



NEWS RELEASE | April 6, 2023

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The Florida Orchestra's new season celebrates music of America and beyond

- **MASTERWORKS OPENING NIGHT:** Holst's *The Planets*, Percussion Collective
- **RHAPSODY IN BLUE:** Gershwin's groundbreaking work turns 100 years old
- **AMERICAN GREATS:** Copland, Marsalis, Bernstein, Bates, Barber, Daugherty, Mazzoli
- **EPIC MASTERPIECES:** Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony*; Beethoven's *Eroica*
- **MYSTERY PIECES:** Secret works that will not be listed on the program
- **WIDE VARIETY:** *Cirque Dances*, *Twist & Shout*, *Sci-Fi Spectacular*, *Holiday Pops*
- Season tickets for all series on sale now at FloridaOrchestra.org

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ST. PETERSBURG, FL – The Florida Orchestra will celebrate the unique musical language of America in its new 2023-24 season in the fall, the orchestra announced today. Inspired by the 100th anniversary of **Gershwin's** groundbreaking *Rhapsody in Blue*, Music Director Michael Francis is featuring a wide range of American composers from Aaron Copland to Wynton Marsalis alongside global masterpieces from Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Dvorak and more. In September, he launches the premier Hough Family Foundation Masterworks series with a bang: **Holst's *The Planets*** paired with the thrilling **Percussion Collective**. In the Raymond James Pops series, the circus meets the symphony in **Cirque Dances with Troupe Vertigo**, in addition to **Twist & Shout**, a tribute to 60 years of The Beatles in America; a supersonic **Sci-Fi Spectacular** of space-themed movie and TV music; and the very merry tradition of **Holiday Pops**. Season tickets for all series are on sale now at FloridaOrchestra.org.

"It's important to celebrate America's own musical art form," said internationally acclaimed Music Director [Michael Francis](#), a British native who became an American citizen in 2019. "This season we'll take audiences on a journey across America's musical landscape, as we explore our musical roots and where we are today. Alongside the story of American music, we will delight our Tampa Bay community with beloved classics from around the world. New this season will be secret 'mystery pieces' -- moments of discovery and fun that won't be listed in the program. We remain passionate about reflecting the different cultures that make up Tampa Bay and beyond."

At the heart of TFO's 56th season, Maestro Francis will conduct featured soloist Stewart Goodyear in **Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*** (Feb. 17 & 18, 2024). This masterpiece combined jazz and classical to change music forever when it premiered 100 years ago in 1924. "This revolutionary work deserves to be put on a pedestal and celebrated as one of the most important pieces of American art. So much of America's heritage is on display in one extraordinary piece," said Francis, who will enter his ninth season with TFO. The concert will spotlight works

by three more American composers: jazz great Wynton Marsalis' *Herald, Holler & Hallelujah*; Grammy Award winner Mason Bates' *Alternative Energy*; and the legendary Leonard Bernstein's *Three Dance Episodes* from *On the Town*.

For the first time ever, all 13 Hough Family Foundation Masterworks concerts will include a surprise, unlisted "mystery piece" personally chosen by Maestro Francis. "We've put a lot of thought into each short piece, which will enhance the concert in an unexpected and memorable way and reveal something new. They will make you smile," Francis said.

October 2023 brings another important American masterpiece, **Copland's Appalachian Spring** (Oct. 21 & 22), showcasing the beauty of the distinctly American sound. "Copland saw how the power of music can unite a country. He created an open, pioneering sound that tapped straight into the psyche and soul of the American people," said Maestro Francis. The program also features Grammy-nominated baritone Jubilant Sykes performing American spirituals that highlight our African-American heritage. "These songs reflect our diverse musical roots as a nation," Francis said.

More big moments in TFO's core classical series include **Dvorak's New World Symphony** (April 12-14, 2024), based on American spirituals while Dvorak lived in the United States; Beethoven's heroic **Eroica Symphony** (April 5-7, 2024); **Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6** (Jan. 19 & 20, 2024) and **Elgar's Enigma Variations** (May 17-19, 2024). The series wraps up with **Mahler's epic Symphony No. 2, "Resurrection"** (May 25 & 26, 2024), which features the Master Chorale of Tampa Bay. "With a vast orchestra and huge choir, Mahler's *Second Symphony* is the most impressive concert experience possible. It is the most uplifting, jaw-dropping masterpiece, and one you simply *have* to hear live," Francis said.

