



**News Release | December 19, 2018**

**CONTACT:** Kelly Smith, Public Relations Manager, [ksmith@floridaorchestra.org](mailto:ksmith@floridaorchestra.org); 727.362.5448

## The Florida Orchestra names new CEO

*Seasoned leader and musician Mark Cantrell takes over in February.*



ST. PETERSBURG, FL – The Florida Orchestra has named Mark Cantrell as the new president and CEO who will lead the state’s premier orchestra into its next 50 years, the orchestra announced today. Now CEO of the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, Cantrell is an experienced leader, musician, and bold thinker with a vision for re-imagining the American orchestra. He will join TFO on Feb. 14, 2019.

“I am excited and thrilled to join such a great organization. The Florida Orchestra has a meaningful impact on a great community, clearly demonstrating the transformative power of music. I look forward to working with such a talented team of musicians, staff, and board members to create a truly American orchestra committed to enriching the lives of all who live in our community, and helping to make the Tampa Bay area a cultural leader in our nation,” Cantrell said.

At the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, Cantrell championed community building, grew fundraising and audience size, and erased the orchestra’s debt. Cantrell previously was executive director of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, personnel manager for the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, and a bass trombonist for the Boston Pops, Boston Ballet, and Boston Lyric Opera, among others. He also was an adjunct professor of music at Boston University and University of Massachusetts.

Along with his passion for music, Cantrell credits much of his success as an orchestra executive to his unique career path. In the 1990s, he led a team of 16 sled dogs in 300-mile races in New England. In 2006, he followed his boyhood dream and became an airline pilot for several years. Both taught him valuable lessons in leadership, teamwork and community building. “Great leaders always strive to foster an environment of possibility. I have never feared to be bold, take risks or dream,” Cantrell said.

A nationwide search produced an outstanding pool of candidates, but Cantrell hit it off right away with Music Director Michael Francis, who recently extended his contract through the 2023-24 season.

“We share the same vision,” Francis said. “Mark is passionate about ‘The Why’ of what we do as an orchestra, how we use the power of music to transform a community, to connect lives, and to communicate through our art form. Together, with our musicians, boards and staff, we aim to re-imagine the American orchestra for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, based not just on outstanding concerts, but on what the community of Tampa Bay needs to succeed and thrive. I am personally very excited to work

## The Florida Orchestra names new CEO

closely alongside him, and have full confidence that he is the right person at the right time for this orchestra.”

Led by a task force of board members, musicians and staff, the search for a new president and CEO started in July, when Michael Pastreich stepped down after more than a decade.

“We are so pleased to have found Mark,” said Janet Paroo, chair of the Board of Directors. “As a talented musician and seasoned orchestra executive, he’s the whole package. I’ve been so impressed by his vision of what an orchestra can and must do to be an integral part of a community’s success. That’s exactly the guiding force we need for this orchestra. He, along with Michael Francis and the entire organization, will make a formidable team.”

Cantrell and his wife, Carolyn, an accomplished musician (French horn) have two daughters and will relocate to Tampa Bay.

### [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 51<sup>st</sup> 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](http://floridaorchestra.org) and 727.892.3337 or 1.800.662.7286.*