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The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County and Greater Miami Youth Symphony partner to develop, commission and premiere their first family-friendly musical composition in 2023 “THE OCEAN LIVES THERE”

South Florida’s Ethan Soledad to compose piece following a statewide call for artists

Greater Miami Youth Symphony to premiere work during the Center’s free Family Fest in 2023

Miami, FL – November 1, 2022 – The **Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County** ([@arshtcenter](https://www.arshtcenter.org)) and **Greater Miami Youth Symphony** ([@gmysymphony](https://www.gmysymphony.org)) **announce the creation of their first family-friendly musical composition, a celebration of life in the Tropics.** Entirely Florida made, the original score draws inspiration from a picture book by Miami author M.J. Fievre and is composed by Broward native Ethan Soledad for the Greater Miami Youth Symphony (GMYS). The piece will have its world premiere on April 15, 2023 when the Greater Miami Youth Symphony performs it as part of the Arsht Center’s signature free Family Fest series.

“‘The Ocean Lives There’ celebrates Florida-made music and literature, educates young musicians in the practice of new work and provides an accessible and engaging musical experience for families,” said Jairo Ontiveros, Arsht Center vice president of arts education and community engagement.

The project began in summer 2022 with a statewide search for local composers followed by an independent review of submissions by a panel comprised of diverse music experts from across the Miami community. Ethan Soledad, a native of Broward County and graduate of Florida State University, was selected to compose this new piece. At just 23 years old, Soledad’s compositions have been performed at the Etchings Festival (Massachusetts), Charlotte New Music Festival (NC) and at the [Oregon Bach Festival Composer Symposium](#).

“With Ethan’s talent, we transform the rich sounds of life near the equator into a musical gift for generations of young audiences and musicians,” continued Ontiveros.

Making it a truly memorable experience for audiences, “The Ocean Lives There” will include live narration and interactive components in addition to a full orchestral performance by GMYS. Founded in 1958, GMYS is an inclusive year-round, multi-tiered music training program consisting of over 600 students ranging in age from 5 to 18. Learn more about GMYS at [gmys.org](https://www.gmys.org).

“Generations of children have been introduced to orchestral music through works like “Peter and the Wolf.” With ‘The Ocean Lives There,’ the Greater Miami Youth Symphony and the Arsht Center introduce a new generation of youth to the emotive, colorful sounds of tropical culture – sounds that

are inclusive of the rich Caribbean communities that have made Florida their home," said Jessica Munch-Dittmar, executive director of the Greater Miami Youth Symphony.

After carefully considering a number of high-quality children's stories written by local authors, the Arsht Center and GMYS selected "The Ocean Lives There: Magic, Music, and Fun on a Caribbean Adventure" as the inspiration for the program. Written by Miami-based, Haitian-born author [M.J. Fievre](#), the picture book tells the story of a door that leads a young girl to vibrant memories and visceral connections to a homeland she never knew.

"The Ocean Lives There" marks the first time the Arsht Center commissions an original piece made specifically for South Florida families. The intention is to elevate the state's tropical cultures and highlight the shared immigrant experience of many South Florida communities. Other Arsht Center musical commissions have included Chucho Valdes' "La Creacion" (2021); "Caravan: Road to Revolution" by Terence Blanchard, the E-Collective, Rennie Harris and Andrew Scott (2019); The Vivaldi Project "4", a collaboration between Decadancetheatre and Miami's Nu Deco Ensemble (2017); and Avner Dorman's "Siklon" (2016).

["The Ocean Lives There."](#) presented by the Greater Miami Youth Symphony and the Adrienne Arsht Center, will be performed FREE on Saturday, April 15, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. Family Fest is supported by presenting sponsor Baptist Health South Florida. For more information on FREE first-access passes, visit [here](#).