Additional American composers include **Samuel Barber's Violin Concerto** (Jan. 19 & 20, 2024) with soloist Stella Chen; **Missy Mazzoli's Sinfonia (For Orbiting Spheres)** (Jan. 6 & 7, 2024); **John Adams' The Chairman Dances: Foxtrot for Orchestra** (April 5-7, 2024); and **Michael Daugherty's Metropolis Symphony** (Oct. 28 & 29). "Daugherty is an extension of Dvorak and Copland but with a dash of DC Marvel comics and Andy Warhol thrown in. This is a really vibrant piece of American culture," Francis said.

TFO will bring a wide range of world-renowned guest artists to Tampa Bay stages, including guest conductor **Jonathon Heyward** of the Baltimore Symphony, the only Black music director of a major U.S. orchestra. He'll conduct a program of **Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4** and more. Pianist **Yulianna Avdeeva** will make her TFO debut in **Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini**, exciting young pianist **George Li** will perform **Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2**, **Javier Perianes** returns for **Beethoven's Emperor Concerto**, and **Julian Rachlin** will be conductor and violinist for a program that pairs him with violinist/violist **Sarah McElravy** for **Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante**. TFO's own virtuoso musicians will be in the spotlight, including **Concertmaster Jeffrey Multer**, who joins **Principal Cello Yoni Draiblate** for **Brahms' Double Concerto**, and **Principal Clarinet Natalie Hoe** for **Stravinsky's Ebony Concerto**.

All Hough Family Foundation Masterworks concerts include popular Pre-Concert Conversations, which take a deep dive into the stories behind the music with guest artists and conductors, starting one hour before the performance. Sponsored by Smith & Associates Real Estate.

TFO'S RAYMOND JAMES POPS SERIES showcases a variety of Broadway, movie and popular music. It opens with **Cirque Dances with Troupe Vertigo** (Oct. 7 & 8), with stunning aerial acts and mindboggling contortions perfectly choreographed to beloved classics. **Hollywood's Golden Age** (Nov. 11) features iconic movie scores from *Vertigo*, *King Kong*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and more, and **Sci-Fi Spectacular** (Jan. 13 & 14) includes stellar hits from TV and movies, such as *Avatar*, *The Mandalorian*, *Star Wars* and more.

Twist & Shout: The Music of the Beatles (March 1, 2024) pays tribute to 60 years of Beatlemania in America, conducted by TFO Resident Conductor Chelsea Gallo; **Disco Fever** (May 3 & 5, 2024) brings the greatest hits of the 1970s, including *I Will Survive*, *The Hustle* and more; and **Women Rock** (Nov. 3 & 4) honors the powerful female singers and songwriters who changed rock 'n' roll forever.

TFO's most popular concert of the year, **Holiday Pops** (Dec. 15-17), continues a very merry family tradition with holiday classics, conducted by Bruce Hagen, former guest conductor of the Boston Pops. For Valentine's Day, **From Broadway With Love** (Feb. 10, 2024) puts Broadway vocalist Ashley Brown center stage for favorites from the Broadway and Disney songbooks. A **Gershwin Celebration** (Jan. 27 & 28, 2024) honors the 125th birthday of George Gershwin with *The Man I Love*, *'S Wonderful*, *An American in Paris* and more.

THE LIGHT FAVORITES MORNING MATINEES SERIES will feature top conductors from around the nation and the world for classical favorites in a casual, relaxed setting. Australian/British conductor Sarah Ioannides leads **Take Flight** (Oct. 4 & 5), inspired by birds, while Sameer Patel will conduct **Natural Wonders** (Nov. 8 & 9). Japanese conductor Morihiko Nakahara directs music based in mythology, such as Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*, in **Mythic Masterpieces** (Nov. 29 & 30); Lawrence Loh returns for **From the Beginning** (Jan. 10 & 11, 2024), taking audiences through the origin story of the symphony; Grammy Award winner Lucas Richman conducts music from the theater in **Center Stage** (Feb. 7 & 8, 2024); and TFO Resident Conductor Chelsea Gallo wraps up the series with **Waltz into Spring** (May 1 & 2, 2024), featuring famous waltzes. The six-concert series at the Mahaffey Theater and Ruth Eckerd Hall comes with a splash of humor and a Pre-Concert Conversation, starting one hour before the performance.

FOR COMMUNITY CONCERTS in the fall, the orchestra will perform the free Raymond James Pops in the Park concert in Vinoy Park in St. Petersburg and is planning a wide variety of community partnerships for the 2023-24 season. A full schedule of TFO's specials and community concerts such as Inside the Music, Sing Out Tampa Bay, full-orchestra Family Concerts and more will be released over the summer.

