

Carrollwood Cultural Center: Not Just For the Locals

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434 Words

It's called the Carrollwood Cultural Center, but Marketing Director, Laure Pericot stresses that *everyone* is welcome to join, no matter your location. This is a place for the Tampa Bay Area community to come together and share in the love of the arts.

Opened March 2, 2008, the Center is proud to be home to up-and-coming artists, musical series, lectures, dance recitals, theatrical performances and much more.

Walk inside and the first thing you notice is the beautiful diverse artwork adorning the Center's walls. Local artists are invited to display their craft at no charge.

Enter a hall to the right and you step into a large room, a performance area with a spacious stage highlighted by an \$80,000+ Shigeru piano, hand-crafted from Japan. On November 14, pianist Franz Mantini will perform works by Haydn, Beethoven, Chopin and Granados on its extraordinary keys.

"We recently had a wedding in here," Pericot advises and then shows off the professional kitchen attached to the room.

Venture further and you are greeted by a room with a wooden floor and mirrored walls for dancers to train, a music room filled with pianos and a teacher giving a lesson to a young student, a spacious well-lit art studio, a sculpting classroom with nine wheels and two kilns, a computer room with sixteen state-of-the-art computers and a teacher's monitor, the size of a big screen TV and lastly, various-sized conference rooms available for public rental.

From Making Music with Little Ones (ages 12-24 months), Piano, and Oriental Brush Painting to Sculpture, Jazz and Intro to Computers, the catalog of classes offered at the Carrollwood Cultural Center are as diverse as its students. "Our students range from 12 months to 91 years old," says Pericot. "Each of our instructors is a professional; the classes are taught by *real* artists."

One such class, Modern Modes of Expressions, offers youth and seniors alike the opportunity to learn contemporary painting under the instruction of artist Darwin Leon, whose goal is to bring a "contemporary approach to traditional methods."

Not only are specialized classes available for a nominal registration fee, but the Center boasts a free Community Chorus and Band with a debut performance coming in December.

"Can you imagine having a Renaissance in Carrollwood?" Leon sums up the idea behind the center. "Anything that has to do with the arts – with creativity – is a contribution to the community. We need to encourage the arts from a very early age all the way through adulthood."

Carrollwood Cultural Center should be extremely proud; they are doing just that.