



SYMPHONY NO. 7

SHOSTAKOVICH

SAN DIEGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

RAFAEL PAYARE

MENU

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
SYMPHONY NO. 7 "LENINGRAD"

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RAFAEL PAYARE
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SAN DIEGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
MUSICIANS

CREDITS

TRACK LIST

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

SYMPHONY NO. 7 "LENINGRAD"

On August 23, 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed a treaty of nonaggression, in which the two countries agreed not to attack one another for 10 years. Less than two years later, on June 22, 1941, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, and, to the astonishment of the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin (who was completely unprepared for this disaster), the armies of the Third Reich poured eastward over the border into the USSR. Nine weeks later, the northern flank of the Nazi forces reached the city of St. Petersburg, the former capital of the Russian Empire and known in those days as Leningrad (in honor of Stalin's predecessor, the Russian revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin).

Thus began the Siege of Leningrad, one of the longest, most notorious, and brutal sieges in modern history, lasting 872 days – approximately two and a half years. Between 1.5 and 2 million human beings died, either in the fighting or of freezing cold and starvation, though we will probably never know the true figures.

Less than two months before, in mid-July, as the Nazi armies were already advancing into Soviet territory but had not yet arrived at the gates of Leningrad, the composer Dmitri Shostakovich – who was born there and lived and worked and

was raising a young family there – began his Seventh Symphony.

By the end of August, in just six weeks, and only days before the enemy arrived on the outskirts, Shostakovich finished the first movement. Two weeks later, he completed the second movement and invited a small group of friends to hear him perform what he had written so far on an upright piano in his study:

It was an extraordinary experience, especially to hear him playing the second movement and showing us the sketches of the third movement against the dull thud of bombs falling not far away.

The enormous sheets of music paper lying open on his desk showed us what a vast orchestra he was imagining. And when he played, though he was very nervous, he gave the music tremendous forward movement. He seemed to be trying to draw out of his piano every detail of the orchestral colors in his mind.

The result made a colossal impression on all of us. We understood: this work was an extraordinary example of a synchronized, instant creative reaction to historical events

as they were actually being lived through, transmuted into a huge and complex form without the slightest hint of artistic compromise ...¹

Over the next two weeks, Shostakovich completed the third part, the overpoweringly tragic slow movement. And then, on October 1, he and his family were ordered by the city authorities to be evacuated. They were to take almost nothing with them. But in the composer's suitcase was the manuscript of the first three movements of this symphony.

The airport, when they got there, was almost surrounded by the enemy, and a ferocious bombardment was in progress. Somehow the plane took off. The composer's son, Maxim, who was only three years old at the time, vividly remembered seeing flashes of light outside the cockpit window: "I asked my parents, "What are those?" And they explained: it was the Germans trying to shoot down our plane." ²

The family was evacuated, first southward to Moscow and then 650 miles to the east, to the ancient city of Samara on the River Volga (in Soviet times Samara was called Kuybyshev, in honor of one of Lenin's many revolutionary colleagues). There, in the last days of December

1941, in a small, cramped, and uncomfortable apartment with his family all around him, Shostakovich completed the fourth and final movement of the symphony.

Within months, it was performed triumphantly across the Soviet Union, and a microfilm of the manuscript score was flown abroad (via Tehran, the capital of Iran) to the different countries of the Western Allies. In June 1942, Sir Henry Wood conducted the piece with the London Symphony Orchestra, first on a BBC radio broadcast and then in front of a live audience at the Royal Albert Hall. In July 1942, it was first performed in New York City, with the NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arturo Toscanini, in a concert broadcast all over the United States. Among the hundreds of thousands of Americans who listened on their radios that day were two Russian-born composers, both living in exile in Hollywood: Igor Stravinsky and Sergei Rachmaninoff. Memorable performances soon followed in other parts of the United States, led by some of the greatest conductors of the age, including Leopold Stokowski and Serge Koussevitzky.