SEASON TICKETS FOR ALL SERIES ON SALE NOW. Florida Orchestra 2023-24 season packages of varying sizes are on sale now at FloridaOrchestra.org. Premium curated packages are offered for the classical Hough Family Foundation Masterworks, Raymond James Pops, and Morning Matinee series, and are the best value: Season subscribers save \$5 per ticket, per concert over single-ticket prices. Subscribers receive more great benefits including priority seating, single ticket discounts, bonus concerts, and free flexible ticket exchanges. For more information, email the Ticket Center at ticketcenter@floridaorchestra.org or call 727.892.3337. The Ticket Center is open 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday, and 10 am to 2 pm on Saturday (Saturday hours by phone and email only). Single tickets go on sale in July 31.

COMPOSE YOUR OWN SERIES. Our most flexible series. Mix and match at least three Masterworks and Pops concerts for \$45 a ticket, all fees included. Seat assignments are on a first-come, first-served basis. Premium curated package benefits do not apply. Go to ComposeYourOwn.com to subscribe.

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TFO Blog: FloridaOrchestra.org/blog | **TFO Email Club:** [Click here to sign up](#)

[About Michael Francis](#)

The 2023-24 season will be Michael Francis' ninth year as music director of The Florida Orchestra. With bold innovation and creativity, Maestro Francis has raised artistic excellence to new heights, strengthened the audience's connection to the music and reinvigorated TFO's community and education programs. The internationally acclaimed conductor also is music director of the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego and principal conductor of Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz in Germany. For more, [click here](#)

[About Chelsea Gallo](#)

Labeled a "rising star" within the conducting world, Chelsea Gallo has been praised for her ability to "lead the orchestra with grace and fiery command." She returns in the fall as TFO's resident conduct. For more, [click here](#)

[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

The Florida Orchestra 2023-24 Series Concert by Concert

Hough Family Foundation Masterworks Series

Led by Music Director Michael Francis

Our premier series of history's greatest music, plus exciting new works from a wide range of composers.

Bonus! Free Pre-concert Conversations with musicians and conductors start 1 hour before the concert. Sponsored by Smith & Associates Real Estate.

Free Classical Kids & Teens tickets: Kids and teens ages 5-18 get in free to all Masterworks concerts. At least one adult ticket purchase required. Only available in advance through the TFO Ticket Center.

For more information on guest artists and conductors, please click the name.

Holst's The Planets

FEATURING THE PERCUSSION COLLECTIVE

[Michael Francis](#), conductor

[The Percussion Collective](#)

[The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay](#)

Christopher Theofanidis: Drum Circles

Holst: The Planets

Sat, Sept 30, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, Oct 1, 7:30 pm, Ruth Eckerd Hall

Copland's Appalachian Spring

FEATURING JUBILANT SYKES FOR AMERICAN SPIRITUALS

[Michael Francis](#), conductor

[Jubilant Sykes](#), baritone

Selected Old American Spirituals

Copland: *Appalachian Spring* Suite

Dvorak: Slavonic Dances

Sat, Oct 21, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, Oct 22, 7:30 pm, Ruth Eckerd Hall

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini

FEATURING DAUGHERTY'S METROPOLIS SYMPHONY

[Michael Francis](#), conductor

[Yulianna Avdeeva](#), piano

[Michael Daugherty](#): Metropolis Symphony

Rachmaninoff: Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini

Ravel: *La Valse*

Sat, Oct 28, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, Oct 29, 2 pm, Mahaffey Theater – Matinee

Brahms' Symphony No. 1

FEATURING CHOPIN'S PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2

[Vladimir Kulenovic](#), conductor

[George Li](#), piano

Wagner: *Flying Dutchman* Overture

Chopin: Piano Concerto No. 2

Brahms: Symphony No. 1

Fri, Nov 17, 8 pm, Straz Center, Ferguson | Sat, Nov 18, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, Nov 19, 7:30 pm, Ruth Eckerd Hall

Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4

FEATURING CONDUCTOR JONATHON HEYWARD

[Jonathon Heyward](#), conductor

[Vadim Gluzman](#), violin

[Missy Mazzoli](#): Sinfonia (For Orbiting Spheres)

Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 4

Respighi: Fountains of Rome

Bernstein: *On the Waterfront* Symphonic Suite

Sat, Jan 6, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, Jan 7, 7:30 pm, Ruth Eckerd Hall

Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6

FEATURING BARBER'S VIOLIN CONCERTO

[Earl Lee](#), conductor

[Stella Chen](#), violin

Valentin Silvestrov: Prayer for Ukraine (arr. Resatch)

Barber: Violin Concerto

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6, "Pathetique"

