

Meet Gregory Holland, CEO of The Straz Center

Gregory Holland is an arts executive, theater administrator, revenue builder and deal-maker with more than 25 years of experience. He became the president and CEO of the David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts in October 2022.

Please tell us about The Straz Center for the Performing Arts' upcoming programs for spring 2024.

Our Broadway Series will continue with a lineup of Broadway hits such as "Moulin Rouge" and The "Girl From the North Country," which takes a deep dive into Bob Dylan's catalog. Opera Tampa's schedule features two of the form's greatest works, "Don Giovanni" and "La Traviata" and one that may be its most accessible, Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel." "Taste" at the Straz will be, as always, massive and delicious. Next Generation Ballet will perform the heartbreaking "Giselle." We also have a wide variety of entertainment including the off-Broadway comedy "Stranger Sings!" and comedian Daniel Sloss on our schedule.

How do The Straz Center for the Performing Arts and cultural institutions contribute to cultural

tourism and the overall cultural landscape of our region?

First, The Straz Center brings world-renowned performances to The Straz. Recently, we presented the only North American production of London's West End musical "The Choir of Man." As we do this, The Straz Center also partners with local hotels so our visitors will have a price-friendly option when they decide to stay overnight following, say, a Broadway series event. Ideally, these guests spend more time in Tampa and discover some of our other cultural institutions. As for our impact on the cultural landscape, we've been a major part of it for most of our existence and will continue to be. In addition to our major events, our Patel Conservatory trains the next generation of dancers, actors, singers and musicians. Jobsite, our resident theater company, offers innovative programming in an intimate setting. Finally, our outreach programs bring the arts to underserved communities and also give them a voice through events such as our town halls.

The density of arts organizations and the prevalence of arts events

play a role in attracting residents and businesses to (re)locate into a community by improving its image and making it more appealing. Where do you see The Straz Center for the Performing Arts in this equation?

During Mayor Bob Martinez's administration, The Straz Center was built to anchor Tampa as a cultural destination and to play a part in growing downtown. We now see that The Straz has been on the front line of making Tampa more appealing to businesses and professionals for decades. Another element that makes Tampa appealing is our now-thriving downtown, and The Straz is a major part of that revival. We're utilizing the Riverwalk to bring the arts to more and more



Gregory Holland
Chief Executive Officer
David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts

people, including many who have never been our guests. The resurgence of downtown has been good for us, and we've been an important part of that resurgence.

How do you believe The Straz Center for the Performing Arts influences individuals and communities?

Our commitment to the arts and culture drives our outreach programs. We believe the arts are for everyone. We work with schools and other institutions to provide traditionally underserved communities with access to what we have to



offer, in our field trip series, Arts Legacy Remix, the BI-POC play-reading series and our extensive programs for veterans and their families, among others. Also, the Straz works closely with military veterans to provide arts programs focused on vets and their families. Because of this we have become a national leader in "arts and healing."

Can you share a less known, however important, fact about The Straz Center for the Performing Arts?

The Patel Conservatory is

accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) under the division of Cognia. In fact, Cognia recently presented Alice Santana, our vice president of education and community engagement, the Cognia Excellence in Education Award for 2023. That illustrates that The Straz and Patel Conservatory are dedicated to continuous improvement and learner-based education.

Visit our website at StrazCenter.org.



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