

EMBARGOED UNTIL THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2020 AT 10 A.M.

JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES NEW PRESIDENT & CEO

Jacksonville, FL (January 9, 2020) --- Jacksonville Symphony announces non-profit veteran Steven Libman as new President & CEO. Libman comes to Jacksonville from the Atlanta Ballet in Atlanta, Georgia where he has served as the organization's chief advancement officer since 2014.

"After a year-long search, the Board reached a unanimous decision that Steven is the absolute perfect candidate for the job," says Don Baldwin, vice chair of the Symphony's Board and head of the Search Committee. "As Interim President & CEO, David Strickland has done a fantastic job in maintaining the momentum of the Jacksonville Symphony, and we very pleased to have Steven guide us through this next stage of our evolution."

As chief advancement officer for the Atlanta Ballet, Libman was responsible for planning, implementing, overseeing and assessing the Atlanta Ballet's development strategies in support of the organization's strategic vision and growth. While there, he led a \$23.5 million capital campaign and \$5 million annual fund. In his new role as Jacksonville Symphony President & CEO, Steven reports to the Board of Directors through the chairman and is responsible for an organization that has been operating for nearly 70 years, is comprised of more than 100 employees, and reaches more than 250,000 people annually.

Throughout his career, Libman has raised over \$150 million, including a recent \$6 million for the Atlanta Ballet to fund a brand new production of *The Nutcracker*, with a world-class team of Tony Award-winning designers. He also co-created and launched a radio show that appeared on public radio from 2013-2016 entitled *The Voice of the Performing Arts*. Hosted by Libman and Jeff Swensson, they interviewed over 500 guests, over 160 shows, with a weekly audience of up to 10,000 listeners. The thorough list of guests included members of Congress, university presidents, as well as executive and education directors from some of the most prestigious arts organizations in the world.

"My wife, Carol, and I feel inspired to make the move to Jacksonville," Libman says. "There is a rich abundance of cultural activity in the River City, and the Jacksonville Symphony is the largest institution within that culture. Through the arc of my career, I have been a part of helping almost 4 million people to experience the joy of the performing arts, and I could not be more excited to become a part of that in Jacksonville."

Prior to his time in Atlanta, Libman was in Indiana as the founding President & CEO of the \$175 million Center for the Performing Arts, a three-venue performing arts center and museum. He successfully branded the Center as a major community asset and developed programming for over 100 artists, built the staff from 2 to 80, the board from 3 to 30, raised over \$12 million in operating funds during the first two seasons and established a volunteer corps of over 500.

"I am thrilled that Steven is joining us in Jacksonville," says Music Director Courtney Lewis. "He is a perfect fit to lead our organization as we provide meaningful symphonic music, programs and services for the community and region. The Jacksonville Symphony is proud to be leading a cultural shift in symphonic organizations across the country, developing creative new ways to stimulate evolving audience interest, while honoring the expectations and desires of music lovers regarding what symphonic music can look and sound like in the new decade and beyond."

In addition to his more recent accomplishments in Atlanta and Indiana, Libman worked at the Tony Award-winning La Jolla Playhouse as managing director. While there, he ran a four-venue theatre complex that produced over 300 performances per season, and produced 28 plays, including 10 world premieres. He oversaw a budget of \$15 million, supervised a staff of 100, and directed all strategic planning, financial management, fundraising and marketing.

“With Steven and Courtney Lewis, in concert with the exceptional staff and orchestra, we will have the proven experience, knowledge and vision needed to position the Jacksonville Symphony as a premier orchestra in the Southeast,” says David Strickland, Chair of the Board.

Libman also spent 17 years at the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. While there, he served as both development director and managing director, consecutively. He was responsible for spearheading a successful \$20 million capital campaign as well as an additional \$2.5 million by expanding the ballet’s donor base to include well-known New York City funders like the Wallace Foundation and Shubert Foundation. Libman has also served on adjunct faculty for graduate programs at many universities, including Syracuse University, Carnegie Mellon University and University of California/San Diego.

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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. In total, the Jacksonville Symphony has a \$29.7 million economic impact with over 250,000 attendees annually. 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.