

JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY CELEBRATES AMERICAN COMPOSERS IN *AMERICAN LANDSCAPES*

The music of Barber, Bernstein, Ellington, Hanson & Liebermann

Jacksonville, FL (May 9, 2018) --- The Jacksonville Symphony will present a program celebrating American composers on May 18-20. The program is titled *American Landscapes* and features works by Samuel Barber, Leonard Bernstein, Duke Ellington, Lowell Liebermann and Howard Hanson.

WHO: Leading this program of American works is American conductor **Kazem Abdullah**. A vibrant, versatile and compelling presence on the podium, Abdullah is one of the most watched talents on the international stage today. Since 2012 he has been Generalmusikdirektor of the City of Aachen, Germany, where he leads both the orchestral and operatic seasons. Recently, he was nominated by critics in *Die Welt*, as best conductor in the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen for his conducting of *Brokeback Mountain*, *Tosca* and *Tannhäuser*.

In 2009, Abdullah conducted a 12 city tour of the United States with Orquestra de São Paulo, one of Brazil's most celebrated ensembles. Internationally he has made appearances with ensembles including the St. Gallen Symphony Orchestra, New World Symphony, the Boca del Rio Philharmonic and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

Born in the United States, Abdullah began his musical studies at the age of 10. A graduate of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music with a Bachelor of Music in clarinet performance, he continued his studies at the University of Southern California. In 2006 Abdullah was appointed assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera in New York by Music Director James Levine. Abdullah made his Metropolitan Opera debut conducting Gluck's *Orfeo ed Eurydice*. *The New York Times* lauded this first performance at the Metropolitan Opera as "...a confident performance... impressively responsive to the singers during their long stretches of orchestra-accompanied recitative."

Joining Abdullah and the Symphony for the Concerto for Cello and Orchestra is cellist **Julian Schwarz**. Schwarz was born to a multigenerational musical family in 1991. Heralded from a young age as a cellist destined to rank among the greatest of the 21st century, Schwarz's powerful tone, effortless virtuosity and extraordinarily large color palate are hallmarks of his style. In 2016, Schwarz won first prize at the Boulder International Chamber Music Competition's "The Art of Duo" with Canadian pianist Marika Bournaki.

After making his concerto debut at the age of 11 with the Seattle Symphony and his father, Gerard Schwarz on the podium, he has led an active career as soloist. Recent and upcoming debuts include the Buffalo and Rochester Philharmonics, Camerata Chicago, Symphony Silicon Valley and the Jacksonville Symphony.

An avid supporter of new music, Schwarz often commissions new, exciting works to enhance the cello repertoire. He has premiered concertos by Richard Danielpour, Samuel Jones and will give the world premiere of Lowell Liebermann's first Cello Concerto with five orchestras in the 2017-2018 season.

Featured on this program is a work by modern composer **Lowell Liebermann**. Liebermann will be in Jacksonville for the performances and will speak during the pre-concert talk, *Insight*, an hour before each Masterworks concert. Liebermann is one of America's most frequently performed and recorded living composers. He has written over 130 works in all genres, several of which have gone on to become

standard repertoire for their instruments. His Sonata for Flute and Piano and *Gargoyles* for piano are among the most frequently performed contemporary works for their instruments.

Liebermann has written two full-length operas, both enthusiastically received at their premieres: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the first American opera commissioned and premiered by l'Opéra de Monte-Carlo, and *Miss Lonelyhearts*, after the novel by Nathanael West, commissioned by the Juilliard School to celebrate its 100th anniversary.

WHAT: In a celebration of American music, the Jacksonville Symphony will perform pieces by some of America's most beloved composers, including Leonard Bernstein and Samuel Barber. The concert will open with one of Barber's best known works, *Adagio for Strings*. The Symphony will then perform a work by one of the greatest jazz composers of all time, Duke Ellington. *The Three Black Kings* was written as a celebration of three iconic figures: Balthazar, one of the "three kings" from the Nativity story, King Solomon and the modern "king" found in Dr. Martin Luther King. Following is Lowell Liebermann's *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*, which was a joint-commission by the Jacksonville Symphony. The concert will end with Bernstein's famed score from *On the Waterfront* and Howard Hanson's sweeping "Romantic" *Symphony*. Hanson's "Romantic" Symphony was written for the 50th Anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1930.

WHEN: There are three performances of this program: Friday, May 18 and Saturday, May 19, both at 8 p.m. and Sunday, May 20 at 3 p.m.

WHERE: All performances will take place 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. You can also visit the Ticket Office Monday-Friday 10a.m. to 4p.m.

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

###

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.