

In 50th anniversary season, The Florida Orchestra sells its most tickets ever



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From a 'Triangle Solo' to sheet music to doughnuts, season adds up to success

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – For the second year in a row, The Florida Orchestra has set a record for ticket sales, with 125,700 paid seats in the 2017-18 season. That's two consecutive seasons above the 100,000 mark. Add in free tickets and community concert crowds, and the count climbs to more than 215,000 for TFO's 50th anniversary season.

At least 18 sell-out concerts fueled the record attendance, topped by TFO's premier 50th anniversary gala concert featuring Sting, which sold out the Mahaffey Theater in a week and raised a record \$1.5 million. Other standouts included Handel's *Messiah*, with an eye-popping nearly 10,000 patrons in three days; *Carmina Burana*; Holiday Pops; *Romeo and Juliet* & *West Side Story*; Music of Star Trek vs Star Wars; Distant Worlds: music from FINAL FANTASY; and film concerts of the first two Harry Potter series, performed in conjunction with the Straz Center.

Another success was the debut of TFO's family-friendly weekend matinee series at the Mahaffey Theater, with select Raymond James Pops concerts on Saturdays and select Tampa Bay Times Masterworks on Sundays. Combined, the series' attendance finished about 25% higher than expected.

Using the latest figures, The Florida Orchestra's ticket sales have soared 45% since 2010.

The orchestra also performed for just under 80,000 people at its community concerts, most for free. TFO was on track to set another record in this category -- until rain canceled two big Pops in the Park concerts. TFO also generously provided 17,000 free tickets to the concert halls in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Clearwater, including about 1,000 Classical Kids and Teens tickets for Masterworks programs.

The attendance records are double exclamation points at the end of a 50th anniversary season that has been a tremendous success. Other milestones include the debut of the new \$1.8 million stage shell providing state-of-the-art acoustics at the Mahaffey Theater and the co-naming of First Street as Florida Orchestra Way in downtown St. Petersburg – a permanent sign of TFO's dedication to serving Tampa Bay that will last well beyond the 50th season.

From sheet music to doughnuts

No matter how you add it up, TFO's 50th anniversary season has been extraordinary. Which inspired us to add it up anyway. Here's what we found:

14 million views for Triangle Solo video

During a Coffee concert, John Shaw and Stuart Malina did a parody of the GEICO commercial, which went viral on the Classic FM site. Haven't seen it? [Click here](#)

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Orchestra sells its most tickets ever**

2.2 million people reached through **Facebook** over the season, with **37%** increase in followers

1.2 million views at **FloridaOrchestra.org**, a **51%** increase in web traffic

\$1 million in ticket sales solely through TFO's website – a record

22,000 elementary students at **14 youth concerts** in Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco counties

21,252 doughnuts served at Coffee concerts in St. Petersburg and Clearwater

10,700 kids and adults trying instruments at TFO's Instrument Petting Zoo events

400 works of music – at least – performed by the orchestra

Ranging from *Spider Pig* at "Sing Out! Tampa Bay" to Verdi's *Requiem*, totaling about 20,000 pages

210 buses bringing various groups to 14 Coffee concerts

144 pencils and **24 brick erasers** used by music librarians to notate and clean music

142 bananas for Music Director Michael Francis (his preferred snack)

130 full orchestra concerts at **20** venues throughout Tampa Bay

41 total guest soloists and conductors from around the world, in addition to 6 collaborations with the Master Chorale of Tampa Bay

12 radio broadcasts

Live recordings from this season aired on WSMR 89.1 & 103.9 FM, plus one historical recording

8 world premieres

Includes 50th anniversary commission *Triptych*, a 20-minute love letter to Florida by Tampa native Michael Ippolito; 5 Florida Fanfare Project commissions by Florida professors; 1 fanfare by TFO Principal Guest Conductor Stuart Malina; and 1 fanfare by the winner of the TFO Student Composition Competition.

1 Sith Lord conducting ([Click for video](#) of Michael Francis at Star Trek vs. Star Wars)

Bonus! How much will fit in a Honda Fit packed for an Instrument Petting Zoo community event?

- 4 chairs
- 5 music stands
- 8 violins
- 1 trumpet
- 1 trombone
- 1 French horn
- 1 flute
- Box of percussion
- 1 Cello

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- 1 Cello stand
- 2 wagons
- Box of marketing supplies
- Box of miscellaneous art supplies
- AND multiple large foam board signs

For more Florida Orchestra news and features, [click here for the TFO Blog](#).

[About The Florida Orchestra](#)

Celebrating its 50th 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.