



Courtney Lewis
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Steven B. Libman
President & CEO

The Jacksonville Symphony presents Beethoven & Rachmaninoff with Guest Conductor Michael Stern

Jacksonville, Fla. (January 9, 2025) – The Jacksonville Symphony continues its 75th Anniversary Season with the sixth Florida Blue Classical concert “Beethoven & Rachmaninoff,” on January 31 and February 1. Renowned guest conductor Michael Stern will lead the Symphony through a program of classical masterpieces, featuring Ludwig van Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7, Sergei Rachmaninoff’s “Symphonic Dances” and Guillaume Connesson’s “Flame Writing.”

The program starts with Connesson’s “Flame Writing,” an electrifying contemporary work inspired by the composer’s fascination with energy and motion. The piece, known for its vibrant orchestration and rhythmic drive, was also composed with Beethoven in mind.

“I wanted to compose a work with a fierceness that would draw a psychological portrait of [Ludwig van] Beethoven and, more generally, pay homage to the music of Germany,” said Connesson. “In the development, the four themes are transmuted, recalling the sudden emergence of the major mode in the finale of Beethoven’s Fifth. Following the drama comes a dance of joy.”

The Symphony will then perform Rachmaninoff’s “Symphonic Dances,” a three-movement suite that was originally composed during his later years in Huntington, Long Island. This work has been referred to as a swan song and was almost presented as a ballet due to its many dance rhythms. It is both nostalgic and innovative, showcasing his signature harmonies while embracing modern elements of 20th century music.

The final piece of the program is Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7, often hailed as one of his most exhilarating symphonies. Known for its rhythmic vitality and emotional depth, this work features an iconic second movement and a lively final movement that will end the evening with a joyful energy.

To learn more about the pieces, watch Music Director Courtney Lewis’ Insight episodes available at JaxSymphony.org and on the Symphony’s YouTube channel.

Tickets are available at JaxSymphony.org or by calling the Box Office at 904.354.5547. This concert is part of the Florida Blue Classical Series.

About the Jacksonville Symphony

The Jacksonville Symphony is North Florida’s leading nonprofit performing arts organization offering live performances at Jacoby Symphony Hall in the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts and other venues throughout the area. Led by President and CEO Steven Libman and Music

Director Courtney Lewis, the Jacksonville Symphony reaches over 165,500 individuals through over 95 performances each season. 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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