

SYMPHONY REACHES NEW AGREEMENT WITH MUSICIANS LOCAL 444

Jacksonville, FL (August 18, 2020) – For the 2020/21 season, all musicians of the Jacksonville Symphony will take a 10% pay reduction when measured against the 2019/20 wages or a 14% reduction when compared to what compensation would have been in 2020/21; both calculations are equivalent to the reductions taken by the full time staff. All salary changes are due to repercussions from financial losses surrounding COVID-19.

“Although we wish we did not have this decision to make, it is in the best interest of the organization,” says Board Chair David Strickland. “I know I speak for the entire Board of Directors when I say we could not be more thankful to our musicians and The American Federation of Musicians Local 444 for their willingness to find a solution during this unprecedented time. We exist because of the incredible talent they provide, and we as an organization will continue to support that talent in every way that we can.”

As previously stated in a release regarding staff furloughs, the original 2020/21 operating budget would have been at \$12.1 million. Due to COVID-19, the budget has been slashed to \$9.6 million, a 20% decrease, and the lowest in six seasons. Payroll reductions represent a savings of \$1.4 million. As the necessity for physical distancing in Jacoby Symphony Hall becomes more and more of a reality, the capacity will drop from almost 1,800 to 582 seats, resulting in a projected loss of \$1.5 million in ticket sales.

“This is not how we wanted to begin the 2020/21 season,” says associate principal bassist Todd Lockwood. Lockwood also serves as the chair of the Symphony’s orchestra committee, a group of elected musicians responsible for representing the orchestra in liaising with the administration. “That being said, the committee and the orchestra are thrilled to be moving forward together with the administration and board of directors. We are excited to get back to performing exemplary music for the Jacksonville community.”

“I know we are all disappointed to be announcing a second round of pay reductions,” says President & CEO Steven Libman. “COVID-19 has had a dramatic effect on arts organizations across the country, forcing reductions in pay, and we are not excluded. The good news is we are moving forward, and the entire organization is eager and ready to perform on the Jacoby Symphony Hall stage once again.”

The Symphony’s first concert of the season, *Fanfare! Opening Night* is still scheduled to take place on Saturday, September 26. Patrons with questions regarding tickets for the 2020/21 season can still call the Symphony Box Office at 904.354.5547 or visit the Symphony website at www.jaxsymphony.org.

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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 through the Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestras. For more information about the Symphony, visit



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