

Star Bright



Jahja Ling leads the San Diego Symphony at Copley Symphony Hall.

DAVID HARTIG

BEHIND THE MUSIC: JULIA PAUTZ

Among the newest members of the San Diego Symphony is violinist Julia Pautz, who begins performing at Copley Symphony Hall in October as the orchestra launches its centennial season.

"I feel like I could not possibly be starting at a better time," says Pautz, 29, who's leaving the Fort Worth Symphony. "The San Diego Symphony is totally on the ascendancy."

The plucky daughter of a Suzuki violin teacher and a dentist from Blanco, Texas, has degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music, the University of Southern California and Los Angeles' Colburn School. She's also a member of the Hall Ensemble, an up-and-coming chamber music group.

And the 5-foot-2 musician isn't afraid of daunting challenges. A devoted cyclist (she nicknamed her own custom-built bikes "Frenchie" and "Miss Cherry"), Pautz completed a triathlon last year in Dallas and credits the race with helping her succeed in the grueling San Diego Symphony audition that pitted her against 173 other violinists.

"I realized that if I could do the triathlon, I could do the orchestra audition," she explains. "It's nice to prove that you have it in you."

SAN DIEGO SYMPHONY BY THE NUMBERS

80

Full-time orchestra musicians

2,231

Seats in Copley Symphony Hall

126

Concerts in the 2010-11 centennial season, including the Jacobs Masterworks, Winter Pops, Summer Pops and other performances

\$18 MILLION

Dollars in the projected budget for the season —V.S.

CALIFORNIA'S OLDEST ORCHESTRA enters its 100th season with a lineup that's anything but elderly. Even if we don't know strings from horns, most of us recognize the names—and appreciate the talent—of masters like Yo Yo Ma, who's slated to perform during the San Diego Symphony's centennial gala.

"It's a great season in terms of quality and quantity," symphony executive director Edward Gill says of the lineup that took two seasons to plan. "It's one of the biggest rosters we've had in recent years."

Flutist Sir James Galway performs at the opening concerts October 8-10; Yo-Yo Ma is scheduled for the Opus 2010 Centennial Concert December 3. Pianist Lang Lang serves as soloist in concertos by Beethoven, Schumann and Tchaikovsky at the Lang Lang Concerto and Festival, January 14-16, while other programs feature virtuosos ranging from pianist Emanuel Ax to percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie.

More than anything, the star-packed centennial season proves how much progress has been made since December 6, 1910, when the ensemble that became the San Diego Symphony debuted at the U.S. Grant Hotel. The orchestra's history has been rocky, with more ups and downs than a series of arpeggios. But having survived a near-fatal financial meltdown in the 1990s, the San Diego

Symphony made one of the most spectacular comebacks in the history of U.S. orchestras, aided by the extraordinary generosity of benefactors Joan and Irwin Jacobs.

"Without Joan and Irwin, the orchestra would not be at the artistic level it is today," says Gill. "Their vision made the difference."

The League of American Orchestras has designated the San Diego Symphony as a tier-one ensemble, the same budget category as California's largest orchestras, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and San Francisco Symphony. The musical quality also continues to rise.

"The orchestra plays better and better every time I return to the Copley Symphony Hall stage," says conductor Jahja Ling, who's starting his seventh season as music director. "They play with a sense of unity and cohesiveness as well as with a distinctive artistic personality."

The symphony is undeterred by the recession. Ticket sales for the Jacobs Masterworks Series keep improving. They're already up 15 percent over last year, signaling enthusiasm for the centennial season's stellar programs.

"This is the culmination of the first hundred years," Gill says. "The orchestra's future will be brighter and brighter as we move forward."

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