

Pacific Symphony: Volunteer Challenge #61: Celebrating Mother's Everywhere and Cinco de Mayo!

From: Abby Edmunds (aedmunds@pacifichsymphony.org)

To: aedmunds@pacifichsymphony.org

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Hello, Pacific Symphony Volunteers!

I think we can all agree that living in Southern California is like a dream come true! Beauty can be found everywhere! Today, as I paused to eat lunch in my backyard (important to get that Vitamin D), I was greeted with announcements of new life surrounding my patio – baby birds calling from their nest to get mom's attention, beautiful flowers pouring off the pittosporum that lines my back fence and baby bees drinking deeply from the colorful flowers in my clay pots.

And, I was reminded that Mother's Day is right around the corner, actually in only 4 days! Mother's Day is one of my favorite Hallmark holidays as my own child was born years ago just a few days before this occasion. She was and is my favorite gift....EVER! Mother's Day is so special because we all have a reason to celebrate. Either you have a mom, or you are a mom.

😊 So, in commemoration of mom's everywhere, here is a song by Taylor Swift, written for her own precious mom. Click to hear Taylor Swift's, The Best Day: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4_6eQm7RTQ

Another significant event is happening today....Cinco de Mayo! Cinco de Mayo, or the 5th of May, is observed by people all over our state. It commemorates Mexico's victory over French forces at the Battle of Puebla in 1862 which took place in Puebla, Mexico. Our favorite Volunteer Challenge contributor, Bob Apfelzweig, had a great suggestion for what we should listen to in celebration. "Huapango", by Jose Pablo Moncayo (1912-1958), is probably the best-known and most popular piece of Mexican classical music ever written. It is based on authentic folk dances from the Vera Cruz area of eastern Mexico. Already a successful composer, pianist and percussionist in Mexico, Moncayo studied at Tanglewood in the 1940's and there met and befriended a couple of up-and-coming American musicians, Lukas Foss and Leonard Bernstein. He premiered this piece the during this time period, in 1941.

There are many excellent videos of this splendid, vivacious piece of music, but the one performed by Gustavo Dudamel with the Orquesta Sinfónica Simón Bolívar is especially magnificent. Dudamel has often performed it as an encore with orchestras all over the world. Bob suggests that we listen carefully to the marvelous way Moncayo has with the percussion, and the Mariachi-like sound of the massed trumpets at about 8:17 into the video. The massed trumpets will probably send a chill down your spine as it appears they do for Dudamel in a closeup of this section as we observe his eyes closed in ecstasy!

Click for Dudamel conducting Huapango: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShFXQNgmIQQ>

Also, as an indication of how well this music travels across cultures and nations, here is another remarkable video of Huapango as performed by the R.O.C [Taiwan] Ministry of National Defense Symphony Orchestra. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dYfEmJA9SY>





Jose Pablo Moncayo

Gustavo Dudamel

Please enjoy the rest of this beautiful day, and I will be with you in heart as you celebrate Mother's Day this weekend with your families and friends!

It brings me so much joy to stay connected with you each week! Until I see you again, please stay well. Stay safe. Know how much we miss you.

Warm regards,

Abby

Abby Edmunds

Director of Volunteer Services | Pacific Symphony

t: (714) 876-2353 | **m:** (949) 933-4842 | **e:** aedmunds@PacificSymphony.org

Charlie and Ling Zhang Center for Musical Arts and Education

17620 Fitch, Suite 100 | Irvine, CA 92614

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