



Sunday | October 23 | 5pm
Symphony Hall

Los Angeles Philharmonic
Gustavo Dudamel conductor
María Dueñas violin

Gabriela Ortiz
(b. 1964)

Altar de cuerda, for violin and orchestra
Morisco chilango
Canto abierto
Maya déco

(Boston premiere)

INTERMISSION

Gustav Mahler
(1860-1911)

Symphony No. 1
Langsam schleppend
Kräftig bewegt
Feierlich und gemessen
Stürmisch bewegt

Today's program will run approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes,
including a 15-minute intermission.

Gabriela Ortiz' *Altar de cuerda* was commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic
with generous support from the Lenore S. and Bernard A. Greenberg Fund.

Support for the LA Phil on tour is generously provided by the
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David Howard

E-Flat Clarinet

Andrew Lowy

Bass Clarinet

David Howard

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Shawn Mouser
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Evan Kuhlmann

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Evan Kuhlmann

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Chair

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Chair

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Associate Principal
Nancy and Donald de Brier
Chair

Christopher Still
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Chair

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The Los Angeles Philharmonic string section utilizes revolving seating on a systematic basis. Players listed alphabetically change seats periodically.

The musicians of the Los Angeles Philharmonic are represented by Professional Musicians Local 47, AFM.

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

At a glance

On the surface, this program would seem to be predicated on contrast. The temporal, geographical, cultural, chronological, and aesthetic distances between Gustav Mahler's First Symphony and Gabriela Ortiz' seventh musical "altar" are great indeed. But there are also areas of common ground, however dislocated. Both composers draw on a focused range of inter-disciplinary influences and inspirations—Mahler from German Romantic art and literature (with a portentous nod to Dante), Ortiz from border-fluid architecture and sociology—and both accept and personalize traditional forms.

Perhaps freed by her distance from the origin of those traditions and her maturity as an artist, Ortiz was able to complete *Altar de cuerda* in three months last year. She cast it in the three fast–slow–fast movements common to the concerto heritage but filled that familiar outline with a heady mix of vivid and inventive instrumental colors and textures.

Mahler, on the other hand, struggled for 15 years with details great and small (including eliminating an entire movement) before bringing his Symphony No. 1 through four premieres to its final published form in the four movements of tradition. In the process, he ditched the evolving verbal programs that once accompanied the music, though their nature imagery and narrative arc remain audible. As with *Altar de cuerda*, the forms and their functions may be of recognizable genres, but their expression is utterly idiosyncratic.

— John Henken



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Gabriela Ortiz (b. 1964)

Altar de cuerda, for violin and orchestra (2021; Boston premiere)

As of today, Mexican composer Gabriela Ortiz has created seven works in the series of “musical altars,” and there is no reason to assume that she will not write more in the future. This is the full list so far:

- Altar de neón* (1995), for four percussionists and chamber orchestra
- Altar de muertos* (1997), for string quartet, water drums, and masks
- Altar de piedra* (2002), for three percussionists and orchestra
- Altar de fuego* (2010), for orchestra
- Altar de luz* (2013), for tape
- Altar de viento* (2015), for flute and orchestra

The fact is that for Gabriela Ortiz, the altar is not a religious concept; instead, its meaning for her tends more towards the symbolic, the spiritual, and the magical; an altar is a place to throw music into relief. Nonetheless, the first work in the series was in fact inspired by a true neon altar she came across in a church. In this most improbable image, she found a cultural syncretism, an erasure of borders, a conceptual eclecticism that can very well be synthesized in the idea of the postmodern, which happens to be one of the main aesthetic tendencies that define her music.

In recent years, Ortiz has established a close working relationship with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, a relationship which has produced several works and their respective premieres: *Altar de piedra* (2002), *Téenek* (2017), *Pico-Bite-Beat* (2018), *Yanga* (2019), and *Kauyumari* (2021). When in 2021 the opportunity for a further collaboration arose, the composer was ready (and willing) to write a violin concerto. Then, Gustavo Dudamel, the LA Phil’s Music Director, put forth the name of the brilliant young Spanish violinist María Dueñas. Thus, the stage was set for the creation of *Altar de cuerda* (“String Altar”), for violin and orchestra.

Tackling the issue of form in her new piece, Gabriela Ortiz proceeds according to tradition and chooses the usual three-movement structure, fast–slow–fast. In the first movement, “Morisco chilango” (“Chilango Moorish,” where “chilango” is a moniker for Mexico City natives), the composer has included a few subtle melodic turns which impart a vaguely Mediterranean flavor, a nod to María Dueñas’ Andalusian roots. More generally, “Morisco chilango” represents one more of Gabriela Ortiz’ visions on cultural appropriation and re-appropriation, an important theme in her musical thought. (She herself is, by the way, proudly *chilanga*).

