



Jorge Peña selected to receive the 2021 Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award

Noted violist and co-founder of the St. Augustine Music Festival honored by The Community Foundation

JACKSONVILLE, Florida – January 11, 2021 —Jorge Peña, veteran member of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, and artistic director and co-founder of the St. Augustine Music Festival, was presented with the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award last week. The presentation was made in front of his colleagues in the Jacoby Symphony Hall as they prepared for the Florida Blue Masterworks Series performance on Friday night. Peña has performed with the Symphony for 23 seasons.

Peña and his wife, Jin Kim-Peña, co-founded the St. Augustine Music Festival fifteen years ago. They envisioned a free classical music concert series designed to celebrate the rich artistic and cultural traditions of St. Augustine. He was determined to make the event accessible and enjoyable for all. Its mission is to ‘Entertain, Educate and Elevate,’ and since inception, the St. Augustine Music Festival has been free of charge. Over the years, the festival has presented an array of world-renowned soloists and ensembles, while also providing a stage for talented local musicians and has been featured on NPR’s Performance Today.

“Jorge’s mastery of the viola and contributions to the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra are notable in themselves, but he has gone on to share his passion for classical music well beyond traditional audiences,” noted Martha Frye Baker, Ann McDonald Baker’s daughter-in-law and chair of the board of trustees of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. “His generosity of spirit is exactly what we had in mind five years ago when we established this award to honor Ann’s devotion to making our community a better place through the arts, and Jorge is a significant contributor to that model.”

The Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award recognizes an artist whose work brings distinction to Northeast Florida, and is named for the late Ann McDonald Baker, whose leadership helped create and nurture such vital cultural gems such as The Community Foundation’s Art Ventures Fund, the Arts Assembly (now the Cultural Council), Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, and Greenscape, among others. As this year’s Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures award recipient, Peña received a \$15,000 unrestricted grant.

Peña serves as conductor and music director of the Golden Isles Youth Orchestra, and General Manager of the Coastal Symphony of Georgia in Brunswick. He has conducted master classes and coached at LaVilla School of the Arts, Douglas Anderson School of the Arts and the University of North Florida. He is an instructor for the Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestra and was on the faculty of Prelude Chamber Music Camp.

The selection process for the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award includes a knowledgeable, anonymous panel of advisors who put forward a short list of finalists after considering a wide range of deserving artists in all disciplines throughout the year. A Selection Committee (a member of the Baker family, a Trustee of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, a representative from the advisory panel and The Community Foundation president) reviews the finalists and names the winner. Past recipients include Terrance Patterson, David Engdahl, Jim Draper, Louise Freshman Brown and John Bunker.

(More)



Art Ventures

For decades, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida has invested in the local cultural community as part of an exceptional initiative known as Art Ventures. In 1989, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) chose Jacksonville to receive \$50,000/year for four years, provided that The Community Foundation and (at the time) The Arts Assembly work together to raise \$100,000/year in unrestricted gifts over the same period. The challenge was a success, and the first grants were made in 1990. Art Ventures provides support for the more fragile part of the arts community—emerging individual artists and small arts organizations—and it has provided more than \$1 million in grants to individuals and small arts organizations since its inception. In 2015, The Community Foundation created the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award to honor the late Ann Baker, who led the initial Art Ventures fundraising with Courtenay Wilson, and who chaired The Community Foundation Board of Trustees from 2002-2003.

About The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida (www.jaxcf.org), Florida's oldest and largest community foundation, works to stimulate philanthropy to build a better community. The Foundation helps donors invest their philanthropic gifts wisely, helps nonprofits serve the region effectively, and helps people come together to make the community a better place. Now in its 57th year, the Foundation has assets of approximately \$480 million and has made grants of approximately \$550 million since 1964.

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