



Simone Porter

## STAR ON THE RISE

Teen violinist Simone Porter to join Dudamel for 'Immortal Beethoven' celebration at Disney Hall

By Laurence Vittes

When 18-year-old **Simone Porter** plays Beethoven's Two Romances for violin and orchestra at Walt Disney Concert Hall on October 1 and 8, with the **Los Angeles Philharmonic** conducted by **Gustavo Dudamel**, she will be the only instrumental soloist featured during the weeklong "Immortal Beethoven" celebration.

Not bad for a young string player who made her professional debut at age ten with the **Seattle Symphony**.

Dudamel will conduct two complete cycles of the symphonies, divided between the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the **Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela**, with the two orchestras joining forces for the Ninth Symphony.

Three months earlier, during a similar event at the Teatro Mayor in Bogotá, Colombia, Porter had an out-of-town tryout that gave her the opportunity to play >>>

the Two Romances with Dudamel. Porter, a Seattle native and former student of **Margaret Pressley**, now studies with **Robert Lipsett** at the Colburn School in LA, where she is coached in the reconstructed Frank Lloyd Wright–designed studio of violin legend **Jascha Heifetz**.

Her professional career is skyrocketing.

She had her LA Phil debut last fall at the Hollywood Bowl, performing the Barber Violin Concerto. She already has performed with the **New York Philharmonic** and a host of other orchestras.

She plays a 1745 J.B. Guadagnini violin.

Playing Beethoven with Dudamel began like a fairy tale, she says. It all started two years ago during an LA Phil audition.

As Porter tells it, “Chad Smith, responsible for the philharmonic’s artistic oversight, had been out with maestro Dudamel and invited him along to hear me. I was very surprised when I saw him sitting in the audience!” They talked afterward and Dudamel expressed an interest in working with her “in the future.”

The future came quickly.

After Porter played Barber’s Concerto at the Bowl last September, conducted by Seattle Symphony music director **Ludovic Morlot**, she received an invitation to perform the two Beethoven Romances during the Disney Hall Beethoven cycle.

“So,” she says happily, “I am going to play them in Los Angeles in October.”

But first, in July, she headed back to Bogotá to play the Two Romances with Dudamel and the Simón Bolívar Orchestra at the start of their own Beethoven cycle.

It seems that nothing is beyond her grasp.

When Porter notes that she also has played Mozart’s Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K 219, the “Turkish Concerto,” with the Joachim cadenzas, I ask if the driven teen violinist has ever thought about composing her own cadenza.

“You have to have ambition to compose,” she says modestly, adding that she may have the ambition, but she hasn’t yet tried.