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The Florida Orchestra names new CEO

Leader and musician Ignacio Barrón Viela brings global experience to TFO in August.



ST. PETERSBURG, FL – The Florida Orchestra has named Ignacio Barrón Viela as its new president and CEO, the orchestra announced today. He brings global experience to lead the state’s largest professional orchestra in a new era of growth in Tampa Bay, joining TFO in August.

Born in Zaragoza, Spain, Barrón Viela is a classically trained cellist who has spent more than a decade performing in orchestras and managing music projects worldwide. He comes to TFO from the Reno Philharmonic in Nevada, where as president and CEO he helped expand its artistic offerings with a wide variety of events and concerts, including a semi-staged opera. Post-pandemic audiences consistently grew, sometimes exceeding pre-pandemic levels. During his tenure, the Reno Phil Youth Symphony Orchestra performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Before that, he was the executive director of the Billings Symphony in Montana, where he created key partnerships with local and national associations, cultivated donor relationships with record-setting donations, and doubled the symphony’s net worth and endowment. Barrón Viela succeeds Mark Cantrell, who departed in April to be CEO of the Colorado Symphony.

“It will be an honor to lead Florida’s premier orchestra,” Barrón Viela said. “I am impressed by the orchestra’s stellar reputation and innovative programming, and I am inspired by TFO’s commitment to serving the needs of this growing community with such passion. I look forward to working closely with Michael Francis, the remarkable Florida Orchestra musicians, a great board and an energetic staff.”

“After a national search, Ignacio’s global experience and high standard of excellence clearly stood out. His drive to build community and connect lives through the power of music aligns perfectly with our mission and makes him the right leader for TFO as we grow for the future,” said TFO Board Chair Gregory Yadley.

Barrón Viela brings a range of skills beyond arts management. As an industrial engineer, he has worked as a senior management consultant and project manager for two of the largest private investor-owned energy companies in the world. With projects in conventional power plants and renewable energy assets spanning

Europe, Asia, South America and the U.S., he specialized in operational excellence and performance management, skills that he applies to the orchestra field.

“I am delighted Ignacio Barrón Viela will join us as president and CEO of TFO,” said Music Director Michael Francis. “From our first meeting, it was clear that Ignacio has a genuine passion for music, a strategic mindset, and a charismatic ability to communicate deeply about our wonderful art form. With his fascinating background as a musician, engineer, senior management consultant and successful orchestra CEO, Ignacio will bring a highly skilled, experienced and dynamic approach to leading The Florida Orchestra. I am excited to partner with Ignacio as we build upon the outstanding artistic quality of The Florida Orchestra.”

Barrón Viela holds a Master of Industrial Engineering degree from the University of Zaragoza and an MBA from the USC Marshall School of Business, with an emphasis in arts leadership through the USC Thornton School of Music. In 2020, he was nominated as one of the “40 Under 40” most successful leaders in Montana, and in 2022 he was recognized with the Community Builder Award by the Downtown Billings Association.

Barrón Viela and his wife, Brianna, enjoy exploring the great outdoors, running road races, and learning from and engaging with people from all walks of life. They will make the move to Tampa Bay over the summer.

As the largest professional orchestra in the state, with 71 full-time professional musicians and conductors, The Florida Orchestra’s mission is to inspire, educate and unite our community through the power of music. TFO performs more than 100 concerts a season and provides free music education and outreach programs to underserved areas throughout Tampa Bay all year long. Maestro Francis opens TFO’s 56th season in September with Holst’s *The Planets* in the premier Hough Family Foundation Masterworks series, kicking off a wide range of classical, popular, film, rock and family-friendly concerts. Season tickets are available now at FloridaOrchestra.org. Single tickets go on sale July 31.

[About Michael Francis](#)

Entering his ninth season as music director of The Florida Orchestra, Michael 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 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. Under the leadership of Music Director Michael Francis, TFO performs series of classical, popular, and morning matinee 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