



Florida Tomorrow

University of Florida  
Performing Arts



**UF** | FLORIDA  
TOMORROW  
THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA



## From the Director

Bringing the world to Gainesville, University of Florida Performing Arts enriches the lives of both the university and North Central Florida communities by presenting the highest quality artists and performances from across the globe.

Three venues fall under the auspices of the presenting program of University of Florida Performing Arts: the Curtis M. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts; the University Auditorium; and the Baughman Center. While each is unique in its history and structure, together they form a consortium that enriches the lives of arts supporters in Alachua and its 12 surrounding counties.

Not only does University of Florida Performing Arts have a stature in our community, through the program's dedication to supporting young artists as well as new works by established artists, the development and commissioning of these projects identifies the University of Florida as an innovator and initiator as artists and ensembles travel worldwide.

Always looking for new ways to reach audiences with limited access to the professional performing arts, the *AIM Together* program established between University of Florida Performing Arts and Shands Arts in Medicine brings these professional artists on the regular season into the health care setting. This initiative provides performances and interactive arts events to individuals who, due to illness, age, disability and challenging socioeconomic and geographic circumstances, have little or no access to the arts.

University of Florida Performing Arts is committed to educating, enriching and cultivating patrons of all ages. University students have access to rich culture without leaving the campus; community members enjoy and immerse themselves in the arts without leaving Gainesville. As a recruitment tool for the university, Santa Fe Community College, Gainesville, Alachua County and all who have access to this cultural mecca, University of Florida Performing Arts strives to support the University of Florida in its goal to become one of the top 10 public universities in the United States.

Sincerely,

Michael Blachly, Ph.D.

Director, University of Florida Performing Arts

# Florida Tomorrow

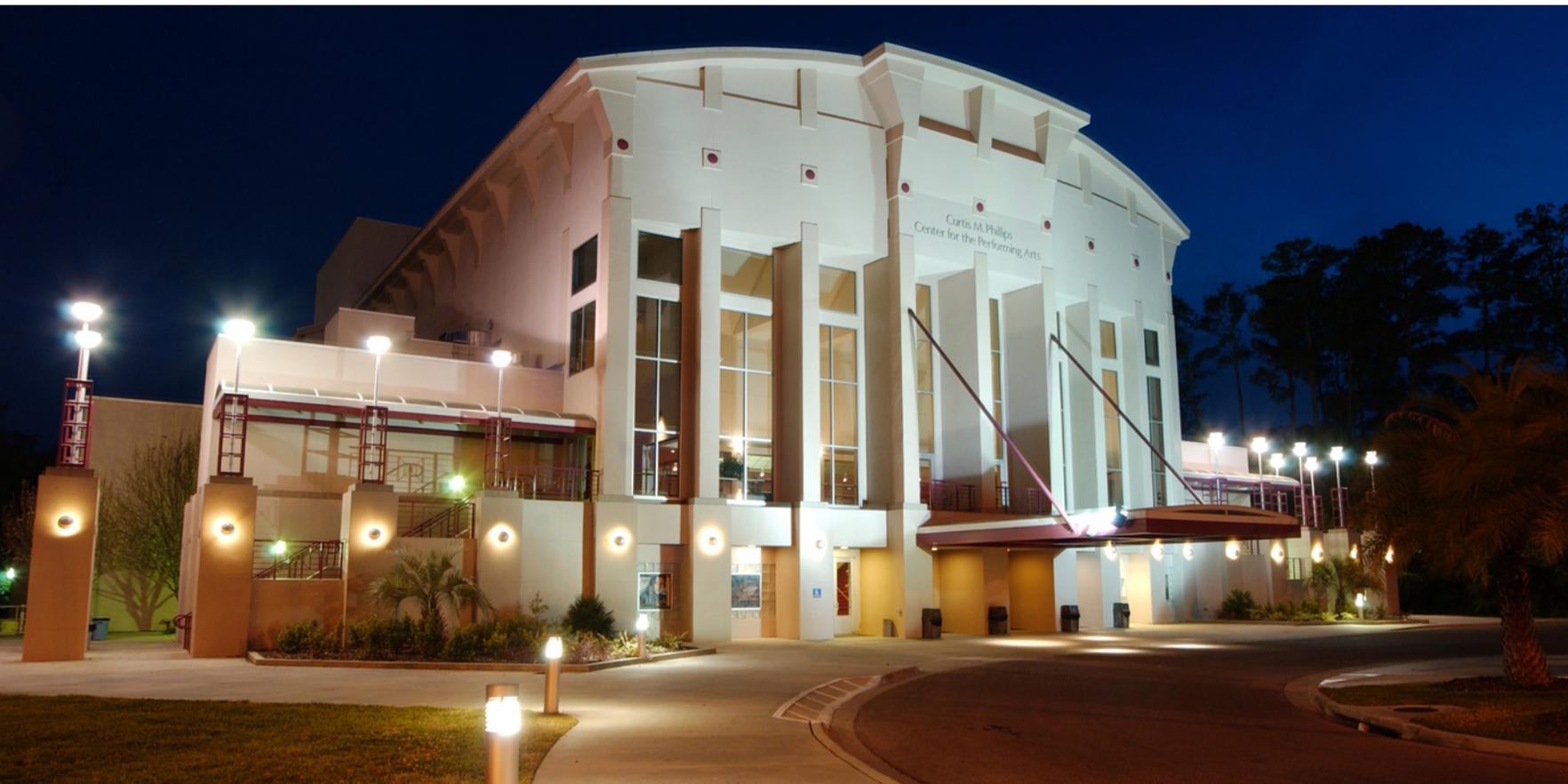
## ... and the University of Florida Performing Arts

