NEWS RELEASE | March 28, 2025

CONTACT: Kelly Smith, Chief Communications Officer
ksmith@floridaorchestra.org

THE FLORIDA ORCHESTRA, MUSICIANS ANNOUNCE NEW 4-YEAR CONTRACT

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – The Florida Orchestra and its musicians announced the ratification of a new four-year labor contract today, more than five months before the current contract expires on Aug. 31, 2025. The agreement will grow total musician compensation by 23% through salary increases and other benefits over the life of the contract; reduce health insurance costs; increase paid parental leave; update the audition and tenure process; and adjust workload and scheduling parameters.

The agreement between The Florida Orchestra and the American Federation of Musicians – Florida Gulf Coast Local 427-721 resulted from several highly collaborative meetings that included TFO management, musicians from the Orchestra Committee, and TFO board directors. The contract takes effect Sept. 1, 2025, and extends through Aug. 31, 2029.

“I am extremely grateful to everyone who played a role in this remarkable achievement, which underscores a deep commitment and collaboration between the musicians, management and the community we serve,” said TFO President & CEO Ignacio Barrón Viela. “With a positive tone and spirit of openness, we came together for a shared vision of growth and stability for TFO, while continuing to honor the hard work of our musicians. Now we look forward to a new era of innovation, music education and inspiring performances for Tampa Bay."

For TFO’s 68 full-time professional musicians, the collective bargaining agreement will gradually increase pay for the next four years: 3% in the 2025-26 season, followed by 4% for the next two seasons, then 5% in the final year of the contract. Starting in year three, musicians also will gain one extra week of work and one more paid vacation week. The agreement will increase total guaranteed compensation by 23% over the previous contract, from $50,495 in the final year of the current contract to $62,259 in year four of the new contract. The increase will help keep TFO competitive in attracting and retaining musicians of the highest caliber under the artistic leadership of Music Director Michael Francis, who is in his 10th season with TFO. Francis has signed a contract extension that runs through the 2029-30 season.

The contract was ratified by musicians on March 23 and approved by TFO Board of Directors on March 25. Highlights of additional musician benefits include:

- **Reduced health insurance costs,** including a break in premium increases and expanded funds for musicians who have family policies.
- **Increased paid parental leave** from five to six week for all new parents, with an additional two paid weeks for women who give birth (total of eight weeks).
- **Increased paid religious holidays**, from three to four.
- **Updates to audition and tenure process,** such as additional feedback for new tenure track musicians.
- **Future expansion of titled positions,** such as principal, associate principal, etc. TFO already has the most titled positions of any orchestra its size in the nation: 34 – half of current musicians. Earning a titled position also increases pay.

The contract will set workload limits while adding some schedule flexibility to allow for artistic and economic opportunities. For example, it limits the workload for weeks with film scores and guarantees more instances of

consecutive days off, yet it allows more Saturday rehearsals and other flexibility. To strengthen safety guidelines, the contract updates policies on tropical cyclone preparedness and workplace violence and harassment prevention. The agreement guarantees 39 total weeks in the season for the duration of the contract.

“I want to offer thanks and congratulations to my colleagues on the Orchestra Committee, as well as our staff and board who demonstrated a vision for future growth at The Florida Orchestra,” said Ross Holcombe, Associate Principal Trombonist and Chair of the Orchestra Committee. “This new agreement will help us retain our current musicians and attract exciting new talent. This agreement also sends a signal that orchestral music is thriving in Tampa Bay, and that our audiences can look forward to performances of ever higher quality and emotional impact each time they come to hear us. We are lucky to live in a world-class community, and we are grateful to be able to continue to provide a world-class symphony orchestra for Tampa Bay!”

“This achievement reflects how well musicians and management work together as one team with one ultimate goal: how to best serve our community through the power of music,” said TFO Board Chair Linda Cassaly. “Together we have established a strong foundation built on mutual trust and shared values that will ensure a sustainable future for our beloved orchestra. With the vital, continued support of our generous patrons and donors, we can create music that resonates far beyond the concert hall.”

The Florida Orchestra’s mission is to Inspire | Educate | Unite to build community through the power of music. Deeply rooted in the Tampa Bay community for 57 years, TFO is the largest professional orchestra in the state. This season, the orchestra will perform more than 100 concerts in venues throughout Tampa Bay, including a wide range of classical, popular, film, chamber and family-friendly music, as well as perform with global stars including cellist Yo-Yo Ma and *Wicked* star Cynthia Erivo. Through concerts and education/community programs combined, TFO serves more than 155,000 residents each year – nearly half through free or low-cost programs.

About Michael Francis

The 2024-25 season celebrates 10 years of Michael Francis as The Florida Orchestra’s music director, with a contract extension through at least the 2029-30 season. With bold innovation and passionate performances, 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 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 57th season in 2024-25. Under the leadership of Music Director Michael Francis, TFO performs series of classical, popular, and morning 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