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EXTRAORDINARY LEADERS: SAN DIEGO

The Score of San Diego Symphony



The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park

The San Diego Symphony's two new state-of-the-art venues and world-renowned music director bring rhythm and harmony to Southern California.

If there is one thing learned after the COVID-19 pandemic, it's the power of shared experiences. With this in mind, the San Diego Symphony (SDS) opened its new outdoor venue, The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park, in 2021 to capture the imagination of guests as they marvel at the picturesque pavilion floating like a shell over the bay.

"I was sitting outside the other night watching the last movement of Verdi's *Requiem* as the sun set into the ocean," says Martha Gilmer, SDS CEO. "It was like watching a bird in flight. There's a magic that occurs when nature and culture collide that feels spiritual."

A staple of San Diego culture since its first performance in 1910, the SDS is a symbol of the city and a celebration of culture past and present. Whether watching a 100-year-old symphony or a contemporary guest artist performing with the orchestra, audiences sit engaged in silence to experience timeless compositions with the same emotional intensity as when the work was first performed.

Unlike the unchanging nature of a painting, even the most minor changes in each musician's day will influence a performance. When it's over, it can be recreated but never experienced in the same way that the audience had that night.

"The next time I hear Verdi's *Requiem*, I won't forget the time I watched it on a Sunday evening in September as the moon set with Jupiter," says Gilmer. "That moment will be with me forever. And then a new memory can be added the next time I hear it."

The Era of Music Director Rafael Payare

At the heart of an orchestra is the conductor, and with Music Director Rafael Payare at the helm since 2019, every San Diego Symphony Orchestra performance radiates passion.

"Rafael is an internationally sought-after figure and one of the most talented musicians I've ever met. He's an amazing man that we're lucky to have as our Music Director," says Gilmer. "There's a visceral connection between him and the orchestra that the audience can't help but notice. The musicians respect him and amplify his love for the music, and the performances are thrilling as a result."



→ Rendering of the new Jacobs Music Center

Unveiling the Jacobs Music Center

In addition to the outdoor venue, the SDS is in the process of renovating its downtown indoor hall set to open in autumn 2023.

Originally opened in 1929 as a Fox Theatre, the new Jacobs Music Center is designed to engage audiences in ways that honor and improve the artistic intentions of the original build. Raised flooring and enhanced lighting will illuminate magnificent plaster figures in the walls once obscured by shadows.

"This is one of the best-preserved Fox Theatres in the United States," says Gilmer. "We've spent years researching how to enhance the sights and sounds of the building without changing the original design features. Nearly everything is intact and enhanced with modern technology to create an experience even better than what was possible when it was originally built."



Martha Gilmer, SDS CEO



San Diego Symphony

Rafael Payare | Music Director