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The Florida Orchestra announces winner of Student Composer Competition

Orchestra will premiere work inspired by 'Lord of the Rings' in May

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – The Florida Orchestra has named Florida State University doctoral student Lincoln Sandham as the winner of its annual Student Composer Competition. TFO will premiere his short work, *Silver Glass*, on the final concerts of the Tampa Bay Times Masterworks series at three major concert halls in Tampa Bay in May.

Sandham, 25, pulled on what he knows and loves for *Silver Glass*, which was inspired by a line from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*: "the grey raincurtain turned all to silver glass and was rolled back."

He's a huge fan. "I have read and re-read *Lord of the Rings* countless times," Sandham said. "There is something pure, honest, and simple in that story that brings me back again and again."

To Sandham, his five-minute composition represents a transition from one state of being to another. The eerie, haunting sound of "silver glass" is created by using bows on percussion instruments. The rest of the orchestra gradually adds their voices to create a "glistening halo of sound," according to Sandham's artist statement.

Currently pursuing a doctorate in composition at FSU, Sandham also has a master's degree in composition from the University of Louisville and a bachelor's in composition from Baldwin Wallace University in Berea, OH. He has composed various works for orchestra, chamber groups and voice, and someday he plans to teach music theory and composition at the collegiate level. He will receive a \$1,000 honorarium for his win.

The competition was open to composition students at universities throughout Florida. It underscored TFO's commitment to education and offered an unusual opportunity for young composers to write for an orchestra, which also fits with Music Director Michael Francis' penchant for nurturing young talent. A panel of TFO staff and musicians narrowed the student finalists to three based on an artist statement, score, short electronic audio file of the work and a resume. The orchestra played through the works, each 5 minutes or less, in March. Maestro Francis had the final say on the winner.

The other finalists were Alex Arellano, a senior working on his bachelor's of musical arts in music theory and composition at the University of Miami's Frost School of Music, and Joshua Nichols, who is enrolled at Florida Atlantic University pursuing a master's degree in music and composition.

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The Florida Orchestra, conducted by Maestro Francis, will premiere *Silver Glass* on the season finale of its Tampa Bay Times Masterworks series, which also includes Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto*, featuring TFO Concertmaster Jeffrey Multer, and Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5* on May 24-26 at the Straz Center in Tampa, Mahaffey Theater in St. Petersburg and Ruth Eckerd Hall in Clearwater. [Click here for concert information.](#)

Winning this competition gives Sandham hope for the future of new music. "It is immensely encouraging to me that performers and audiences are still seeking out, listening to, and supporting new music. The Florida Orchestra in particular has impressed me with their initiatives to engage young musicians," Sandham said. "The world of contemporary composition is vast and varied, made up of countless artistic voices. I am excited and honored to be sharing my voice with The Florida Orchestra."

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

[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