

Creative Encounters

BY G.K. SHARMAN

In its fourth year, Creative City Project brings artists and performers together for an evening of creativity in the heart of downtown Orlando.

If you're impressed by home theater surround-sound, wait until you hear what standing in the middle of a concert orchestra sounds like.

Talk about being one with the music. Arrayed on five stages, the Central Florida Community Orchestra will encircle its listeners in sound — one of the defining experiences of this year's Creative City Project.

If you haven't heard, Creative City is an annual explosion of creativity emanating from its epicenter at the intersection of Orange Avenue and Central Boulevard in downtown Orlando. Set for Saturday, Oct. 15, the event is free and family friendly.

"It's an immersive orchestral experience," explains Creative City Project Founder Cole NeSmith. "An experience you can't have anywhere else."

Featuring everything from concerts and spectacles to popup performance installations and "large wow murals," Creative City gives Orlando's many artists, from large organizations to up-and-coming individuals, a chance to participate and make an impact on the city's creativity quotient. Some 1,000 artists and performers, new and returning, are involved in this year's event.

The Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra is making its first appearance at Creative City. Accidental Music Festival, a perennial favorite, will present a 70-minute modern classical installation with music that shifts as the audience comes and goes.

Another fave, Cirque du Soleil, will perform a new act from its *La Nouba* show at Disney Springs: an acrobatic duo performing on a steel beam suspended from a crane. A live singer will serenade from a nearby balcony.

And who says art has to be something you watch or listen to? Local bartending sensation Michael Ring will feature cocktail creations at Art of the Cocktail. Dinner at Artisan's Table, on nearby Pine Street, is included in a VIP package.

Also on the agenda: a vast number of small-venue performances, screen printing and a letterpress demo



LAST YEAR'S LATIN DANCE performance is returning, with the help of producers Maria Saavedra and Teresa Borker. Twenty-five ethnicities and cultures were represented in the line-up of 2015.

JOSEPH HOLLAND, IMAGE STILL PHOTOGRAPHY

from Mama's Sauce print shop — and what NeSmith calls "artistic surprises." Local artists and food purveyors will have booths as well.

The event itself is free, though organizers ask that attendees register online. For a \$10 donation you can be entered in a raffle for a prize package that also includes two additional event tickets.

VIP tickets, which include reserved VIP spaces front and center at all of the main performance venues, a customized VIP route and time guide, and a ticket for a free drink at Art of the Cocktail, are \$100. For \$150, the deluxe VIP experience includes everything on the VIP list as well as appetizers and dinner at Artisan's Table.

Last year's event brought an estimated 15,000 people downtown, NeSmith says, and he's hoping for 20,000 this year. Chances are, they'll be in awe of what they see.

For more event details and to purchase VIP tickets or make donations, visit creativecommonsproject.com. [oam](#)

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