



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: Mariah Forde | mariah.forde@lpomusic.com | 240.506.7789

LOUISIANA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA HONORS HISTORY AND TRADITION OF NEW ORLEANS' MARDI GRAS INDIANS

World premiere performance in partnership with Big Chief Juan Pardo of the Golden Comanche and composer Maxim Samarov

LPO Family Concert series presents Birth of a Culture at Eleanor McMain Auditorium



photo of Big Chief Juan Pardo

NEW ORLEANS (January 11, 2024) - The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, the region's Grammy-nominated and premier orchestra, joins the community in celebrating Carnival season with **BIRTH OF A CULTURE** on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at the Orpheum Theater at 7:30 PM. A concert for New Orleans, **BIRTH OF A CULTURE** honors the revered and vibrant tradition of Mardi Gras Indians (also known as Black Masking Indians) and their unique, colorful, and remarkable contribution to New

Orleans' history and culture. LPO Music Director Matthew Kraemer takes the podium to lead an evening of premieres including a world premiere by Big Chief Juan Pardo of the Golden Camanche Mardi Gras Indian Tribe and Maxim Samarov and jazz-great Wynton Marsalis. For more information, visit www.lpomusic.com.

"The LPO is proud to use its musical voice as a culture bearer to amplify the unique stories of our community," says LPO Executive Director Anwar Nasir. "This will be the first time that these two centuries old local traditions will cross paths and raise the standard for innovation and collaboration in our region."

Native to New Orleans and deeply rooted in the Black community, the Mardi Gras Indian culture traces back of enslaved African people in America and their liberation with the help of Native Americans. The eye-catching apparel of the Mardi Gras Indians is uniquely hand-crafted and pays homage to the Native American community.

"*Birth of a Culture* draws on the distinct heritage of the Mardi Gras Indian tradition from New Orleans in the 18th century to present day," says Big Chief Juan Pardo of the Golden Comanche. "We've shaped the culture through our music, dance, and tribal attire but this is our history, our story. This concert with the LPO solidifies our impact through an orchestral experience and will show that there are no limits to what we can do."

LPO's **BIRTH OF A CULTURE** concert pays tribute to this cherished component of Carnival culture with musical compositions that embody a spirit of freedom, identity, and tradition. The program begins with a premiere of composer Arlene Sierra's new work *Kiskadee* – inspired by the sounds of the titular bird – a colorful and boisterous creature – found in Texas and Argentina. The LPO is the second orchestra to perform Sierra's work following its world premiere with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in 2023. Next on the program is a preview Wynton Marsalis' *Blues Symphony* which paints a picture of American music through generations with varying musical colors and rhythms. Closing the program is a world premiere of Big Chief Juan Pardo and composer Maxim Samarov's *Birth of a Culture*. The music depicts the emergence of Mardi Gras Indian tradition as a blend of Native American and African culture, which traditional Mardi Gras Indian chants such as, "Ho Na Nae," "Shallow Water," and "Indian Red."

FAMILY CONCERT

On Saturday, January 27th at 11 AM, **BIRTH OF A CULTURE** can be experienced in a program formatted for families with the LPO's Family Concert: Mardi Gras Indians. The concert will run for approximately 60 minutes and will take place at Eleanor McMain Secondary School. Prior to the concert at 10:15 AM, families are invited to participate in Musician Learning Stations where children can learn and ask questions about the instruments and the musicians that play them. Tickets for Family Concert: Mardi Gras Indians are \$16.

TICKETS

Tickets for **BIRTH OF A CULTURE** are on sale and range from \$25 to \$110. Student tickets are available for \$10 with proof of student ID. To purchase tickets or for more information, visit www.lpomusic.com or contact Patron Services by calling 504.523.6530.

PROGRAM

Matthew Kraemer, conductor
Big Chief Juan Pardo

Sierra: *Kiskadee*

Marsalis: *Blues Symphony*

Samarov: *Birth of a Culture*

###

ABOUT LOUISIANA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Steeped in history yet focused on innovation, the Grammy-nominated Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) is the only full-time collaboratively governed and operated orchestra in the United States. Under the leadership of Music Director, Matthew Kraemer, the LPO is rooted in a culturally diverse community with a two-hundred-year orchestral music tradition, the LPO sets the standard for orchestral programming and performance in Louisiana. For our sixty-seven musicians, achieving the highest level of artistry is integrally linked with a personal investment in our organization and our community.

Visit lpomusic.com to learn more.

ABOUT BIG CHIEF JUAN PARDO AND THE GOLDEN COMANCHE

Big Chief Juan Pardo and the Golden Comanche Mardi Gras Indians is an electrifying display of a culture that dates back over two hundred years in New Orleans. Chief Juans soulful voice brings any audience to feel like they are in the jazz filled streets of New Orleans. This percussion-heavy tribal music infused by the funk styles of the Meters, Willie T, and the Neville Brothers can only be performed by those who are chosen. The Chief and his Golden Comanche have studied the traditions of those before them and now are the keepers of the flame. Juan not only performs the music of this tradition but also writes and produces music that has become staples among tribes in New Orleans. Chief Juan has recorded and performed with many bands such as Galactic, 101 Runners, and Rhythm Conspiracy. He has graced the stage with names like Pattie Labell, Cyril Neville, Anders Osborne, Trombone Shorty, and Doctor John, to name a few. Chief Juan and the Comanche travel the world to bring the tribal and funk sound of New Orleans Culture to people everywhere.