

Jacksonville Symphony and Music Director Courtney Lewis Open New Florida Blue Masterworks Series on Friday, September 30

Jacksonville, FL (September 20, 2016) --- The Jacksonville Symphony under the baton of Music Director Courtney Lewis will open its 2016-2017 Florida Blue Masterworks Series on Friday, September 30, 8pm at Robert E. Jacoby Symphony Hall in the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts.

The performance, Rachmaninoff and *The Rite*, will also include guest pianist Inon Barnatan. The evening will open with British composer Julian Anderson's *Imagin d' Corners* before Barnatan's turn at the piano for Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2. Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, a composition that caused a "riot" at its introduction in Paris, will end the evening.

Guests are encouraged to "dress to impress" for the evening's opening celebration. There will also be performances on Saturday, October 1 at 8pm and Sunday, October 2 at 3pm. Tickets for all concerts are available at jaxsymphony.org or by calling 904-354-5547.

The 2016-2017 season will be the second complete season with Courtney Lewis as Music Director. Lewis, who introduced several 'new' pieces to Jacksonville last year, including Thomas Adés *Asyla* will continue the trend this year. *The Dream of Gerontius* by Edward Elgar will be performed for the first time in Jacksonville on November 11 and 12. The concert will feature the Jacksonville Symphony Chorus under the director of Donald McCullough, the University of North Florida Chorus under the direction of Dr. Cara Tasker, and guest vocalists Jill Grove, Kevin Deas and Steven Ebel. Considered to be Elgar's greatest work, it is the epic tale of life, death and the meaning of it all.

Chamber music will take its turn on Oct. 21, 22 and 23 with Bachtobertfest. Conductor/harpsichordist Jeanne Sorrell will lead the Symphony and featured musicians Philip Pan (concertmaster), Melissa Barrett (assistant concertmaster), Aurelia Duca (principal second violin), Les Roettges (principal flute) and Rhonda Cassano (second flute) in Handel, Vivaldi and Bach.

Another 'new' performance will actually be the return of a favorite – opera. *Hansel and Gretel* will be performance on December 2, 3 and 4 including guest vocalists, the Jacksonville Children's Chorus and larger-than-life puppets in a magical production. *Hansel and Gretel* is semi-staged and sung in English with subtitles.

The Jacksonville Symphony is North Florida's leading music nonprofit offering live performances at Jacoby Hall in the Times-Union Center for Performing Arts and other venues throughout the area. The Symphony also provides music instruction for youth and operates the Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestras. For more information about the Symphony, visit

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