

Jacksonville Symphony Performs Russian Masterworks By Rachmaninoff and Shostakovich

Jacksonville, FL (February 14, 2018) --- The Jacksonville Symphony will perform Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony and Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto on February 23 & 24. The Symphony welcomes guest pianist Behzod Abduraimov to perform what is considered to be one of the most challenging piano concerti ever written.

WHO: Assistant Conductor **Nathan Aspinall** will lead the Symphony through both of these tremendous works. Aspinall is joined by guest pianist **Behzod Abduraimov** for the performance of Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto.

Abduraimov was born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in 1990 and began to play the piano at the age of 5. He is an alumnus of Park University's International Center for Music(ICM) where he studied with Stanislav Ioudenitch and now serves as the ICM's artist-in-residence.

Abduraimov has collaborated with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, NHK Symphony and Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestras. He has appeared at Carnegie Hall in 2015 and performed for the Cliburn Concerts, Carolina Performing Arts, the Vancouver Recital series and played concerts in Houston and Pittsburgh. Abduraimov has recently appeared at the Aspen Music Festival and with orchestras such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Dallas Symphony and Seattle Symphony. In 2015 he made his debut with the Münchner Philharmoniker under Gergiev featuring in their new 360 degree Festival and subsequently made his BBC Proms debut with them playing Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto.

*"In between, young Uzbekistani pianist **Behzod Abduraimov** proved a hugely impressive soloist in **Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto**, technically in total command, poetic and stormingly rousing as the music demanded." - Financial Times*

WHAT: Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto is arguably one of the most difficult piano concerti ever written. Featured in the movie *Shine*, the piece is the center of a pianist's emotional breakdown as he is driven mad while trying to conquer the technical demands of Rachmaninoff's concerto. The third concerto was written for Rachmaninoff's first American tour in 1909. Its second performance was conducted by fellow composer Gustav Mahler who Rachmaninoff said "touched my composer's heart straight away by devoting himself to my Concerto..."

Dmitri Shostakovich wrote his **Fifth Symphony** at a critical point in his career. The composer faced Stalin's displeasure after his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtensk District*, was banned for not falling in line with the standards of the regime. This was the first time he faced Stalin's displeasure, which could have ended his career. The Fifth Symphony, maybe his most well-known, premiered November 1937 and was received with enthusiasm. The musical language was direct, the melodies were well-shaped and the piece ended in positivity; all characteristics needed for Stalin's approval. Although Shostakovich outwardly described the work as "a Soviet artist's reply to just criticism," it is rumored he personally saw the final movement as a satire of the dictator and its appearance of elation as hollow.

WHEN: The concerts will take place on Friday, February 23 and Saturday, February 24.

WHERE: The concerts will all take place in the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts in Jacoby Symphony Hall.

TICKETS: For more information or to purchase tickets, please call the Ticket Office at 904.354.5547 or visit JaxSymphony.org.

SPONSORS: These concerts are a part of the Florida Blue Masterworks Series.

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The Jacksonville Symphony is North Florida's leading music nonprofit offering live performances at Jacoby 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 Orchestra. 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.