



Courtney Lewis
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Jacksonville Symphony Extends Associate Conductor and Youth Director's Contract

Jacksonville, Fla. (May 21, 2026) — The Jacksonville Symphony has extended the contract of Associate Conductor and Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestras (JSYO) Music Director Nathaniel Efthimiou through June 2027, reinforcing its commitment to artistic excellence and the next generation of musicians.

“Nathaniel has become an indispensable part of our team,” said Marianne Rice, Ed.D., The Lory Doolittle Endowed Vice President of Music Education & Community Impact. “His ability to inspire young musicians while fostering a culture of musical excellence has elevated the JSYO and strengthened our Symphony as a whole. We’re thrilled to continue this work together.”

Now in his second season as JSYO Music Director, Efthimiou has cultivated a supportive, high-energy learning environment that challenges and inspires students across all ensembles. With his leadership, JSYO musicians have demonstrated notable artistic growth, performing with increasing confidence not only in youth orchestra concerts but also in ensemble performances throughout the community.

“Under Dr. Efthimiou’s direction in Philharmonic, my fellow ensemble players and I have been challenged both technically and musically by such repertoire as Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony and Brahms’s Second Symphony,” said Madeleine Callen, nine-year JSYO student. “I look forward to further growth as a musician under Dr. Efthimiou’s leadership next year.”

“As Music Director of the JSYO, I look forward to deepening my work with the staff and community to continue providing a world-class youth orchestra experience for the young musicians of Northeast Florida,” Efthimiou said.

In his role as Associate Conductor, Efthimiou has become a versatile and trusted presence on the podium. He has led multiple Pops programs, *First Coast Nutcracker* performances and other special events, conducted his first movie concert this season, served as cover conductor for several *Florida Blue Classical* concerts and the Symphony's recent production of *Tosca*. His work has also taken him beyond Jacksonville, including a performance on Sea Island and into the community through post-concert conversations and educational outreach tied to *Fleet Landing Coffee* concerts.

"I'm thrilled to extend my time as Associate Conductor of the Jacksonville Symphony and Music Director of the JSYO," Efthimiou said. "The past two seasons alongside our Music Director Courtney Lewis and the musicians have been incredibly rewarding and I'm excited to continue contributing to the Symphony's extraordinary cultural impact in Jacksonville."

Efthimiou brings a multifaceted musical background to his work on and off the podium, pairing high-level training with a deep commitment to community engagement. He was also recently named the AAF/Faber Young Conductor Fellow at the Salzburg Music Festival, selected by members of the Vienna Philharmonic, and has participated in prestigious international competitions, including the Donatella Flick LSO Conducting Competition and the Hong Kong International Conducting Competition, where he was a semifinalist. He was also awarded the James Conlon Conductor Prize at the Aspen Music Festival.

About the Jacksonville Symphony

The Jacksonville Symphony is Northeast 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 B. Libman and Music Director Courtney Lewis, the Jacksonville Symphony reaches over 155,500 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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