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## **WHERE BALLET FLATS MEET BRUSHSTROKES**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – From classical concertos under the oaks to weekend art festivals in the park, culture and arts converge to make Tallahassee an epicenter for the performing and visual arts. Through the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) and the numerous programs and organizations dedicated to ensuring a thriving arts community, Florida’s Capital City embraces its dynamic culture and encourages its visitors to do the same. Whether it’s the Annual Florida African Dance Exhibition, Tallahassee Film Festival or First Friday Gallery Hop at Railroad Square, a cultural happening is just waiting to be discovered. ([www.VisitTallahassee.com](http://www.VisitTallahassee.com))

As a high point on Tallahassee’s cultural calendar, Florida State University’s Seven Days of Opening Nights is a weeklong celebration of performing arts held every February. Since 1999, FSU has committed to engaging the community and its visitors with world-renowned performers, from blues legend Buddy Guy and American roots sweetheart Alison Krauss, to the unrivaled writings of Stephen King and the heavenly sounds of the Vienna Boys Choir. The main performance hall, Ruby Diamond Auditorium, is currently undergoing a \$30 million renovation, and the 2011 celebration will mark its return to center stage.

With a mission to promote and advance education, interest and participation in the visual arts, LeMoyne Center for Visual Arts is a cornerstone in the Tallahassee arts scene. Providing exhibitions, year round classes and arts-related events, the Center is a driving force in advancing the arts in the Big Bend area.

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Each spring, 100 of the country's most talented artists assemble in Tallahassee for the annual LeMoyne Chain of Parks Art Festival, held downtown in a string of historic, oak-lined parks. Attracting more than 40,000 visitors each year and set among a backdrop of blooming dogwoods, azaleas and camellias, the festival showcases the finest in drawing/painting, fine crafts, jewelry, mixed media, photography and sculpture.

As one of the country's leading universities in the visual and performing arts, FSU's College of Music is the third largest program in higher education. Home to two Grammy Award winners, a former concert master for the New York Philharmonic, a Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and a former leading tenor of the Metropolitan Opera, the College is at the forefront of music education and regularly entertains the community with more than 400 concerts and recitals each year, from jazz and concert bands and chamber music to seven choral ensembles and opera.

The FSU College of Visual Arts, Theatre and Dance is in a race to become the top program in the country, and graduates of the programs have seen successful careers on stages, behind and in front of cameras and in art galleries across the country. With former principal ballerina for the New York City Ballet and Kennedy Center Honoree Suzanne Farrell leading the Dance program, ballet performances at the Nancy Smith Fichter Theater are not to be missed. As an extension of the College, the Museum of Fine Arts is an enriching experience with a permanent collection of more than 4,000 pieces, ranging from pre-Columbian pottery to contemporary art, from Rembrandt to Picasso.

FSU adds another dimension to its artistic endeavors through the Master Craftsman Studio, a university department that allows students to see a working professional studio and be exposed to the inner business workings, beginning with estimates and ideas and concluding with installation and invoices.

Projects include custom mosaics, sculptures, ship models and cast stone benches, in addition to iron pouring and glass blowing. Combining pieces of metal and iron, the materials are melted and molded into objects for projects such as FSU's Legacy Walk, while glass blowing involves blowing molten glass to create objects such as glasses and bowls. Summer workshops are open to the public.

As if FSU didn't offer enough entertainment for Tallahassee visitors, the FSU Flying High Circus, one of only two collegiate circuses in the country, performs under the Big Top every spring. The campus troupe celebrates more than 60 years of breathtaking shows with thrills rivaling those found in professional circuses, with jaw dropping routines, both in the air and on the ground.

Also located in Tallahassee, Florida A&M University (FAMU) holds its own in the arts world and boasts the Foster Tanner Fine Arts Gallery. The Gallery has a long and distinguished history of service to areas of visual arts and art education, as well as to the entire state of Florida and to the FAMU community. The gallery provides top quality and international exhibitions and gallery openings, and, due to the ever-evolving racial dynamic of the FAMU community, select works of arts by adults, adolescents and children of all races, creeds and nationalities and genders have been on exhibit for the educational and cultural enrichment of FAMU and the surrounding Tallahassee area.

Established in 1892, FAMU's history-making Marching 100 is known as one of the most energetic and talented marching bands in the country. Credited with creating at least 30 standard operating procedures that are used in many high school and collegiate band programs in the nation, the Marching 100 can be enjoyed every football season during FAMU's halftime show.

