

The Florida Orchestra's community
and education programs increase 47%



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TFO announces dates for free Pops in the Park, Happy Hour, Sing Out & more

PHOTOS: [Click here for images to download](#)

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – In the past four years, The Florida Orchestra's community and education programs have grown 47%, reaching more than 91,000 people in the 2018-19 season at mostly free events like park, youth and hospital concerts. That's up from 62,000 participants in the 2014-15 season.

The Florida Orchestra's total attendance for the eight-month season was 208,598 – which means 44% of the people who experienced TFO did so for free or little cost.

One of the driving forces behind the jump is Music Director Michael Francis, who is entering his fifth season with TFO. From the beginning, the maestro has been passionate about getting the orchestra out into the community and providing more free or low-cost programs in the concert hall. For example, in his first season in 2015-16, Francis initiated TFO's casual community sing-along, Sing Out Tampa Bay, and its Inside the Music series, which takes the audience on a journey through a single work. Both are pay-what-you-can concerts. He also conducted TFO's first free hospital concerts.

The programs support a key mission of Maestro Francis and TFO: If you believe in the power of music, then you have to take it to everyone – even those who can't come to a concert hall.

In 2016, TFO hired its first Community Engagement Director, Erin Horan, who oversees innovative new programs such as free violin lessons through the Prodigy Cultural Arts Program and Teaching Artists in Pinellas schools. She and Community Engagement Manager Daryn Bauer manage two of TFO's biggest programs: free Pops in the Park concerts in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Clearwater (drawing about 44,000 people) and its annual Youth Concert field trips for 24,729 students in Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough counties.

Because community and education programs are offered for free or low cost, TFO counts on support from generous individuals, foundations and corporations to offset the cost of bringing world-class arts programming to the entire community. Many programs also receive support from local government because of their economic and social benefits to the Tampa Bay region.

In the past four years, TFO has initiated or revamped nine community and education programs:

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- **Free violin lessons through the Prodigy Cultural Arts Program**
 - **Goal:** Use violin to teach life skills to underserved kids. In just one year, the program grew from one site to five in Hillsborough County, reaching more than 100 kids. Most have never picked up a violin before. Coordinated by TFO's Michelle Painter; funded by University Area CDC and Hillsborough County. ([See the program in action in this video.](#))
- **Teaching Artists in Pinellas schools**
 - **Goal:** Teach strings to teachers and students in support of music education. Two professional musicians split their time between the TFO stage and the classroom. Last school year, violinist Kristin Baird and violist Kaitlin Springer worked with 27 Pinellas classrooms. In partnership with the Pinellas County School District since January 2017; funded in part by Pinellas County Schools referendum. ([See Teaching Artists in action in this video](#))
- **TFO-produced Youth Concerts**
 - TFO has performed Youth Concerts for most of its 52 years, but now it produces the concerts, under the baton of Associate Conductor Daniel Black, as well as a 44-page study guide for use all year long in the classroom.
- **Health & Wellness Concerts**
 - Michael Francis initiated in 2015, with a combination of free full-orchestra and chamber concerts for patients and staff in hospitals such as Johns Hopkins All Children's, Moffitt Cancer Center, St. Joseph's Hospital North, Tampa General and more across Tampa Bay.
- **Inside the Music**
 - Debuted in 2015. Details below.
- **Sing Out Tampa Bay**
 - Debuted in 2016. Details below.
- **Woodson Chamber Concerts**
 - Debuted in 2017. Details below.
- **Full-orchestra Family Concerts**
 - New format for 2019-20 season. Details below.
- **Free Happy Hour Concerts at Armature Works**
 - Debuted in 2018. Details below.

These are in addition to increased emphasis and participation in open orchestra rehearsals for students, side-by-side concerts with youth orchestras, masterclasses, pop-up community concerts in malls, bars and retirement communities, pre-concert lobby performances by school ensembles, and a huge increase in Instrument Petting Zoo opportunities, in which kids can try out instruments.

Here is a schedule of most of The Florida Orchestra's community events for the 2019-20 season:

INSIDE THE MUSIC

You'll never listen to music the same way again. Michael Francis blends humor, smart analysis and live orchestra demos to take you on a journey through a single piece, ending with a full performance.

Admission is pay what you can at the door. Sponsored by the Hough Family Foundation.