A few weeks after the very first Western performances, on August 9, back in Leningrad, and in the very middle of this terrible, inhuman

siege – destruction and starvation on every side, dead bodies lying in the streets – there took place the most famous of all performances of this symphony. The only orchestra remaining in the besieged city was the Radio Orchestra, by now reduced to just 14 musicians. Somehow the conductor, Karl Eliasberg, managed to find the other 80 or 90 players needed. Many were old and frail, long since retired. Others were fighting on the front as soldiers to defend their city. Nearly all were starving, and to enable the concert to take place at all, the authorities had to find extra food for them. And that is how they gave a performance of this symphony that has now passed into one of the legends of twentieth-century music:

I was there. I was sitting right up close to the musicians. The concert was not far from the army hospital, and many wounded soldiers came to listen. It was summer and warm, so some came in their dressing gowns and some just in their white nightshirts. The audience was huge, the hall packed. People were everywhere, on the floor, in the aisles, and up in the gallery.³

Human beings who no longer knew how to shed tears of sorrow and misery now wept from sheer joy.⁴

Astonishingly, this concert was also broadcast live on Soviet radio, which in those days meant that it could also be heard from open-air speakers hung on pillars, lamp posts, wires, and the corners of buildings. That was how – as was later discovered after the war – it was actually heard by a group of young German soldiers, music lovers who were conscripts in Hitler’s besieging army.

As one of those actually present in the concert hall on that occasion later wrote: “Hearing such music, how could we possibly surrender?”⁵

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- ¹ Valerian Bogdanov-Berezovsky, quoted in Elizabeth Wilson – *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*, p. 172
- ² Maxim Shostakovich, quoted in Elizabeth Wilson – *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*, p. 173
- ³ Mikhail Bobrov, quoted in Fiona Maddocks – *Goodbye Russia: Rachmaninoff in Exile*, p. 253
- ⁴ Alexander Kron, quoted in Elizabeth Wilson – *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*, p.174
- ⁵ Mikhail Bobrov, quoted in Fiona Maddocks – *Goodbye Russia: Rachmaninoff in Exile*, p. 253



SAN DIEGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The San Diego Symphony Orchestra stands among the nation's leading orchestras and serves as a dynamic cultural ambassador for the United States and the San Diego region. Led by President and Chief Executive Officer Martha Gilmer and Music and Artistic Director Rafael Payare, its 82 internationally distinguished musicians bring artistry of the highest caliber to audiences at home and abroad.

Now in a defining period in its history, the San Diego Symphony is shaping a forward-looking vision of the 21st-century American orchestra. Globally connected and firmly grounded in its community, the Symphony's artistic life is anchored by two iconic venues: The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park, a striking open-air performance space on the San Diego waterfront, and the recently renovated Jacobs Music Center, now a premier concert hall and architectural landmark. Together, these halls have transformed the cultural landscape of downtown San Diego and established distinctive homes for the Symphony's year-round work.

Since his appointment in 2019, Music and Artistic Director Rafael Payare has led a period

of significant artistic expansion, sharpened the ensemble's sound, and deepened its expressive range. The Orchestra presents a broad and ambitious repertoire, from cornerstone symphonic works to major new commissions, and collaborations with leading artists of our time, positioning San Diego as a destination for leading conductors, soloists, composers, and creative partners. Its profile continues to grow through regional and national appearances and an increasingly visible presence on the global stage.

Guided by its mission of Changing Lives Through Music, the Symphony's community work serves more than 65,000 students, families, educators, military service members, and nonprofit partners each year. In schools and neighborhoods throughout the region, its programs integrate music into daily learning and expand access to live performance. Sustained binational collaborations with artists, youth, and cultural institutions across the San Diego-Tijuana region further reflect the shared cultural identity of this community.

The Orchestra debuted at Carnegie Hall in 2013 and returned in 2023 under Payare to an enthusiastic audience and positive

critical notice. Its 2022 recording of Dmitri Shostakovich's Symphony No. 11, "The Year 1905," was praised by *Gramophone* as "right up there with the best we have." The five-city European tour in spring 2027 signals continued artistic momentum and international ambition.

Rooted in its community and resonant on the world's great stages, the San Diego Symphony is shaping a cultural ecosystem that spans the border region and reaches across continents, carrying the creative vitality of its region to audiences worldwide.

