

One year later, The Florida Orchestra
performs 50th live concert amid pandemic



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CONTACT: Kelly Smith, Communications, ksmith@floridaorchestra.org; 727.362.5448

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Serenity concert March 13 & 14 offers 'serene musical space' to pause and reflect.

VIDEO: [See what we're doing to keep each other safe at concerts](#)

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ST. PETERSBURG, FL – One year after the coronavirus brought our world to a standstill, The Florida Orchestra has hit a milestone filled with hope: TFO has now performed more than 50 concerts for live audiences at the Mahaffey Theater since October, all following CDC guidelines for health and safety. To pause and reflect as the Tampa Bay community continues to heal, the orchestra will perform a concert full of Serenity on March 13 & 14, conducted by Music Director Michael Francis.

“We have experienced 12 months unlike anything before,” Maestro Francis said. “As we move forward together with optimism, we wanted to curate an event that gives our community a chance to pause and reflect. This Serenity concert is a haven: a serene musical space for peace, beauty and contemplation.”

The Tampa Bay Times Masterworks [Serenity](#) concert features **Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings***, one of the most recognizable pieces in the world. Famously featured at the funeral of Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy, as well as the 1986 film *Platoon*, it simultaneously evokes both sadness and hope. Maestro Francis will begin the concert with **Ahmed Alabaca's *Across the Calm Waters of Heaven – A Piece for Peace***, written after the mass shooting in San Bernardino, Calif., in 2015, that “captures the inextinguishable spark of human goodness.” Also on the program are **Tomaso Albinoni's *Concerto for Oboe No. 2*** featuring soloist Mitchell Kuhn; ***On the Nature of Daylight*** by **Max Richter**; **Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Variations on a Theme by Thomas Tallis***, and **Anton Bruckner's *Christus factus est***, adapted for low brass by Ross Holcombe. Three performances at The Duke Energy Center for the Arts/Mahaffey Theater in St. Petersburg; tickets start at \$23. (For details, [click here](#).)

From the safety of home, anyone can watch the Serenity concert via live stream at 8 pm March 13. It's free and easy to register at FloridaOrchestra.org/livestreams.

In a separate Soundwaves concert on the same weekend, the orchestra's premier winds will perform **Mozart's *Gran Partita***, one of the most beautiful and poignant serenades in all classical music. Performances are 5 pm on March 13 & 14. (For details, [click here](#).)

“Considering a year ago we had no idea when we'd be able to perform live again, this 50-concert milestone is an amazing feat – especially as many orchestras across the nation remain dark. We owe so much of our success to the unwavering support of our Tampa Bay community, the passionate dedication of Maestro Francis and the musicians, our strong Board of Directors, and tireless staff,” said TFO

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President & CEO Mark Cantrell. “We still have a full slate of concerts in this remarkable season that will continue to bring comfort, joy and healing to Tampa Bay and beyond.”

An artistic gem in Tampa Bay for 53 years, the orchestra returned to the stage for in-person audiences on Oct. 31 after an eight-month hiatus. In a unique approach to the season, TFO added Soundwaves concerts, the result of Maestro Francis splitting the orchestra into two smaller ensembles for safety. The silver lining: twice the music, including works TFO doesn't often get the chance to perform. TFO also began to offer select concerts for free via live stream and on demand. **So far, more than 21,000 screens across the country have tuned in.**

Even as TFO started to cancel live concerts in March 2020, musicians kept the music going, with well more than 100 performance and education videos in its [TFO at Home series](#) online. The orchestra's community and education programs have not missed a beat:

- **Free violin lessons for kids** continue virtually in partnership with the Prodigy Cultural Arts Program in Hillsborough County. ([Watch the program in action here](#))
- **Teaching Artists** offer virtual lessons to support strings programs in Pinellas schools and have created more than 140 videos to help students practice. ([Watch the program in action here](#))
- For the first time, the orchestra streamed its **annual Youth Concert** straight into Tampa Bay classrooms, safely reaching an estimated 30,000 elementary students – more than ever.

The 2020/21 season continues through May. Highlights of the Tampa Bay Times Masterworks series include [Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto](#) with Jeffrey Multer, [Dvorak's New World Symphony](#) with guest conductor **Thomas Wilkins**, and a one-of-a-kind Soundwaves concert featuring [TFO Percussion](#). Highlights of the Raymond James Pops series include **Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue** performed by **Stuart Malina** and [Fly Me to the Moon](#) featuring **Charles Lazarus on trumpet**. The morning Coffee series explores music by Beethoven, Mozart, Prokofiev and more.

To keep each other healthy and safe, all concerts follow CDC guidelines, including mandatory face masks, spaced seating in pairs and extensive testing for musicians. [For full safety measures, click here.](#)

[About Music Director Michael Francis](#)

Michael Francis has quickly established himself as one of the leading international conductors of today. This is his sixth season leading TFO.

[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 53rd 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](#). To support the power of live music: [FloridaOrchestra.org/donate](#).

Covid-19 Warning

An inherent risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus/Covid-19 exists in any public place where people are present. Covid-19 is a highly contagious disease that may result in personal injury, severe illness and death. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, senior citizens and persons with underlying medical conditions are especially vulnerable. Please visit the CDC's website for its current guidance on people at increased risk for severe illness and other people who should take extra precautions. By attending a performance of The Florida Orchestra, you voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to Covid-19. Please help keep each other safe.