



A FOURTH ALBUM FOR RAFAEL PAYARE AND THE OSM

HECTOR BERLIOZ'S LE CARNAVAL ROMAIN AND SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE

ALBUM RELEASE ON OCTOBER 17

Montreal, September 18, 2025 — On the heels of the opening concert of its 92nd season, featuring Hector Berlioz's masterful *La Damnation de Faust*, the **Orchestre symphonique de Montréal** and Music Director **Rafael Payare** have added a new opus to their **PENTATONE** discography: *Berlioz—Le Carnaval romain & Symphonie fantastique*.

With this recording, Payare and the OSM celebrate Berlioz's inventiveness through two signature works: the *Symphonie fantastique*, which revolutionized the symphonic form with its bold narrative quality, and *Le carnaval romain*, which exalts the orchestral brilliance of French Romanticism. The OSM recently performed both works in some of **Europe's most prestigious** venues during its November 2024 tour. Now, audiences everywhere will have the chance to hear the Orchestra's interpretations—performances that **enthralled critics** only a short time ago.

This new album also has a very special dimension. The *Symphonie fantastique* features the first recording of the bells acquired by the OSM in the summer of 2024. Two bells from a set of ten are heard on this recording. These bells broaden the orchestra's sound palette and bring an incomparable brilliance, enriching Berlioz's original vision. Set for release on **October 17**, this album will be the **OSM's 138th**. Recorded in December 2024 at Montreal's Maison symphonique, it builds on the Orchestra's rich legacy of recordings.

"After three albums devoted to late Romanticism and the great Austro-German composers, I am delighted to return to the French repertoire, where the OSM has excelled for decades. Part of the OSM's repertoire since 1937, the Symphonie fantastique beautifully embodies the orchestra's deep connection to French music. Beyond the narrative elements, it is the striking orchestral colors that have left a lasting impression on me. Thanks to the virtuosity of the musicians, we were able to offer a fresh interpretation that remains faithful to tradition, enhanced by the exceptional acoustics of the Maison symphonique." —**Rafael Payare, OSM Music Director**



A RETURN TO THE OSM'S DNA

Following three acclaimed releases on PENTATONE—*Mahler's Fifth Symphony* (2023), *Mahler's Rückert-Lieder* paired with *Richard Strauss' Ein Heldenleben* (2024), and *Schoenberg's Verklärte Nacht* and *Pelleas und Melisande* (2024)—all jewels of the late Romantic repertoire, Rafael Payare and the OSM now return to the Orchestra's very DNA, reconnecting with a lineage of legendary recordings that began in the 1980s.

While the OSM's 1985 recording of the *Symphonie fantastique* brought the Orchestra international renown, this present-day interpretation draws fresh inspiration from a reinvigorated and vibrant orchestra that breathes new life into the iconic work, infusing it with novel colours and renewed impetus.

This flagship piece is paired with *Le carnaval romain*, the first work conducted by Payare upon his appointment in January 2021 as music director of the OSM. The meaningful choice of repertoire reflects an intuitive musical affinity with the *Symphonie fantastique*, which here also takes on a personal and sentimental dimension for the conductor.

"We are delighted to collaborate once again with our dear partners, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal—conducted by the incomparable Rafael Payare—in this new release, a sumptuous and thrilling program devoted to Berlioz. The OSM has already enriched the PENTATONE catalogue with varied and exciting programs that feature Mahler, Schoenberg and Richard Strauss. This new release, both thoughtful and exhilarating, highlights different facets of this remarkable orchestra and its Music Director. We're proud to collaborate with this invaluable institution, which rightfully garners praise and accolades for its work on the concert stage and in the recording studio."—Sean Hickey, PENTATONE Managing Director

This return to the works that made the Orchestra's renown has now begun with the *Symphonie fantastique* and will continue with yet another recording—a fifth one—by Rafael Payare and the OSM on PENTATONE. Expected in the fall of 2026, the album will unite Maurice Ravel's celebrated ballet *Daphnis et Chloé* with Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. These two works, featured in OSM recordings from the 1980s, have

beguiled generations of music lovers; thanks to Rafael Payare's verve and his deep symbiosis with the OSM, they will continue to inspire many more.



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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 vital to the pursuit of its mission. The OSM gratefully acknowledges its principal 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 count on its loyal commercial partners, and wishes to thank Hydro-Québec, the OSM presenter, as well as BMO Financial Group, the Orchestra's season presenter.

We also extend our gratitude to Power Corporation of Canada, Fondation J. A. DeSève, IG Wealth Management, Air Canada, CanadaLife, BFL Canada, ESG UQÀM, National Bank, Spinelli, Cogeco, IRIS, Volvo, Bivouac, Clarins, Solotech, Long & McQuade, Boréale Beer, Distillerie de Montréal, Symphony, Radio-Canada, medici.tv, La Presse PWC and McKinsey&Company.

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 Orchestra continues to fulfill many rich traditions that stem from the Orchestra's long history of social involvement, far-reaching projects, world-class tours, and high-quality recordings. Rooted in the world of today, the OSM refreshes the symphonic repertoire while firmly maintaining its place at the heart of Quebec's great metropolis.

Over the years, the OSM has toured throughout Quebec's Far North, the United States, Latin America, and in several European and Asian countries. Its discography comprises over 100 recordings on the Decca, Analekta, CBC Records, ECM, EMI, Philips, Sony, and PENTATONE labels, which have garnered over 110 national and international awards.

RAFAEL PAYARE, MUSIC DIRECTOR OF THE OSM



Distinguished by innate musicianship, a gift for communication, and an irresistibly joyous spirit, conductor Rafael Payare began playing horn in Venezuela's El Sistema program at age 14 and started his formal conducting studies in 2004 with José Antonio Abreu.

Since winning Denmark's prestigious Malko Competition for Young Conductors in 2012, his career has advanced rapidly. He was Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Ulster Orchestra from 2014 to 2019; has served as Principal Conductor of the Castleton Festival, founded by his mentor the late Lorin Maazel, since 2015; became Music Director of the San Diego Symphony in 2019, and three years later became

Music Director of Canada's Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. In recent years, Payare has conducted many of the world's most prestigious orchestras, including those of New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Zurich, Berlin, Vienna, London, Munich, Hamburg, and Paris, besides making important opera debuts at London's Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; the Glyndebourne Festival; Stockholm's Royal Swedish Opera; and the Royal Danish Opera.

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