RAFAEL PAYARE

MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



With his charismatic energy, innate musicianship, and technical brilliance on the podium, Rafael Payare is always “electrifying in front of an orchestra” (*Los Angeles Times*). Since September 2019, he has been Music and Artistic Director of California’s San Diego Symphony Orchestra, where he is widely credited with inspiring what *The Wall Street Journal* termed “the San Diego Symphony’s splendid new sound.”

Payare has helped usher in a bright new era for the San Diego Symphony. He and the orchestra drew international notice with the openings of The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park, their bayside

open-air venue, and Jacobs Music Center, their newly renovated indoor home, where the Symphony “finally has a San Diego venue that permits it to sound like the world-class orchestra they’ve been since Payare took over” (*San Diego Union-Tribune*). In recent seasons, the orchestra has presented festival programming including two weeks dedicated to Brahms, “Upright and Grand: A Tribute to the Piano,” and “It’s About Time,” a focus on percussion that included performances on both sides of the U.S.–Mexico border. Payare features works by Brahms, Mahler, Bruckner, and Shostakovich every season, regularly programs new music by composers including

Matthias Pintscher and Gabriela Ortiz, and recently commissioned Symphony No. 6: *Monarch* by San Diego Symphony composer-in-residence Jimmy López. In 2023, Payare joined Gustavo Dudamel and Esa-Pekka Salonen to launch the California Festival, a statewide celebration of contemporary music featuring the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, and San Diego Symphony. He also launched the San Diego Symphony Conducting Fellowship Program. In 2027, Payare leads the orchestra on its first European tour, with performances in Barcelona, Dublin, Hamburg, Paris, and Toulouse.

Beyond San Diego, Payare is Music and Artistic Director of Canada's Orchestre symphonique de Montréal – with which he has made four Pentatone recordings and appeared numerous times on Medici.tv – and Conductor Laureate of Northern Ireland's Ulster Orchestra, where he previously served as Principal Conductor and Music Director, making multiple appearances at London's BBC Proms. Since winning first prize at Denmark's 2012 Malko Competition, he has forged relationships with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the Boston, Chicago, and Pittsburgh Symphonies; the Cleveland and Philadelphia

Orchestras; the Los Angeles and New York Philharmonics; and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Staatskapelle Berlin, and Vienna Philharmonic. He has also led productions at London's Royal Opera House, the Glyndebourne Festival, Royal Swedish Opera, and Royal Danish Opera.

An alumnus of Venezuela's El Sistema program, Payare founded Montreal's El Sistema OSM. He lives in San Diego and Montreal with his wife, cellist Alisa Weilerstein, and their two children.

SAN DIEGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Rafael Payare
*Music & Artistic
Director*

VIOLIN

Jeff Thayer,
Concertmaster
*Deborah Pate and John
Forrest Chair*

Wesley Precourt,
Associate
Concertmaster
Jisun Yang,
Assistant
Concertmaster
Katia Tesarczyk,
Principal Second Violin

Cherry Choi
Tung Yeung,
Associate Principal
Second Violin

Nick Grant,
Principal Associate
Concertmaster
Emeritus

Ai Nihira Awata
Jing Yan Bowcott
Yumi Cho
Alicia Engley
Kathryn Hatmaker
Yeim Lee

Kenneth Liao
Alexander Palamidis
Igor Pandurski
Evan Pasternak
Julia Pautz
Yeh Shen
Xiaoxuan Shi
Edmund Stein
Hanah Stuart
John Stubbs
Pei-Chun Tsai
Tiffany Wee
Zou Yu

Tommy Dougherty*
Francesca Fetten*
Aloysia Friedmann*
Missy Lukin*
Margeaux Maloney*
Sarah Schwartz*
Christine Skinner*
Marlyse Thayer*
Michael Turkell*
Angela Xing*

VIOLA

Chi-Yuan Chen,
Principal
*Karen and Warren
Kessler Chair*

Nancy Lochner,
Associate Principal
Jason Karlyn
Alexander Knecht
Sung Jin Lee
Zeyu Victor Li
Wanda Law
Qing Liang
Ethan Pernela
Megan Wei
Ariel Chapman*
Travis Maril*
Rebecca Matayoshi*
Greg Perrin*
Jiawei Yan*

