

CENTER PREPARES TO CELEBRATE 10TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

July 13, 2017 (Tampa, FL) – *Let the Magic Begin.*

That was the Carrollwood Cultural Center's message when it opened almost ten years ago. After years of negotiations, renovations, new construction, building public awareness, the only thing left to do was to open the front doors and let the magic happen.

The magic of the Carrollwood Cultural Center, located at 4537 Lowell Road in Tampa, actually began several years prior with a special partnership between Hillsborough County and the Friends of Carrollwood Cultural Center (FCCC), a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for residents through arts and culture. Together, the county and the FCCC worked to renovate St. Mark's Episcopal Church into the creative center it is today.

However, when it opened in March 2008, there was no outdoor marquee. No lighting system. No sound system. No coffee bar. No monthly market. What the organization did have was a supportive community, dedicated volunteers and a lot of spirit.

The interior of the Center was beautiful, but surrounded with stark arctic-white walls. One painting on display, by artist Peter Stilton, perched on a bronze easel in the lobby. Over the years, the Gallery at Carrollwood Cultural Center grew to include several mini-galleries, with proper gallery lighting, allowing the organization to exhibit several shows, and host multiple artists, at one time.

The main stage was unmarked, showing no signs of life. Now the stage resembles that of a working theatre, with markings that tell stories as entertaining as the performers it has supported including Janis Ian, Donald Pippin and Ron Raines.

The opening team had four staff members. Now, almost a decade later, the staff is 13 strong – hardworking people who, with the help of the community, have built every aspect of its operation from the ground up.

This October, the Center will launch its 10th Anniversary Season – a series of events and activities that represent the best of what they have done, along with some hints of what to expect in the future. The schedule will include performances by groups that originated at the Center, including Jazz with Jim, the Carrollwood Community Chorus, Carrollwood Winds, Carrollwood Jukebox Big Band, Carrollwood Brass, and the Big Treble Youth Group.

The Center's resident theatre troupe, MAS Theatre, will also have a busy year. The theatre season will open in October with *Nunsense*, a musical comedy by Dan Goggin with eight (yes, that's 8) sequels. Over the next few years the Center intends to produce them *all*.

The MAS season will also include Howard Knoch's adaptation of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* (October), Michele Lowe's devilish comedy, *The Smell of the Kill* (May) and Goggin's *Nunsense II: The Second Coming* (September 2018).

In March, MAS will collaborate with the Carrollwood Community Chorus and the Carrollwood Winds on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, a new musical based on the Victor Hugo novel and songs from the Disney film. With music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Stephen Schwartz and book by Peter Parnell, this production will combine the talents of the three groups into one large production, making it easily the largest and most ambitious production ever attempted on the Center stage.

For the Center's annual summer musical, they are going back to the beginning with a restaging of Lionel Bart's *Oliver!* This award-winning musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* is a sentimental choice for the organization as it was the first musical ever produced at the Center back in 2009.

Featured entertainers returning to the Center include Peace of Woodstock, The New Christy Minstrels, Emile Pandolfi, The Sounds of Soul, Franz Mantini, Cypress Creek Jazz Band, A.C.T. for Youth, Mr. Tommy, the production team of Washington and Eisenstadt, the comedians of Girls Night Out, and more.

For more information about the Carrollwood Cultural Center's 10th Anniversary Season and to purchase tickets, please visit CarrollwoodCenter.org.

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The Carrollwood Cultural Center is a partnership between Hillsborough County and the Friends of the Carrollwood Cultural Center. The mission of the Friends of the Center is to create culture through community and community through culture. The Friends of the Carrollwood Cultural Center, a 501(c)3 organization. For more information visit the Center website at www.carrollwoodcenter.org.

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