, Munich, Hamburg and Paris. He has also made important debuts in the opera world, at the Royal Opera House in London (Covent Garden), the Glyndebourne Festival, the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm and the Royal Danish Opera.

### **MÉLANIE LA COUTURE, OSM PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

A seasoned executive, Mélanie La Couture combines strategic vision, rigour and an ability to mobilize talent to transform the organizations she leads. A graduate of Polytechnique Montréal and holder of an MBA from the University of Western Ontario, she joined the OSM in 2002. Initially Director of the OSM Foundation, she became its



Chief Operating Officer, playing a key role in the Orchestra's financial consolidation and the completion of the Maison symphonique, inaugurated in 2011. In 2013, she took over management of the Montreal Heart Institute (MHI) Foundation, significantly increasing its revenues. Appointed CEO of the MHI in 2017, she modernized the institution and fortified its excellence in care and research. Her humanistic and rigorous leadership enabled the ICM to weather the pandemic while maintaining quality of care. In 2024, she returned to the OSM as President and CEO, succeeding Madeleine Careau. An enthusiastic collaborator with Music Director Rafael Payare, she is dedicated to raising the Orchestra's profile and enhancing its rootedness in society. Mélanie La Couture stands out for her collaborative approach and her commitment to innovation and excellence. Her career path illustrates a constant desire to make a sustainable impact on the organizations she leads.

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