KAUFFMAN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS TO OPEN IN KANSAS CITY SEPTEMBER 2011

Designed by Moshe Safdie, $326 Million Kauffman Center is a Catalyst for the Educational, Civic, and Economic Vitality of the Region

Kauffman Center Will Bring Performers from Around the World to Kansas City Will Also Serve as Home of Kansas City Ballet, Symphony, and Lyric Opera

Kansas City, MO, October 12, 2010 – The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, a major new center for music, opera, theater, and dance, will open in downtown Kansas City, Missouri in September 2011. The Kauffman Center will present a wide range of entertainers and performances from around the world, including classical, pop, and jazz music, ballet and contemporary dance, Broadway productions, comedy shows, and more. In addition, the Kauffman Center will serve as the performance home of 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 further advance the role of the arts as a catalyst for the educational, civic, and economic vitality of Kansas City. When it opens, the 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 audiences. Designed by Moshe Safdie, the 285,000-square-foot facility will include two stand-alone halls—the 1,800-seat Muriel Kauffman Theatre and the 1,600-seat Helzberg Hall—both housed within a dramatic overarching shell featuring a glass roof and glass walls that provide sweeping views of Kansas City.

“The creation of the Kauffman Center will provide our outstanding performing arts organizations and audiences with the premier facilities they deserve, while at the same time presenting performers from around the world to the region,” said Jane Chu, President and CEO of the Kauffman Center. “It will further establish Kansas City as a dynamic destination for the arts, energizing the development of downtown and enriching the lives of all who live, work, and visit the city.”
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, Missouri. The Kauffman Center has raised more than $369 million to-date, nearly 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 a $105 million gift 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. In 1994, Muriel Kauffman began planning for the creation of a performing arts center in Kansas City. Since her death, Muriel’s daughter, Julia, Chairman of the Board of the Kauffman Center and Chairman/CEO of the Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation, has worked to realize her mother’s vision.

“The Kauffman Center will be an incredible resource for performers and audiences and a destination for everyone in the Greater Kansas City area. My mother’s dream was to foster extraordinary and diverse performing arts experiences in Kansas City, and I am proud that the Center will make this vision a reality for current and future generations,” said Julia Irene Kauffman.

Situated on 5 acres, including the 113,000-square-foot Performing Arts Center Terrace which will be used for outdoor performances and as a public gathering space, the Kauffman Center bridges three of Kansas City’s most dynamic downtown neighborhoods—the high-rise urban core of downtown to the north and east; the Crossroads Arts District, a low-rise neighborhood of industrial warehouses that has become a mecca of artist residencies, galleries, small business and shops to the south; and the Power & Light District, an entertainment center and home to the recently opened Sprint Center, to the northeast. The Kauffman Center will serve as a second cultural cornerstone in the city’s already vibrant arts community along with the recently expanded Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and its neighbors, the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art and Kansas City Art Institute.

The Kauffman Center’s two performance venues, Muriel Kauffman Theatre and Helzberg Hall, are two distinct structures, each existing in their own acoustical envelope and housed within a dramatic architectural shell. This shell features a glass roof and glass walls, creating the Center’s shared public spaces, a series of interior piazzas. Safdie collaborated with Richard Pilbrow of Theatre Projects Consultants and Yasuhisa Toyota of Nagata Acoustics America on the design of both halls, which will
share backstage facilities, including dressing accommodations for over 250 performers, as well as 11 rehearsal and warm-up rooms. The Center has been designed so it can accommodate future expansion along the east side of the building.

The north elevation of the building, which faces downtown Kansas City, features a series of arched walls sheathed in stainless steel that rise from the ground like a wave. From its crest a curved glass roof sweeps down towards the low-rise Crossroads neighborhood to the south and cascades into a 65-foot high by 330-foot wide glass wall, which provides the Kauffman Center’s Brandmeyer Great Hall with panoramic views of Kansas City. This dramatic glass façade and roof are anchored by 27 high-tension steel cables, reminiscent of a stringed instrument.

“The Kauffman Center will be a beacon for Kansas City—a transparent and welcoming place that radiates warmth and invites the community to come together. And as a hub for Kansas City’s performing arts, the Center will play a vital role in the social fabric of the region, linking both people and neighborhoods,” said Moshe Safdie, architect of the Kauffman Center. “This sense of connectivity continues in the halls themselves, which have been designed to create unparalleled intimate experiences for both artists and audiences.”

**Muriel Kauffman Theatre**

The Muriel Kauffman Theatre will host dance performances, plays, musicals and more, and will serve as the performance home of Kansas City Ballet and Lyric Opera of Kansas City. The 1,800-seat venue is designed to be visually striking, yet retain an intimate experience for both audiences and performers. Inspired by the great opera houses of Europe, audiences are seated in front of the stage in a variation on the traditional horseshoe configuration—bringing them closer to the performers than in traditional auditorium-style venues.

The design of the Muriel Kauffman Theatre’s expanded facilities will provide dramatically enhanced performance capabilities—including a vast 5,000-square-foot stage; a flexible orchestra pit that can accommodate 95 musicians; increased backstage facilities; a 74-foot tall fly tower; and a flexible proscenium stage opening. The Theatre’s fly tower will allow for scenery as tall as 30 feet to be flown above the stage, allowing productions to make use of more sophisticated scenic design elements.

