

# Carnival Center for the Performing Arts

## MIAMI'S NEW LEGACY

BY CASSANDRA JOHNSON PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAX AMS



◀ Governor Jeb Bush speaking at the opening ceremony

athletes, and international stars to the 2200-seat Knight Concert Hall.

### Act II – Oct 6th

Two of the Carnival Center's four resident companies—New World Symphony and Concert Association of Florida—shared the limelight. The intoxicating sounds of the New World Symphony, led by Michael Tilson Thomas unleashed the world premiere of *Turn The Key*, created by acclaimed American composer, Stephan Mackey. Beethoven's *Violin Concerto* was performed by Grammy Award-winning Russian violin virtuoso Maxim Vengerov and world-renowned Canadian soprano Measha Brueggergosman.

### Act III – Oct 7th

The Ziff Ballet Opera House was immersed in elegance as Florida Grand Opera's performed Act II of Puccini's *La Bohème*. Patricia Racette, and Tony Award winner Harvey Fierstein struck the unconscious and awakened the senses.

As curtains revealed a special performance of the final act of Tchaikovsky and Petipa's *The Sleeping Beauty*, gasps of delight swept through the packed house. Staged for the first time in the history of the Miami City Ballet, this timeless ballet was executed flawlessly. Dancers glided across the staged landscape in a multitude of *petite allegros*, *grand adagios*, and *pas de deux*, as Aurora's Wedding

What was once a desolate tract of retail space has been miraculously transformed into Miami's cultural Mecca. The brazen architecture and dazzling lights of the Sanford and Delores Ziff Ballet Opera House and the John S. and James L. Knight Concert Hall has turned a lingering abyss into a constellation of the arts that has illuminated Miami. The \$450 million Carnival Center for the Performing Arts is the result of an astounding synergy between the public and private sectors, and its opening slate of festivities October 5-8 was nothing short of spellbinding.

### Act I – Oct 5th

Marking the focus of Miami's artistic resurgence, dancers and drummers rumbled up Biscayne Boulevard in a slew of prismatic ruffles, arriving in

front of the Ziff Ballet Opera House. Beats of samba, Japanese and urban street drums resounded through the corridor, marking a moment decades in the making. As fireworks erupted overhead, Michael Hardy, president of the Carnival Center Trust, presented Miami's cultural bastion to the audience and the city. Various luminaries and political figures, including Governor Jeb Bush, addressed the crowd with praise for those who had carved the Carnival Center from a long-standing dream into a concrete reality.

Members of the Miami Heat made a special on-stage appearance to the delight of the audience before over 150 performers cast ethereal music in *The Concert for Miami*. Quincy Jones hosted the star-studded event featuring Gloria and Emilio Estefan, Alejandro Sanz, Bernadette Peters, Andy Garcia and many others who welcomed the crowd of politicians, business leaders,

gave life to fairies of the enchanted garden. These performances evoked comparisons of the Grand Ballets at Lincoln Center in New York, according to many spectators. "This center is going to be a preamble of success in bringing the city together around the arts," noted Senator John Kerry.

Following the concert, a black-tie gala in the Boulevard Ballroom further celebrated the landmark Carnival Center. Guests were treated to a special three-course meal and orchestral performance. Sherwood "Woody" Weiser, chairman of the board for the Carnival Center Foundation, spoke in length, thanking the donors of the trust and claiming the night as a "defining moment for Miami as it changes course."

#### Act IV – October 8th

The final day of the Carnival Center's grand opening culminated with a resounding bang! *Target Globalbeat* was an open house blowout filled with the rhythmic sounds of far away lands. Gospel, reggae, rumba, cumbia, calypso, konpa, and other urban styles occupied eight stages and represented Miami's musical diversity as Gateway to the Americas.

#### Denouement

The grand opening of the Carnival Center for the Performing Arts was the fuse that has ignited Miami's new artistic legacy. Just as rocky shoals boast lighthouses to guide ships safely into port, the Carnival Center will brighten the pathway of the arts into the future.

