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## Review

### Pops concert packs theater with energy, fun

The Florida Orchestra repeats its program at 7:30 p.m. today at Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater, and at 7:30 p.m. Monday at the Mahaffey Theater, St. Petersburg. \$15.50-\$50. 813 286-2403 or toll-free 1-800-662-7286; [www.floridaorchestra.org](http://www.floridaorchestra.org)

#### ACTION

By NANCY PARADIS, Times Staff Writer  
Published March 13, 2005



Nancy Paradis

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TAMPA - If pops concerts tend to offer music that is readily accessible to audiences that might not venture to a Masterworks performance, then Friday's concert by the Florida Orchestra was no exception. The theme of the concert, under the baton of pops conductor Richard Kaufman at Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, was "Music of the Islands," with the first half featuring music from mostly familiar movie and television scores.

The percussion section opened the orchestra's performance of the *Hawaii* overture, setting the stage for an evening dominated by high energy and rhythm. That much of Kaufman's musical life has been spent in the arena of film and television music was evident both from his enthusiasm and his comments that preceded each selection.

Following the mood set by *Hawaii*, music from the movies *Swashbuckler* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* conjured up images of three-masted schooners and rollicking pirates sailing the high seas. Had the concert taken place during Gasparilla, it would have been easy to imagine the annual pirate invasion spilling onto the stage.

A treat was a suite from the soundtrack of *Finding Neverland*, which won the Oscar for best original score. Kaufman prefaced this second concert performance of the music, and its first since the Academy Award ceremony, by reading an e-mail from composer Jan A.P. Kaczmarek thanking him and the orchestra for bringing his music in concert form to the American public. If the music was not familiar to those who have not seen the film, it is easily recognizable as a movie score, even without the big screen.

Music from *Mutiny on the Bounty* and an encore, the theme from the television series *Hawaii Five-O*, that, as Kaufman remarked, needed no introduction beyond "book 'em, Danno," rounded out the first part of the evening.

If the first half set the tone with music from the islands, the second half, highlighting the Tampa Bay Steel Orchestra, stole the show. The seven-member band, formed by Florida Orchestra principal percussionist John Shaw in 2003, took center stage in a unique collaboration between symphony orchestra and steel pan players. The steel pan players took off solo with *Yellowbird* and *My Band*, then jazzed it up with the addition of the full orchestra. Following *Holiday for Strings*, with the orchestra's string sections providing the backdrop, sometimes in pizzicato, to the tenor pan's melody line, the steel pans alone played Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. In the arrangement by Shaw, his skillful performance on tenor pan captivated the audience with the distinctive sounds produced by hitting drums made of finely tuned and hammered steel.

Popular local jazz musician Fred Johnson provided vocals in a medley of Harry Belafonte tunes, including *Kingston Town*, *Angelina*, *Day O* and

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*Matilda*, as well as a stirring performance of Bob Marley's *Redemption Song*.

The concert wrapped up with the enthusiastically received *Pan in A minor* and *Jump in the Line*. What the evening's music may have lacked in gravitas, it more than made up for in exuberance, high energy and fun.

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