The stage’s flexible proscenium opening will allow the width and height of the stage to be adjusted, making it tremendously adaptable and allowing for both intimate and larger-scale productions. The
Theatre will also offer the Figaro seatback system, with a personal monitor mounted on each seat for productions requiring translation.

**Helzberg Hall**

From chamber music to full orchestra, from jazz and pop to lectures and recitals, Helzberg Hall will be the performance home of the Kansas City Symphony as well as host the best and brightest international soloists and ensembles. Named in recognition of a $10-million gift from Shirley B. and Barnett C. Helzberg, the 1,600-seat venue is oval in shape, with a vineyard-style seating configuration. The stage extends approximately one-third of the distance into the Hall, thus placing 40 percent of the seats alongside or behind the orchestra. This creates an intimate and immersive experience for both artists and audiences and allows a portion of the audience to experience the musician’s perspective during performance. The distance from the stage to Helzberg Hall’s farthest seat is just over 100 feet.

The Hall will feature mechanical risers that allow the layout of the stage to be altered quickly and easily, greatly expanded backstage facilities, and acoustics which can be readily customized for solo concerts, chamber music, and full orchestra. Helzberg Hall will also enable the Kansas City Symphony to rehearse and perform in the same space, something it has been unable to do at its current home, the Lyric Theatre.

The visual centerpiece of Helzberg Hall will be a Casavant Frères pipe organ, which will be one of the finest concert hall organs in the country. Quebec-based firm Casavant Frères has custom-designed the mechanical organ in the French romantic tradition, with 79 stops, 102 ranks, and 5,548 pipes.

**Resident Companies**

The Kauffman Center will provide performance homes for three of Kansas City’s premier performing arts organizations and keep them unified under one roof. A greater range of programming will also be possible, when compared with the technical and scheduling constraints at the historic Lyric Theatre, the home all three organizations currently share. The Kauffman Center’s resident companies will include:

- **Kansas City Ballet** – Nationally recognized as one of the country’s leading companies, the Ballet enriches the cultural landscape of the Kansas City region through exceptional performances, touring engagements, community outreach activities, and Kansas City Ballet School. Under Artistic Director William Whitener, the 25-member company performs three mixed repertory programs per year with a focus on the rich history of American ballet. Eclectic programming ranges from classics to contemporary ballets, as well as the ever-popular *The Nutcracker*. The Ballet is home to Kansas City Ballet School, which serves more than 600 students each year.
• **Lyric Opera of Kansas City** – A cornerstone of the Kansas City cultural community and the city’s oldest professional performing arts organization, the Lyric Opera presents four operas each season—all sung in their original languages. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Ward Holmquist, the Company has gained national and international recognition, presenting a broad range of repertoire including several works by major American composers and three world premieres. The Lyric Opera reaches over 20,000 community members annually through its innovative, nationally-recognized education and outreach programming which is designed to further music and arts education in public schools and in the broader community.

• **Kansas City Symphony** – The Kansas City Symphony is the region’s only full-time professional orchestra and is a major force in the cultural life of the community. Under the artistic leadership of Music Director Michael Stern, the Symphony’s eighty full-time musicians perform more than 50 concerts each year, and also serve as the orchestra for Kansas City Ballet and Lyric Opera of Kansas City. Praised for providing performances of uncompromising standard, the ensemble often welcomes guest artists of international acclaim as part of their classical and pops subscription series. Complementing its full schedule of concerts, the Symphony strives to enrich the lives of Kansas City residents by providing music education opportunities for children and adults. Highlights each season include a range of free master classes, events, and concerts reaching over 100,000 community members each year.

**About Moshe Safdie**
Moshe Safdie is a leading architect, urban planner, educator, theorist, and author. Embracing a comprehensive and humane design philosophy, Safdie has been influential in architecture and urban planning for over forty years. Safdie is committed to architecture that supports and enhances a project’s program; that is informed by the geographic, social, and cultural elements that define a place; and that responds to human needs and aspirations. Safdie has completed a wide range of projects around the world, such as cultural, educational, and civic institutions; neighborhoods and public parks; mixed-use urban centers and airports; and master plans for existing communities and entirely new cities.

Current and recent projects by Moshe Safdie include Mamilla Alrov Center, Jerusalem, Israel (January 2010); Marina Bay Sands Integrated Resort, Singapore (December 2010); Khalsa Heritage Centre in the state of Punjab, India (April 2011); United States Institute of Peace Headquarters on the National Mall in Washington, DC (Spring 2011); and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas (2012). Based in Boston, Safdie Architects also has branch offices in Toronto, Jerusalem, and Singapore.

**About the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts**
The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, a major new center for music, opera, theater, and dance designed by Moshe Safdie will open in Kansas City in September 2011. The Kauffman Center will present vibrant performances and educational programming, and will advance the role of the performing arts as a catalyst for Kansas City’s educational, civic, and economic 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 1,800-seat Muriel Kauffman Theatre and the 1,600-seat Helzberg Hall, 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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For media in Kansas City:
Lisa Cordes
Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts
816-994-7237
lcordes@kauffmancenter.org

For media outside of Kansas City:
Ilana B. Simon / Isabel Sinistore
Resnicow Schroeder Associates
720-746-9552 / 212-671-5175
isimon@resnicowschroeder.com / isinistore@resnicowschroeder.com