



ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE  
DE MONTRÉAL

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**PRESS RELEASE**  
*for immediate release*

## ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE MONTRÉAL CHOOSES RAFAEL PAYARE AS ITS NEXT MUSIC DIRECTOR



**Montreal, January 7, 2021** — The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) announced today that Rafael Payare will become its next Music Director, effective from the 2022-2023 season for a minimum of five years. Mr. Payare assumes the position of Music Director Designate from September 1, 2021, taking over from Maestro Kent Nagano, who held the position of Music Director from 2006 to 2020.

Mr. Payare's debut with the Orchestra in 2018 was a hugely memorable occasion, and his natural rapport with the OSM musicians was immediate. This connection was reaffirmed on his return to the Orchestra in 2019.

Mr. Payare's appointment was unanimously endorsed by the selection committee for the OSM's next Music Director. The 11-member committee, which included three OSM musicians, was chaired by Suzanne Fortier, Principal and Vice-chancellor of McGill University.

Rafael Payare, who is forty, is one of the most prominent and internationally sought-after conductors of his generation. His innate musicianship, his brilliant technique and the charisma he radiates on the podium characterize his musical style and approach. Mr. Payare trained as a French horn player and graduated from the acclaimed music education program *El Sistema*. His talent was soon recognized by Maestro José Antonio Abreu, *El Sistema's* founder, with whom he began his formal studies in orchestral conducting in 2004.

Since winning the prestigious *Malko International Competition for Young Conductors* in Denmark in 2012, Mr. Payare's career has advanced rapidly. From 2014 to 2019, he was Music Director of the Ulster Orchestra and since 2019 he has been Music Director of the San Diego Symphony.

In recent years, he has conducted many of the world's most prestigious symphony orchestras, in, Berlin Vienna, London, Munich, Chicago and Paris, among others. Mr. Payare has been Principal Conductor of the Castleton Festival since 2015, which was founded by his mentor, the late Lorin Maazel.

Rafael Payare, born in Venezuela, will become the ninth Music Director in the history of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, and the first conductor from the South American continent to hold this position.

As artist-in-residence for the 2020-2021 season, Rafael Payare will conduct three OSM concerts that will be webcast in the coming weeks. The first of the three will be presented live this Sunday, January 10, starting at 2:30 p.m., and can be viewed free of charge at [OSM.ca](https://www.osm.ca) and Medici.tv. The next Music Director of the OSM will conduct Berlioz' *Roman Carnival* and Brahms' Symphony no. 1 in C minor, op. 68.

#### **QUOTATION FROM RAFAEL PAYARE**

"It's an immense honour and a pleasure to have been chosen as the next Music Director of the fantastic Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. To be given the opportunity to work, create and explore new musical possibilities with the wonderful group of artists that is the OSM, is a hugely exciting prospect. It is my heartfelt wish that, in close synergy with the musicians, we can give the OSM's audience many moments of joy, pride and hope."

#### **QUOTATION FROM LUCIEN BOUCHARD**, chair of the OSM's Board of Directors

"Today, we are experiencing the culmination of a very important process in the life of a symphony orchestra: that of choosing its next Music Director. It's a chance to breathe new life into the OSM and an outstanding opportunity to open itself up to new musical approaches while maintaining the criteria of excellence that have always been its hallmarks. We are firmly convinced that the arrival of Rafael Payare will enable us to write an exciting chapter in the OSM's history."

#### **QUOTATION FROM MADELEINE CAREAU**, Chief Executive Officer of the OSM

"Rafael Payare's passion, energy and determination, his Latin roots and his engaging personality are attributes that will undoubtedly appeal to Montreal audiences, especially since our next Music Director is driven by a strong desire to get involved in the community. His talent, creativity and leadership will help the OSM continue to shine on the world stage, whether on tour or through recordings adapted to different broadcast platforms."

#### **QUOTATION FROM SUZANNE FORTIER**, chair of the selection committee for the OSM's next Music Director

"Today's announcement is the result of rigorous efforts that began in 2017 to choose a successor for Kent Nagano, who did not wish to renew his contract at the end of the 2019-2020 season. Based on solid selection criteria, our search was global in scope. It was an honour for me to chair this committee and I'm very happy with the result. We were able to identify a candidate of the

highest quality, Rafael Payare, whom we unanimously recommended to the OSM's Executive Committee and Board of Directors."

## **ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE MONTRÉAL**

Founded in 1934, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) is a distinguished leader of musical life in Quebec and Canada. Recognized as one of the finest orchestras in the world, whose core activity is to perform the vast orchestral repertoire with conductors and soloists of the highest calibre, the OSM is an essential cultural ambassador. The OSM perpetuates several rich traditions rooted in its long history of social involvement and embodied in far-reaching projects, world-class tours and a superb discography. Firmly anchored in today's world, the OSM's innovative artistic programming in both concerts and recordings brings modern-day relevance to the symphonic repertoire while strengthening the Orchestra's place at the heart of its home base in Quebec's metropolis. Over the years, the OSM has crisscrossed Canada and toured abroad, travelling to Quebec's Far North as well as to the United States, Latin America, and several countries in Europe and Asia. The OSM's discography totals more than 100 recordings on the Decca, Analekta, CBC Records, ECM, EMI, Philips and Sony labels, earning more than 50 national and international awards.

### **THE OSM WISHES TO THANK ITS PARTNERS, SUBSCRIBERS AND AUDIENCES**

The contribution of the Orchestra's public partners being indispensable to its operations, the OSM thanks its principal partner, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, along with the Canada Council for the Arts, the Government of Quebec and the Conseil des arts de Montréal.

The OSM is proud to be able to count on its loyal partners and wishes to thank Hydro-Québec, title presenter of the OSM, BMO Financial Group, season partner, and Power Corporation of Canada, major series sponsor. We also wish to express our gratitude to the OSM Foundation, Sélection Retraite, Yimby, Air Canada, Fondation J.A. DeSève, J. Armand Bombardier Foundation, Le Groupe Maurice, Spinelli, Canada Life, National Bank, BBA, Cogeco, Estiatorio Milos, Volvo Car Canada, Charton-Hobbs, DoubleTree by Hilton Montreal, ESKA, IRIS, Ritz-Carlton Montreal and Solotech. The OSM is likewise grateful to its other partners and donors, as well its subscribers and audiences, who, in different ways, provide essential support for its activities. The Artist-in-residence program is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Rossy Foundation. The Grand Orgue Pierre-Béique was generously gifted to the OSM by Ms. Jacqueline Desmarais.