

## JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY WELCOMES METROPOLITAN OPERA SINGERS FOR SEASON FINALE: TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Jacksonville, FL (May 23, 2018) --- The Jacksonville Symphony will end the 2017-2018 season with a performance of selections from Richard Wagner's epic *Götterdämmerung*, the fourth opera in the grandiose Ring Cycle. In addition to playing these selections, the Symphony will also be performing Claude Debussy's *Iberia*.

**WHO:** For the selections from Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, Music Director Courtney Lewis and the Jacksonville Symphony will be joined by three guest vocalists. Jay Hunter Morris will perform the part of Siegfried, Christine Brewer will perform the part of Brünnhilde, and John Whelan will perform the part of Hagen. Christine Brewer and Jay Hunter Morris are both regulars at some of the world's finest opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera in New York City.

Opera singer, Grammy-winner and author, **Jay Hunter Morris** came into the National spotlight when he created the role of Tony in Terrence McNally's celebrated play *Master Class*, on Broadway in 1995. Career highlights include performances in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Seattle, Santa Fe, San Diego, Toronto, Los Angeles, Dallas, Atlanta, Paris, Monte Carlo, Budapest, Tokyo, Strasbourg, Vienna and Beijing. He debuted the role of Siegfried with the San Francisco Opera in 2011, and perhaps most famously, at the Metropolitan Opera in their new production by Robert LePage in 2011-2013. The production was broadcast live to cinemas worldwide and won a Grammy in 2013 for Best Opera Recording. He sang the role in Budapest at the Wagner Days Festival, and again in 2016 with Houston Grand Opera. Other recent successes include his first Tristan in Valencia, under the baton of Zubin Mehta, and Schoenberg's *Guerre-Lieder* at the Vienna Konzerthaus with Kent Nagano. Morris has most recently been seen on PBS in the role of Captain Ahab in Jake Heggie's *Moby-Dick*, from the San Francisco Opera.

**Christine Brewer** is a Grammy Award-winning American soprano who performs in opera, concert and recitals around the world. She was named "one of the top 20 sopranos of all time" by the BBC and the *New York Times*' Anthony Tommasini described her as "in her prime and sounding glorious."

On the opera stage, Brewer is highly regarded for her striking portrayal of the title role in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, which she has performed with the Metropolitan Opera, Opéra de Lyon, Théâtre du Chatelet and Santa Fe Opera. Attracting glowing reviews with each role, she has performed Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* at San Francisco Opera, Gluck's *Alceste* with Santa Fe Opera, the Dyer's Wife in Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Paris Opera, and Lady Billows in Britten's *Albert Herring* at Santa Fe Opera.

Brewer has performed with ensembles including the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the New World Symphony, the San Francisco Symphony, the Boston Symphony, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Opera, the Chicago Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the New York City Opera, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Philharmonic and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

**Paul Whelan** began the 2017-2018 season at the Lyric Opera of Kansas City in the role of Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*. He travels to Norway for performances of Haydn's *Creation* with the Norwegian Arctic Philharmonic Orchestra. Back in the US, Whelan will sing the role of Hagen in selections from *Götterdämmerung* with the Jacksonville Symphony.

The bass-baritone recently added the role of Sarastro *Die Zauberflöte* to his repertoire which he sang at Hawaii Opera Theatre. In Geneva, he joined the Grand Theatre for their new production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as Quince, and he appeared at Gothenburg Opera for the role of Claudio in *Hamlet* for a new production by Stephen Langridge for which he won sterling reviews.

Recent highlights include the role of Daland in *Der fliegende Holländer* at Hawaii Opera Theatre and New Zealand Opera as well as role debuts as Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* for Opera New Zealand, Banco in *Macbeth* at Opera North in the UK, and Titirel *Parsifal* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

**WHAT:** When performed altogether, Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, more commonly referred to as the Ring Cycle, lasts for almost 15 hours. Although referred to today as operas, Wagner insisted on calling his grand works "music dramas." Wagner believed that opera was the greatest of the human arts, and he wanted it to contain *all* the arts: literature in the form of the text, visual arts in the set and costume design, and music. He wanted his theatre pieces to be "complete art works", and in order to distinguish them from the operas of the past, he called them "music dramas." For this performance, the Symphony will perform almost 90 minutes of the finale to Wagner's Ring Cycle, *Götterdämmerung*, translated as "The Twilight of the Gods."

**WHEN:** There are two performances of this program: Friday, June 1 at 8 p.m. and Saturday, June 2 at 8 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](http://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.

**CONCERTMASTER SEARCH:** During the extensive search for a new concertmaster, the Jacksonville Symphony will be bringing in eight candidates to perform with the Symphony during the season. The last of these candidates is Lauren Roth.

Lauren Roth is concertmaster of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra and was named assistant professor of violin at the University of Arizona beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. Prior to these positions, she was concertmaster of the Canton Symphony. In May 2013, Roth earned a Master of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music as a student of William Preucil, and she was accepted into his prestigious Concertmaster Academy. She was a member of the Cleveland Pops orchestra and a substitute with The Cleveland Orchestra.

A native of Seattle, Roth received a Bachelor of Music degree in violin performance and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Italian studies from the University of Washington. During that time, she served as concertmaster of the Seattle Philharmonic Orchestra, Thalia Symphony, Marrowstone Festival Orchestra and the UW Symphony.

Roth has appeared as soloist with Philharmonia Northwest, Thalia Symphony, Canton Symphony, Sierra Vista Symphony and the Tucson Symphony. In 2013 she attended the Tanglewood Music Center and received the Jules C. Reiner Violin Prize. An avid teacher and chamber musician, Roth was an adjunct faculty member at Holy Names Academy in Seattle and has served on the faculty of Icicle Creek Music Center and the International Lyric Academy in Italy. She spends summers in Prague, Czech Republic and Bellingham, WA where she is a faculty member at the Prague Summer Nights Festival and the Marrowstone Music Festival respectively.

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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](http://JaxSymphony.org), like them at [facebook.com/JaxSymphony](https://facebook.com/JaxSymphony); follow them on @jaxsymphony, on Instagram at JaxSymphony and on YouTube at JacksonvilleSymphony.