

## **GroundUP Music Festival Miami Beach –** **LOI for Special Event Sponsorship Funding**

We respectfully request Special Event Sponsorship Funding in the amount of \$50,000.

### Who are “We”?

I am Paul Lehr, 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Miami Beach resident and native, musician since the age of six, former CEO of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts/YoungArts, and co-founder and CEO of the 501c3 GroundUP Music Foundation which has produced the annual GroundUP Music Festival at the Miami Beach Bandshell since 2017. My co-founder and Artistic Director is Michael League, who is the bandleader of the 5 Time Grammy Award Winning music collective Snarky Puppy, acclaimed **by *Rolling Stone Magazine*** as “**one of the most versatile bands on the planet,**” and has been featured on the covers of *Jazz Times* and *The New York Times Sunday Arts Section* and has a chapter dedicated to him by the Random House release “the New Face of Jazz.”

### GroundUP brings Artists from all over the world, and a worldwide (and local) audience, to Miami Beach/North Beach:

With diversity at its heart, GroundUP began presenting its annual GroundUP Music Festival in Miami Beach in February, 2017. Since 2017, approximately 70% of the 20,000+ festival attendees have travelled to Miami Beach/North Beach for GroundUP from outside the state of Florida, from all other 49 US States and 55+ countries. The Rhythm Foundation founders have repeatedly credited GroundUP with being the most important cultural tourism event in North Beach and at the Bandshell, and the impact of this cultural tourism has played a major role in the re-vitalization of the Miami Beach Bandshell, a cultural focal point of the neighborhood.

GroundUP has also supported thousands of music students and pre-professionals from all across South Florida including from partner schools/programs: Miami Beach High and other Miami-Dade County public schools, Young Musicians Unite, Live Modern School of Music, Guitars Over Guns, Miami Music Project, New World School of the Arts, University of Miami Frost School of Music, etc.

GroundUP’s inclusion of world artists from more than 40 countries to date, and the diverse audience from all over the world mixed with the residents of Miami Beach and other South Floridians, fosters a dialogue encouraging mutual respect for the diverse values and musical traditions of all people and broadens our understanding of ourselves in the context of our larger society.

### Reputation for Excellence, Major Media Coverage:

GroundUP Music Festival Miami Beach has developed the reputation as one of the best and most unique music festivals in the country, and its reputation for excellence has garnered significant media attention attesting to its significant worldwide, national, and local draw. Indeed, as part of its decade-in-review on the most important and impactful events in the Arts, ***The New York Times*** named GroundUP as one of the “**Top 10 Definitive Moments of the Decade**” in music. GroundUP was the *only* South Florida event to receive recognition on any of The New York Times “best-of decade-in-review lists.” Additionally, NPR’s nationally syndicated show Jazz Night in America with Christian McBride (WGBO/Lincoln Center) aired a special segment dedicated to GroundUP, SiriusXM’s stations regularly feature GroundUP’s annual festival music sets, and each year, NPR’s Global Village show, which is syndicated on more than 480 NPR stations around the country, airs sets throughout the year from prior Miami Beach GroundUP Music Festivals, with attribution to both GroundUP and Miami Beach in every segment.

GroundUP also regularly receives significant local media attention, and has been repeatedly named by the ***Miami New Times*** as “one of the 10 best music events,” and prominently featured each year in ***The Miami Herald***. In the most recent **Muck Rack Report** from 2024, GroundUP Miami Beach generated in **excess of 500 Million media impressions**, all focused on GroundUP and its’ spectacular Miami Beach location and further establishing Miami Beach as a center of cultural excellence and diversity.

### Just Some of Our Artists (spanning multiple music genres, from Jazz to Rock to Hip-Hop, to Rap, to Blues, to Classical, to Fusion, to World, and so much more):

Rather than artist selection being driven by social media numbers or statistics on number of tickets sold or name recognition/draw or fitting within a particular genre, artists are curated by Artistic Director Michael League based only on their musical diversity and universal excellence in their craft. As described by ***The Miami Herald*** cover article, GroundUP regularly features “**a wildly eclectic range of stellar and hard to define artists.**” In addition to the annual hosting and attendance of 5 time Grammy Award Winning Artist Snarky Puppy, previous artists include: guitar legends John Scofield and Bill Frisell and Eric Gales, Rock legends Living Colour (2x Grammy Winners and frequent tour openers for the Rolling Stones), Jeff Tweedy (Wilco), Nai Palm (Hiatus Kaiyote), Madison Cunningham, Jacob Collier, Louis Cato (Musical Director of Late Show with Stephen Colbert), Kimbra, Michael McDonald, Chris Potter, Esperanza Spalding, Tank & the Bangas, Lila Downs, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Brian Blade, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Lalah Hathaway, Chris Thile (NPR’s Live From Here), The Wood Brothers, Béla Fleck, Robert Glasper, Emily Estefan, Buika, Eliades Ochoa (Buena Vista Social Club), and many more.

Said the late two-time Rock & Roll Hall of Fame legend and GroundUP artist David Crosby, “you’ll meet and interact with artists and fans from all over the world. I don’t think you’ll get a better shot at hearing real music than at this festival. It will knock your socks off.”

Unique International Appeal, Setting & Guiding Principles:

The Festival was founded on the principle of curating an enriching experience for the artists, residents, students, and audience. GroundUP shatters the barriers between artists and audience/students. In a typical festival, artists remain in their trailer until showtime and then depart after their show, practically inaccessible to the students and attendees. At GroundUP, artists remain for the entire festival and hang-out with the audience to experience the other performing artists and to participate in intimate masterclasses and other uniquely personal interactions with the audience. Moreover, many artists arrive before the festival and offer mentorship experiences at partner venues for underserved students/aspiring musicians and others with traditionally limited exposure to the arts. GroundUP provides hundreds of free and heavily discounted tickets to Miami Beach seniors and students as well to students and others throughout Miami-Dade County.

GroundUP’s Major Economic & Cultural Annual Impact (since 2017):

According to the latest GMVCB Report from GroundUP Music Festival Miami Beach 2024, GroundUP’s annual economic and cultural impact on Miami Beach/North Beach includes:

- **\$4 Million** - local economic impact
- **4,200** – hotel room nights
- **1,070** - Supported Local Jobs
- **500 Million** - Media Impressions including major national coverage bringing attention to the North Beach neighborhood and Miami Beach as a center of cultural and artistic excellence
- **Tourists** from all 50 US States and from 55 countries from around the world
- **Renowned Programming** by artists available at steeply discounted prices for the local residents for which people travel from all over the world, literally, to experience.

With Appreciation:

As CEO and co-founder of GroundUP Music Foundation and GroundUP Music Festival Miami Beach, and as a native and resident of Miami Beach, Miami Beach is in my view the ideal location for these programs and attracting a local, national, and international audience, and it is my hope and intention to keep GroundUP Festival in Miami Beach as a major annual cultural event and draw for the City that is so rich with and ripe for cultural excellence. I appreciate all you do for our City and our arts and culture, and I give you my sincere thanks for all of your past and continued support.