The impact of Parker Thomson on the Miami Music Community

By Julian H. Kreeger

Parker Thomson, the Miami Herald music critic and one of the city’s most influential leaders, had a profound impact on the arts in Miami. He was passionate about music and worked tirelessly to support the arts in the city. Thomson was instrumental in the development of the performing arts in Miami and helped to establish the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts.

Thomson's love for music began at an early age. He was the son of a history professor at Russell Sage College in Troy, New York. He attended many concerts at the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, a performance space with exceptional acoustics. In his memoir, "Although I cannot recall having written a letter in my life," he noted his love for music.

Thomson was a brilliant Harvard-trained lawyer. When the Ford Foundation and Miami-Dade County established the Miami Dade County Trust, the committee charged with the ultimate decisions for the arts, he was a prominent participant in the discussions. When I was later to be an important participant in the discussions.

When Cooper left the Arts Council, Parker was actively involved in helping him develop an association with University of Miami's School of Music, where he ultimately became a full-time professor. He was a serious deficiency. In 2008, when Maestro James Judd was appointed by the Miami Symphony Orchestra, he had 'no greater admiration for anyone – Parker was always available and had a tremendous credibility with the Knight Foundation and the Miami-Dade County.'

Parker felt that the presence of the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts has stimulated major developments in Miami's arts and culture. He is currently working with his daughter, Meg Daly, to make it possible for young students in the Miami-Dade Public Schools to learn to play classical music. He has donated $2.5 million to support the Miami Music Project (the "MMP").

Despite the debate about whether or not the size of the concert hall could exceed 1,800 seats – the size of the best concert halls in Europe – Parker maintained that the acoustics could be optimized for up to twelve players. Russell Johnson created adjustable reflectors over the stage so that the acoustics could be adjusted side panels in the hall for reverberation. It was ultimately decided that a 2,200-seat hall could be designed that would not compromise the acoustics. Moreover, it was also possible to adjust side panels in the hall for reverberation.

The Miami Herald's Executive Editor, Ted Arison, the son of a history professor at Russell Sage College in Troy, New York, would later describe Miami's music community as a "doughnut." He was a prominent participant in the discussions. When I was later to be an important participant in the discussions.

Richard F. Wolfson, General Counsel for Wometco Enterprises, was a prominent participant in the discussions. When I was later to be an important participant in the discussions.

The Plan, 1989

Construction 2001-04

Courtesy of the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County. (See www.arshtcenter.org/About-Us/Facts-History)