

# OBERLIN IN CHICAGO

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF THE OBERLIN CONSERVATORY

## RAPHAEL JIMÉNEZ, *conductor*

Born in Florida and raised in Venezuela, Raphael Jiménez began his musical life as a violinist. While a member of the Simón Bolívar National Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, he was assigned his first conducting responsibility at the Venezuelan National System of Youth and Children's Orchestras (El Sistema). He was soon conducting all the professional orchestras in the country and was appointed Principal Conductor of the Caracas National Ballet at age 22. He now serves as Associate Professor of Conducting and Director of Oberlin Conservatory orchestras.

Praised for his “tightly wrought” and “stirring, vividly shaped” renditions (*The New York Times*) and for his “delicious buoyancy and impeccable taste” (*Washington Times*), Jiménez is celebrated for his work with orchestras around the world, with recent engagements in Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the U.S. As a ballet conductor, he has collaborated with several ballet companies including recent performances with the New York City Ballet at Lincoln Center. He has also served as music director for numerous opera productions with companies in Caracas, Venezuela, at the Teresa Carreño Center for the Performing Arts; Lubeck, Germany; and Palm Beach, Florida.

Equally comfortable on the podiums of both professional and pre-professional ensembles, Jiménez is recognized for his deep commitment to education. The *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* writes “The [orchestra], conducted by Raphael Jiménez, played [with] a professional sheen rarely heard from student ensembles.”

Jiménez devotes great effort to the promotion of new music, especially of works by Latin American composers, and he has been recognized for his diverse and eclectic programming. He has had the privilege of premiering numerous works including the world premiere of *and flowers pick themselves* featured on the eponymous recording.

He enjoys a very active career, including frequent invitations to conduct symphonic concerts, ballets, and opera productions to critical acclaim. Recent appearances include performances in China with the orchestras of Zhejiang and Guanxi; in Latin America with the orchestras of Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, and Puerto Rico; and leading the opera orchestras of Lubeck in Germany and Palm Beach in Florida. He has also conducted the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra, the Florida Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfónica Municipal de Caracas, Lansing Symphony, Battle Creek Symphony, and the Filene Center Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C.

