



NEWS RELEASE | Nov. 15, 2022

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The Florida Orchestra names principal cello



ST. PETERSBURG, FL – For the first time in nearly 35 years, The Florida Orchestra has named a new principal cello. **Yoni Draiblate** won the highly competitive blind audition and will lead the cello section of the largest professional orchestra in Florida, under the artistic leadership of internationally acclaimed Music Director Michael Francis.

Draiblate has toured the United States, Europe and South America with orchestras and has appeared on prestigious stages such as Carnegie Hall in New York, Royal Albert Hall in London, Teatro Colon in Argentina, Philharmonie Berlin and many more. He is one of eight new musicians TFO welcomes this season. The Florida Orchestra employs 71 full-time professional musicians and conductors.

“I am incredibly honored to fill this role in The Florida Orchestra. I’ve lived and performed all over the world, but my colleagues here have quickly made me feel at home,” Draiblate said. “I am lucky to be part of an orchestra that values the highest level of excellence, both onstage and in our community and schools.”

Draiblate is a former principal cellist of the Haifa Symphony Orchestra in Israel, former principal cellist of Symphony in C in New Jersey, and former associate principal of the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra. He also appeared as a guest principal cellist with the Princeton Symphony Orchestra. Before moving to Florida, he was a full-time member of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra.

The Israeli-born Draiblate began playing cello at age 5, entering the conservatory at age 7. He has his undergraduate degree from Tel-Aviv University, and in 2011 he earned his master’s degree from the New England Conservatory. He holds a doctoral degree in music performance from Temple University in Philadelphia.

Draiblate plays on a 2015 reproduction of the famous 1707 Countess of Stanlein Ex-Paganini Stradivarius cello. The “Oberlin Countess” is one of only three cellos in the world built jointly by 60 world-renowned makers. For more on Draiblate, [click here](#).

Draiblate succeeds James Connors, TFO’s esteemed principal cellist since 1988, who is preparing to retire at the end of this season in May.

TFO will perform more than 100 concerts this season in venues throughout Tampa Bay, including a wide range of classical, popular, film, rock and family-friendly music. Next up is the [Music of Led Zeppelin](#) rock concert on Friday (Nov. 18) at the Mahaffey Theater. Maestro Francis continues the Hough Family Foundation Masterworks series with [Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4](#) on Dec. 2-4, featuring the world premiere of Michael Ippolito's *Violin Concerto* composed especially for Concertmaster Jeffrey Multer. The Raymond James Pops series includes blockbusters such as [Holiday Pops](#), [Harry Potter vs Star Wars](#), and the Beatles' iconic [Abbey Road](#) album. The orchestra's [55th Celebration concert](#) featuring legendary violinist Itzhak Perlman will be March 11 at the Mahaffey Theater. Tickets for all concerts are on sale now at [FloridaOrchestra.org](#).

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[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. It celebrates its 55th season in 2022-23. 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 family and youth concerts and other educational programs. For tickets and information: [FloridaOrchestra.org](#). The Florida Orchestra is a non-profit 501(c)3 EIN: 59-1223691 CH#1830. To learn more how you can support the power of music in building community, contact: sweymouth@floridaorchestra.org To donate now: [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.