

GONZALO FARIAS NAMED AS JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY'S NEW ASSOCIATE CONDUCTOR

Jacksonville, FL (May 9, 2019) --- This morning, the Jacksonville Symphony announced that Chilean conductor Gonzalo Farias will join the orchestra as associate conductor. Gonzalo was selected through an audition process that was held this spring. This announcement was made by Music Director Courtney Lewis and Vice President & General Manager Roger Wight.

"I'm delighted to welcome Gonzalo to the Jacksonville Symphony family, after a confident and inspiring audition," says Lewis. "He's a passionate musician who will bring joy and enthusiasm to our concerts."

Farias will be responsible for conducting the Jacksonville Symphony concerts in a variety of settings and series including community concerts, educational programs for kids, *Symphonic Night at the Movies Series* and *Fidelity National Financial Pops* concerts. He will bring a new voice to Jacksonville Symphony artistic planning, particularly around education and community programs. Farias will assist Music Director Courtney Lewis and guest conductors in rehearsals while preparing to fill in last minute, should the need arise.

"Gonzalo is a well-rounded artist with a particular penchant for storytelling and engaging people with his excitement for symphonic music," says Vice President & General Manager Wight. "I'm thrilled to have him join our team and look forward to all he will bring to the Jacksonville Symphony and our community."

Previous to his appointment with the Jacksonville Symphony, Farias served as the assistant conductor of the Virginia Symphony Orchestra under JoAnn Falletta's leadership. *The Virginia Gazette* noted that "with a lyrical, almost Zen-like quality, the amiable Farias established himself as a focused, musical artist who knows what he wants and how to get it - with grace and style and substance."

Farias was the recipient of the prestigious Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Conducting Fellowship for two seasons. Mentored by Marin Alsop, he assisted conductors Robert Spano, Bernard Labadie, Markus Stenz, Christoph König, Johannes Debus, Lahav Shani, among others. As former music director of the Joliet Symphony Orchestra, Farias embraced the Hispanic residents of the greater Chicago area with pre-concert lectures, Latin-based repertoire and a unique side-by-side bilingual narration of Bizet's *Carmen*.

Out of 566 applicants from 78 countries, he was recently chosen as one of 24 finalists in the prestigious 2018 Malko Conducting Competition with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra. Hailed by the *Gramophone* magazine critics, Farias offered one the "most fluent, honest, open hearted and pointed performances."

Farias was born in Santiago de Chile, where he began his piano studies at age five. He earned his bachelor's degree at the P.C. University of Chile, and then continued his graduate piano studies at the New England Conservatory as a full-scholarship student of Wha-Kyung Byun and Russell Sherman. He has won first prize at the Claudio Arrau International Piano Competition and prizes at the Maria Canals and Luis Sigall Piano Competitions. As a conductor, Farias attended the University of Illinois working with Donald Schleicher, the Peabody Conservatory with Marin Alsop and worked privately with Larry Rachleff and the late Otto-Werner Mueller.

Besides having a fond love for piano, chamber and contemporary music, Farias is passionate reader of second-order cybernetics as a way to help understand how complex systems organize, coordinate and interconnect with one another. This includes the interdependent and recursive nature of musical experiences, in which performers and audiences alike interact and respond to each other.

"It's just so exciting to be part of such an extraordinary organization like the Jacksonville Symphony. I'm looking forward to working with the amazing musicians of the Symphony, Music Director Courtney Lewis and the entire administration," Gonzalo said. "I very much admire what the Symphony has done for the Jacksonville community, so I can't wait to call Jacksonville my new home and share my life story with all of you."

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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, like them at facebook.com/JaxSymphony; follow them on Twitter @jaxsymphony, on Instagram at JaxSymphony and on YouTube at JacksonvilleSymphony.