### The Promise of Tomorrow

What is *Florida Tomorrow*? Here at University of Florida Performing Arts, we believe it's an opportunity, one filled with promise and hope. It's that belief that feeds the university's capital campaign to raise more than \$1 billion.

The *Florida Tomorrow* campaign will shape the university, certainly. But its ripple effect will also touch the state of Florida, the nation and the entire world. *Florida Tomorrow* is pioneering research and spirited academic programs. It is a fertile environment for inquiry, teaching and learning. It is being at the forefront to address the challenges facing all of us, both today and tomorrow.

What is *Florida Tomorrow*? At UFPA, it's our pledge to support the community, faculty, students and artists. It is our commitment to introduce and encourage the performing arts, here on campus and throughout North Central Florida. And it's our promise to future generations to foster tomorrow's next great artists.





# Florida Tomorrow is a place ...

where interest and appreciation for the performing arts is encouraged as a way to better understand the world in which we live.

## Deeper Understanding

The audience for the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields was treated to an evening of classical music of Stravinsky, Mozart and Beethoven. Those who attended a pre-performance discussion at the Phillips Center with members of the orchestra also got a glimpse into Beethoven's soul — Beethoven's second symphony was composed when he was going deaf.

"Here's this great composer about to lose what he needs most for his passion, his life. When you know that, you can understand the emotions he was going through at the time. The piece starts to make sense," says Elizabeth Auer, assistant director for University of Florida Performing Arts.

During the 2005-06 season alone UFPA hosted 74 discussions for 3,497 people. The pre- and post-performance lectures are so popular "people are disappointed when we have a performance that doesn't have one," UFPA Director Michael Blachly says.

This is just one educational outreach program at UFPA. Others include master classes with visiting artists, in-depth residency work and classroom visits with various UF colleges. The cast of L.A. Theatre Works' "The Great Tennessee Monkey Trial," for instance, joined UF's Levin College of Law for a panel discussion and master class.

Blachly has focused on making UFPA a creative home for artists — commissioning new works and fostering the development of groundbreaking acts such as the acclaimed acrobatic troupe AEROS on the Phillips Center stage.

"New works are the research product of the performing arts," Blachly says. "Commissioning and premiering new works carries the University of Florida's name across the country."

Equally important are the classics that bring first-time theatergoers, he says.

"A production like 'Cats' is an opportunity for young people to experience theater. It may be the first time they've seen the lights of the stage," Blachly says. "It can be what makes them say, 'I really like this — this is worth my time and money.'"

Once someone discovers the thrill of live performance, UFPA's educational outreach enriches the experience.

"When you know more about the art form, the creation of the work, the artists, you have a much deeper understanding of what you're about to experience," Blachly says. "It gives context to the next two hours of your life."



STOMPer Andrés Fernández spends time with his newest fan on the bone marrow transplant floor at Shands Hospital





# Florida Tomorrow is a day ...

when the performing arts are accessible to all, regardless of age, physical or mental disability or socioeconomic status.

## Healing Touch

The 12-year-old boy had already seen far too much: a frightening diagnosis, cancer treatments, the short-lived joy of remission followed by relapse. He wasn't interested in playing the drum that the Bayanihan Philippine National Dance Company had offered him.

"He was anti-everything," recalls Deborah Rossi, director of marketing for University of Florida Performing Arts. "It took half an hour for him to even look at the performance. But when he started playing the drum, it was a real transformation."

Bayanihan is one of the world-renowned performing arts groups passing through the Phillips Center that has taken time to visit Shands HealthCare, giving patients and caregivers alike a much-needed respite. The effort, called *AIM Together*, is a groundbreaking partnership between UFPA and Shands' Arts in Medicine program, bringing the arts to those who — due to age, illness or disability — are unable to access the arts.

*AIM Together* began in 2004 as a pilot project funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and soon became a model for programs nationwide. In 2006, the flagship program expanded to Jacksonville, Miami, Orlando, Tallahassee and Tampa.

Elizabeth Auer, assistant director, coordinates *AIM Together* for UFPA. She explains that its impact extends beyond the patients to the medical staff, families and even artists themselves.

"My favorite part of an *AIM Together* interaction is watching the artists transform from world-class performers to regular people," Auer says. "There's a moment that happens when they break the 'fourth wall' that a stage creates and begin interacting with the people right in front of them. They have an opportunity to reach out to someone on a personal level."