In “Canto abierto” (“Open Song”), the distant reference is to the open chapels that were a common feature in 16th-century Mexican churches, built to catechize indigenous communities still reluctant to go inside a temple. Here, the composer’s operating principle is the creation of chords that are built and deconstructed, harmonies that slowly grow and contract like a sea swell that can be visually perceived in the score, while the solo violin lyrically floats over the sound waves. At the beginning and at the end of the movement, all wind players (both woodwind and brass) play tuned crystal glasses, which create an additional harmonic field.

“Maya déco” is a virtuosic, rhythmic, and fast-paced movement, with a constant dialogue between the solo violin and the orchestra; near the end of the piece, there is a fully written-out cadenza for the soloist.

The thoughtful listener will discover that there are references to architecture in all of *Altar de cuerda*’s three movements. On the one hand, this may be attributed to the fact that

those cross-border appropriations that occupy the composer's thoughts are particularly evident in architecture; on the other hand, it so happens that Gabriela Ortiz' father, Rubén Ortiz Fernández, was not only a prominent music lover and a musician himself, but also an architect by profession.

It is worth noting that in all of Gabriela Ortiz' *Altars* (except for *Altar de luz*) there is an important (and sometimes protagonistic) presence of percussion instruments; *Altar de cuerda* includes, besides timpani, three percussionists playing a role related more to color than to rhythm.

Gabriela Ortiz wrote *Altar de cuerda* between September and December 2021, on a commission from the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, and the work is, as it happens, the first concerto dedicated to María Dueñas.

—Juan Arturo Brennan

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) **Symphony No. 1**

The genesis of Mahler's First Symphony was protracted—15 years separate his first thoughts from his final revision. During that time, the young composer went from apprentice to journeyman to master. In 1884, when he first scribbled down themes that would eventually find their way into the Symphony, Mahler was conductor of the opera in Kassel, a modest post. By the time the work achieved its final form, he was director of the Court Opera in Vienna. The years in between had taken him to Prague, Leipzig, Budapest (where the First Symphony premiered in its original, five-movement version in 1889), and Hamburg, as well as a two-month stint as a guest conductor at Covent Garden in London.

The Symphony, too, had seen as many cities. After its Budapest premiere, Mahler revised it for performances in Hamburg (1893) and Weimar (1894), finally excising an entire movement and premiering the work in (nearly) its present form in Berlin in 1896. The version published in 1899 reflects further revision, primarily to the work's orchestration.

Several facts about Mahler the composer emerge in connection with this Symphony. First and foremost, his activities as a composer of songs were inextricably intertwined with his work as a symphonist. In this case, themes from his *Songs of a Wayfarer*, which he started in 1893, play a central role in the First Symphony's opening and third movements.

Mahler also needed an extramusical stimulus to get started on his symphonies, but would later discard that program, usually a mark that the work had achieved its final form. Here, Mahler began with an elaborate program derived from early German Romantic writers Jean Paul and E.T.A. Hoffmann—writers whose ecstatic nature imagery and descriptions of the grotesque and macabre certainly left their mark on Mahler's music—and the Italian medieval poet Dante Alighieri—the Symphony's finale at one time bore the descriptive title “Dall'Inferno al Paradiso.” The visual arts also played a role, especially the woodcut *The Hunter's Funeral Procession* (1850) by Moritz von Schwind, in which the animals of the forest carry the bier of the dead hunter, a key impetus for the third movement funeral procession.

But Mahler eventually distanced himself from these influences, leaving a four-movement symphony with a sonata-allegro opening, a spirited and earthy dance movement, the funeral procession, and a finale whose storm dissolves in light. And though a product of his journeyman years, the First Symphony, in its final form, already affirms Mahler's complete mastery, an unequivocal announcement that the wayfarer has definitely arrived.

—John Mangum

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Gustavo Dudamel conductor

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 globe and has helped to provide access to the arts for countless people in underserved communities. He currently serves as Music & Artistic Director, Walt and Lilly Disney Chair, of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Music Director of the Opéra National de Paris and Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra.

One of the few classical musicians to become a *bona fide* pop culture phenomenon, Dudamel's film credits include Steven Spielberg's new film adaptation of Bernstein's *West Side Story*; *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*; *The Simpsons*; and he led the LA Phil with Billie Eilish in the concert film *Happier Than Ever: A Love Letter to Los Angeles*. He has performed at the Super Bowl halftime show, the Academy Awards, the Nobel Prize Concert, and has worked with international superstars Christina Aguilera, Beyoncé, Coldplay, and others. His extensive discography includes 65 releases and four Grammy® Awards.

