

JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY REACHES 20 YEAR MILESTONE AT ROBERT E. JACOBY SYMPHONY HALL; OFFERS 1997 PRICES FOR CONCERTS THE WEEKEND OF APRIL 28

Jacksonville, FL (April 4, 2017) --- The Jacksonville Symphony reaches the 20 year anniversary of its permanent home, Robert E. Jacoby Symphony Hall, on April 26. Twenty years ago on that date a sold out crowd gathered for opening night of Florida's only dedicated symphony hall. Jacoby Hall has become an integral part of Jacksonville's cultural DNA over the past two decades. To celebrate the anniversary, the Symphony is offering 1997 prices for concerts the weekend of April 28th. All tickets for that weekend's performances will be \$25.

The Symphony will present Stravinsky's Violin Concerto with Ayano Ninomiya as guest soloist and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6, "Pathétique" on Friday and Saturday, April 28 and 29 at 8pm and Sunday, April 30 at 3pm.

Although the journey to building such a space began in the mid 1980's, the official planning of Jacoby Hall started in 1993. The original project included a multi-million dollar overhaul of the Civic Auditorium, which would be named the Times-Union Center for Performing Arts after a \$3 million donation from the *Florida Times-Union*. The problem was the auditorium did not meet all the needs of a rapidly-growing Jacksonville Symphony.

"The acoustics were not good for a symphony orchestra," said Bob Shircliff, one of the community leaders who helped drive the effort to upgrade the venue. "And the musicians could never rehearse where concerts were being played."

After consulting with the then-Music Director Roger Nierenberg, board member Preston Haskell pitched the idea of building a symphony hall within the Times-Union Center to his building committee colleagues. He said the new hall would give the orchestra an acoustically balanced home to practice and perform, without having to schedule everything around the visiting theatrical performances, concerts and graduation ceremonies. The price tag was \$10-\$15 million more than the originally-approved budget, so a capital campaign would be necessary. The committee approved the project and the fundraising began.

The hall's namesake, Robert E. Jacoby, contributed the first gift without hesitation. Jacoby's enthusiastic support built excitement for the project, inspiring many other donors to get involved. In total, the campaign raised \$22 million, well over the initial goal.

Jacoby Hall was designed by Jack Diamond of KBJ Architects and world-renowned acoustician Larry Kierkegaard. The hall seats 1,800 and its “shoebox” shape takes inspiration from acclaimed music halls in Vienna and Boston. This configuration was and continues to be considered the gold standard for orchestral sound design.

“I don’t know if newer patron’s realize what a monumental effect the Jacoby has had on making the Symphony was it is today,” said Robert Massey, president and CEO of the Jacksonville Symphony. “We have the most professional orchestra in Florida because we have this venue. It is one of the crown jewels of performance destinations.”

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. In addition, the Symphony provides music instruction for youth and operates the Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestras. For more information about the Symphony, visit www.jaxsymphony.org, like them at [www.Facebook.com/JaxSymphony](https://www.facebook.com/JaxSymphony), follow them on Twitter @jaxsymphony, on Instagram at JaxSymphony and on YouTube at JacksonvilleSymphony.