



Introduction to Johann Zietsman. 1:02 min. Interview: Raymond Elman. Post-Production: Lee Skye. Music: Karen Gomyo. Recorded 10/26/2022, Miami.

Johann Zietsman:

Making a Difference at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County

By Elman + Skye

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.

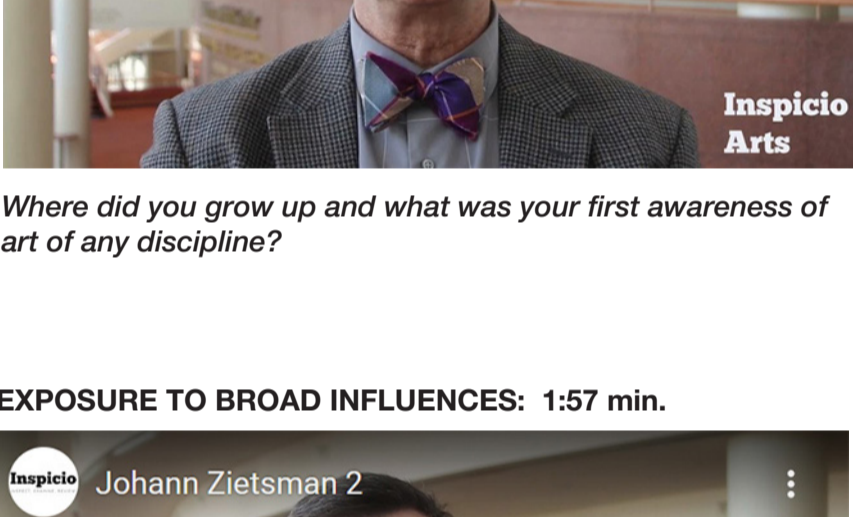
In 2002, Zietsman and his family moved to the United States when he was recruited by the **International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA)**, based in New York City. In June 2007 they moved to Mesa, Arizona, where Zietsman served as Executive Director of the **Mesa Arts Center**, and Director of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

— *Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County*

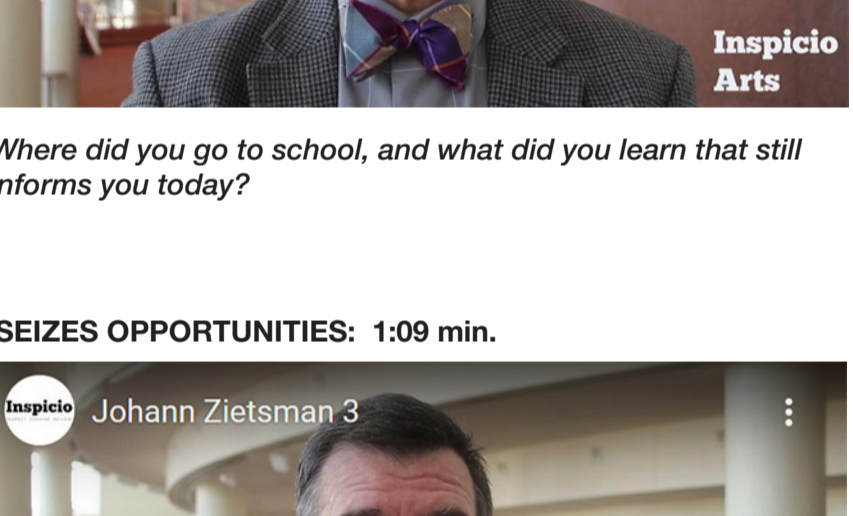
The videos below are organized by Success Factor, and run between 30 seconds and 8 minutes. Click on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos.

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 0:35 sec.



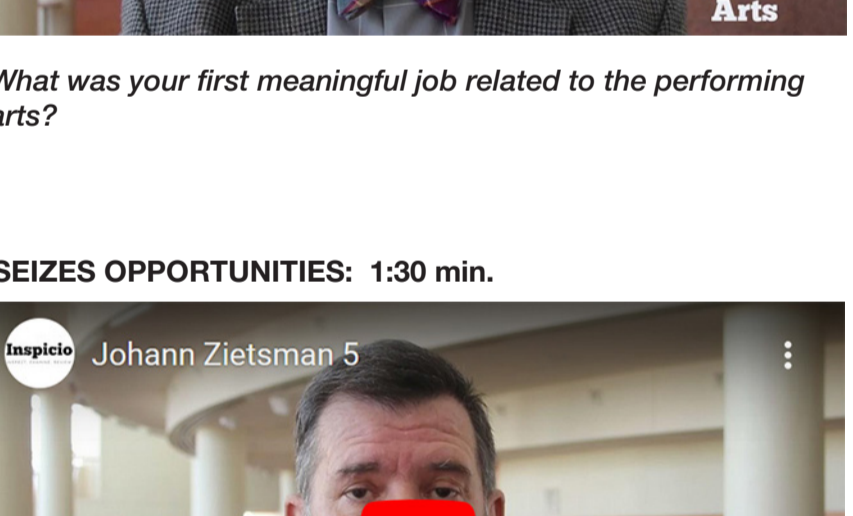
Where did you grow up and what was your first awareness of art of any discipline?