ABOUT THE ARSHT CENTER'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

FAMILY FEST is one of the 10 ongoing Arsht Center programs committed to community engagement and deepening the experience of the performing arts for all Miami-Dade County residents. Having served more than 105,000 people throughout its 16-year history, the programs broaden community participation and open the sights, sounds and possibilities of the world through the performing arts. New programs include: **Broadway on Biscayne**, a series of pre-and post- performance experiences giving audiences a closer look at the shows; and **Club Broadway** which brings together a cohort of teen Broadway enthusiasts for shows and workshops. Existing programs include: **Free Gospel Sundays**, featuring Miami's best gospel artists and nationally renowned gospel headliners; **The Heritage Project**, a free salon series and annual festival featuring panel discussions surrounding performing arts and social justice in the Black community; **AileyCamp Miami**, a full-scholarship, six-week summer dance camp which uses dance as a vehicle for the personal development of young people; **CommuniTea Dance**, an annual celebration honoring Miami's LGBTQ+ community; **Knight Masterworks Classical Conversations**, a series of free lectures which give the audience insight into the musicians, composers and history of music presented in our Knight Masterworks Classical Music series; **Accessing the Arts Residencies**, art workshops for children and adults with disabilities; and **Arsht on the Road**, a series of free pop-up performances that bring the arts into Miami-Dade County's diverse neighborhoods.



Image of (from left) Composer Ethan Soledad, Greater Miami Youth Symphony Artistic Director and Symphony conductor Huifang Chen and "The Ocean Lives There" author MJ Fievre – Photo by Morgan Sophia Photography



Image of Composer Ethan Soledad working with Greater Miami Youth Symphony musicians on his original composition, which was commissioned by the Arsht Center and GMYS - Photo by Morgan Sophia Photography



Image of author MJ Fievre speaking with GMYS musicians about her book, "The Ocean Lives There," – Photo by Morgan Sophia Photography

To download high-resolution versions of the photos above, click [here](#).

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*All programs, artists, ticket prices, availability, dates and times are subject to change without notice. Visit arshtcenter.org for up-to-date information.

The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County is made possible by the public support of the Miami-Dade County Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners, the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Tourist Development Council and the City of Miami Omni Community Redevelopment Agency, as well as the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. The Adrienne Arsht Center also receives generous support from individuals, corporations and local, state and national foundations.

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About Us

Set in the heart of downtown Miami, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County is committed to welcoming and connecting ALL people to the arts, to the Arsht Center and to each other. Our stages are alive year-round with artists from around the world, innovative programming from our resident

Adrienne Arsht Center

FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY



MUSIC FOR ALL LEVELS AND ABILITIES

companies and local arts partners, free community events that reflect Miami's unique identity and arts education experiences for thousands of Miami children each year.

Since opening in 2006, the Arsht Center, a 501C3 non-profit organization, has been recognized as a catalyst for billions of dollars in new development in the downtown area, a leader in programming that mirrors South Florida's diversity, a host venue for historic events and Miami's hub for arts education.

Each year, we serve more than 60,000 young learners and offer more than 100 culturally diverse and inclusive education programs — many enhanced by the Arsht Center's relationship with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, local teaching artists and Miami-based arts organizations.

The Arsht Center is also a home stage for three resident companies — Florida Grand Opera, Miami City Ballet and New World Symphony — and a launch pad for local artists to make their mark on the international stage. Our 300+ events each year include the Center's Signature Series of classical, jazz, Broadway, local theater and much more. We present a robust series of touring Broadway musicals direct from New York, the largest jazz series in South Florida, a major annual Flamenco Festival and an award-winning Miami-based theater program. In addition, our Family Fest, Free Gospel Sundays, CommuniTEA LGBTQ+ celebration and Heritage Fest are among dozens of free events that bring together people from all corners of our community. For more information, visit arshtcenter.org.

About Greater Miami Youth Symphony

Since 1958, the Greater Miami Youth Symphony (GMYS) has been a cornerstone of Miami's thriving arts and culture scene. Over the years, the orchestra has seen and survived rough times – from recessions to the pandemic, we've remained strong because our community has surrounded us.

Our mission is to instill life-long values of discipline, teamwork, responsibility, respect, and cultural appreciation in young musicians while enriching the cultural foundation of our community by reaching out to and recruiting young musicians from different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. We understand how important it is to keep the music playing and the difference it makes in the lives of the many students we serve. For more information on the Greater Miami Youth Symphony, visit gmys.org.