

Around Town

Festival of the Arts Boca ends on a Brazilian high note

Festival of the Arts Boca wrapped up March 11 with **Sergio Mendes and Brasil 2017**, a swinging blend of pop, rock and jazz, heavily flavored by the samba and bossa nova that launched Mendes as a major force in popular music half a century ago with *Brasil '66*. Of course, none of the original ensemble remains, although much of the vocal load is handled by Mendes' wife, **Gracinha Leporace**, literally a "girl from Ipanema," who joined the group mid-'70s.

The sellout crowd of 2,100-plus was into the show from open to close — *Mas Que Nada*, *Going Out of My Head*, *One Note Samba*, *Day Tripper*, even an updated *Agua de Beber* spiced up with a little rap.

Despite their Social Security status, audience members danced in the aisles like teenagers and pressed against the stage during the encore to capture digital mementos on their smartphones.

Such was the case last year when Herb Alpert and wife Lani Hall enjoyed a similar response.

"Nothing is coincidental," festival artistic coordinator **Charles LeTourneau** said.

Alpert was responsible for Mendes' initial success with *Brasil '66*, and those ties still bind.

Politics also attracts sizable crowds at each festival, the protagonist this year being Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and *Time* contributing editor **Jon Meacham**.

"Sorry we're here with so little news going on. I was going to try to do this in 142 characters," he joked.

Meacham claimed a Pulitzer for his biography of fellow

Tennessean Andrew Jackson, who coincidentally is a favorite of **Donald Trump**. Were it not for coincidences and twists of fate, he suggested, neither may have been elected.

Accused of being a bigamist, Jackson challenged Charles Dickinson, a crack shot, to a duel. Dickinson's shot missed Jackson's heart by inches; Jackson then aimed and fired a fatal shot into Dickinson's stomach.

President James Monroe appointed Jackson the first governor of the Florida territory. Jackson "was governor for about 20 minutes, because Rachel (Jackson's wife) didn't like mosquitoes," Meacham stretched, "and you're probably luckier for it."

The Trump phenomenon, on the other hand, "may be the most amazing moment in American history, unprecedented in American life," Meacham said.

"Donald Trump would not be president today if he had not been on *The Apprentice* for 14 years."

Last summer during the campaign, Meacham sat down with Trump, who told him he'd never read any of his books but liked him on TV. When asked how he was preparing to be president, Trump compared himself with Babe Ruth, telling Meacham: "I just swing at it."

A few days earlier across town at **Florida Atlantic University**, **Angela Davis**, one of the most visible "campus radicals" of the '60s, offered some optimism as the new president settles in.

"Maybe we need a Donald Trump to wake us up. Once he's elected and people rise up in response, we have to say, well, this is a good thing, because we never knew we had this kind of



Branford Marsalis opened the Festival of the Arts Boca, playing with the Symphonia Boca Raton, directed by Constantine Kitsopoulos (right). **Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star**

strength," Davis said in her Feb. 23 keynote address at FAU's observance of Black History Month.

Best known for her support of community activism and the Black Panthers half a century ago, Davis, 73, is professor emerita at University of California, Santa Cruz and continues to press for reform of failed institutions. Among her targets: the "prison industrial complex," an issue close to FAU. In 2013, the university's



Davis

administration approved a deal to name its new football stadium for Boca-based **GEO Group** in exchange for a \$6 million donation.

GEO is one of the largest international operators of for-profit prisons. GEO's founder, chief executive and board chairman is **George Zoley Jr.**, an FAU grad and former chairman of the school's board of trustees.

The backlash was so fast and furious from students, alumni, faculty and the community that trustees quickly rejected the GEO deal and FAU President Mary Jane Saunders resigned.

Prisons for profit don't work,

said Davis, who in 1997 helped found Critical Resistance, a grass-roots organization dedicated to dismantling the prison system, decriminalizing drug use and prostitution and providing basic necessities such as food, shelter and freedom.

Davis, who also spoke at the Women's March in Washington, warned that the nation is being run more and more like a corporation as legislators move to privatize not only the prison system but education and health care.

"We need a different kind of justice system that is not about revenge," she said, noting that activists around the nation were inspired "by the actions you took on this campus."

Six weeks after being introduced as FAU's new football coach on Dec. 13, **Lane Kiffin** had his coaching staff in place, including brother **Chris** as defensive coordinator. But Kiffin, family man that he is, had one more relation in mind. News broke in early March that Kiffin's father will come aboard.

Monte Kiffin's role had not been defined and the athletic department was scrambling to create an official position, but ESPN reported he would serve as a "defensive analyst/NFL liaison," a task well-suited.

The senior Kiffin, 77, coached 29 years in the NFL. In 13 years at Tampa Bay, he turned the Bucs' defense into one of the NFL's best. He was Lane's assistant head coach at Tennessee and Southern Cal, then worked two years at Dallas and most recently at



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