



GUSTAVO DUDAMEL

2024/25 SEASON (LONG BIOGRAPHY - 1867 WORDS)

Gustavo Dudamel is committed to creating a better world through music. His unwavering belief in the power of art to inspire and transform lives has fueled his unifying presence on and off the podium, his commitment to education and access for underserved communities around the world, and his mission to expand the impact of classical music to new and ever-larger audiences. His rise, from humble beginnings as a child in Venezuela to an unparalleled career of artistic and social achievements, offers living proof that culture can bring meaning to the life of an individual and greater harmony to the world at large. He currently serves as the Music & Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela, and in 2026, he becomes the Music and Artistic Director of the New York Philharmonic, continuing a legacy that includes Gustav Mahler, Arturo Toscanini, and Leonard Bernstein. Throughout 2025, Dudamel will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of El Sistema, honoring the global impact of José Antonio Abreu's visionary education program across five generations, and acknowledging the vital importance of arts education. Dudamel will tour internationally with the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra and the National Children's Symphony of Venezuela, and continue to work directly with teachers and students on the ground in Venezuela and in satellite programs around the world.

Dudamel's bold programming and expansive vision led *The New York Times* to herald the LA Phil as "the most important orchestra in America—period." The 2024/25 LA Phil Walt Disney Concert Hall season celebrates the many communities of Los Angeles, from the continuation of both the Pan-American Music Initiative and the *John Williams Spotlight*, to the Seoul Festival highlighting modern Korean culture, to Carlos Simon's *Gospel Mass*, which pays homage to the resilience and joy of the Black community. Highlights conducted by Dudamel include the season-opening Gala program of Ginastera and Rachmaninoff, the world premiere of Gabriela Ortiz's cello concerto *Dzonot* paired with a production of Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a series of Día de los Muertos celebrations, and 11 concerts in the Mahler Grooves Festival. Dudamel and the LA Phil also open Carnegie Hall's 2024/25 season and kick off its season-long *Nuestros sonidos* festival of Latin culture in the U.S., with three nights of bold, genre-defying programs, before touring to Colombia for a series of education events and performances. Dudamel's 2024 Hollywood Bowl season is star-studded, with headliners including Diana Damrau and two nights with the four-time Grammy and 17-time Latin Grammy winner Natalia Lafourcade.

Dudamel began to unveil his vision for the New York Philharmonic in April 2024, with a centennial celebration of the legendary Young People's Concerts that included performances with the NY Phil, young musicians from across New York City, and guest artists Common, soprano Hera Hyesang Park, and guitarist and former New York Yankees center fielder Bernie Williams. In the 2024/25 season, Dudamel returns for three weeks of concerts with the orchestra and performances in all five boroughs of New York City, including a free performance in Central Park.

Throughout 2024/25, Dudamel undertakes tours around the world, beginning in spring 2024 with the revival of the LA Phil's groundbreaking production of Beethoven's *Fidelio* in partnership with Deaf West Theatre and Coro de Manos Blancas (White Hands Choir) of Venezuela, with performances in Los Angeles, London, Paris, and Barcelona. Dudamel also tours the U.S. with the National Children's Symphony of Venezuela in August 2024, with a stop in New York as part of Carnegie Hall's World Orchestra Week celebrating international youth orchestras. In spring 2025, Dudamel leads a residency in Spain with the London Symphony Orchestra, and in summer 2025, he joins the Berlin Philharmonic for a series of dates in Berlin and an unprecedented tour across Japan.

In January 2025, Dudamel and the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra tour across Europe, including concerts in Paris, London, Luxembourg, Berlin, Munich, Brussels, and Madrid. The performances are part of a yearlong celebration of the 50th Anniversary of El Sistema, and the global impact of José Antonio Abreu's visionary education program across five generations. Dudamel has been a tireless champion of El Sistema, working directly with teachers and students on the ground in Venezuela, as well as visiting El Sistema-inspired programs around the world. Dudamel also toured the U.S. in the summer of 2024 with the National Children's Symphony of Venezuela, including an acclaimed performance with Carnegie Hall's World Orchestra Week, where *The New York Times* reported him exclaiming from the stage: "This is the Venezuela we want."

Dudamel's advocacy for the power of music to unite, heal, and inspire is global in scope. In appearances from the United Nations to the White House to the Nobel Peace Prize Concert, Dudamel has served as a passionate advocate for music education and social integration through art, sharing his own transformative experience in Venezuela's El Sistema program as an example of how music can give a sense of purpose and meaning to a young person and help them rise above challenging circumstances. In 2007, Dudamel, the LA Phil, and its community partners founded YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles), which now provides more than 1,700 young people with free instruments, intensive music instruction, academic support, and leadership training, while also welcoming them to YOLA's purpose-built, Frank Gehry-designed facility, the Judith and Thomas L. Beckmen YOLA Center at Inglewood. In 2012, Dudamel launched the Dudamel Foundation, which he co-chairs with his wife, actress and director María Valverde, with the goal of expanding access to music and the arts for young people by providing tools and opportunities to shape their creative futures. The Dudamel Foundation has hosted its *Encuentros* initiatives around the world, from Spain to the Hollywood Bowl, as a way to explore cultural unity and celebrate harmony, equality, dignity, beauty, and respect through music.

