

May 7, 2021

Daniella Levine Cava, Mayor
Office of the Mayor, Miami-Dade County
Stephen P. Clark Center, 111 NW 1st St. 29th Floor
Miami, FL 33128

Dear Mayor Cava:

I am writing to you both as a South Florida homeowner, and as a leader in the regional theater industry. I am the Executive Artistic Director of Maine's historic 89-year-old Ogunquit Playhouse, which has just under 700 seats.

I've been watching the news surrounding the Coconut Grove Playhouse, and I wanted to reach out to strongly advocate for the preservation of the Playhouse—not only as a historic landmark but also in the interest of its financial sustainability in regards to seating capacity and its stage size and structure.

Nonprofit regional theaters require a large amount of seats to remain sustainably viable. Specifically, when programmed correctly, a regional theater can easily sell inventories of 700+ seats, eight times a week for a full season. These ticket sales are vital to sustaining the nonprofit theater and supporting its other endeavors like education and community impact & outreach. In addition, you will need the significant stage you already have to share productions with the other large regional theaters in the U.S. and to hopefully target new shows created in Coconut Grove that can travel to New York and other theaters.

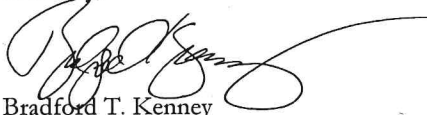
At Ogunquit Playhouse, we have shown a 20-year increase in ticket sales, growing from a \$1.2 million budget to \$12 Million—now the largest performing arts organization in the state of Maine—and one of America's largest nonprofit theaters. That was done through strong ticket sales and capitalizing on our available seat inventory. Even being a historic building in a highly seasonal area like the Maine seacoast, we needed those seats for potential ticket sales—often reaching 80% or 90% capacity as our company grew.

Significantly reducing the number of seats of the Coconut Grove Playhouse to 300 would be a grave mistake and create a scenario whereby the Coconut Grove Playhouse would have to survive on donations to balance its budget as opposed to earned ticket sales that it can control on its own. Strong budgeting of ticket sales are a large part of success and sustainability—even for a nonprofit theater. A smaller 300-seat venue will never achieve that type of earned revenue, financial viability, or economic impact. It will be reaching out for County support year after year.

There is no question that Coconut Grove and its surrounding area have the sophistication and resources in its community to keep the Playhouse strong and vibrant without relying on County support. The Playhouse must have a strong number of seats and adequate stage capacity to ensure financial success.

I would be happy to meet and discuss the aspects of ensuring that the Coconut Grove Playhouse creates a significant impact on the Coconut Grove community and has the resources that it needs to succeed and sustain itself.

Sincerely,



Bradford T. Kenney
Executive Artistic Director
Ogunquit Playhouse

cc: Commissioner Raquel Regalado, District 7

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