

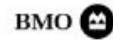


**ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE  
DE MONTRÉAL**

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## **THE ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE MONTRÉAL TO RENEW RAFAEL PAYARE'S TENURE FOR 5 MORE SEASONS**



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**MONTREAL, April 22, 2026** — The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal is honoured to announce the renewal of Rafael Payare's tenure for a five-year term. Maestro Payare, whose initial term will conclude in the spring of 2027, will carry his cherished relationship with the OSM—now as Music and Artistic Director—through the 2031–2032 season, dedicating 14 to 16 weeks each regular season. The change in title reflects his desire to shape the future of the OSM beyond programming and his presence on the podium.

Since being appointed in 2021, Rafael Payare has consolidated the OSM's place at the forefront of major North American orchestras, infusing energy, ardour and renewal into the Orchestra, while reaffirming the OSM's role as a cultural institution firmly rooted in the communities of Montreal, Quebec and Canada. On the world's greatest stages, Rafael Payare serves as an ambassador for the OSM, its history, and the culture it represents. With the Orchestra, in Montreal and on tour, he embodies Quebec and Canada's excellence in classical music.

“It is pure joy to see the relationship between Rafael, and the Orchestra continue so seamlessly. Since his first moment on the podium, a symbiotic connection was established with the musicians. His conducting style, both rigorous and radiant, reflects his deep respect for the members of the Orchestra. Owing to the strength of his artistic vision, he excels in steering the Orchestra to new heights. His community engagement energizes the OSM’s profile and makes the Orchestra more accessible and open. Rafael’s vision is now an integral part of the OSM’s DNA, to our immense delight.”

— Mélanie La Couture, OSM President and Chief Executive Officer



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## **Artistic leadership acclaimed and rooted in Montreal**

A graduate of Venezuela’s El Sistema program, Rafael Payare was appointed by a unanimous vote on January 7 2021, as the OSM’s 9th Music Director. He rapidly distinguished himself in Montreal and on the world’s foremost stages, embodying the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal’s mission of excellence through his charisma and artistic vision. During his first term, Payare notably conducted the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, the Staatskapelle Berlin and Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

Since 2022, he has led the OSM on four international tours—one in South Korea, one in the United States, and two in Europe. He also fulfilled a long-held dream: creating the Programme El Sistema OSM to enable some 120 young students from Montréal-Nord to learn orchestral music completely free of charge. Finally, he has recorded four albums with the Orchestra on the PENTATONE label.

“The love and connection I share with the Orchestra’s musicians, just like the warm reception I continue to receive from the Montreal community, make me blessed to carry forward this wonderful relationship with the OSM. My family and I have made Montreal our home out of love for this cultural and gastronomical metropolis, and we are proud to be Montrealers. Since my appointment, I have pursued cycles devoted to the works of Mahler and Shostakovich, while also giving pride of place to Québécois, Canadian and Latin American works and artists. In recording, I enjoyed the opportunity of delving into the post-Romantic Germanic repertoire and returning to the sources of the OSM with the French repertoire, notably Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique* and Ravel’s ballet *Daphnis et Chloé*. So many beautiful programs have been achieved since 2022, which makes me even more eager for what we can build together in the future.”

— Rafael Payare, Music and Artistic Director of the OSM

## Looking to the future

Building on a level of excellence recognized on the international stage, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal continues to undertake ambitious projects that only an institution among the world’s great orchestras can pursue. True to its tradition since 1960, the Orchestra places a strong emphasis on international tours, studio recordings, and broadcasts. The renewal of Rafael Payare’s tenure signals a continuation of this tradition, guiding the Orchestra to revisit—with passion and sensitivity—works that have made the OSM’s renown, while also embarking on new cycles and exploring fresh musical eras. The programming will likewise feature a prominent place for Latin American artists and composers, a vital source of enrichment for Payare.

The renewal of Rafael Payare’s tenure also heralds continued commitment to education and to communities. A pillar of the OSM’s mission since 1934, education holds particular significance for Rafael Payare, shaped both by his roots in El Sistema and by his commitment to training emerging Quebec and Canadian musicians. Through masterclasses, collaborations with the conservatory network, the OSM Competition, and the Orchestral Immersion project, supporting the next generation remains fundamental. The same is true for the OSM and Rafael Payare’s commitment to their community. With free or low-cost concerts, school matinees that accommodate over 20,000 young people annually, and large-scale concerts in parks, it is a priority for Payare and the OSM to provide access to the Orchestra for all audiences.

“Since assuming his post, Rafael Payare has infused into the OSM an artistic energy fuelled by attentiveness, generosity and a profoundly human approach to music. His conducting, a blend of discipline, adherence to the works and openness, has established a genuine dialogue with the musicians and fostered remarkable cohesion on stage. Every concert becomes a collective experience, driven by his infectious passion and his deep respect for the Orchestra’s identity. The renewal of his tenure embodies a desire to pursue this rare chemistry, which makes the OSM shine brightly far beyond the walls of the Maison symphonique.”

— Andrew Wan, OSM Concertmaster



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## **THE OSM WISHES TO THANK ITS PARTNERS, DONORS, 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, 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.

## **ABOUT 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 AND ARTISTIC 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 Staatsoper Berlin, Royal Opera House in London (Covent Garden), the Glyndebourne Festival, and the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm.

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