EXPOSURE TO BROAD INFLUENCES: 1:57 min.



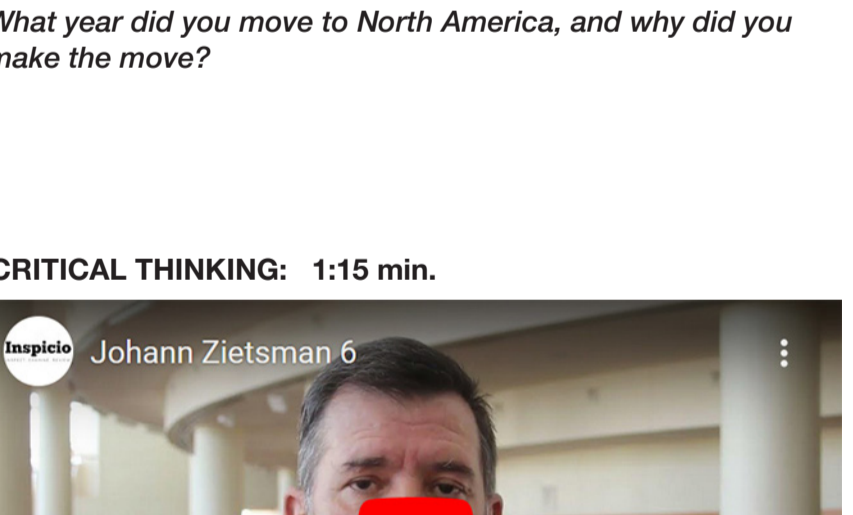
Where did you go to school, and what did you learn that still informs you today?

SEIZES OPPORTUNITIES: 1:09 min.



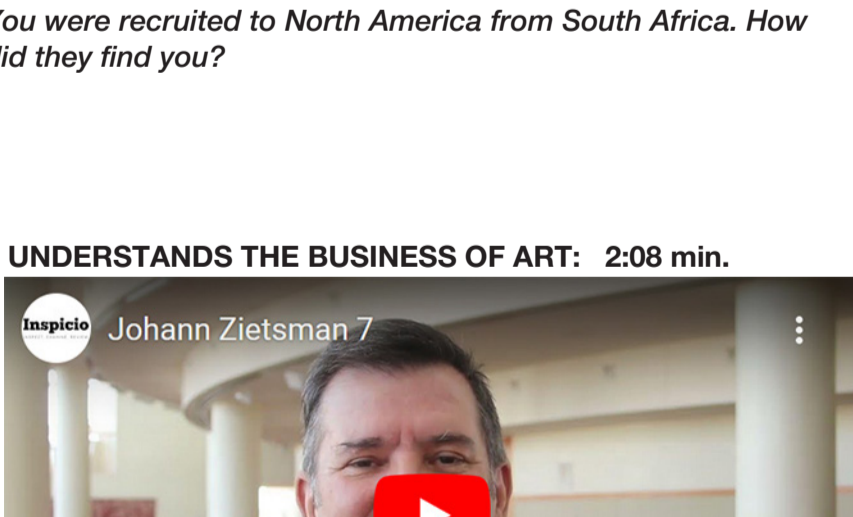
What was your first meaningful job related to the performing arts?

SEIZES OPPORTUNITIES: 1:30 min.



