

Punta Gorda Symphony to perform outdoor concert



The Punta Gorda Symphony performs at the outdoor amphitheater of Florida SouthWestern State College's Charlotte County campus. Photo by Jerry Beard.

After two successful Holiday Pops Outdoors concerts in December, Punta Gorda Symphony returns outdoors on Feb. 6 to perform a concert inspired by romance, offering the music of well-known composers from Hollywood and Broadway that tells stories of love.

From Georges Bizet's romantic opera "Carmen," that captures the intense flush of a first love, to the tear-jerking love themes of "West Side Story," Symphony on the Lawn will be filled with an endless supply of delightful and familiar love tunes. An arrangement of music from the dramatic film "Ben-Hur" will contrast in style from the rest of the program, and features Punta Gorda Symphony Concertmaster Ming Gao as the violin soloist on the love theme "Judah Meets Esther." The program will also include musical and pops medleys from "Guys and Dolls," "Carousel" and "The Sound of Music" — all certain to be crowd-pleasers

"There's no substitute for live performance," said Maestro Raffaele Ponti.

With musicians and audiences alike yearning for in-person cultural experiences, Punta Gorda Symphony will continue presenting outdoor concerts. Performances of Symphony on the Lawn are at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., again in partnership with, and at the outdoor amphitheater of, Florida SouthWestern State College's Charlotte County campus, 26300 Airport Road, Punta Gorda.

"We're thrilled to be able to perform live music for our community," says PGS Executive Director Craig Badinger, "After the success and rave reviews from our patrons at Holiday Pops Outdoors, we're confident audiences will continue to feel safe and will encourage their friends to come enjoy the music."

Even though they're being performed outdoors, concerts will be limited to socially distanced audiences of 250, and will follow standard COVID-related health and safety guidelines. Patron seating on the lawn will be filled in order of arrival, guided by staff and volunteers to the next available space, a process familiar to those who visit theme parks in Orlando. Parties of two to four patrons will be provided chairs within their own 6-foot grid on the lawn, face masks will be required, hand sanitizing stations will be available and direct person-to-person contact will be kept at a minimum.



Punta Gorda Symphony musicians perform socially distanced and with face masks at the Holiday Pops Outdoors concerts on Dec. 19. Photo by Jerry Beard.

One enthusiastic new symphony patron praised the Dec. 19 concert and COVID-19 protocols in review: "As newcomers to the area, this was the first time my husband and I attended a Punta Gorda Symphony event, and it will not be the last time. Your commitment to social distancing was outstanding. The location was great. The performance itself was wonderful and listening to the music transported me back to so many wonderful memories."

All tickets are \$49 for general admission. Patrons interested in student tickets must inquire with the Punta Gorda Symphony office at 941-205-5996.

For further details about Punta Gorda Symphony, visit www.PGSymphony.org. For updates on all programs, join the email list at www.PGSymphony.org/Join.