The Florida Orchestra, Museum of Fine Arts combine art, music for series of concerts

Art comes to the concert hall, music comes to the museum in collaborative performances inspired by MFA’s Art of the Stage exhibit on theater design.

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ST. PETERSBURG, FL – The Florida Orchestra and the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg will meld art and live music in a series of performances from renowned ballets, operas and plays whose production designs will be on view in the MFA’s upcoming exhibit, Art of the Stage: Picasso to Hockney. The partnership of the two major arts organizations will feature a TFO Masterworks concert inspired by, and enhanced with, big-screen images from the MFA exhibit on theater design, a TFO Takeover of MFA with small orchestra performances in the museum, and more on select dates in January and February.

“It’s our passion to unite the arts in our community, and this is our biggest collaboration yet,” said TFO Music Director Michael Francis. “When we fuse art, live music and more, we strike a spark that ignites unparalleled creativity, bringing the arts to life in ways we could never expect.”

At the center of the collaboration will be a Tampa Bay Times Masterworks concert that combines Art of the Stage images, ballet, and original art by TFO Visual Artist-in-Residence Geff Strik. Under the leadership of Maestro Francis, the concerts in Tampa and St. Petersburg on Jan. 17-19 will include:

- **Rimsky-Korsakov’s Golden Cockerel**: The performance will be enhanced with images from the MFA exhibit projected above the orchestra. All work is by artist Natalia Goncharova, who did designs for The Golden Cockerel opera-ballet production in 1913-1914, produced by Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes at the Théâtre National de l’Opéra, Paris.
- **Stravinsky’s Pulcinella**: The one-act ballet with three solo voices features dancers from the Tampa City Ballet and artwork by Geff Strik, who was inspired by Pablo Picasso’s stage designs for Pulcinella to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the ballet’s premiere. Picasso’s painting of the original set design also is featured in the Art of the Stage exhibit.
- **Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 3**: With Swiss-born American pianist Gilles Vonsattel, who has performed in concert halls around the world.

Concerts are Friday, Jan. 17, at 8 pm at the Straz Center in Tampa; Saturday, Jan. 18, at 8 pm at the Mahaffey Theater in St. Petersburg; and Sunday, Jan. 19, at 2 pm at the Mahaffey. Tickets are $18-$48 at FloridaOrchestra.org. Kids and teens get in free with Classical Kids tickets, available in advance. Join Michael Francis for the Pre-concert Conversation 1 hour prior.

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Opening at the MFA one week later, on Jan. 25, is *Art of the Stage: Picasso to Hockney*, which depicts the works of major painters who also designed for the stage, including Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, David Hockney, Robert Indiana, and more, featuring more than 100 studies for scene, costume, curtain, and program designs. From the sumptuous productions of the Ballets Russes, to the riotous spectacle of avant-garde theater, to Robert Indiana’s Pop vision for an American opera, *Art of the Stage* reflects the grand history of Western art from the vantage point of the stage. The exhibit runs through May 10, 2020. (click here for details).

“In many ways, this first-of-its-kind collaboration between the MFA and TFO feels historic and completely contemporary at the same time,” said the MFA Associate Curator of Public Programs Margaret Murray. “These cross-organizational collaborations amplify each other’s artistry and bring new voices and a fresh vision to our crafts and our community.”

The partnership also includes:

**TFO Takeover of MFA**

In spaces throughout the museum, small orchestra groups will perform music inspired by the *Art of the Stage* exhibit, under the baton of TFO Associate Conductor Daniel Black.

**Sun, Jan 26, 12:30-4 pm, Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg**

Musical tours led by Daniel Black and MFA docent start at 12:30 pm & 2:30 pm in MFA’s Conservatory

Schedule:

- 12:30 pm & 2:30 pm: Tchaikovsky’s *Serenade for Strings* (Mvts. 2 & 4) and Mozart’s *Violin Concerto No. 5* (Mvt. 3) with soloist Jeffrey Multer (Conservatory)
- 1:05 pm & 3:05 pm: Satie’s *Adventures of Mercury*, arranged by Birtwistle (Marly Room)
- 1:30 pm & 3:30 pm: Stravinsky’s *Octet* (Hough Gallery)

Included with museum admission; free for MFA members

**TFO Concert at MFA**

The Florida Orchestra does an intimate performance of Milhaud’s *La Creation du Monde* and Stravinsky’s *The Soldier’s Tale*, narrated by local actor Becca McCoy. Both works celebrate the artworks featured in the MFA’s *Art of the Stage* exhibit. Daniel Black conducts.

**Wed, Feb 5, 2-4 pm, Marly Room, Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg**

Included with museum admission; free for MFA members

Also as part of the partnership, The Florida Orchestra will perform an intimate, invitation-only *Inside the Music* concert Feb. 6 at the museum. TFO’s Michael Francis and MFA’s Kristen Shepherd will take the audience on a journey through two pieces of music and their connection to the *Art of the Stage* exhibit before a performance of the full works, featuring Milhaud’s *La Creation du Monde* and Stravinsky’s *The Soldier’s Tale*.

**In the Tampa Bay Times Masterworks concerts on Jan. 17-19,** audiences also will be immersed in 25 paintings by TFO Visual Artist-in-Residence Geff Strik, Tampa City Ballet dancers and vocalists as Maestro Francis conducts Stravinsky’s *Pulcinella*. Strik’s work is based on Picasso’s original designs, the story of *Pulcinella* and theatrical inspirations from around the world, and will be projected on the big screen.

This is Strik’s third collaboration with TFO; previously his work was featured in art videos paired with live orchestra for Schoenberg’s *Transfigured Night* and Strauss’ *Don Quixote*. Click here for more on Geff Strik. The vocal soloists for *Pulcinella* are Madison Leonard, soprano; Joshua Blue, tenor; and Kevin Deas, baritone. Strik’s work is sponsored by Compass Land and Title, Oktane Media, Siecle des Lumieres, Kahwa Coffee Roasters and ArtExpo of St. Pete Beach.

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Tampa City Ballet is a professional contemporary dance company founded in 2018 by Paula Nuñez, who is also its artistic director. It strives to establish a creative space to cultivate local talent, create unique performances and provide high-quality arts education. *Pulcinella* was choreographed by Nuñez and Resident Choreographer Elsa Valbuena.

**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.

**About the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg**
The MFA at 255 Beach Drive NE has a world-class collection, with works by Monet, Morisot, Rodin, O’Keeffe, Willem de Kooning, and many other great artists. Also displayed are ancient Greek and Roman, Egyptian, Asian, African, pre-Columbian, and Native American art. Selections from the photography collection, one of the largest and finest in the Southeast, are on view in a gallery dedicated solely to the medium. Kristen A. Shepherd is the Executive Director. For more information, please call 727-896-2667 or visit mfastpete.org.