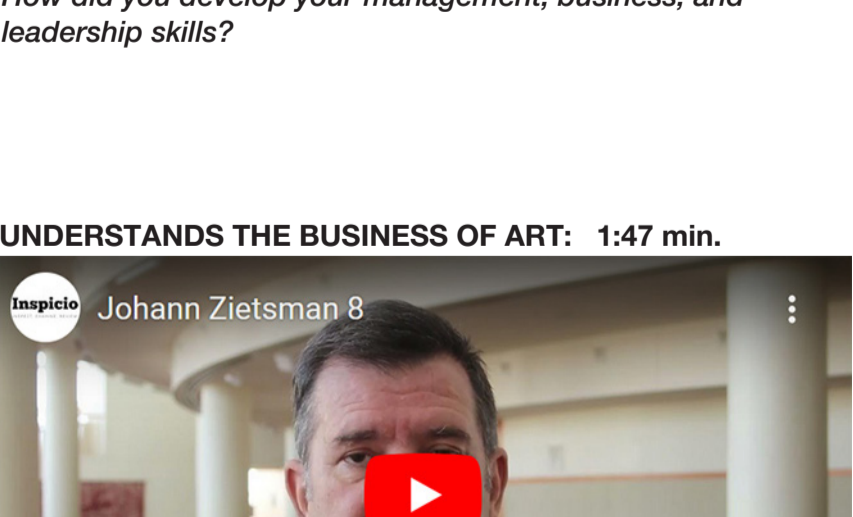
What year did you move to North America, and why did you make the move?

CRITICAL THINKING: 1:15 min.



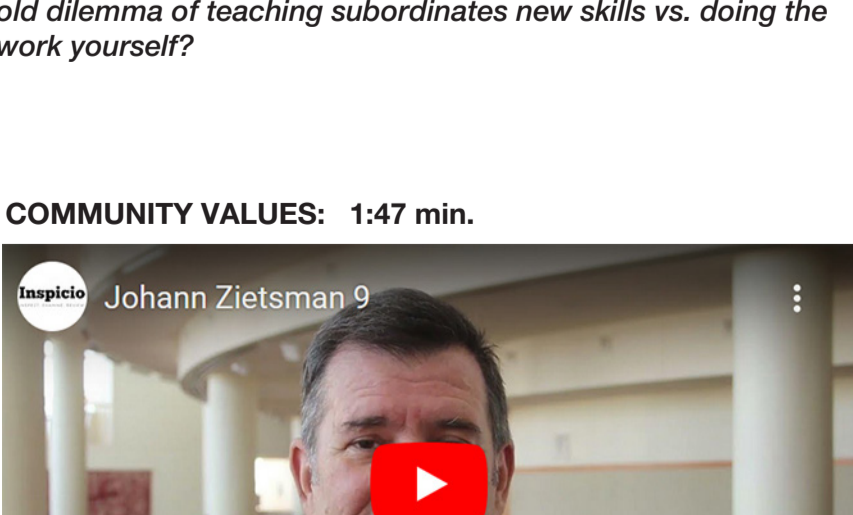
You were recruited to North America from South Africa. How did they find you?

UNDERSTANDS THE BUSINESS OF ART: 2:08 min.



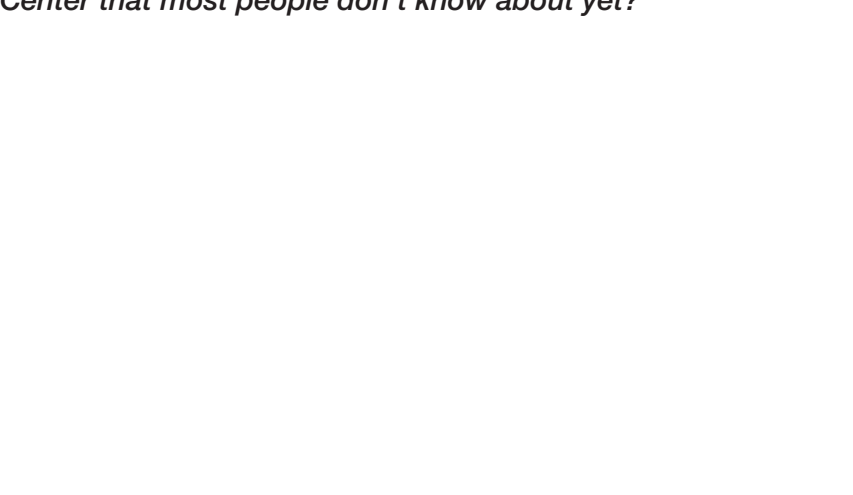
How did you develop your management, business, and leadership skills?

UNDERSTANDS THE BUSINESS OF ART: 1:47 min.



As a “get-things-done-new-leader,” how did you address the old dilemma of teaching subordinates new skills vs. doing the work yourself?

COMMUNITY VALUES: 1:47 min.



What are some of the things on the drawing board for the Arsht Center that most people don’t know about yet?

COMMUNITY VALUES: 2:53 min.



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

OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED: 3:32 min.



What are some of your projects that you are most proud of, or were the most fun?

COMMUNITY VALUES: 3:15 min.



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

CRITICAL THINKING: 2:59 min.



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

CRITICAL THINKING: 2:44 min.



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

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 1:13 min.



What’s your favorite movie?