

The Florida Orchestra returns for live concerts  
this weekend with new safety measures



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*Live-streaming service also debuts Saturday with Beethoven's Symphony No. 7.*

**DOWNLOAD PHOTOS:** [Click here for photos about the season](#)

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – For the first time in nearly eight months, Music Director Michael Francis and The Florida Orchestra return to the Mahaffey Theater for five live concerts this weekend (Oct. 31 & Nov. 1) with Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7* – one of the first major arts organizations in Tampa Bay to perform live for an audience since the pandemic began. All concerts will follow CDC guidelines for the health and safety of everyone in the concert hall. On Saturday, TFO will debut its new live-streaming service, offering digital concerts for free so everyone has access to the music.

Facing the challenges of the pandemic, TFO has had to rethink every aspect of its 53<sup>rd</sup> season. For maximum safety, Maestro Francis has divided musicians into smaller ensembles for multiple, shorter concerts with no intermission and limited audiences. The result is an expansion of the premier Tampa Bay Times Masterworks series to include exciting new "Soundwaves" concerts, allowing TFO to celebrate our world through a rich range of composers.

That means the orchestra will perform five concerts over two days this weekend, all exclusively at The Duke Energy Center for the Arts/Mahaffey Theater. Maestro Francis will open the Masterworks series with three performances of **Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7***, in a program that also includes **Jessie Montgomery's** engrossing *Strum* and **Zoltan Kodaly's *Dances of Galanta***. For the first Soundwaves concerts, Francis will conduct **Legends from the Americas**, which includes **Aaron Copland's** original version of *Appalachian Spring*, **Scott Joplin's *The Entertainer***, **Astor Piazzolla's *Serie del angel*** featuring **TFO Principal Bassoon Joshua Baker**, and more – with a surprise twist from the maestro. Concert times and limited tickets are available at [FloridaOrchestra.org](http://FloridaOrchestra.org).

To keep each other healthy and safe, a team of TFO board members, musicians and staff has worked in conjunction with the Mahaffey Theater to implement strict safety protocols that reach from the lobby to backstage, in accordance with CDC guidelines. The orchestra consulted with an epidemiologist to evaluate its comprehensive safety plan.

All safety protocols for musicians and staff start with rehearsals this week at the Mahaffey Theater.

### **Safety highlights for MUSICIANS include:**

- \* Extensive Covid-19 testing for musicians and backstage staff
- \* Touchless temperature checks before rehearsals and concerts.
- \* No sharing of chairs and music stands, which will be sanitized between each use.

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- \* Fewer musicians and spaced seating on stage: 6 feet between strings, 8 feet between brass and woodwinds.
- \* Wearing face masks at all times. Brass and woodwinds will remove masks to play.
- \* New backstage procedures for uncasing instruments and how musicians enter and exit the stage.

### Safety highlights for PATRONS include:

- \* Touchless temperature checks on arrival.
- \* Mandatory face masks at all times. Masks may be removed briefly to drink beverages.
- \* Reserved seating in pairs at least 6 feet apart; 25 percent audience capacity.
- \* Plexiglass and touchless pay systems at bar areas and concierge.
- \* Online concert information and program notes instead of a program book.

[For safety details, click here.](#)

The safety measures extend throughout the Mahaffey Theater, which is implementing new cleaning procedures for before and between concerts, including long-lasting disinfectant spray in the theater, lobby and backstage. All high-touch areas, including seat armrests, will be cleaned between concerts. The ventilation system meets or exceeds all federal, state and local guidelines. The system uses HEPA filters with a MERV rating of 13 combined with regular sanitization of the evaporator coils.

**THE ORCHESTRA LAUNCHES ITS FREE LIVE STREAMING SERVICE** with the Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7* concert on Saturday, Oct. 31, at 8 pm. For anyone not ready for the concert hall, concerts can be easily accessed on any device at [FloridaOrchestra.org](http://FloridaOrchestra.org). Other digital concerts planned so far include **Ragtime Kings** on Nov. 7 at 8 pm to open the Raymond James Pops series; **Mozart's Symphony No. 40** on Nov. 14 at 8 pm; **Tchaikovsky & Vivaldi for Strings** on Dec. 5 at 8 pm; and **Classical Christmas** on Dec. 20 at 5 pm. All concerts also will be available later on demand.

For full flexibility, the orchestra is redesigning its season in phases. For now, the orchestra has announced only Phase 1 concerts, which run through December. In November, TFO will announce Phase 2 concerts, which start in January. [Click here for concert calendar](#)

For safety, each performance has very limited capacity. Tickets for all Phase 1 concerts are available at [FloridaOrchestra.org](http://FloridaOrchestra.org) or by phone at 727.892.3337 or 1.800.662.7286. The Ticket Center is not open for in-person transactions. Single tickets for Tampa Bay Times Masterworks, Raymond James Pops and the Classical Christmas special concert are \$23, \$38 and \$53, all fees included. Single tickets for morning Coffee concerts are \$29, \$34, \$39 and \$47, all fees included. Compose Your Own subscribers can mix and match three concerts at \$33 each, all fees included.

### [About The Florida Orchestra](#)

*The Florida Orchestra (TFO) 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. For its 53<sup>rd</sup> season, the orchestra is proud to introduce free live-streaming video of select concerts so everyone has access to the music. Under the leadership of Music Director Michael Francis, TFO performs series of classical, popular, and morning coffee concerts in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Clearwater, as well as free Pops in the Park concerts. The orchestra is dedicated to connecting to the community both in-person and virtually, with TFO at Home, family and youth concerts and other educational programs. For tickets and information: [FloridaOrchestra.org](http://FloridaOrchestra.org)*