

The Florida Orchestra opens season
With Beethoven's Fifth on Sept. 28-30



NEWS RELEASE | September 19, 2018

CONTACT: Kelly Smith, Public Relations Manager, ksmith@floridaorchestra.org; 727.362.5448

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- **Bonus 'Inside the Music' performance on Sept. 27**
- **TFO's first-ever Pride Weekend with Bernstein's Broadway Oct. 5-6**
- **Disney in Concert: *Tale as Old as Time* coming Nov. 2-4**

Photos: [Click here for 2018/19 season photos](#)

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – On the heels of a record-breaking 50th anniversary, The Florida Orchestra launches its new 2018/19 season in less than two weeks with the most famous four notes in music: [Beethoven's Symphony No. 5](#), conducted by Music Director Michael Francis. The program also features Valentina Lisitsa on Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2*, performed Friday through Sunday (Sept. 28-30) in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Clearwater in the Tampa Bay Times Masterworks series.

Bonus performance! Before the season officially opens, Maestro Francis will lead [Inside the Music: Beethoven's Symphony No. 5](#) on Thursday, Sept. 27, at a pay-what-you-can concert at the Palladium Theater in St. Petersburg. Francis, in his fourth season with TFO, blends humor, smart analysis and live orchestra demos for a journey through the work before a full performance.

The 51st season of the largest professional orchestra in Florida gets rolling with some of its biggest concerts, including Maestro Francis conducting [Bernstein's Broadway](#) for opening weekend of the Raymond James Pops series (Oct. 5-6). The concert celebrates a century of an American original, Leonard Bernstein, as well as TFO's first-ever Pride Weekend, featuring groups that support Tampa Bay's vibrant LGBTQ community in the lobby. Other highlights in just the next few months include:

- [The Music of Queen](#) rock concert (Oct. 19).
- [Free Pops in the Park](#) at Vinoy Park, presented by Ashley HomeStore, TFO's largest concert every year, packing in 20,000 people (Oct. 20). Encore performance at River Tower Park in Tampa on Oct. 21. Introducing new TFO Assistant Conductor Daniel Black!
- [Broadway](#) music for the opening of the Coffee Concert series on Nov. 1 at the Mahaffey.
- [Disney in Concert: *Tale as Old as Time*](#) featuring big screen film clips and a family-friendly matinee (Nov. 2-4).
- TFO debut of Tippett's [A Child of Our Time](#), in partnership with the Florida Holocaust Museum commemorating the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht (Nov. 9-11). Features The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay.

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- TFO's first revamped **Happy Hour Concert**, now free on select Wednesdays at Tampa's Armature Works (Nov. 28).
- **Holiday Pops**, the annual family tradition with two matinees (Dec. 14-16).

This season the orchestra performs four film concerts with John Williams' scores, including [Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban in Concert](#) (Oct 13-14 at the Straz Center); [Star Wars Live in Concert: A New Hope](#) (Dec. 1 at Ruth Eckerd Hall); [Home Alone in Concert](#) (Dec. 21 at Ruth Eckerd Hall); and [Star Wars Live in Concert: The Empire Strikes Back](#) (Jan. 26 at Ruth Eckerd Hall).

The orchestra is coming off a spectacular 2017/18 season. Bucking the trend for many orchestras, TFO sold its most tickets ever last season – two consecutive years topping the 100,000 mark. Overall, ticket sales have soared 45% since 2010. Add in free tickets and community concert crowds, and the count climbs to more than 215,000 for TFO's 50th anniversary season. Other successes include a sold-out fundraising concert with rock legend Sting, a series of works showcasing Florida composers, the debut of weekend matinee concerts, and live-recorded broadcasts of select Masterworks concerts on Classical WSMR radio, which will continue this season.

For the new 2018/19 season, which runs through May, other Tampa Bay Times Masterworks highlights include [Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue](#) featuring the return of conductor Thomas Wilkins and Cuban pianist Aldo López Gavilán, Holst's [The Planets](#) with NASA images, and Mendelssohn's [A Midsummer Night's Dream](#). Under the leadership of Principal Pops Conductor Jeff Tyzik, The Raymond James Pops series features [The Music of John Williams](#), [Broadway Tonight](#), [Women Rock](#) and [Ragtime, Blues and All That Jazz](#) with Byron Stripling. Principal Guest Conductor Stuart Malina guides the morning Coffee concert series, served with free coffee and doughnuts.

TICKETS for the Tampa Bay Times Masterworks and Raymond James Pops series are \$18 - \$58 (prices may vary with demand). Coffee concerts are \$24, \$29, \$34, and \$42. Rock concerts are \$35, \$50, and \$65. All tickets are available at FloridaOrchestra.org or 727.892.3337 and 1.800.662.7286. Kids and teens get in free to all Tampa Bay Times Masterworks with Classical Kids tickets, available in advance through the Ticket Center. Students and members of the military can get \$10 tickets for most concerts starting 1 hour before the performance at the venue.

In all The Florida Orchestra will perform more than 130 concerts this season. That includes its long tradition of community and education programs that serve about 80,000 people a year throughout Tampa Bay, including more than 26,000 students at youth concerts. Other community concerts include Woodson Chamber Concerts on Sunday afternoons at the Woodson African American Museum; "Sing Out! Tampa Bay," TFO's sing-along concert with community chorus; Family Concerts; Inside the Music; and more. [Click for details](#) on community concerts.

[TFO Blog](#): Tune into news about The Florida Orchestra you won't find anywhere else

[About Music Director 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.](#)

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[About Principal Pops Conductor Jeff Tyzik](#)

[About Principal Guest Conductor Stuart Malina](#)

[About Assistant Conductor Daniel Black](#)

[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. Its 51st season runs from the end of September through May. 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 buy tickets: floridaorchestra.org and 727.892.3337 or 1.800.662.7286.