



JACKSONVILLE WIND SYMPHONY CELEBRATES 33 YEARS OF CONCERTS AT JU

First Coast Wind Symphony presents noted American Composer Brian Balmages in concert

Words by Ann Carey Holt

The Jacksonville University Creative Arts Series presents the First Coast Wind Symphony and the Jacksonville University Wind Ensemble in concert on Feb. 18 at 7:30 p.m. in JU's Terry Hall.

The concert will feature the music of American composer and conductor Brian Balmages. Balmages' works span the worlds of orchestral, band and chamber music having been performed by groups ranging from professional symphony orchestras to elementary schools and in venues including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center and the Sydney Opera House.

As a conductor, Balmages enjoys regular engagements with all-state and regional ensembles as well as university and professional groups throughout the world. He is an elected member of the American Bandmasters Association and has taught instrumental conducting at Towson University where he also served as assistant director of bands and orchestras. Currently, he is director of MakeMusic Publications and Digital Education for Alfred and MakeMusic.

Balmages will conduct both ensembles in a program featuring some of his most popular works. He will also present a free public masterclass on Feb. 17 from 2-3 p.m. in the Phillips Building at JU.

An all-volunteer community music organization, the First Coast Wind Symphony includes 60 musicians led by music director Artie Clifton and conductor Paul Weikle. The organization provides a cultural service to Northeast Florida by offering free concerts throughout the community and

is currently in its 33rd season. The Jacksonville University Wind Ensemble is led by music professor Chris Creswell.

The First Coast Wind Symphony was recently chosen through a highly selective audition process to perform at the annual Association of Concert Bands National Convention in Orlando this May. The ensemble is proud to represent Jacksonville in a forum with such broad national recognition. They have also released three albums to wide acclaim, "Prevailing Winds," "A Christmas Celebration" and "Symphonic Spirit," as well as the DVD "Sounds of the First Coast."

This spring the First Coast Wind Symphony hosts an annual statewide Concerto Competition for high school students. Championed and juried by the organization, the competition rewards the winning musician with a scholarship and a featured solo with the First Coast Wind Symphony in an April concert.

For more information about the masterclass, contact music director Artie Clifton at info@fcwinds.org. Additional information about the group and its upcoming season is available at fcwinds.org.