Fri, Jan 19, 8 pm, Straz Center, Ferguson | Sat, Jan 20, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater

Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY

[Michael Francis](#), conductor

[Stewart Goodyear](#), piano

[Natalie Hoe](#), clarinet

[Wynton Marsalis:](#) Herald, Holler & Hallelujah: Fanfare for Brass & Percussion

[Mason Bates:](#) Alternative Energy

Bernstein: Three Dance Episodes from *On the Town*

Stravinsky: Ebony Concerto

Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue

Sat, Feb 17, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, Feb 18, 2 pm, Mahaffey Theater – Matinee

Beethoven's Emperor Concerto

FEATURING STRAUSS' EIN HELDENLEBEN

[Michael Francis](#), conductor

[Javier Perianes](#), piano

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 5, "Emperor"

R. Strauss: Ein Heldenleben, "A Hero's Life"

Fri, Feb 23, 8 pm, Straz Center, Morsani | Sat, Feb 24, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, Feb 25, 7:30 pm, Ruth Eckerd Hall

Beethoven's Eroica Symphony

FEATURING SHOSTAKOVICH'S PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2

[Michael Francis](#), conductor

[Natasha Paremski](#), piano

John Adams: The Chairman Dances: Foxtrot for Orchestra

Shostakovich: Piano Concerto No. 2

Beethoven: Symphony No. 3, "Eroica"

Fri, Apr 5, 8 pm, Straz Center, Ferguson | Sat, Apr 6, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, Apr 7, 7:30 pm, Ruth Eckerd Hall

Dvorak's New World Symphony

FEATURING MOZART'S SINFONIA CONCERTANTE

[Julian Rachlin](#), conductor & violin

[Sarah McElravy](#), violin/viola

Berlioz: Roman Carnival Overture

Mozart: Sinfonia Concertante

Dvorak: Symphony No. 9, "From The New World"

Fri, Apr 12, 8 pm, Straz Center, Morsani | Sat, Apr 13, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, Apr 14, 2 pm, Mahaffey -- Matinee

Saint-Saens' Organ Symphony

FEATURING FAURE'S REQUIEM

[Chelsea Gallo](#), conductor

[The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay](#)

Lili Boulanger: Of a Spring Morning

Faure: Requiem

Saint-Saens: Symphony No. 3, "Organ"

Fri, Apr 26, 8 pm, Straz Center, Ferguson | Sat, Apr 27, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, Apr 28, 2 pm, Mahaffey -- Matinee

Elgar's Enigma Variations

FEATURING BRAHMS' DOUBLE CONCERTO

[Michael Francis](#), conductor

[Jeffrey Multer](#), violin

[Yoni Draiblate](#), cello

Ravel: Le Tombeau de Couperin

Brahms: Double Concerto

Elgar: Enigma Variations

Fri, May 17, 8 pm, Straz Center, Ferguson | Sat, May 18, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, May 19, 7:30 pm, Ruth Eckerd Hall

Mahler's Resurrection Symphony

[Michael Francis](#), conductor

[The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay](#)

Mahler: Symphony No. 2, "Resurrection"

Sat, May 25, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, May 26, 7:30 pm, Ruth Eckerd Hall

Raymond James Pops Series

Featuring the best of Broadway, movie and popular music

Cirque Dances with Troupe Vertigo

[Daniel Black](#), conductor

[Troupe Vertigo](#)

The circus meets the symphony. Stunning aerial acts and mindboggling contortions are perfectly choreographed to beloved works, including Copland's *Hoe-Down*, Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty*, Khachaturian's *Masquerade* and more.

Sat, Oct 7, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, Oct 8, 2 pm, Mahaffey Theater -- Matinee

Women Rock

[Chelsea Gallo](#), conductor TFO honors the powerful female singers and songwriters who changed rock 'n' roll forever. Featuring three of Broadway's brightest young female stars for the iconic music of Tina Turner, Heart, Aretha Franklin, Carole King, Janis Joplin and many more.

Fri, Nov 3, 8 pm, Straz Center, Ferguson | Sat, Nov 4, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater

Hollywood's Golden Age

[Bob Bernhardt](#), conductor

[Michael Chertock](#), piano

Hollywood classics that never grow old. Featuring iconic movie scores from *Vertigo*, *King Kong*, *Victory at Sea*, *Psycho*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and more.

