



Courtney Lewis
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Steven B. Libman
President & CEO

The Jacksonville Symphony presents Beethoven's "Emperor" with internationally renowned pianist Barry Douglas

Jacksonville, Fla. (February 13, 2025) – The Jacksonville Symphony continues its 75th Anniversary Season with the seventh Florida Blue Classical concert “Beethoven’s ‘Emperor’” on March 7 and 8. Led by Belfast-born Courtney Lewis, the Symphony will perform with internationally renowned Belfast pianist Barry Douglas in a program of classical masterpieces, including Samuel Barber’s Overture to “The School for Scandal,” Jean Sibelius’ Symphony No. 5 and Ludwig van Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 5, “Emperor.” This program carries a subtle nod to Ireland, featuring Lewis and Douglas alongside Barber’s Overture inspired by a play written by Irishman Robert Brinsley Sheridan.

The program starts with Barber’s Overture from “The School for Scandal,” a satire written by Sheridan in 1777. This witty play is about a man deciding which nephew to pass his fortune to, carrying a playful energy reminiscent of the recent HBO drama “Succession.” The piece captures this energy combined with classic European romanticism for a short but vibrant orchestral display.

Next audiences will experience Sibelius’ Symphony No. 5, a three-movement piece with elements of folk themes drawn from Sibelius’ Finnish background. The inspiration from nature and folk legends is evident in its sweeping and grand movements. During the program’s Insight episode Lewis states “the symphony’s most famous moment is often interpreted as a musical depiction of this swan-sighting, the leaping theme from the opening transformed into something of magisterial power and beauty.”

Beethoven’s “Emperor” is a well-known masterpiece with a very recognizable melody and piano sound. Douglas, born in Belfast, joins the Symphony for this work, displaying his incredible talent on the keys and charming stage presence. Douglas has toured the world, performing with the London Symphony, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Russian National, Vancouver and Colorado Symphonies, the Halle Orchestra and many others. Douglas was also made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire for services to music and community relations in the 2021 New Year Honours List.

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 and the David M. Hicks Piano 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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