

## THE JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY'S *HOLIDAY POPS* TRADITION RETURNS TO JACOBY SYMPHONY HALL

Jacksonville, FL (November 28, 2018) --- The Jacksonville Symphony's annual *Holiday Pops* concerts are right around the corner. There will be seven showings starting Thursday, December 6 and going through Sunday, December 9.

**WHAT:** Everyone has their favorite holiday music. Some like the traditional carols, some wouldn't think of celebrating without attending a performance of Handel's *Messiah* and others like the more modern music that has been built around family experiences.

Whatever your preference, *Holiday Pops* has something for you. This year's event is full of special guests, including the Jacksonville Symphony Chorus. Accompanying them will be dancers from Douglas Anderson School of the Arts Dance and Theater program. **And don't forget the finale will include Jacksonville's one and only guaranteed snowfall!**

Highlights of this year's performance include:

- An arrangement of Alan Silvestri's *Chanukah Festival Overture*,
- Timeless favorites such as "White Christmas" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,"
- Suites from holiday film favorites *The Polar Express* and *Home Alone*,
- The always loved horse whinny and slapstick of Leroy Anderson's *Sleigh Ride*,
- And of course, the traditional Audience Sing Along!

**WHO:** Holiday Pops will be conducted by Jacksonville Symphony Associate Conductor **Nathan Aspinall**. Recent performances of Aspinall's have included Handel's *Messiah*, Prokofiev's *Cinderella* and *Masterworks Series* production *Pictures at an Exhibition* with organist Cameron Carpenter. Formerly, he held the position of young conductor with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra where he assisted Chief Conductor Johannes Fritzsch and visiting guest conductors and conducted concerts for the education series. Aspinall studied French horn and Conducting at the University of Queensland and upon graduation was awarded the Hugh Brandon Prize.

**GUEST ARTISTS:** Joining Aspinall on stage will be vocalist Ben Gulley.

**Ben Gulley**, operatic tenor and cultural entrepreneur, has won awards and competitions throughout the nation for his singular blend of talents and been featured with symphonies, theaters and opera companies around the globe.

This 2018-2019 season will see Gulley's return to Opera San Luis Obispo as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* and Sarasota Opera as Ismaele in Verdi's *Nabucco*, his debut as Doctor Marianus in Mahler's Eighth Symphony with South Dakota Symphony.

Recent performances include his Carnegie Hall debut with The American Symphony, Rodolfo in *La bohème* at Opera Orlando, Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* with Opera Idaho, Énée in *Les Troyens* with

Maestro Kent Nagano at Staatsoper Hamburg and Pedro in *Tiefland* at Sarasota Opera. Gulley has appeared in concerts with David Foster, Opera Steamboat, Grand Rapids Symphony, Orlando Philharmonic and Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra, amongst others.

In addition to his career in classical forms, Gulley is equally at home in musical theater and as a singer/songwriter. He has released his debut solo album of original pop music, *IN BETWEEN* and helped compose/develop two new musicals with Rocky Mountain Repertory Theater and the Kansas City Repertory Theater. He is a founding board member of Kansas City's premier opera company, Opera 180, and a sitting member on the University of Missouri-Kansas City's Alumni Board.

**WHEN:**

- Thursday, December 6 at 7:30 p.m.
- Friday, December 7 at 11 a.m. (Coffee Concert with abbreviated program) & 8 p.m. (full concert)
- Saturday, December 8 at 3 p.m. & 8 p.m.
- Sunday, December 9 at 3 p.m. & 7 p.m.

**WHERE:** All performances will take place in the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts in Jacoby Symphony Hall.

**SPONSORS:** *Holiday Pops* Coffee Concert is a part of the *Raymond James Coffee Series* and is presented by Westminster Woods on Julington Creek and Westminster St. Augustine. *Holiday Pops* is a part of the *Fidelity National Financial Pops Series* and sponsored in part by SunTrust, Stein Mart, Harbinger Sign Company and The Jess and Brewster J. Durkee Foundation.

###

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 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.