Johann Zietsman assumed the role of President and CEO of the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County in 2018.

Soon after beginning his tenure, Zietsman set out on a mission to develop a thoughtful, well-researched strategic plan that took into account the community's feedback. To do this, he embarked on a widespread listening tour across Miami-Dade County asking community members to share their hopes and aspirations for the future of the Arsht Center. The feedback gathered at these public listening sessions, as well as through focus groups and online surveys, became the cornerstone of the Center's new strategic plan.

Titled "Arshtconnect," the plan encompasses Zietsman's dedication to local communities in Miami. During his term thus far as CEO of the Arsht Center, Johann has overseen more than 400 shows, supported advancements in the Center's arts education programming, and helped welcome the Center's 5 millionth guest.

Born in the 1950s in South Africa, Johann Zietsman grew up under the apartheid regime and first got involved in the arts as a brass player in his high school band. This led to his lifelong passion for the transformative value and role of the arts in a community.

After serving in the military, he earned a bachelor's degree in architecture. Then Zietsman and his wife, Tharrie, moved to Ithaca, New York, where he completed a master's degree in music.

Returning to South Africa in 1982, Zietsman started a 20-year career in various executive arts management positions, including a music school, two orchestras, an opera and music theatre company, a community arts center, a large multi-theatre performing arts company, and a commercial communications company.

During this time, he was actively involved in the political transformation of his homeland through pioneering work in the arts, resulting in recognition from Mr. Nelson Mandela's government. As a volunteer, he launched and directed two community youth initiatives, which currently serve about 4000 at-risk children in townships.

In 2002, Zietsman and his family moved to the United States when he was recruited by the International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA), based in New York City. In June 2007 they moved to Mesa, Arizona, where Zietsman served as Executive Director of the Mesa Arts Center, and Director of Arts and Culture for the city of Mesa.

In December 2009, Zietsman accepted the position of President and CEO of EPCOR CENTRE for the Performing Arts, now known as Arts Commons, in Calgary, AB, Canada. Under his leadership, Arts Commons transformed into a resilient and dynamic value-driven organization – a place of equity, diversity and inclusion.
What are some of your projects that you are most proud of, or were the most fun?

Tell us about some of the Arsht Center's outreach and education programs.

What are your thoughts about the evolution of Miami's art communities in the 21st century?

In this highly charged political era, have you received pressure to suppress performances?

What's your favorite movie?

How does the Arsht Center support the concept of "arts education for all"?