KAUFFMAN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
TO OPEN IN KANSAS CITY SEPTEMBER 16-18, 2011

Guest Stars Placido Domingo and Itzhak Perlman Will Perform At Opening Galas
Greater Kansas City Invited to Special Community Day

Kansas City, MO, October 14, 2010 – The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, a new center for music, opera, theater, and dance, will open in downtown Kansas City, Missouri September 16-18, 2011 with a weekend of celebration. The Kauffman Center will host back-to-back Grand Opening galas to inaugurate its two new performance halls, bringing legends Placido Domingo and Itzhak Perlman to Kansas City on the evenings of Friday, September 16 and Saturday, September 17, 2011, respectively. The opening weekend will culminate with a community day on Sunday, September 18 featuring performances on the stages of the Kauffman Center’s new houses: the Muriel Kauffman Theatre and Helzberg Hall.

Designed by architect Moshe Safdie, the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts will present a wide spectrum of entertainers and performances from around the world, including classical, pop, and jazz music, ballet and contemporary dance, Broadway productions, comedy shows and more. It will also be the performance home to three of the region’s leading performing arts organizations—Kansas City Ballet, Kansas City Symphony, and Lyric Opera of Kansas City. The Kauffman Center will be one of the most technically and architecturally advanced performing arts centers in the nation, allowing its resident companies and presenters to stage more sophisticated work, encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, and foster the cross-fertilization of the companies’ audiences. The 285,000 square-foot facility will include two separate halls: the 1,600 seat Helzberg Hall and the 1,800 seat Muriel Kauffman Theatre—both housed within a dramatic overarching shell featuring a glass roof and glass walls. The Brandmeyer Great Hall will provide sweeping views of Kansas City.

The Kauffman Center’s Grand Opening events are designed to showcase the capabilities of the Center’s two venues, Muriel Kauffman Theatre and Helzberg Hall. The weekend will kick off on Friday, September 16 with a tribute to the center’s late namesake, Muriel McBrien Kauffman. The gala evening will feature a range of performances from opera to Broadway, headlined by world-renowned tenor and
musician Placido Domingo, making his first appearance in Kansas City. The Center’s three resident companies, the Kansas City Ballet, Kansas City Symphony and Lyric Opera of Kansas City, will all take part in the program. The celebration will continue Saturday, September 17 in Helzberg Hall with a concert to showcase the acoustics of the new hall, featuring a special guest appearance by virtuoso violinist Itzhak Perlman accompanied by the Kansas City Symphony, conducted by Music Director, Maestro Michael Stern.

On Sunday, September 18, the Kauffman Center will open its doors to the community, hosting a series of short, family-friendly performances throughout the afternoon in both halls. Tours of the Center, including opportunities to see backstage areas, will give visitors a rare sneak peek behind the scenes.

“We can hardly wait to welcome the Kansas City community into the Kauffman Center and invite individuals and families from across the region to take part in our opening,” said Jane Chu, President and CEO of the Kauffman Center. “We are thrilled that two of the classical music world’s most acclaimed and beloved artists will be here to perform as part of the festivities, and we look forward to the opportunity to show off both the beauty and enhanced capabilities of our new performance halls. This is a great moment that we’ve all been waiting for.”

“I know mother would be proud to welcome the entire community to take part in these joyous opening celebrations,” said Julia Irene Kauffman, Chairman of the Board of the Kauffman Center and Chairman/CEO of the Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation. “The new performing arts center is a wonderful expression of her sense of civic responsibility and a gift that will keep on giving for generations to come.”

The Kauffman Center’s performance venues, Muriel Kauffman Theatre and Helzberg Hall, are two distinct structures, each existing in their own acoustical envelope. An overarching shell houses both venues and its glass roof creates a series of interior piazzas that serve as shared public spaces. The venues will share backstage facilities, including dressing accommodations for over 250 performers, as well as 11 rehearsal and warm-up rooms. The Kauffman Center’s grounds will be used for outdoor performances and as a public gathering space. The Center has been designed so it can accommodate future expansion along the eastern facade of the building.

The $413-million project includes $326 million for the creation of the performing arts center, a $40 million endowment, and a $47 million, 1,000-car underground parking garage funded by the City of Kansas City, MO. The Kauffman Center has raised more than $369 million to-date, more than 90 percent
of the total funding. Major gifts have included $30 million from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, $23 million from the Hall Family Foundation, $12 million from the Joe and Jeanne Brandmeyer Family Foundation, and $10 million from Shirley B. and Barnett C. Helzberg. In December 2000, the Kauffman Center received two gifts totaling $105-million to launch the project from Julia Irene Kauffman and the Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation—a fund established by the late civic leader and philanthropist to support organizations and programs that enhance the quality and accessibility of the arts in the greater Kansas City community.

About the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, a new multi-venue Center for music, opera, theater, and dance designed by Moshe Safdie will open in Kansas City September 16, 2011. The Kauffman Center seeks to enrich the lives of all Greater Kansas City residents by presenting vibrant performances, educational programming, and creating a tradition of the performing arts as a catalyst for Kansas City’s civic, economic, and educational vitality.

Three of the region’s leading performing arts organizations—Kansas City Ballet, Kansas City Symphony, and Lyric Opera of Kansas City—will be in residence at the Kauffman Center. The Kauffman Center’s two performance venues, the 1,600-seat Helzberg Hall and the 1,800-seat Muriel Kauffman Theatre, will offer audiences engaging and intimate experiences, while at the same time providing resident companies with dramatically enhanced performance capabilities.

Serving as a cultural cornerstone for Kansas City’s dynamic downtown, the Kauffman Center will bring a new spotlight to the region’s performing arts community while simultaneously attracting some of the world’s most talented performers and entertainers, further establishing Kansas City as a major cultural destination.

More information on the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts is available at kauffmancenter.org.

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