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**THE BROWARD CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
LAUNCHES ARTS FOR ACTION
TO ADDRESS CRITICAL ISSUES OF
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RACIAL INEQUALITY**

Public invited to participate in June 2 "Bridging the Gap" event

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida (May 20, 2021) – The Broward Center for the Performing Arts has launched Arts for Action to lift voices that are vital to the Broward community with an emphasis on how the arts and artists can be a force for change in addressing critical issues of social justice and racial inequality.

Arts for Action: Black Voices will feature discussions, performances, and art-making events, both virtually and in person, and will culminate in an outdoor arts festival in Esplanade Park next year. The project will launch with **Bridging the Gap on June 2 at 6:30 p.m.**, a moderated discussion featuring Wil Baptiste and Kev Marcus, the acclaimed musicians known as Black Violin.

"The Broward Center is in a unique position to bring diverse artists and the community together to explore critical social issues that can lead to change," said Broward Center President and CEO Kelley Shanley. "It begins as a community effort to amplify voices with the Community Foundation of Broward generously providing the funding through their Art of Community grant. Wil and Kev first came to the Broward Center as students seeing a SEAS school-day performance and later appeared on our stages to sell-out crowds. Now they return in an important role as social activists. We share a common goal: to promote understanding, equity and inclusion through the arts."

Bridging the Gap: A conversation about race and the performing arts on June 2 will feature a roundtable with Black Violin joined by Broadway actor and performance coach Syndee Winters, who appeared on Broadway in such shows as *Lion King* and *Hamilton*, and Darius V. Daughtry, founder and artistic director of Art Prevails Project, a performing arts organization dedicated to expanding cultural conversation through theatrical performance, arts education, and community engagement. The panel will be moderated by Neki Mohan, an adjunct professor at Barry University who served as a broadcast journalist at WPLG for 16 years.

Grammy®-nominees for Best Contemporary Instrumental Album for *Take the Stairs*, Black Violin first met and played together in the orchestra at the Dillard Center for the Arts, an arts magnet high school in Fort

Lauderdale. Each year they reach deep into urban communities with numerous performances for students and hands-on engagement with youth symphonies and community centers. Through programs such as Turnaround Arts, the duo connects with more than 100,000 students throughout the year, mostly at low-income and Title 1 schools, and have adopted Bethune Elementary in an ongoing mentorship program.

“We see this important dialogue as an opportunity to bridge the gap between Broward’s artistic institutions and the communities they serve,” said Black Violin, regarding this special event. “Using the arts and intentional dialogue, we hope to give a voice to those voices who are too often underrepresented.”

Presented live to a limited, physically distanced audience, **Bridging the Gap** will be livestreamed free to the general public on June 2 at 6:30 p.m. Zoom Registration is required at [BrowardCenter.org](https://www.browardcenter.org).

The Broward Center’s Arts for Action: Black Voices initiative is funded through the Community Foundation of Broward’s Art of Community grant program, which aims to use the arts as a tool or catalyst to heighten awareness, deepen knowledge, and mobilize action on social justice issues. Support has been provided by the following Funds at the Community Foundation of Broward: Mary N. Porter Community Impact Fund, Community Concerts Association of Fort Lauderdale Performing Arts Fund, A Fund for the Performing Arts and the Linda and Michael Carter Fund.

Additional supporters of the initiative include BBX Capital Foundation and JM Family Enterprises, Inc.

The Broward Center for the Performing Arts is located at 201 SW Fifth Ave. in Fort Lauderdale. For more information visit [BrowardCenter.org](https://www.browardcenter.org), like us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/BrowardCenter](https://www.facebook.com/BrowardCenter) and [Facebook.com/BrowardCenterEducation](https://www.facebook.com/BrowardCenterEducation), follow us on Twitter and Instagram @BrowardCenter, subscribe to our channel at [Youtube.com/user/BrowardCenter](https://www.youtube.com/user/BrowardCenter) and join the conversation with #BrowardCenter.

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About The Broward Center for the Performing Arts

One of America’s premier performing arts venues, the Broward Center for the Performing Arts presents more than 700 performances each year to more than 700,000 patrons, showcasing a wide range of exciting cultural programming and events. Guest experiences at the Broward Center include the all-inclusive JetBlue Flight Deck on the Club Level, special events in the Huizenga Pavilion, waterfront dining at Marti’s New River Bistro and innovative classes and workshops for all ages at the Rose Miniaci Arts Education Center. With one of the largest arts-in-education programs in the United States, the Broward Center serves more than 130,000 students annually. The Broward Performing Arts Foundation, Inc. receives and maintains funds to sustain, develop and secure the future of the Broward Center. The Broward Center for the Performing Arts is located at 201 SW Fifth Ave. in Fort Lauderdale. For more information, visit [BrowardCenter.org](https://www.browardcenter.org).

Broward Center’s Road to Recovery Fund

The Broward Center is on the Road to Recovery. While the theaters are dark, and staff is at a minimum, the hard work continues. Despite the loss of 90% of its revenues, the Center maintains a full mix of educational programs online and on campus, as well as a limited number of live performances that are physically distanced and outdoors. Until audiences can return to the theaters, the Broward Center depends on contributions to sustain its

operations. Visit [BrowardCenter.org/R2R](https://www.browardcenter.org/R2R) to donate to the Road to Recovery fund and help ensure the future of live performances in Fort Lauderdale.

About the Black Violin Foundation

Black Violin Foundation Inc. (BVF) is a non-profit 501 c3 organization dedicated to empowering youth by working with them in their communities to provide access to quality music programs that encourage creativity. Their long-term goal is to empower youth to color outside of the lines and push the boundaries of music through innovation.

Currently, Black Violin Foundation has 3 programs that promote music access and education. The James Miles Musical Innovation Grant for Continuing Education provides scholarships of up to \$2,500 to youth between the ages of 11 – 19 who would like to continue their musical education. In 2021, Black Violin Foundation added 2 new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs that both promote music access and arts education to Black Indigenous Person of Color (BIPOC) youth. The Dreamer Diversity Equity and Inclusion Grant is an award of \$2,500 to BIPOC youth who either are looking to start taking music lessons or are continuing their music education. The third program, in partnership with Baroque Violin Shop, is the Dreamer Instrument Access Program which provides stringed instruments free of cost to BIPOC youth who are interested in either starting music lessons or need a new instrument to continue their music studies.

For more information, visit www.blackviolinfoundation.org or send an email to info@blackviolinfoundation.org

About the Community Foundation of Broward

Founded in 1984, the Community Foundation of Broward helps families, individuals and organizations create personalized charitable Funds that deliver game-changing philanthropic impact. 479 charitable Funds represent more than \$200 million in assets, distributing \$131 million in grants over the past 36 years. The Community Foundation provides bold leadership on community solutions and fosters philanthropy that connects people who care with causes that matter. The Foundation empowers visionaries, innovators and doers to create the change they want to see in the community – and to BE BOLD. www.cfbroward.org