

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Jacksonville Symphony Opens Season with New Commission by Composer
Lowell Liebermann**

Jacksonville, Fla – On September 29 and 30, the Jacksonville Symphony presents the world premiere of an original work, *Organ Concerto, Op. 41*, by award-winning composer Lowell Liebermann, performed by Paul Jacobs, the first organist ever to win a GRAMMY®. This work is sponsored by Brenda and Gene Wolchok.

Conducted by Music Director Courtney Lewis, the opening Florida Blue Classical concert of the 2023/24 season commences by highlighting Ludwig van Beethoven's masterful musical storytelling in *Leonore Overture No. 2*. Liebermann's *Organ Concerto* is next in the lineup, and the evening concludes with Robert Schumann's cheerful *Second Symphony*.

Lowell Liebermann is one of America's most frequently performed and recorded living composers who writes unashamedly for the pleasure of the audience. Liebermann's grand and thrilling new work for the Jacksonville Symphony harnesses the unique power and color of the organ while drawing on its rich history.

"In terms of composition style, the *Organ Concerto* is very consistent with the rest of my pieces," said Liebermann. "I've always seen my works as being part of the Western classical continuum of music. I never intend for my music to be a radical break with what's happened before it. To me, the whole history of music is a very enriching tradition, and my music often makes references to other composers, styles and techniques."

Liebermann's *Organ Concerto* is a large piece in four movements, about a half hour in length. The first movement, titled *Chorale-Prelude*, is expansively melodic, with references to Baroque music and Johann Sebastian Bach in particular. The second movement is an ironic *Dance*, mimicking the fast-paced composition of a Scherzo. The third movement, *Aria*, is the emotional core of the piece. This leads, without pause, into the fourth movement which starts off at one tempo and then gets imperceptibly faster until the exhilarating finale.

"In my music, there usually is no extra-musical inspiration," Liebermann explains. "It's not about sunsets, political events or things of that sort. It's about the manipulation of the harmonies, the melodies, the musical materials I'm using and the abstract emotions that those evoke in the listener."

Premiering the *Organ Concerto* is Paul Jacobs, GRAMMY® Award-winning organist and pioneer in the movement for the revival of symphonic music featuring the organ. An eloquent champion of his instrument, Jacobs is known for his imaginative interpretations and charismatic stage presence.

The Jacksonville Symphony has embarked on an exciting, multi-year project to premiere original works commissioned from today's most exciting composers. The 2021/22 Season saw the first of these works with *Trances*, a full symphonic piece by Tarik O'Regan. In this season's lineup of historic masterpieces, new music makes history of its own with not one but two world premieres with Liebermann's Organ Concerto this September and composer Courtney Bryan's original work debuting in Spring 2024.

"New music produced by living composers is so important because it keeps classical music relevant, fresh and reflective of contemporary times," said Lewis. "I cannot wait for our listeners to experience this concerto and discover a new sense of connection with the colossal instrument that it highlights - the historic Bryan Concert Organ."

For more information on the performance and to purchase tickets, visit Jaxsymphony.org.

About Lowell Liebermann

Composer/pianist Lowell Liebermann is the recipient of many awards and honors including the Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Virtuoso Award from Concert Artists Guild, a Grammy nomination, and awards from BMI and ASCAP. He was the first winner of the Van Cliburn Competition's American Composers Invitational, and the inaugural recipient of the Virgil Thomson Award for vocal composition.

He is one of America's most frequently performed and recorded living composers and has written over one hundred thirty works in many genres - several of which have become standard repertoire for their instruments. He has been commissioned and performed by a wide array of ensembles and instrumentalists, among them the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Emerson Quartet, and flautist Sir James Galway.

Mr. Liebermann has written two full-length operas: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the first American opera commissioned and premiered by l'Opéra de Monte-Carlo; and *Miss Lonelyhearts*, commissioned by the Juilliard School to celebrate its 100th anniversary. His full-length ballet *Frankenstein* was co-commissioned by London's Royal Ballet and the San Francisco Ballet and has been released on Reference Recordings with the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra under the baton of Martin West.

Mr. Liebermann's debut solo piano album on the Steinway label - *Personal Demons*, a compendium of works by Busoni, Liszt, Kabeláč, Schubert, and himself - was called by *Whole Note* magazine "expertly curated and impressively executed" and by *Fanfare* "all-around excellent playing and a joy to hear."

About Paul Jacobs

Heralded as "one of the finest organists and teachers of our day," by Zachary Woolfe of *The New York Times*, "one of the major musicians of our time" by Alex Ross of *The New Yorker*, the internationally celebrated organist Paul Jacobs combines a probing intellect and extraordinary technical mastery with an unusually large repertoire, both old and new.

He has performed to great critical acclaim on five continents and in each of the fifty United States. The only organist ever to have won a Grammy Award—in 2011 for Messiaen’s towering “Livre du Saint-Sacrément,”—Mr. Jacobs is an eloquent champion of his instrument both in the United States and abroad.

A fierce advocate of new music, Mr. Jacobs has premiered works by Samuel Adler, Mason Bates, Michael Daugherty, Bernd Richard Deutsch, John Harbison, Wayne Oquin, Stephen Paulus, Christopher Theofanidis, and Christopher Rouse, among others.

No other organist is repeatedly invited as soloist to perform with prestigious orchestras, thus making him a pioneer in the movement for the revival of symphonic music featuring the organ. Mr. Jacobs regularly appears with the Chicago Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Lucerne Symphony Orchestra, Montreal Symphony, Nashville Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, and San Francisco Symphony, among others.

Mr. Jacobs studied at the Curtis Institute of Music and at Yale University. He joined the faculty of The Juilliard School in 2003 and was named chairman of the organ department in 2004, one of the youngest faculty appointees in the school’s history.

About the Jacksonville Symphony

The Jacksonville Symphony is North Florida’s leading music nonprofit offering live performances at Jacoby Symphony Hall in the Jacksonville 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.

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