



GUSTAVO DUDAMEL

2020/21 SEASON (LONG BIOGRAPHY)

Gustavo Dudamel is driven by the belief that music has the power to transform lives, to inspire, and to change the world. Through his dynamic presence on the podium and his tireless advocacy for arts education, Dudamel has introduced classical music to new audiences around the world and has helped to provide access to the arts for countless people in underserved communities. As the Music & Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, now in his twelfth season, 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."

With the COVID-19 global pandemic shutting down the majority of live performances, Dudamel has committed even more time and energy to his mission of bringing music to young people across the globe, firm in his belief that the arts play an essential role in creating a more just, peaceful, and integrated society.

While quarantining in Los Angeles, he hosted a new radio program from his living room entitled "At Home with Gustavo," sharing personal stories and musical selections as a way to bring people together during a time of isolation. The program was broadcast locally as well as internationally in both English and Spanish, with guest co-hosts including, among others, composer John Williams, his wife, actress María Valverde.

Dudamel also participated in Global Citizen's *Global Goal: Unite For Our Future* TV fundraising special, giving a socially-distanced performance from the Hollywood Bowl with the LA Phil and YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles). The event, also featuring guest artists Shakira, Coldplay, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Usher, and more, was viewed by millions of people worldwide and raised \$6.9 billion dollars to provide COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines to the world's poorest and most marginalized communities.

Upcoming projects include a virtual version of the YOLA National Festival (alongside numerous other national and international educational events with YOLA), and the launch of his highly-anticipated multimedia educational project in collaboration with the "la Caixa Foundation," beginning in Barcelona and touring throughout Spain later this year.

Dudamel anticipates performances with the Vienna Philharmonic at the Salzburg and Grafenegg Festivals, a United States tour later in the season with the Vienna Philharmonic including three performances at Carnegie Hall, and will create two new teaching projects with his Foundation during the 2020-21 season, in collaboration with the "Escuela de Música Reina Sofía" in Madrid.

Following his U.S. debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl in 2005, Dudamel became the orchestra's music director starting in the 2009/10 season. Under his direction, the LA Phil has secured its place as one of the leading orchestras in the world, extending its reach into the community. As Dudamel begins his second decade with the orchestra, having recently extended his contract through the 2025/26 season, they continue to push boundaries, bringing new sounds, voices, and faces into the concert hall.

In 2019, Dudamel was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, joining Hollywood greats as well as such musical luminaries as Bernstein, Ellington, and Toscanini. His legacy is tied to Los Angeles, but



Dudamel's musical life was formed in Venezuela. He is the most famous graduate of El Sistema, an extraordinary program of immersive musical training initiated in 1975 by Maestro José Antonio Abreu that gives opportunities to young children, often from poor backgrounds, to learn and play a musical instrument. More than a music program, it is a philosophy that sees music as an agent for social change, and it informs all of Dudamel's work both on and off the podium.

Inspired by El Sistema, Dudamel, the LA Phil and its community partners founded YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles) in 2007, and what started out as a music program in South L.A. for 80 musicians now serves over 1,300 musicians across four sites, providing young people with free instruments, intensive music instruction, academic support, and leadership training. In the 2020/21 season, YOLA is planning to open its own permanent, purpose-built facility: The Judith and Thomas L. Beckmen YOLA Center at Inglewood, designed by architect Frank Gehry.

Dudamel's advocacy for the power of music to unite, heal, and inspire is global in scope. In 2017, he led the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic at the Nobel Prize Concert in Sweden, where he also delivered a lecture on the unity of the arts and sciences. His 2018 "Americas" tour with the Vienna Philharmonic – beginning in Carnegie Hall and ending in the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires – celebrated the symbolic union of North, Central, and South America, a bridge he further strengthened with an LA Phil residency in Mexico City in 2019, where his Foundation helped to bring 96 YOLA musicians for a cultural exchange culminating in a free, open rehearsal for all of the students with Dudamel.

Dudamel's films, recordings, and broadcasts have reached hundreds of millions of people around the world. In the coming season, Dudamel will conduct Bernstein's iconic score for Steven Spielberg's adaptation of *West Side Story*, voice the character of Trollzart in the new DreamWorks animated feature *Trolls World Tour*, lead a cutting-edge virtual reality video project by La Caixa in Spain, and star as the subject of a documentary on his life, to be released by Participant Media. His extensive, Grammy Award®-winning discography includes 57 releases, including last season's acclaimed Deutsche Grammophon LA Phil releases of Andrew Norman's *Sustain* (which won a Grammy Award® in 2020 for *Best Orchestral Performance*), a double-album of the music of John Williams, a special Centenary box set, a new reading of Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, and a landmark recording of John Adams' *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*. Last season also saw the Sony Classical audio/video release of the *Sommernachtskonzert 2019* with the Vienna Philharmonic, following their 2017 New Year's concert, where he was the youngest conductor in history to lead this famous annual performance. He has made several acclaimed recordings with the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela, including the soundtrack to the feature film *Libertador* – about the life of Simón Bolívar – for which Dudamel composed the score, and digital releases of all nine Beethoven symphonies.

A bona fide pop culture persona, Dudamel has had cameos in Amazon Studio's award-winning comedy series *Mozart in the Jungle*, *The Simpsons*, and Disney's *The Nutcracker and the Four Realms*, for which he also recorded the score. At John Williams' personal request, he guest conducted the opening and closing credits of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* and performed with the LA Phil at the 2019 Academy Awards®. It was a first for a classical musician when Dudamel, together with members of YOLA, participated in the 2016 Super Bowl half-time show alongside pop stars Coldplay, Beyoncé, and Bruno Mars. Dudamel has been featured several times on CBS' *60 Minutes*, profiled on PBS, and interviewed by Christiane Amanpour on CNN, Conan O'Brien on *Conan*, Stephen Colbert on *The Late Show*, and Elmo on *Sesame Street*.



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 from an early age was drawn to conducting, and 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, comprised of graduates of the El Sistema program. Dudamel gained international attention when he won the inaugural Bamberger Symphoniker Gustav Mahler Competition in 2004. Dudamel went on to become the music director of the Gothenburg Symphony (2007–2012), where 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 who took the initiative to sign the 27-year-old Dudamel as music director in 2009.

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

Dudamel continues to exert influence as a musical leader and mentor to young musicians. In 2012, the Gustavo Dudamel Foundation, a registered charity, was created with the goal "to expand access to music and the arts by providing tools and opportunities for young people to shape their creative futures."

For more information about Gustavo Dudamel, visit his official website at gustavodudamel.com and Gustavo Dudamel Foundation at dudamelfoundation.org

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