Gustavo Dudamel: Biography

Conductor Gustavo Dudamel’s passionate music-making continues to inspire audiences of all ages worldwide. Currently serving as Music Director of both the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the impact of his musical leadership is felt on four continents. While his commitment to these posts accounts for the major portion of his yearly schedule, Dudamel also guest conducts with some of the world’s greatest musical institutions. This season he returns to the Vienna and Berlin Philharmonics, and tours with La Scala in opera and concert to Japan. Additional guest appearances include the New York Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra London, Bamberg Symphony, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and Gothenburg Symphony, where he is Honorary Conductor.

Dudamel makes his first foray into composing for film with the major feature Libertador (the life of Simón Bolívar), for which he wrote the score and recorded it with the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela. It is being released this season, along with the soundtrack.

Now in his 15th season as Music Director, Dudamel continues to lead the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra in his native Venezuela as well as on tour. Starting with a production of Tannhäuser at the Bogotá Opera in July 2013, followed by a 2013 summer residency at the Salzburg Festival, the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra then tours to Paris and the Middle East in January of 2014, before travelling to California in February for a residency and joint concerts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic for an LA Phil Tchaikovsky Festival.

Gustavo Dudamel is in his fifth season as Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where his contract has already been extended through 2018-19, the orchestra’s 100th season. Under his leadership the Los Angeles Philharmonic has expanded its diversified outreach through many projects, most notably Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA), influenced by Venezuela’s widely successful El Sistema. With YOLA, Gustavo brings music to children in the underserved communities of Los Angeles, and also serves as an inspiration for similar efforts throughout the United States, as well as for programs in Sweden (Hammarkullen) and Scotland (Raploch). This season, the students of YOLA will have the unique opportunity of playing alongside the musicians of the Los Angeles Philharmonic in its first ever public “side by side” concert.

At the Los Angeles Philharmonic, it is not only the breadth of the audience reached, but also the depth of the programming performed under Gustavo Dudamel that is remarkable. Programs at the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 2013-2014 continue to represent the best and the boldest: eleven world premieres and thirteen commissions; a Hollywood Bowl Aida and Verdi Requiem; a community-wide season opening festival in celebration of the 10th anniversary of Walt Disney Concert Hall, culminating in a gala performance at the Hall; and a seven-city North American tour to San Francisco, Kansas City, New York, Washington DC, Toronto, Montreal and Boston in March 2014. The season ends with a staged Così fan tutte with sets by architect Zaha Hadid, completing a three-consecutive-year Mozart/Da Ponte trilogy project.

An exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist since 2005, Grammy winner Gustavo Dudamel has numerous recordings on the label. As part of a major Mahler recording project, his most recent CD release is
Mahler 9 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, with Mahler 7 (Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra) anticipated for early 2014. In addition, DG has already released Mahler 5, as well as *Dudamel: Mahler 8 - Symphony of a Thousand Live from Caracas* (DVD + Blu-Ray), featuring the combined forces of the LA Phil and the Bolívars. September 2013 sees the international release of an all-Strauss disc with the Berlin Philharmonic (CD), and a concerto disc with the Bolívars and Yuja Wang featuring Rachmaninoff’s Third Piano Concerto and Prokofiev’s Second Piano Concerto is scheduled for release later this season. A CD of Adams’ *Gospel According to the Other Mary* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic is planned for release in March 2014.

Many video/DVD releases capture the excitement of important concerts in Gustavo Dudamel’s musical life, including *The Inaugural Concert* documenting his first concert in 2009 as Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, *New Year’s Eve Concert Gala 2011* with the Berlin Philharmonic, and *a Birthday Concert for Pope Benedict XVI*, among others. In June 2011, a documentary, *Let the Children Play*, featuring Dudamel, was shown in over 500 Fathom movie theaters nationwide. Gustavo Dudamel has been featured three times on CBS’s *60 Minutes* and appeared on a 2010 PBS special, *Dudamel: Conducting a Life*, with Tavis Smiley. He appeared on *Sesame Street* with Elmo in February 2012.

Gustavo Dudamel is one of the most decorated conductors of his generation. He has recently been named Musical America’s 2013 *Musician of the Year*, one of the highest honors in the classical music industry, and was voted into the Gramophone Hall of Fame. In October of 2011, he was named *Gramophone Artist of the Year*, and in May of the same year, was inducted into the Royal Swedish Academy of Music in consideration of his “eminent merits in the musical art.” The previous year, he received the *Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts* at MIT. Dudamel was inducted into l’*Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* as a Chevalier in Paris in 2009, and received an honorary doctorate from the Universidad Centroccidental Lisandro Alvarado in his hometown of Barquisimeto. He also received an honorary doctorate from the University of Gothenburg in 2012. In 2008, the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra was awarded Spain’s prestigious annual *Prince of Asturias Award for the Arts* and, along with his mentor José Antonio Abreu, Dudamel was given the “Q Prize” from Harvard University for extraordinary service to children.

Named one of *Time* Magazine’s 100 most influential people in 2009, Gustavo Dudamel was born in 1981 in Barquisimeto, Venezuela. He began violin lessons as a child with José Luis Jiménez and Francisco Díaz at the Jacinto Lara Conservatory. He continued his violin studies with Rubén Cova and José Francisco del Castillo at the Latin American Academy of Violin. His conducting studies began in 1996 with Rodolfo Saglimbeni and, that same year, he was given his first conducting position, Music Director of the Amadeus Chamber Orchestra. In 1999, he was appointed Music Director of the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra and began conducting studies with the orchestra’s founder, Dr. Abreu; a few years later, in 2004, Dudamel was brought to international attention by winning the inaugural Bamberger Symphoniker Gustav Mahler Competition. These early musical and mentoring experiences molded his commitment to music as an engine for social change – a lifelong passion.

In 2012, Gustavo and Eloísa Dudamel launched The Dudamel Foundation, which is dedicated to furthering music education and social justice around the world.

Gustavo Dudamel, his wife Eloísa Maturén, and their young son Martín divide their time mainly between Caracas and Los Angeles.