As a conductor, Dudamel is one of the few classical musicians to become a bona fide pop-culture phenomenon and has worked tirelessly to ensure that music reaches an ever-greater audience. He was the first classical artist to participate in the Super Bowl halftime show and the youngest conductor ever to lead the Vienna Philharmonic's New Year's Day Concert. He has performed at global mainstream events from the Academy Awards to the Olympics, and has worked with musical icons like Billie Eilish, Christina Aguilera, Ricky Martin, Gwen Stefani, Coldplay, and Nas. Dudamel conducted the score to Steven Spielberg's new adaptation of *West Side Story*, and at John Williams' personal request, he guest conducted the opening and closing credits of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. His film and television appearances include *Sesame Street*, *The Simpsons*, *Mozart in the Jungle*, *Trolls World Tour*, and *The Nutcracker and the Four Realms*. A documentary on his life titled *¡Viva Maestro!* was released in 2022, and in 2019 Dudamel was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, joining Hollywood greats and musical luminaries such as Bernstein, Ellington, and Toscanini.

Dudamel's extensive discography has reached hundreds of millions of listeners around the world, winning five Grammy Awards and seven nominations. His most recent releases include *Revolución diamantina*, the first full album of orchestral works by Mexican composer Gabriela Ortiz on the innovative Platoon label, Nonesuch's recording of Thomas Adès' *Dante* with the LA Phil, which won the 2024 Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance, and *Fandango*, with the LA Phil and violinist Anne Akiko Meyers, which received two Grammy nominations and two Latin Grammy nominations. Other recent releases include Deutsche Grammophon LA Phil recordings of Mahler's Symphony No. 8, which won a Grammy for Best Choral Performance, and the complete Charles Ives symphonies and Andrew Norman's *Sustain*, which both won Grammy Awards for Best Orchestral Performance. He has made several acclaimed recordings with the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra, including the soundtrack to the feature film *Libertador*, about the life of Bolívar, for which Dudamel composed the score, and digital releases of all nine Beethoven symphonies.

Dudamel is one of the most acclaimed conductors of his or any other generation. Among his many honors, he received the 2024 Queen Sofía Spanish Institute Award for Excellence and 2024 Academy of Achievement Golden Plate Award, he was named Glenn Gould Prize Laureate in 2022 and received Spain's 2020 Gold Medal for Merit in Fine Arts, the 2019 Konex Foundation Classical Music Award,

and the 2019 Distinguished Artist Award from the International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA); the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize, the Páez Medal of Art, and the Pablo Neruda Order of Artistic and Cultural Merit in 2018; the Americas Society Cultural Achievement Award in 2016; the 2014 Leonard Bernstein Lifetime Achievement Award for the Elevation of Music in Society from the Longy School of Music; and the Medal of the University of Burgos, Spain, in 2021. Leading publications such as *Musical America* and *Gramophone* have named him their artist of the year. Dudamel has received honorary doctorates from Harvard University, the Universidad Centroccidental Lisandro Alvarado in his hometown, the University of Gothenburg, and the Colburn School. He was inducted into l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in Paris as a Chevalier in 2009 and became an Officier in 2022. The Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela was awarded Spain's prestigious Prince of Asturias Award for the Arts in 2008. Dudamel was named one of *Time* magazine's 100 most influential people in 2009. In 2016, he delivered the keynote speech for recipients of the National Medal of Arts and the National Humanities Medal.

Gustavo Dudamel was born in 1981 in Barquisimeto, Venezuela. His father was a trombonist and his mother a voice teacher, and he grew up listening to music and conducting his toys to old recordings. He began violin lessons as a child but was drawn to conducting from an early age. At the age of 13, as a member of his youth orchestra, he put down his violin and picked up the baton when the conductor was running late. A natural, he began studying conducting with Rodolfo Saglimbeni. In 1996, he was named Music Director of the Amadeus Chamber Orchestra, where his talent was spotted by José Antonio Abreu, who would become his mentor. In 1999, at the age of 18, he was appointed Music Director of the Simón Bolívar Youth Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela, composed of graduates of the El Sistema program. Dudamel gained international attention when he won the inaugural Bamberger Symphoniker Gustav Mahler Competition in 2004. He went on to become Music Director of the Gothenburg Symphony (2007–2012), of which he now holds the title of Honorary Conductor. Dudamel's talent was widely recognized, notably by other prominent conductors of the day, but it was the Los Angeles Philharmonic that took the initiative in 2007 to sign the then 26-year-old Dudamel as Music Director, beginning in the 2009/10 season. Dudamel also held the position of Music Director of the Paris Opera from 2021 to 2023, leading acclaimed productions of Puccini's *Turandot* and *Tosca*, Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, and John Adams' *Nixon in China*, adding to an extensive operatic résumé that includes more than 30 staged, semi-staged, and concert productions around the world.

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