

## Season Finale Opens With World Premiere of Tarik O'Regan's Jacksonville Symphony Commission

**Jacksonville, FL:** On June 10 and 11, the Jacksonville Symphony closes its 72<sup>nd</sup> season with the world premiere of an original commission and *Beethoven's Ninth: Ode to Joy*, featuring acclaimed guest vocalists and 100 Symphony Chorus members.

Conducted by Music Director Courtney Lewis, the final *Florida Blue Classical* concert of the 2021/22 season commences with the world premiere of Tarik O'Regan's original work *Trances*. Marking a pivotal moment in the Symphony's history, O'Regan's piece, sponsored by Brenda and Gene Wolchok, is the first in a multi-year series of Jacksonville Symphony commissions from today's most eminent composers.

Earlier in the season on April 8 and 9, the Symphony's *Mozart's Groundbreaker* performances featured O'Regan's piece *Rai*, the first in his trilogy of original works. In *Beethoven's Ninth: Ode to Joy*, the Symphony completes O'Regan's trilogy with *Trances*.

"These are pieces in which I meditate upon North African popular and folk music forms," said O'Regan. "Rather than being ethnographic studies, in these works, I am interested in how I recall the music of my youth and of my own heritage through the haze of memory. Specifically, in *Trances*, I'm trying to define a texture of reminiscence."

Following the premiere of O'Regan's piece is Beethoven's most famous and grandiose work, Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, which made history as the first symphony from a major composer to include chorus and vocal soloists.

"It's hard to know where to start when talking about this colossus, which is one of the most important, beloved and powerful pieces of art in Western culture," said Lewis. "It is joy that is the solution to darkness...Joy enlivens, inspires and unites us, for 'all people become brothers, where joy's gentle wings alight.' That optimism can be a sticking point for us today."

Joining the Symphony and the Symphony Chorus for *Ode to Joy* is a quartet of acclaimed operatic vocalists including soprano Elaine Alvarez, mezzo-soprano Tamara Mumford, baritone Anthony Clark Evans, and tenor Cooper Nolan.

Alvarez recently held title roles in productions such as *Tosca* with Chorges d'Orange and *Kat'a Kabanova* with Boston Lyric Opera.

Mumford is a graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program and has since appeared in more than 140 performances around the globe.

Evans also recently debuted with the Metropolitan Opera to cover Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* and Opera Philadelphia in the title role of *Rigoletto*.

Nolan has starred in leading roles of acclaimed productions such as Don José in *Carmen* and Trin in *La fanciulla del West* with the Minnesota Opera.

### **ABOUT TARIK O'REGAN**

A London-born composer based in San Francisco, O'Regan is the newly appointed Composer-in-Residence with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra where he is overseeing an ambitious new commissioning initiative. O'Regan will have several of his works premiered by several orchestras including the Pacific Chorale and Pacific Symphony along with Amy Dickson at the Presteigne Festival.

O'Regan's work has been recognized with two GRAMMY® nominations and two British Composer Awards, has been recorded on over 40 albums, and is published exclusively by Novello. O'Regan is also included in the *Washington Post's* annual list of creative artists who are "changing the classical landscape" for 2022.

### **ABOUT THE JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY**

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.

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