

# Adrienne Arsht Center

FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County and the  
Dranoff 2 Piano Foundation  
present**

## **PIANO SLAM 2024**

**Miami's top teen poets present original spoken word pieces set to live hip-hop,  
classical and jazz performances including the music of legendary Cuban artist,  
Chucho Valdes**

**April 11, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.  
Free with First-Access Passes\*  
John S. and James L. Knight Concert Hall**

**MIAMI – February 29, 2024** – The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County ([@arshtcenter](#)) and the Dranoff 2 Piano Foundation ([@dranoff2piano](#)) are proud to present **PIANO SLAM 2024** on April 11, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. in the Center's Knight Concert Hall. Taking place during National Poetry Month, the event features Miami's top teen poets who will share their original spoken word mash-ups paired with classical and hip-hop music around the theme, "My Music, Miami, All We Can Save – Rhythms & Writings of Restoration," and set to "Suite Afro Cubana to Lico Jimenez" created by the legendary Cuban artist, Chucho Valdes.

Admission to **PIANO SLAM 2024** is free\*. First-Access Passes, which give guests early access to general admission seating, can be reserved for the performance now. Reserve passes online at [arshtcenter.org](#) by calling the Adrienne Arsht Center box office at 305- 949-6722.

In its 17th year, **PIANO SLAM** features live musical performances and program opportunities for students, families and teachers. This year's focus centers on the history of artists neglected through cultural suppression. The chosen musical piece for this theme is "Suite Afro Cubana to Lico Jimenez," Chucho Valdes' composition dedicated to reclaiming the legacy of Afro-Cuban composers and musicians who have been unjustly overlooked. The poetry competition will expand to include student music and soundscapes that should be safeguarded for future generations. It will also include writing workshops for educators that will include the inspiration of music and the sounds of our environment.

In a career spanning more than 60 years, both as a solo artist and bandleader, Valdes has distilled elements of the Afro-Cuban music tradition, jazz, classical music, rock and more, into a deeply personal style. Winner of seven GRAMMY® and six Latin GRAMMY® Awards, Valdes

received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Latin Academy of Recording Arts & Science in 2023 and was also inducted into the Latin Songwriters Hall of Fame.

"**PIANO SLAM 2024** is a dynamic convergence of Miami's young poets and the rhythmic legacy of Chucho Valdes, weaving together spoken word and music in a celebration of restoration, inclusion and the enduring power of artistic expression," says Carlene Sawyer, Piano Slam creator and producer.

**PIANO SLAM** presents live concerts, poets, scientists and hip-hop spoken word to teens in Miami's middle and high school classrooms culminating in a countywide poetry competition based on the role of music in their lives. Out of thousands of creative submissions, 16 semifinalists are chosen to perform in the Grand Finals concert and competition on the Arsht Center's Knight Concert Hall stage. Prizes of \$1,000 are awarded to the top student poets. For the past 11 years, **PIANO SLAM** has included a STEAM track and has taken students and their teachers to music performances, provided teacher workshops, environmental science research activities, and citizen science field trips by students to study environmental issues impacting their lives.

For over a decade, the Dranoff 2 Piano Foundation's **PIANO SLAM** has been bridging the creative divide between teenage music enthusiasts and professional performance artists across Miami-Dade County, from Hialeah to the beaches and Miami Gardens to Homestead. The event is co-presented with the Adrienne Arsht Center and sponsored by some of Miami's most respected institutions, including Miami-Dade County, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Books & Books, The Children's Trust, and the Miami HEAT.

**PIANO SLAM** is directed by Tanisha Cidel with music direction by Martin Bejerano. **PIANO SLAM**'s wildly popular County-wide music-based poetry competition has worked with more than 150,000 Miami-Dade Public middle and high school students making classical music fun and an inspiration for their own creative writing. Additional musicians include: Anthony "Tony" Laurencio, DJ and the New Canon Chamber Collective for the classical ensemble.

