

Violinist eager to connect with audience on 4th of July

Amanda Sieradzki

Council on Culture & Arts

Music has no borders for violinist Pedro Maia. At the age of 15, he debuted with the ArtBrasilia Symphony Orchestra and currently plays with the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra (TSO). Maia will play during TSO's concert at the City of Tallahassee's Celebrate America event this Fourth of July.

This free community event begins at 7 p.m. and will end with a fireworks display and TSO's rendition of the "1812 Overture" during the grand finale. While the concert celebrates America's independence, it also echoes Maia's belief that no matter the country or continent, music has the power to bring people together.

"Music is an international language," says Maia. "People are more willing to get to know you as a person and get to know your culture because they're interested in your music."

Maia is pursuing his doctorate in violin performance at Florida State University and has founded two chamber

groups, including Cosmos New Music ensemble. He feels connected to his friends and fellow players in both chamber groups, many of whom are interna-

tional students and colleagues hailing from across the globe.

From Brazil to Mississippi

Maia began his journey in music at a young age, and at the insistence of his parents. He slowly came around to practicing the violin on his own and fell in love with the instrument in his teen years. Maia earned a full scholarship to the University of Southern Mississippi, and it was during undergraduate studies he met Dr. Shannon Thomas who would become his mentor at FSU.

"The teaching I had in Brazil had a more traditional, European influence," says Maia. "[Thomas'] way of teaching and pedagogy was totally fresh and new. She has so many ideas about how to approach a musical phrase and exe-

See MAIA, Page 4C



Pedro Maia plays with the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra and is pursuing his doctorate in violin performance at Florida State University. He has founded two chamber groups, including Cosmos New Music ensemble. PERRONE FORD, PTFPHOTO

Maia

Continued from Page 4C

cution. She changed my way I looked at music and I felt super inspired every time I left her class.”

Maia can be found practicing between four or five hours a day when preparing for a solo concert.

He considers himself a “technique man” and focuses on the bow movements and the use of his right hand.

For chamber music rehearsals, he enjoys the camaraderie of creating a cohesive sound and making sure the whole group has the same timing and ideas about how to match each other technically.

While Ludwig van Beethoven, Wolfgang Mozart and Igor Stravinsky are among Maia’s longstanding favorite composers, he is constantly seeking out fresh new, voices in the field.

Maia picks up on the feelings that can live inside a composition regardless of composer and strives to make those emotions clear to the listener, whether it be passion, anger or excitement.

Performing work by living composers

“It’s important because you keep music alive,” says Maia.

“If all musicians do their part to promote living composers, we’ll have even greater music in the future like people did in the past. Without those musicians back in the day playing living composer’s music, we wouldn’t have composers like Beethoven today. You have to keep exploring, and with music there’s an infinity of possibilities. There’s always more to be explored.”

Maia has shared numerous performances in music halls that echo with the history of musicians from the past. Some of his most memorable performances have been at Carnegie Hall in New York City and Palazzo Ducale di Urbino in Italy.

He jokes that it is hard to make a bad sound in those historic halls given the acoustics and ability to hear every musician with total clarity.

Maia has served on faculty at festivals in the U.S., Brazil, Chile, Columbia and Mexico.

He gives private lessons and coaches middle and high school students in the Tallahassee Youth Orchestras. In his last concert with TYO, he got a chance to play with his students and was so proud

If you go

What: City of Tallahassee’s Celebrate America Event

When: 7-10 p.m. on Sunday, July 4th

Where: Tom Brown Park

Cost: Free and open to the public

Contact: For more information, call 850-891-3866 or visit [facebook.com/COTparks](https://www.facebook.com/COTparks)

to hear them let their personalities out through their music-making.

Joy in connecting with group, audience

Time in the classroom is spent showing students how to fall in love with their instrument so that they will be motivated to go home and practice on their own.

Maia emphasizes artistry so that students can listen and be aware of sounds they make to communicate their own thoughts and feelings. He recognizes his own joy in their journeys.

“I’m lucky to have some of my best friends playing with me,” says Maia. “It’s really rewarding if you can make the audience connect with the group and the music because you can see their reaction and they understand something without you having even said a word.”

Maia joined TSO in 2015 and has enjoyed being a part of the “family” of local musicians and professionals.

The Fourth of July concert at Tom Brown Park will be the group’s first performance for a live audience since the COVID shut-down. Maia cannot wait to connect with listeners both old and new.

“Music is a bonding experience for any community because it brings everybody together,” says Maia.

“A chamber group is a small community. We have rehearsals where we have to listen to each other, respect each other’s opinion and help each other. Chamber groups and the orchestra can be seen as an example of how a community should work and potentially how a city, state or country could work.”

Amanda Sieradzki is the feature writer for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area’s umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).