



NEWS RELEASE

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St. Petersburg City Council unanimously approves co-naming street as Florida Orchestra Way

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – Just in time to mark The Florida Orchestra’s 50th anniversary, The St. Petersburg City Council unanimously approved co-naming part of 1st Street as Florida Orchestra Way on Thursday.

“Today we recognized the tenure of one of our longest arts anchors, and that’s really what this co-naming is all about,” said council member Karl Nurse. “Sometimes you just get used to something always being there and you forget to say thank you.”

“The Florida Orchestra has been serving St. Petersburg and beyond for 50 years, in and out of the concert hall, and we’re so grateful the city wanted to show appreciation with this signage,” said TFO Board Chairman Tom Farquhar. “As the premier orchestra in Florida, we are proud to be a part of what makes St. Petersburg special as an arts and culture hub.”

The measure means signs between 5th Avenue N and 5th Avenue S will include 1st Street in larger type at the top, with a smaller Florida Orchestra Way underneath. The street runs past the Mahaffey Theater, a venue where the orchestra has a strong performance record. The next step is to work with the city to determine when the signs will go up, probably in the fall. The Florida Orchestra launches its 50th season in September, under the leadership of Music Director Michael Francis.

The Florida Orchestra serves all of Tampa Bay, with deep roots in St. Petersburg. Before merging with the Tampa Philharmonic in 1967 to form what would eventually become The Florida Orchestra, the St. Petersburg Symphony performed in St. Petersburg since long before the Mahaffey Theater was built. When the Mahaffey opened in 1965, it became the orchestra’s main venue, and where TFO now performs a large number of concerts and draws its largest audience. In fact, TFO’s Mahaffey attendance has grown 42 percent since 2011. The orchestra also will debut two new weekend matinee series of classical and pops concerts at the Mahaffey next season.

The orchestra has increased its reach outside the concert hall with free community concerts in St. Petersburg and the entire bay area. For more than 20 years, the orchestra’s biggest event of the season has been the free Pops in the Park concert in Vinoy Park, which attracts more than 20,000 people every year; TFO also performs similar concerts in Curtis Hixon and River Tower parks in Tampa and will return to Clearwater’s Coachman Park in the fall. With TFO chamber concerts at the Woodson African American Museum in St. Petersburg, it is drawing people to a neighborhood that is often

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overlooked. The orchestra also performs free concerts at hospitals, the University of South Florida, Boys and Girls Clubs, schools, retirement and veterans centers, malls and more throughout Tampa Bay.

The Florida Orchestra celebrates its 50th anniversary in the 2017-18 season as the largest professional orchestra in Florida. From September through May, it will perform more than 130 concerts through series of classical, popular, coffee and matinee concerts in St. Petersburg, Tampa and Clearwater. It is dedicated to bringing music to all people, with pre-concert talks, free tickets for kids and teens to classical Masterworks concerts, family and youth concerts and other educational activities.

[About The Florida Orchestra](#)

The Florida Orchestra is recognized as Tampa Bay's leading performing arts institution, the largest professional symphony orchestra in Florida, and one of the most vibrant and innovative orchestras in America. Under the leadership of Music Director Michael Francis, it performs series of classical, popular, rock and morning coffee concerts in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Clearwater, as well as free Pops in the Park concerts. Dedicated to bringing music to all people, connecting to the community is a priority, with pre-concert talks, family and youth concerts and other educational activities. Kids and teens get in free to classical Masterworks concerts with Classical Kids tickets. TFO celebrates its 50th anniversary in the upcoming 2017-18 season. FloridaOrchestra.org.