

The Florida Orchestra to feature  
Sting at 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala concert



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# The Florida Orchestra to feature Sting at 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala concert



Photo by Eric Ryan Anderson

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – Going all out for its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, The Florida Orchestra will feature a performance by world-renowned musician Sting at its gala concert on Saturday, December 9, 2017, at the Mahaffey Theater, under the baton of Music Director Michael Francis. All proceeds will benefit the orchestra's robust community and education programs as well as TFO's artistic initiatives.

In a concert like no other in Tampa Bay, "An Intimate Evening with The Florida Orchestra and Sting" puts the iconic rock star and former frontman of The Police at center stage, but it will not be your typical rock show. Joined by a 3-piece band with music supervised by Rob Mathes (Sting, Bruce Springsteen, Renée Fleming, and more), expect 90 minutes of the 16-time Grammy winner's most celebrated hits re-imagined and arranged for an orchestra, including *Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic*, *Englishman In New York*, *Roxanne*, *Every Breath You Take* and *Fields Of Gold*, among many others. Some arrangements are from Sting's widely acclaimed *Symphonicities* album.

**Gala concert tickets go on sale exclusively to Florida Orchestra subscribers on Monday, September 25, and to the general public on Monday, October 2.** Tickets will be \$75, \$100, \$150, \$250 and \$375 with select premium seats at \$450. Concert tickets do not include gala reception or dinner. This season's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala concert is generously sponsored by Schmidt Investments of South Florida.

"We have a true world star coming to make music with The Florida Orchestra," says Michael Francis, who will share a stage with the British rock icon he grew up listening to in England. "Sting is not just a rock star. He's a deep, comprehensive artist who is constantly re-examining the world around him."

The Rock and Roll Hall of Famer has sold 100 million albums from his combined work as the frontman of The Police and as one of the most distinctive solo artists in the world. A composer, singer-songwriter,

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actor, author, and activist, Sting also has received a Golden Globe, four Oscar nominations, a Tony nomination and the Kennedy Center Honors. Sting has not performed in the bay area since 2010, when he appeared at what is now the MidFlorida Credit Union Amphitheater in Tampa.

This year's gala is chaired by Schmidt Investments CEO Bob Schmidt, who is also a TFO board member, and celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Florida Orchestra and its supporters with an extraordinary evening. Packages include a pre-concert champagne reception with hors d'oeuvres and live music, valet parking, prime seats at the concert and a post-concert gourmet dinner with Sting, Michael Francis and TFO musicians, all overlooking the waterfront at the Mahaffey Theater in St. Petersburg. The dinner will be catered by pre-eminent local chef Chris Ponte, who has been a James Beard Award semifinalist. **Gala package reservations are on sale now at 727.362.5424, or email [nardle@floridaorchestra.org](mailto:nardle@floridaorchestra.org).**

The gala is The Florida Orchestra's only major fundraising event of the year. All proceeds support TFO's high standard of artistic excellence as well as growing education and community programs, including free hospital, park, museum, youth concerts and more throughout Tampa Bay. Last season's gala concert with violinist Itzhak Perlman raised more than \$600,000.

For Maestro Francis, a musician of Sting's caliber is a good fit for the orchestra's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala: "Not only is Sting involved in rock, pop, jazz, and world music, but he loves and supports the classical world. He really sums up what the Florida Orchestra is all about, especially as we look to the future. We are genuinely communicating with Tampa Bay in so many different ways."

### **An Intimate Evening with The Florida Orchestra and Sting**

A 90-minute symphonic concert of Sting performing with The Florida Orchestra for his biggest hits, including *Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic*, *Englishman In New York*, *Roxanne*, *Every Breath You Take*, *Fields Of Gold* and more. The gala concert benefits community programs and artistic initiatives.

**7 p.m. Saturday, December 9, 2017, at Mahaffey Theater in St. Petersburg**

- Tickets: \$75, \$100, \$150, \$250 and \$375, with select premium seats at \$450. Concert tickets do not include gala reception or dinner.
- On sale to general public Oct. 2.
- [FloridaOrchestra.org](http://FloridaOrchestra.org); 727.892.3337 or 1.800.662.7286

### **[About Sting](#)**

Composer, singer-songwriter, actor, author, and activist Sting was born in Newcastle, England before moving to London in 1977 to form The Police with Stewart Copeland and Andy Summers. The band released five studio albums, earned six Grammy Awards and two Brits, and was inducted into The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2003.

As one of the world's most distinctive solo artists, Sting has received an additional 10 Grammy Awards, two Brits, a Golden Globe, an Emmy, four Oscar nominations (including 2017's nomination for *The Empty Chair* from JIM: THE JAMES FOLEY STORY), a Tony nomination, Billboard Magazine's Century Award, and MusiCares 2004 Person of the Year. Also a member of the Songwriters Hall of Fame, he has received the Kennedy Center Honors, The American Music Award of Merit and most recently, The Polar Music Prize.

His new album, *57th & 9th*, was released in November, 2016, and earlier this year, he embarked on the critically acclaimed 57th & 9th World Tour performing in clubs, theaters and arenas joined by Dominic Miller (guitar), Josh Freese (drums) and Rufus Miller (guitar). Throughout his enduring career, Sting has sold close to 100 million albums from his combined work with The Police and as a solo artist.

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Sting's support for human rights organizations such as the Rainforest Fund, Amnesty International and Live Aid mirrors his art in its universal outreach. Along with wife Trudie Styler, Sting founded the Rainforest Fund in 1989 to protect both the world's rainforests and the indigenous people living there. Together they have held 18 benefit concerts to raise funds and awareness for our planet's endangered resources. Since its inception, the Rainforest Fund has expanded to a network of interconnected organizations working in more than 20 countries over three continents. [Click for full bio](#)

### [About Michael Francis](#)

Maestro Francis took over as music director of The Florida Orchestra in the fall of 2015 and instantly became a huge hit. Quickly establishing an international presence, the British conductor also is music director of the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego and a popular guest conductor around the nation and the globe. [Click for a full bio.](#)

### [About The Florida Orchestra](#)

*Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the 2017/18 season, 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 more than 130 concerts a season, with series of classical, popular, 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. To subscribe or buy tickets: 727.892.3337 or 1.800.662.7286; floridaorchestra.org.*