Off college campuses and serving Tallahassee and the surrounding area since 1979 as a professional and accomplished symphony orchestra, the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra (TSO) showcases musicians from around the country and pulls talent from the Florida State University College of Music, one of the single most influential music institutions in the country.

Presenting four classical concerts, an American Celebration, Holiday Magic and one Young People's Concert per season, the TSO also presents Pops in the Park. The annual springtime musical celebration is performed lakeside in SouthWood, where the musically inclined listen to the sounds of Beethoven, Brahms or Tchaikovsky while relaxing under the stars and moss-draped live oaks.

Fostering academic excellence and building character and self esteem go hand-in-hand with creating beautiful music. The Boys' Choir of Tallahassee, while emphasizing life skills and the importance of education. Its extraordinary musical repertoire has reached all corners of the world, from the halls of St. Peter's Basilica to the inauguration ceremonies of President Barack Obama. Residents and visitors alike can enjoy the sounds of the Boys' Choir throughout the year, as they put on local performances across the area.

Visitors looking for a different type of musical performance head to Bradfordville Blues Club. Affectionately known as BBC, this rockin' juke joint is an off-the-beaten-path venue that regularly features award-winning blues artists and acts from around the country, with more than 50 original portraits hanging on the walls and sitting on table tops, all autographed by the "Kings and Queens" of the blues.

For a more eclectic encounter, the First Friday Gallery Hop, held the first Friday of every month, treats art lovers to an evening jaunt through Tallahassee's finest and funkier art galleries. The most popular Gallery Hop destination is Railroad Square Art Park, the crown jewel of the recently revitalized Arts District. A fairly quiet area during the rest of the month, Railroad Square comes alive during First Fridays and is home to more than 50 studios, galleries and small shops, including 621 Gallery, where community and culture are one in the same.

The non-profit 621 Gallery was established in 1981 as a gallery and studio for local artists and is supported by a board of local artists, FSU and FAMU faculty and community art patrons. The Nan Boynton Gallery at 621 is a designated gallery for Tallahassee artists.

Another hot spot for local artisans is the Downtown Marketplace, in its 15<sup>th</sup> year and held March through November of every year. Featuring local produce and artwork, from paintings to sculptures, Downtown Marketplace is a great place for a Saturday morning stroll.

Just two blocks from Downtown Marketplace is the Mary Brogan Museum of Art & Sciences. A cornerstone of learning and an important resource for the community, with exhibits and programs ranging from visual arts, humanities education and science exploration, the Brogan regularly features rare art collections, including traveling collections from the National Museum of Art and an exhibit dedicated to the women of the Napoleonic era.

For a dose of the bizarre and unexpected, the Mickee Faust Club is the “community theatre for the weird community.” With original performances such as “Sex, Beer and Shakespeare,” the acting troupe is referred to as the Faustkateers and their writing style typically keeps with the same themes – making fun of death, religion, the audience and each other. Performances are hilarious and often poignant parodies.

A short drive from Tallahassee, the Gadsden Arts Center, located in neighboring Quincy, Fla., is a successful effort to bring fine arts to a rural community that is highly diverse, culturally, racially and ethnically. Using art to tie the community together, Gadsden Arts Center has grown exponentially since its inception in 1994 and features an impressive permanent collection from local and regional artists.

With a unified arts organization such as COCA, as well as the efforts of two major universities and neighboring communities, Tallahassee has created a thriving arts community that offers endless enriching experiences. A fusion of cosmopolitan flair and charming personality defines the spirit of Florida’s Capital City – where it all comes together for visitors.

Stretching along Florida's Panhandle, Tallahassee is a place where college town meets cultural center, politics meets performing arts and history meets nature – a place where the vibrancy of what to do is matched only by the city's inviting hospitality. Additional visitor information is available from **Visit Tallahassee** at [www.VisitTallahassee.com](http://www.VisitTallahassee.com) or (800) 628-2866.

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**About Visit Tallahassee**

Visit Tallahassee is the official tourism marketing organization for Tallahassee and Leon County Florida, operating as a department of Leon County Government. Visit Tallahassee promotes tourism to the area through direct sales, advertising, public relations, sports, film, product development and visitor services. For more information, visit [www.VisitTallahassee.com](http://www.VisitTallahassee.com).