CELLO

Yao Zhao, Principal
Chia-Ling Chien,
Associate Principal
Vivian Chang
Maximus Gurath
Andrew Hayhurst
Tzu-Wei Jack Huang
Richard Levine
Nathan Walhout
Xian Zhuo
Anna Cho*

Youna Choi*
Nicole Chung*
Benjamin Solomonow*

DOUBLE BASS

Jeremy Kurtz-Harris,
Principal
*Sophie and Arthur
Brody Foundation Chair*
Susan Wulff,
Associate Principal
Aaron Blick
P. J. Cinque
Kevin Gobetz
Samuel Hager
Michael Wais
Nicholas Arredondo*
Evan Hillis*
Michael Martin*
Luis Primera*

FLUTE

Rose Lombardo,
Principal
Sarah Tuck
Lily Josefsberg

PICCOLO

Lily Josefsberg

OBOE

Sarah Skuster,
Principal
Rodion Belousov
Andrea Overturf

ENGLISH HORN

Andrea Overturf
*Dr. William and Evelyn
Lamden English Horn
Chair*

CLARINET

Sheryl Renk,
Principal
Max Opferkuch
Frank Renk
Silvio Guitan*

BASS CLARINET

Frank Renk

BASSOON

Valentin Martchev,
Principal
Ryan Simmons
Leyla Zamora

CONTRABASSOON

Leyla Zamora

HORN

Benjamin Jaber,
Principal
Darby Hinshaw,
Assistant Principal
& Utility

Tricia Skye
John Degnan
John Dickson*
Paul Klintworth*
Mike McCoy*
Gabriella Sa*
Adam Wolf*
Alana Yee*

TRUMPET

Christopher Smith,
Principal
Clinton McLendon
Tim Saeger
Ray Nowak
Michael Brozick*
Dustin McKinney*
Paul Merkelo*
Michael Remish*

TROMBONE

Kyle R. Covington,
Principal

Greg Ochotorena
Kyle Mendiguchia
Bruce Chrisp*
Daniel Lawlor*
Eric Starr*

BASS TROMBONE

Kyle Mendiguchia
John Engelkes*
Phil Keen*

TUBA

Aaron McCalla,
Principal

HARP

Julie Phillips,
Principal
Ko Ni Choi*

TIMPANI

Ryan J. DiLisi,
Principal
Andrew Watkins,
Assistant Principal

PERCUSSION

Gregory Cohen,
Principal
Andrew Watkins

Matthew West
Christopher Clarino*
Eric Derr*
Erin Douglas Dowrey*
Brent Kuszyk*
Eduardo Meneses*
Ryan Nestor*

PIANO

Phillip Matsuura*

LIBRARIANS

Courtney Secoy Cohen,
Principal
Rachel Fields

* Guest Musician

The musicians of the
San Diego Symphony
Orchestra are members
of San Diego County,
Local 325, American
Federation of
Musicians, AFL-CIO.

**Recorded Live at Jacobs Music Center,
San Diego, USA,
on May 16 & 17, 2025**

Recording Producer: Shawn Murphy

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Assistant Engineers: Ryan Nelson, Jason Chaney

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Atmos & DSD Mastering: Michael Romanowski

Production Assistants: Rick Jacobsohn,
Jennifer Nulsen, Noëlle Byer

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Sam Zauscher (Orchestra)

San Diego Symphony President & CEO:
Martha Gilmer

Executive Producer: Charles Adriaenssen

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DMITRI
SHOSTAKOVICH
SYMPHONY NO. 7 (1906 – 1975)

**San Diego
Symphony Orchestra**

Rafael Payare
Music & Artistic Director

Symphony No. 7 in C major, Op. 60, “Leningrad”

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|-------|
| 1. | Allegretto | 28:36 |
| 2. | Moderato: Poco allegretto | 11:36 |
| 3. | Adagio | 18:07 |
| 4. | Allegro non troppo | 17:03 |

Total Time	75:25
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