



RAFAEL PAYARE, CONDUCTOR

"Undoubtedly a brilliant conductor of truly rare substance." - Michael Bastian Weiss, AZ Kultur, 25 February 2015.

Rafael Payare has been Chief Conductor of the Ulster Orchestra since September 2014 and was recently appointed Principal Conductor of the Castleton Festival in Virginia, taking over from the late Lorin Maazel.

Developing into one of the most sought after young conductors, Payare has made recent debuts with the Vienna Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, London Symphony and the Chicago Symphony at the Ravinia Festival. Other highlights have included the City of Birmingham Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Seoul Philharmonic, Oslo Philharmonic, Gothenburg Symphony and the Los Angeles and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic orchestras. 14-15 also saw his acclaimed opera debut conducting Madame Butterfly at the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm. He has enjoyed collaborations with soloists including Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Nikolai Lugansky, Alisa Weilerstein, Elisabeth Leonskaja, Sergey Khachatryan, Jonathan Biss and Alexander Melnikov.

Highlights
of
Payare's
2015-
16
season
include
the
Philharmonia
Orchestra
at
the
Royal
Festival
Hall,
NDR
Sinfonieorchester
Hamburg,
Frankfurt
Radio
Symphony,
Czech
Philharmonic,
Orchestre
de
la
Suisse
Romande,
Zurich
Opera
Orchester
and

the Bamberg Symphony; as well as return visits to the Cincinnati Symphony, CBSO, Rotterdam and Oslo Philharmonic orchestras. With the Ulster Orchestra, as well as continuing their Beethoven and Tchaikovsky cycle and exploring a variety of repertoire, he will lead the players in a busy schedule of education and outreach projects in Belfast and throughout Northern Ireland.

In July 2012, Payare was personally invited by his mentor, the late Lorin Maazel, to conduct at his Castleton Festival in Virginia. This led to a close association and he was recently honoured to accept the position of Principal Conductor and returned to Castleton in July 2015 to conduct performances of Gounod 'Romeo and Juliette' and Beethoven Symphony No 9. He also enjoys a close relationship with the celebrated Polish composer, Krzysztof Penderecki, who invited Rafael to conduct part of his 80th birthday concerts in Warsaw, alongside such conductors as Valery Gergiev, Charles Dutoit, Leonard Slatkin and Jiri Belohlavek.

Born in 1980 and a graduate of the celebrated El Sistema in Venezuela, Payare began his formal conducting studies in 2004 with José Antonio Abreu and has conducted all the major orchestras in Venezuela, including the Simón Bolívar Orchestra, both in Caracas and in Toronto as part of their 2009 Canadian tour. Having also served as Principal Horn of the Simon Bolivar Orchestra, he took part in many prestigious tours and recordings with conductors including Giuseppe Sinopoli, Claudio Abbado, Sir Simon Rattle and Lorin Maazel. As an assistant conductor, he has worked under Claudio Abbado for his performance of Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony with the Simón Bolívar Orchestra and in September 2012 was invited by Daniel Barenboim to assist on his production of Siegfried at the Berlin Staatsoper. In May 2012 he was awarded first prize at the Malko International Conducting Competition.

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formal conducting studies in 2004 with José Antonio Abreu and has conducted all the major orchestras in Venezuela, including the Simón Bolívar Orchestra, both in Caracas and in Toronto as part of their 2009 Canadian tour. Having also served as Principal Horn of the Simon Bolivar Orchestra, he took part in many prestigious tours and recordings with conductors including Giuseppe Sinopoli, Claudio Abbado, Sir Simon Rattle and Lorin Maazel.

As an assistant conductor, he has worked under Gustavo Dudamel, most recently for his staged production of Marriage of Figaro with the LA Philharmonic, and served as assistant conductor to the late Claudio Abbado for his performance of Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony with the Simón Bolívar Orchestra. In September 2012, Daniel Barenboim personally invited him to assist for his production of Siegfried at the Berlin Staatsoper.

Rafael has homes in both Caracas and Berlin with his wife, Alisa Weilerstein.