- **Inside Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, the Mahler arrangement**
Thu, Oct 10, 2019, 7:30 pm, Blake High School, Tampa
- **Inside Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6 'Pathetique'**
Thu, Dec 5, 2019, 7:30 pm, Gibbs High School, St. Petersburg
- **Inside Stravinsky's Rite of Spring**
Thu, Apr 30, 2020, 7:30 pm, Mahaffey Theater

FREE POPS IN THE PARK

A Florida Orchestra tradition for more than 25 years, free Pops in the Park programs are TFO's biggest concerts of the year. Featuring film scores, Broadway hits and symphonic favorites, under the baton of Associate Conductor Daniel Black.

- **Pops in the Park at Vinoy Park**
Presented by Ashley HomeStore
Sat, Oct 19, 2019, 7 pm, St. Petersburg waterfront
Performances of the St. Petersburg Community Concert Band and Master Chorale of Tampa Bay begin at 5 pm, with food trucks and family activities.
Fireworks finale!
- **River Tower Park, Tampa**
Sun, Oct 20, 2019, 7 pm
- **Coachman Park, Clearwater**
Sat, May 9, 2020, 7:30 pm
- **Julian B. Lane Riverfront Park, Tampa**
Sun, May 10, 2020, 7:30 pm – Mother's Day!

FAMILY CONCERTS WITH FULL ORCHESTRA

One Giant Leap, with NASA video

Join the entire Florida Orchestra for an afternoon of family activities and a concert to celebrate the 50th anniversary of moon landing. Featuring NASA footage of the lunar surface, the concert explores space travel and music about the skies with "Jupiter" from Holst's *The Planets*, "Flying Theme" from *E.T.* by John Williams and much more. The concert also includes introductions to the instrument families of the orchestra. Daniel Black conducts. Instrument Petting Zoo and lobby activities start at 1 pm. (Petting Zoo sponsored by the North Suncoast Associates.) Concert run time: 45 minutes.

Sun, Oct 27, 2019, 2 pm, Straz Center, Tampa
Sun, Nov 3, 2019, 2 pm, Palladium Theater, St. Petersburg

Tickets: \$8 per person in advance/\$10 at the door
Ages 3 and under free

Save the Date for May Family Concerts: May 30 & 31, 2020

FREE HAPPY HOUR CONCERTS

The largest professional orchestra in Florida presents three free, hour-long concerts at a historic venue -- Armature Works in Tampa. Stay for a meet and greet with TFO musicians afterward. Food and drink available for purchase in Heights Public Market.

- **Eat, Drink & Be Scary**
Fall under the spell of bewitching favorites like Saint-Saens' *Danse Macabre* and Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*. Stuart Malina conducts.
Wed, Oct 30, 2019, 6:30 pm, Armature Works

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- **Rumba on the River**
Savor the Latin flavor with Gershwin's *Cuban Overture*, Marquez's *Danzon No. 7*, and more.
Stuart Malina conducts.
Wed, Jan 7, 2020, 6:30 pm, Armature Works
- **Russian Hour**
Music from powerhouse Russian composers, including Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, and Rimsky-Korsakov. Daniel Black conducts.
Wed, May 13, 2020, 6:30 pm, Armature Works

WOODSON CHAMBER CONCERTS

The ultimate Sunday afternoon, surrounded by art and music at the Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American Museum in St. Petersburg. TFO chamber performances begin at 3 pm, followed by a reception. Admission is pay what you can at the door; proceeds benefit the museum. Seating is limited. RSVP to WoodsonMuseum@gmail.com. This series is generously sponsored by Bill and Suzanne Garth.

Dates are Jan 12, Feb 9, March 15, and April 5 in 2020. Check FloridaOrchestra.org for program announcements.

SING OUT TAMPA BAY

TFO's casual community sing-along with the orchestra is turning 5! Come belt one out with Music Director Michael Francis at the Mahaffey Theater, either from the stage or your seat. We'll help with the words to familiar favorites from Broadway, film, symphonic, and popular repertoire. Admission is pay what you can at the door.

Fri, Jan 31, 2020, 7 pm, Mahaffey Theater

Onstage chorus registration will be available at FloridaOrchestra.org beginning September 23, 2019. Space is limited.

Music Director Michael Francis opens his fifth season with The Florida Orchestra on Sept. 27-29 with concerts in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Clearwater. The season celebrates 250 years of Beethoven and beyond, including [Beethoven's Fifth](#), music of [The Beatles](#), [Vivaldi's The Four Seasons](#), [Holiday Pops](#), and much more. Tickets available at FloridaOrchestra.org.

[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 chief conductor of Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz, 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.](#)

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 orchestra in Florida, and one of the most vibrant and innovative orchestras in America. This is its 52nd season. 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. To buy tickets: floridaorchestra.org and 727.892.3337 or 1.800.662.7286.