UFPA Director Michael Blachly recalls the time when STOMP, the innovative percussion ensemble, visited Shands. After performing for children on the pediatric floor, the musicians took empty five-gallon water bottles up to the bone marrow transplant floor for a more-subdued show. Blachly remembers how lead performer Andrés Fernandez, himself a father thousands of miles from his children, was touched by the young patients he saw there.

"It was a powerful moment. He looked at those kids and saw his own children," Blachly says. "That's the magic of the exchange — the arts become a bridge that allows people to connect to each other. It's a moment of their day that allows the barriers to be set aside."

For the young cancer patient who finally agreed to play the drums with Bayanihan, he and his grateful mother were touched in a way they never expected.

"He got to be a kid again," Auer says.



# Florida Tomorrow is a belief ...

that audiences are touched, inspired, enlightened and grow through the performing arts.

## Personal Connection

She expected “Don’t Worry, Be Happy.” Instead, Dianne Farb found her preconceptions about music, rhythm and performance — not to mention singer Bobby McFerrin — blown away.

That’s typical, she says, of the enlightening experiences she’s come to expect from University of Florida Performing Arts’ shows.

“I hope to be transformed, to have my mind expanded. Even shocked,” she says. “After a performance, I feel like I’ve just been swept away somewhere, swept away from the daily routine to another place.”

McFerrin’s performance gave Farb a completely new perspective on the nature of music. His 12-member Voicestra creates impromptu performances using only its voices. When Farb walked into the Phillips Center, she remembers thinking, “Where is the orchestra?” The following two hours left her in awe.

“It was just syllables, just sounds, but when he wove them together, it formed an incredible piece of music, entirely unplanned, un-composed. It was amazing,” she says.

There’s no question that magic happens when the curtain lifts and a show begins, but pinpointing just what it is audiences expe-

rience can be a challenge. To find out, UFPA surveyed patrons. The stories collected show the depth of the human connection to the arts.

Patrons said South Africa’s Soweto Gospel Choir empowered, enlightened and uplifted them. Others who watched L.A. Theatre Works’ “The Great Tennessee Monkey Trial” praised it for its intellectual stimulation. Performers introduce audiences to cultures and countries, foster pride in their own ethnic heritage and sometimes even forge bonds within the audience itself.

One young musician traveled from Tampa for violin virtuoso Joshua Bell’s performance and waited in line to meet him. Unable to find the words he wanted when he finally reached Bell’s table, he settled for an autograph. Back in the parking lot, however, he had a change of heart and returned to the University Auditorium. He waited in line another hour to tell Bell what he didn’t have the courage to say the first time — that Bell had been his inspiration to become a musician. It was a moment of connection between artist and audience.





## Our Vision of Tomorrow

The impact of an arts experience is what happens to an audience when the lights go down and artists take the stage — and the cumulative benefits to individuals, families and communities of having those experiences available night after night. Through facial expressions, body language and audible reactions, an audience interacts with performers. There is no mistaking the silence of rapture during a concert, the moment of shared emotion in a theater when a plot takes a dramatic twist, or the post-performance buzz in the lobby.

Live performances have an intrinsic impact. Captivation is the lynchpin. It is the degree to which an audience is absorbed in a performance to the exclusion of all else. Good artists can make a person lose track of time.

“You have these moments where nothing else matters anymore.” — Kathleen Porter, patron, University of Florida Performing Arts

Performing arts provide intellectual stimulation. An audience can be engaged intellectually, challenged and provoked. Artists can make an audience think.

“Classical pieces can bring home past memories and connect your thoughts to other things.”  
— Shane Runyon, patron

Performances are a conduit for transmitting feelings, beliefs and values between the creators of the work and their audience. Emotional resonance is an intrinsic benefit of the experience, regardless of the nature of the emotion — whether joy or pain. Artists can make an audience feel.

“I feel both relaxed and excited when I leave a show.” — Fei Long, patron

Some performances have a spiritual value to an audience. They inspire and uplift. An artist can empower.

“It’s a sort of spiritual experience of appreciating the human capability of going above and beyond the mundane.” — Les Thiele, patron

Aesthetic growth may not be the outcome of performances, but artists can change people’s feelings about art forms and cultures. Artists can make an audience grow.

“The performance addressed painful issues in a way that left me excited and inspired about life.”  
— Rev. Ruth Segal, patron

Performances also have a social value in connecting an audience. Artists can make a person belong.

“It gives me something to talk about with my husband. It’s a connection.” — Audrey Clark, patron



Here at the University of Florida Performing Arts, we look forward to *Florida Tomorrow*. It's a place where creativity is inspired. It's a day when the arts are enjoyed by all. It's a belief that the performing arts can touch souls and enrich lives.

We invite you to help make this vision of *Florida Tomorrow* a reality.



(Above) When the UF men's basketball team played their "Final Four" game versus George Mason University at the same time as Nrityagram Dance Ensemble's performance in April 2006, members of the company wished the team well with traditional Indian dance postures that translate to "Victory to the Sea Monster" or "Go Gators!"



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