

Ovation-Filled Debut at the Degollado

 *Rebeca Pérez Vega. Guadalajara, Mexico (March 8, 2026)*

The **Teatro Degollado** was nearly full on Sunday afternoon to welcome the new program of the **Jalisco Philharmonic Orchestra**, marked by a celebrated debut: that of Chilean conductor **Alejandra Urrutia**, who was bid farewell with a **standing ovation** at the end of the concert.

The evening opened with the **national premiere of *Montgomery Variations* by Margaret Bonds**, a work dedicated to the memory of **Martin Luther King Jr.** Beginning delicately, almost in a whisper, the score gradually expanded until reaching a climax of energetic sonorities. Under Urrutia's baton, the orchestra shaped this ascent, allowing the music to move forward like a collective march that grows wider step by step.

The second moment of the program drew all eyes to the center of the stage. Surrounded by seven timpani, soloist **Sergio Quesada** performed the **Concerto for Timpani by Kai Stensgaard**, a recent work that transforms the instrument into the main voice and that also received its first performance with this Jalisco ensemble.

Quesada moved swiftly among the drums, constantly turning to reach each timpani. The result was an unusual sonic display: strikes that transformed into melodic phrases and deep resonances. At the end, the audience responded with prolonged applause that brought him back to the stage several times.

The second half of the concert included the first performance of ***Apu, Tone Poem for Orchestra* by Gabriela Lena Frank**, inspired by the spirits of the Andes, before closing with the festive energy of ***Four Dance Episodes from Rodeo* by Aaron Copland**.

After the final chord, the audience at the Degollado rose from their seats. The ovation was for the orchestra, for the soloist, and for Urrutia, whose debut with the ensemble was marked by an enthusiastic reception from the Guadalajara audience.