



## New Horizons

'Martín's detailed performance took on heady swagger, and his infectious enjoyment of the music communicated to the orchestra and audience alike,' John Allison, *The Daily Telegraph*

'He conducts as though he is dancing with the players. Not dancing on the podium but reaching out to the musicians as partners and even encouraging them to take the lead.... It's infectious music making. He seems to be having a blast. The musicians seem to be having a blast. The audience is invited to the party,' *Los Angeles Times*

Jaime Martín's joyous passion for making music has, if anything, grown since the coronavirus pandemic struck, as has his love for those who make it. The London-based Spanish conductor is set to reach new audiences and heighten his international profile thanks to his appointment as Chief Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, a thrilling new relationship built on performances given over the past two years. Martín will launch his first season at the helm of Australia's oldest professional symphony with a gala performance and a week of concerts next February. He is scheduled to return to Melbourne for twelve weeks each season and also direct the orchestra on tour and in recording sessions.

During the 2021-22 season, Jaime Martín will also resume work as Music Director of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (LACO) and Chief Conductor of the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra in Dublin. In addition he will end his long and fruitful period as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Gävle Symphony Orchestra next summer, and prepare for his first term as Principal Guest Conductor of the Spanish National Orchestra (Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España).

Before taking up his position in Australia, Martín will join the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's musicians this August working with the full orchestra and chorus, and leading a project involving their youth orchestra. He first collaborated with MSO in June 2019 and returned again this February. Struck by his close rapport with the players, the orchestra's management promptly invited him to succeed Sir Andrew Davis as Chief Conductor.

"From our first meeting I immediately felt a special connection with these incredible musicians," Jaime Martín recalls. "It's a question of chemistry. When it works, like it does for us in Melbourne, it's wonderful. This is a fantastic orchestra. We first met in 'normal' times, pre-Covid, and again during the pandemic, after I'd spent fourteen days in quarantine. On both occasions, I've found an optimistic orchestra. The Melbourne Symphony is like an ensemble of soloists who play together as chamber musicians. It's an amazing blend of individuality, collaboration, curiosity and exploration. For a conductor, this is incredibly exciting."

Melbourne and its symphony orchestra, Australia's longest established professional symphonic ensemble, have clearly captured Jaime Martín's affections. "It's amazing how a group of people and a place can grow on you and become so important so quickly," he notes. "During our first rehearsal of Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony in February, I could see that some players had tears in their eyes. This was the first time they'd played together on an indoor stage for months. I felt incredibly moved and was so excited by what I received back from the orchestra and how much they care about making music. I can't wait to be with them again."

Jaime Martín became a full-time conductor eight years ago after decades spent as a member of several of the world's leading orchestras. He served as principal flute with, among others, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and, most recently, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and was also in high demand as concerto soloist, chamber musician and teacher. Since changing career paths, he has applied lessons learned while observing from a player's vantage point many of the greatest conductors of modern times. His understanding of what makes orchestras tick, feeling for the infinite subtleties of symphonic sound and profound empathy for orchestral musicians are among the attributes that have contributed to his striking success both as a guest and permanent conductor.

While it is too early to announce details of his first Melbourne season, Jaime Martín is determined to explore fresh repertoire and build programmes that embrace cultural currents arising from the world beyond the concert hall. "Covid has been terrible in so many ways and for so many people," he observes. "But it has taught us to

be more flexible as musicians and take account of what's happening in the wider world. There's something liberating about building programmes just a few months or weeks before you perform them rather than planning everything three years in advance. I think it's so important that we remain flexible, stay connected to what's happening and be open to new opportunities. I want to see what we can do in future with this greater freedom in Melbourne and with my other orchestras."

At the end of May the directors of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra awarded Martín a five-year contract extension, to run until the end of the 2026-27 season. His appointment as Principal Guest Conductor of the Spanish National Orchestra, announced just a few weeks earlier, is scheduled to commence in September 2022, dovetailing with his commitments in Melbourne and Los Angeles. His 21/22 season will feature his regular complement of weeks with the RTÉ National Symphony in Dublin, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and Gävle Symphony, his debuts with the Dresden Philharmonic and the Colorado and Indianapolis Symphonies, and guest appearances with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and several orchestras in his native Spain, including Madrid's RTVE Symphony and the Spanish National Orchestra, prior to him taking on the latter's Principal Guest Conductor position the following season.

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