

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jacksonville Symphony Extends Contract with Music Director Courtney Lewis

Jacksonville, Fla - The Jacksonville Symphony proudly announces that Courtney Lewis, Music Director, and the Board of Directors have agreed to extend his contract through June 30, 2027. Lewis has served as the Jacksonville Symphony's Music Director since 2015, a position permanently endowed by Haskell in 2009. This will be his third contract extension.

Currently in his eighth season as Music Director, Lewis has designed an ambitious plan to enrich the surrounding community with innovative symphonic programming, creating the highest quality of art possible. Throughout his tenure, Lewis has dramatically reimagined the Symphony's musical offerings, reinvigorated the Symphony's long tradition of commissioning works from today's brightest composers, and championed more diversity within the orchestra.

"The board is thrilled that Courtney has agreed to extend his role as Music Director of the Jacksonville Symphony," said Don Baldwin, Chair of the Jacksonville Symphony's Board of Directors. "He has transformed and uplifted our orchestra to be at the forefront of artistic excellence and I know I speak for the entire board when I say that we're excited to see where he leads this organization in the coming seasons."

Anchored in the belief that music holds the power to transform lives, Courtney Lewis has established himself as one of his generation's most dynamic conductors. In recent seasons, Lewis has made debuts with the Nürnberger Symphoniker, Hallé Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, Aspen Music Festival and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, led the Australian Youth Orchestra on tour, and led the Minnesota Opera in their revival production and Naxos' recording of *Silent Night*, composed by Kevin Puts. In August 2022, Lewis led the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl.

Lewis' previous seasons with the Jacksonville Symphony have featured a greatly expanded repertoire including works of Gustav Mahler and Anton Bruckner, a Sibelius symphony cycle, Thomas Adès' *Asyla*, Ligeti's Piano Concerto and Timo Andres' *The Blind Banister*. Lewis has also collaborated with distinguished guest artists on the Jacoby Symphony Hall stage, including violinists Anthony Marwood and James Ehnes; pianists Conrad tao, Lang Lang, Inon Barnatan, and Jonathan Biss; and soprano Renée Fleming.

A passionate opera conductor, Lewis introduced symphonically staged productions of *Hänsel und Gretel* in 2017, excerpts from *Götterdämmerung* with Christine Brewer and Jay Hunter Morris in 2018, *Don Giovanni* in 2019 and *La Bohème* in 2022. In 2023, he will conduct *The Magic Flute*. Since his debut in November 2008 with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Lewis has appeared with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Vancouver Symphony, and RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland among many other high-profile orchestras. He served as Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic, Associate Conductor of the Minnesota

Orchestra and Dudamel Fellow with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. From 2008 to 2014, Lewis was also the Music Director of Boston's acclaimed Discovery Ensemble, a chamber orchestra dedicated to giving concerts of contemporary and established repertoire at the highest level of musical excellence while also bringing live music into the underprivileged parts of Boston through workshops in local schools.

Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Lewis began his musical journey as a chorister before studying composition with Robin Holloway at the University of Cambridge and clarinet with Dame Thea King. After completing a master's degree at Cambridge with a focus on the late music of György Ligeti, he attended the Royal Northern College of Music, where his teachers included Sir Mark Elder and Clark Rundell.

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

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