

January 10, 2012

Downtown Miami concert series expands to summer, Gusman Center thanks to \$100K grant

By Sergio N. Candido
Open Media Miami



Just like the changing of seasons, the free DWNTWN Concert Series used to come in October and leave in April, right before summertime. But thanks to a \$100,000 grant by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation not only will the free concerts stay year-round, they'll serve to support one of Miami's landmarks: The historic Gusman Center for the Performing Arts.

The expanded concert series will continue to host monthly events during the winter months at Bayfront Park and at the Gusman during the summer with the goal of introducing new audiences to the arts center, increasing foot traffic in the Flagler Street corridor, and creating a sense of community among downtown residents and visitors, according to a press release.

The foundation's grant requires a matching investment, so the Miami Downtown Development Authority will also be dishing out \$100,000 of its own.

The money and newer crowds will serve well the historic Gusman arts center and movie theater, which was built in 1926. The center lost a \$475,000 annual subsidy from the City of Miami last year.

"Few things bring people together like the arts, and this year-round concert series will help provide the vibrant gatherings and spaces that communities need to thrive," said Dennis Scholl, Knight Foundation's vice president/arts in a released statement.

The Knight Foundation is a nonprofit that supports journalism, informing communities and bringing them together through the arts.

The DDA organizes the monthly concerts. The DDA is an independent public agency of the City of Miami funded by a property tax paid by residents and businesses within the district's boundaries. Its mission is to improve the economy of downtown Miami through events, marketing and capital improvement projects.