



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Sarasota Orchestra Expands Search for Music Center Site**

**SARASOTA, FL – May 30, 2019** – Sarasota Orchestra announced today the organization will broaden its search for the location of a new Music Center beyond the Sarasota City limits. David Steves, Chair of the 18-member Board of Directors, announced the unanimous decision of the Board to expand the search area for a potential site.

Pressing calendar constraints and acoustic limitations at the six venues used by Sarasota Orchestra currently hinder growth and future achievement of Sarasota Orchestra’s mission. The Orchestra also has urgent need for space expansion for its education programs which include eight levels of youth orchestra and Young Persons Concerts serving tens of thousands of students.

The Music Center is envisioned as a transformational project for the region. Sarasota Orchestra, other area music organizations, and the community would all benefit from the center. By providing the only purpose-built concert hall for acoustic music in the region, the proposed Music Center will elevate Sarasota Orchestra's artistic profile, enable other performing arts organizations to expand their offerings, and increase the region's economic, social, and educational vibrancy.

The Orchestra has had a diligent planning exercise underway with a team of highly respected national consultants for the last five years. In June of 2018, Sarasota Orchestra's Board of Directors voted to seek a site for the Music Center off the Bayfront. A number of critical factors informed this resolution, including the extended timeline to build out The Bay and increasing risks associated with coastal construction, sea level rise, and storm surge.

“The Orchestra has a 70-year reputation for enriching lives, as well as for sound planning and stewardship,” said Steves. “We feel a keen sense of urgency from both artistic and business perspectives. To benefit the community we serve, we intend to move into a Music Center well before the projected timeline of 10 to 20 years for the Bayfront buildout, and avoid the risks associated with building a major, 100 year facility right on the waterfront.”

Due to increasing calendar constraints at venues it rents, lack of space for education programs, and pressing artistic needs, the Orchestra's goal is to pursue a site with a timeline that makes it possible to move into a Music Center within five years, said Steves. As a mission-driven nonprofit, Sarasota Orchestra is committed to a responsible plan that will ensure the Music Center advances the Orchestra's purpose of positive community impact for the next century.

**More information** about the Music Center and updates on the site search are posted online here:

<https://www.sarasotaorchestra.org/musiccenter>

**Images** of Sarasota Orchestra can be found on the media page: [www.sarasotaorchestra.org/download](http://www.sarasotaorchestra.org/download)

**About Sarasota Orchestra:**

For 70 years, Sarasota Orchestra has been engaging music lovers from around the region and visitors from around the world. The Orchestra performs more than 125 classical, Pops, education and community engagement concerts each year and thrives as the oldest continuing orchestra in the state of Florida. Youth programs provide concert experiences for about 10,000 students per year and include an extensive youth orchestra program of eight ensembles and more than 300 students. The Sarasota Music Festival is a world-renowned performance and teaching festival that attracts young musicians and faculty from across the globe each June.

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