Inspired by his transformative experience as a youth in El Sistema, Venezuela's immersive music-training program, he created the Dudamel Foundation in 2012, which he co-chairs with his wife, actress and director María Valverde, with the goal "to expand access to music and the arts for young people by providing tools and opportunities to shape their creative futures." In July and August 2022, the Dudamel Foundation brought its "Encuentros" initiative to the Hollywood Bowl as part of the 100th anniversary season, in a two-week intensive global leadership and orchestral training program for young musicians from around the world, culminating in a concert at the Hollywood Bowl and a tour with the "Orquesta del Encuentros" to the legendary Greek Theatre in Berkeley, California. More information is available at gustavodudamel.com and at dudamelfoundation.org.

María Dueñas violin

With her impressive musical expressiveness and technical perfection, at the age of only 19, María Dueñas has quickly established herself as one of the most sought-after artists of her generation. Since winning the 2021 Menuhin Competition and the Audience Prize, the Spanish violinist has been in demand worldwide, making her debuts with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Staatskapelle Berlin, Dresdner Philharmonie, Mozarteumorchester Salzburg, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and NHK Symphony Orchestra, as well as at the Grafenegg Festival, the Vienna Konzerthaus, and Carnegie Hall. As a BBC New Generation Artist 2021/23, she will collaborate with the most relevant concert halls and orchestras across the U.K. The dedication (and today's Boston premiere) of *Altar de cuerda*, a new violin concerto by Gabriela Ortiz, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel, is a major highlight for the season.

Dueñas has already performed with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, National Philharmonic Orchestra of Russia, and Lucerne Symphony Orchestra under conductors such as Gustavo Dudamel, Marek Janowski, Manfred Honeck, Vladimir Spivakov, Vassily Sinaisky, Gustavo Gimeno, and Michael Sanderling.

Dueñas collaborates with world-class soloists such as Matthias Goerne, Itamar Golan, and Robert Kulek, appearing at some of the most important festivals, including Rheingau Music Festival,

Colmar International Festival, Arts Square Festival Saint Petersburg, and Verbier Festival. Many first prizes stand out in her career. Most recently, Dueñas won the Getting to Carnegie Competition, Vladimir Spivakov International Competition, Zhuhai Mozart International Competition, and Yankelevitch Prize, to name a few.

Born in Granada (Spain) in 2002, María Dueñas studies with Boris Kuschnir at the Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna and the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz, Austria.

María Dueñas plays on the Niccolò Gagliano violin, c. 1734, kindly offered on loan from Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben, and on the Guarneri del Gesù "Muntz," c. 1736, on generous loan from Nippon Music Foundation.

Los Angeles Philharmonic

The **Los Angeles Philharmonic**, under the vibrant leadership of Music & Artistic Director Gustavo Dudamel, presents an inspiring array of music through a commitment to foundational works and adventurous explorations. Both at home and abroad, the LA Phil—recognized as one of the world's outstanding orchestras—is leading the way in groundbreaking and diverse programming, onstage and in the community, that reflects the orchestra's artistry and demonstrates its vision. 2022/23 marks the orchestra's 104th season.

More than 250 concerts are either performed or presented by the LA Phil at its three iconic venues: the Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall, The Ford, and the famed Hollywood Bowl. During its winter season at Walt Disney Concert Hall, with approximately 165 performances, the LA Phil creates festivals, artist residencies, and other thematic programs designed to enhance the audience's experience of orchestral music. Since 1922, its summer home has been the world-famous Hollywood Bowl. Under the stewardship of the LA Phil since December 2019, The Ford presents an eclectic summer season reflective of the communities that comprise Los Angeles.

The orchestra's involvement with Los Angeles extends far beyond its venues, with wide-ranging performances in the schools, churches, and neighborhood centers of a vastly diverse community. Among its influential and multifaceted learning initiatives is YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles), inspired by Venezuela's revolutionary El Sistema. Through YOLA, the LA Phil and its community partners now provide free instruments, intensive music instruction, and leadership training to 1,500 students from underserved neighborhoods. In the fall of 2021, YOLA opened its own permanent, purpose-built facility: the Judith and Thomas L. Beckmen YOLA Center at Inglewood, designed by architect Frank Gehry.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic was founded in 1919 by William Andrews Clark, Jr., a wealthy amateur musician. Walter Henry Rothwell became its first Music Director, serving until 1927; since then, ten renowned conductors have served in that capacity. Their names are Georg Schnéevoigt (1927-1929); Artur Rodziński (1929-1933); Otto Klemperer (1933-1939); Alfred Wallenstein (1943-1956); Eduard van Beinum (1956-1959); Zubin Mehta (1962-1978); Carlo Maria Giulini (1978-1984); André Previn (1985-1989); Esa-Pekka Salonen (1992-2009); and Gustavo Dudamel (2009-present).

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