

Rafael Antonio Rodríguez, D.M.A., Conductor

Born in Mexico, raised in the United States, Rafael Antonio made his orchestral debut with the Romanian National Opera and Ballet Orchestra in Constanța in 2013. He returned the following year to conduct this orchestra in a special Easter week concert featuring soloists and chorus from the Teatro National “Oleg Danovsky,” and had the pleasure of conducting the Pazardjik Philharmonic in Bulgaria during this same visit to Eastern Europe. Selected as a Conducting Fellow with the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica (2015), Rafael served as Assistant Conductor with the Boulder Philharmonic for two years during his doctoral residency. Recent engagements include with the National Symphony Orchestra of Cusco (Peru) where he has been invited for a third appearance to conduct Mozart’s Réquiem in the Catedral Basílica de la Virgen de la Asunción on the main square.

Invited to attend the “Conductors Lab” in Aix-en-Provence (France), Rafael studied with an ensemble of ten musicians from the Berlin Philharmonic in master classes and conducting sessions. He participated in the “Black Sea Conducting Festival” in Constanța where he was awarded second prize and an invitation to conduct the Romanian National Opera Orchestra in a full concert performance. Rafael served as Artistic Director for the Orquesta Sinfónica Manuel María Gutiérrez, the national youth symphony orchestra representing the Sistema Nacional de Educación Musical (SiNEM) in the Ministry of Culture of Costa Rica. He regularly appears as guest conductor with the National Bands of Costa Rica, sharing his interpretive experience as an orchestral conductor with these fine professional ensembles.

Rafael’s background as a jazz pianist brings a unique and intimate perspective to his musical interpretations. He collaborates with musicians with a clear sense of purpose and intention, yet is profoundly respectful of the dignity and humanity that each musician represents within the orchestra. Phrase and detail, emotive, energetic and purposeful, these are the characteristics that make Rafael Antonio so compelling on the podium.

Rafael received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Orchestral Conducting and Literature from the University of Colorado in Boulder. His conducting studies include with Italian maestro Alfredo Bonavera, winner of the prestigious Mitropoulos conducting competition in 1969 and Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic from 1969 – 1970, with American conductor Carl St. Clair, director of the Pacific Symphony in California and the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica, and with Gary Lewis, director of the West Texas Symphony and Chorale, and head of the conducting studio at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Rafael's work as a conductor has taken him to Peru, Colombia, Mexico, Honduras, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Romania, Bulgaria, and France. He currently serves as Visiting Professor and Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of Memphis in Tennessee, and was previously the Director of Orchestras & Jazz at Augsburg University in Minneapolis.