#### **About the Dranoff 2 Piano x Adrienne Arsht Center Partnership**

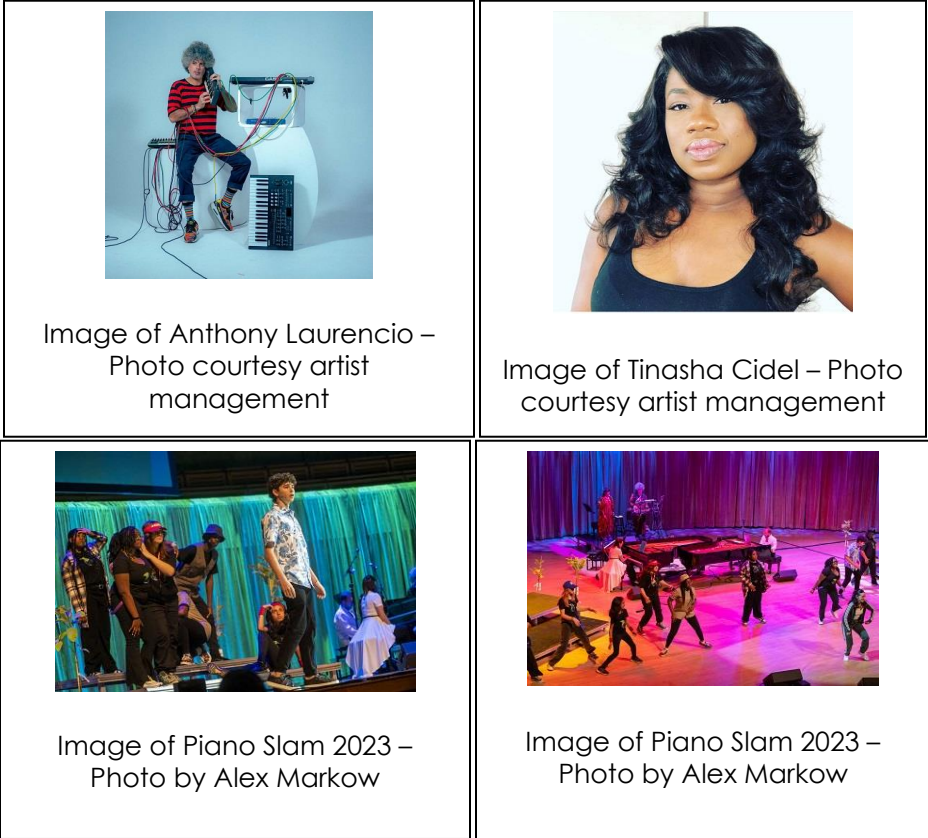
The partnership between The Dranoff Foundation and the Adrienne Arsht Center dates back to 2006, when the Arsht Center had just opened. The Dranoff Foundation, which aims to discover young artists, nurture their talent, and provide them with a platform to showcase their music, joined forces with the Arsht Center to establish a community school-based outreach program in the performing arts. This program was designed to serve young people and their families in the neighborhoods surrounding the new performing arts center.

In the very first year of the PIANO SLAM program, five middle schools located in Overtown, Liberty City, Brownsville, and Little Haiti - participated. Today, more than 100 middle and high schools in Miami Dade Public Schools enjoyed in-school professional artist programs and performances and submitted student poetry to the music-based competition.

Over the 15 years in partnership with the Arsht Center's community engagement and education initiatives, Dranoff 2 Piano Foundation has brought artists, musicians, scientists and educators into over 100 middle and high schools and every school and community district in the county. The ArshtCenter has partnered in teacher professional development, training educators in all core subjects to use music and arts-integrated curriculum in their classrooms.

Dranoff 2 Piano and the Arsht Center provide performance, art, music, writing, coaching and training for students participating in PIANO SLAM. The Adrienne Arsht Center provides a world-class community-based platform for students and top professional artists to perform in the Finals competition concert in the Knight Concert Hall. Tens of thousands of families throughout Miami Dade County have become part of Miami's art scene through PIANO SLAM in the schools and the Dranoff 2 Piano performances with award-winning musicians, dancers and top theater professionals as part of a student and professional artist extravaganza of great entertainment in the Knight Concert Hall.

For more information on Dranoff 2 Piano, please visit [www.Dranoff2Piano.org](http://www.Dranoff2Piano.org).



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

@ArshtCenter #ArshtCenter

\*All programs, artists, ticket prices, availability, dates and times are subject to change without notice. Visit [arshtcenter.org](http://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 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](http://arshtcenter.org).