

JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY ADDS COMPOSER-IN-RESIDENCE TO ARTISTIC STAFF Courtney Bryan Named as Mary Carr Patton Composer-in-Residence

Jacksonville, FL (April 17, 2018) — The Jacksonville Symphony is expanding its role in bringing more unique and diverse music to the community by announcing that New Orleans native Courtney Bryan has been named Mary Carr Patton Composer-in-Residence. The announcement was made by Jacksonville Symphony President and CEO Robert Massey. Bryan will be the first composer-in-residence since Courtney Lewis was named music director in 2014.

Courtney Bryan, a native of New Orleans, La, is “a pianist and composer of panoramic interests” (*New York Times*). Her music is in conversation with various musical genres, including jazz and other types of experimental music, as well as traditional gospel, spirituals and hymns. Focusing on bridging the sacred and the secular, Bryan's compositions explore human emotions through sound, confronting the challenge of notating the feeling of improvisation. Bryan has academic degrees from Oberlin Conservatory (BM), Rutgers University (MM) and Columbia University (DMA) with advisor George Lewis, and completed an appointment as Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of African American Studies at Princeton University. Bryan is an assistant professor of Music at Tulane University's Newcomb Department of Music, and serves as a board member of the Musical Arts Society of New Orleans (MASNO), Composers Now and New Music USA.

Bryan's work has been presented in a wide range of venues, including Lincoln Center, Miller Theatre, Symphony Space, The Stone, Roulette Intermedium, La MaMa Experimental Theatre, National Gallery of Art, Blue Note Jazz Club, Jazz Gallery, Bethany and Abyssinian Baptist Churches and Ojai Music Festival. Upcoming commissions include compositions for the Jacksonville Symphony, Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, Ensemble Pi, Aperture Duo, Davóne Tines and collaborations with writers Sharan Strange and Ashon Crawley, and artists Amy Bryan, Alma Bryan Powell and Tiona McClodden. She has two independent recordings, “Quest for Freedom” (2007) and “This Little Light of Mine.”

The generous sponsorship provided by Mary Carr Patton has allowed the Jacksonville Symphony to bring Courtney Bryan to Jacoby Symphony Hall in residency for the 2018-2019 season. A longtime supporter of the Jacksonville Symphony, Mary Carr Patton serves as an Honorary Member of the Jacksonville Symphony Board of Directors, as well as serving on the Board of the League of American Orchestras. She has been instrumental in two music director searches for the Jacksonville Symphony, most recently chairing the search that brought current Music Director Courtney Lewis to Jacksonville.

Bryan's residency will begin this month and include performances of her music around the city and a mentoring role in educational and community engagement programs throughout the 2018-2019 season. Her residency will culminate in a concert featuring the premiere of a piece commissioned by the Jacksonville Symphony in April 2019.

“I am delighted to welcome Courtney Bryan to the Jacksonville Symphony. We’re looking forward to performing her music, including a world premiere in the 2018-2019 season. It’s my hope that Ms. Bryan’s residency will emphasize our commitment to the music of today while demonstrating the diverse influences and cultures that coalesce under the banner of classical music. I’m grateful to Mary Carr Patton, who is generously supporting this exciting position.”
~ Music Director Courtney Lewis

The opportunity to commission a piece from Bryan is partially underwritten by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). For the 2018 year, NEA Chairman Jane Chu has approved more than \$25 million in grants. Included in her recent announcement is an Art Works grant of \$15,000 to the Jacksonville Symphony to support the commission and premiere of this new composition by composer Courtney Bryan. The work will center around Jacksonville’s diverse communities and the bridges that bring them together. The Art Works category is the NEA’s largest funding category and supports projects that focus on the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and/or the strengthening of communities through the arts.

###

The Jacksonville Symphony is North Florida’s leading music nonprofit offering live performances at Jacoby Symphony Hall in the Times-Union Center for the 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 JaxSymphony.org, like them at facebook.com/JaxSymphony; follow them on @jaxsymphony, on Instagram at JaxSymphony and on YouTube at JacksonvilleSymphony.