Sat, Nov 11, 2 pm, Mahaffey Theater -- Matinee | Sat, Nov 11, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater

Holiday Pops

[Bruce Hangen](#), conductor

[Tampa Oratorio Singers](#)

Our most popular concert of the year! Experience the true spirit of the holidays, filled with family and friends, for very merry music at its very best. With two matinees. Conducted by Bruce Hangen, former guest conductor of the Boston Pops.

Fri, Dec 15, 8 pm, Straz Center, Morsani

Sat, Dec 16, 2 pm, Mahaffey Theater – Matinee | Sat, Dec 16, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater

Sun, Dec 17, 2 pm, Ruth Eckerd Hall – Matinee | Sun, Dec 17, 7:30 pm, Ruth Eckerd Hall

Sci-Fi Spectacular

[Lawrence Loh](#), conductor

Boldly go with TFO on a supersonic trip to new worlds and distant galaxies. Featuring stellar hits from science fiction movies and television, including *Avatar*, *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *The Mandalorian*, *Interstellar* and more.

Sat, Jan 13, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, Jan 14, 7:30 pm, Ruth Eckerd Hall

Gershwin Celebration

[John Morris Russell](#), conductor

Celebrate George Gershwin's 125th birthday! An all-Gershwin tribute to the composer and pianist who ingeniously blended popular, jazz and classical genres to create a whole new style of music.

Featuring *'S Wonderful*, *The Man I Love*, *Porgy & Bess* selections, *An American in Paris* and more.

Sat, Jan 27, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater | Sun, Jan 28, 2 pm, Straz, Morsani -- Matinee

From Broadway With Love

[Jack Everly](#), conductor

[Ashley Brown](#), vocalist

Make it date night with your special Valentine. Featuring Broadway vocalist Ashley Brown for favorites such as *My Funny Valentine*, *Little Girl Blue*, *My Romance* and other love songs from the Broadway and Disney songbooks.

Sat, Feb 10, 2 pm, Mahaffey Theater – Matinee | Sat, Feb 10, 8 pm, Mahaffey Theater

Twist & Shout: The Music of The Beatles

[Chelsea Gallo](#), conductor

A tribute to 60 years of The Beatles' journey into the hearts of Americans everywhere. The concert follows the early years of Beatlemania and the British invasion, including hits *Love Me Do*, *She Loves You*, *I Want to Hold Your Hand*, *Can't Buy Me Love*, *Yesterday* and many more.

Fri, Mar 1, 8 pm, Straz Center, Morsani

Disco Fever

[Enrico Lopez-Yanez](#), conductor

Get down tonight! With TFO and the greatest hits of the '70s. It's a Boogie Wonderland featuring *That's the Way (I Like It)*, *It's Raining Men*, *We Are Family*, *I Will Survive*, *Staying Alive*, *The Hustle* and more. With four spectacular singers.

Fri, May 3, 8 pm, Straz Center, Ferguson | Sun, May 5, 7:30 pm, Ruth Eckerd Hall

Morning Matinees Series

Light classical favorites in a relaxed, friendly setting topped off with a dollop of fun.

Bonus! Free Pre-concert Conversations with musicians and conductors start 1 hour before the concert.

Take Flight

[Sarah Ioannides](#), conductor

Music inspired by birds. Featuring Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, Respighi's *The Birds* and more.

Wed, Oct 4, 11 am, Ruth Eckerd Hall | Thur, Oct 5, 11 am, Mahaffey Theater

Natural Wonders

[Sameer Patel](#), conductor

Bringing the great outdoors into the concert hall. Featuring Debussy's *La Mer* and more.

Wed, Nov 8, 11 am, Ruth Eckerd Hall | Thur, Nov 9, 11 am, Mahaffey Theater

Mythic Masterpieces

[Morihiro Nakahara](#), conductor

Featuring Beethoven's *Creatures of Prometheus*, Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* and more.

Wed, Nov 29, 11 am, Ruth Eckerd Hall | Thur, Nov 30, 11 am, Mahaffey Theater

From the Beginning

[Lawrence Loh](#), conductor

The origin story of the symphony. Featuring Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mahler and more.

Wed, Jan 10, 11 am, Ruth Eckerd Hall | Thur, Jan 11, 11 am, Mahaffey Theater

Center Stage

[Lucas Richman](#), conductor

Music for the theater. Featuring Beethoven, Grieg, Wagner and more.

Wed, Feb 7, 11 am, Ruth Eckerd Hall | Thur, Feb 8, 11 am, Mahaffey Theater

Waltz into Spring

[Chelsea Gallo](#), conductor Featuring Strauss' *Blue Danube*, Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* and more.

Wed, May 1, 11 am, Ruth Eckerd Hall | Thur, May 2, 11 am, Mahaffey Theater