

People & Places



Main photo: Yo-Yo Ma plays the national anthem on his cello at the 44th Kennedy Center Honors at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, Sunday, Dec. 5. Inset, clockwise from top right: President Joe Biden pauses as he speaks during the Kennedy Center Honorees Reception at the White House in Washington, Sunday, Dec. 5; 2021 Kennedy Center honorees, (from left), Justino Diaz, Lorne Michaels, Chita Rivera, Bette Midler, and Berry Gordy pose following the Medallion Ceremony and actress Scarlett Johansson (right) and singer Renée Fleming (left bottom) pose on the red carpet at the honors gala for the 44th Annual Kennedy Center Honors, Sunday, Dec. 5, in Washington. (AP)

Art

Designer Abloh remembered

Rosalia, Lizzo end over the top Miami art week

MIAMI BEACH, Fla., Dec 6, (AP): The over-the-top parties and star-studded shows surrounding Miami's Art Basel wrapped up this weekend with performances by Rosalia, Lizzo, Cardi B and rocker Lenny Kravitz.

The annual event, which was canceled last year during the pandemic, is an extension of the prestigious art show in Switzerland. But over the years, Miami has put its own spin on the affair, which has become a magnet for celebrities. Everyone from Rihanna, Kim Kardashian, Kanye West and Joe Jonas were spotted around town.

The highlight of the week was Louis Vuitton's first ever US fashion show Tuesday. But the lavish affair, where guests were ferried to an island by private yacht, turned into an emotional tribute after legendary 41-year-old designer Virgil Abloh died suddenly just days before the show. Kid Cudi and Erykah Badu performed at an after-party where dozens of dancing red drones blazed the skyline to write "Virgil was here."

Fashion brand Burberry and W magazine hosted a party attended by models Karlie Kloss and Candice Swanepoel, along with Camila Coelho, ASAP Ferg, and Meadow Walker.

Rosalia gave a surprise performance Friday night to celebrate Chanel's iconic fragrance. The French fashion house partnered with artist Es Devlin for a multisensory sculptural installation that included a forest of over 1,000 plants and trees. Before the show, Chanel hosted a private dinner attended by Pharrell Maluma, Leon Bridges, Joe Jonas and songstress sister trio HAIM.

The fashion brand's Five Echoes installation is free and open to the public until Dec. 21.

Cardi B performed Saturday night to launch her new line of drink infused whipped cream. The rapper sprayed Whipshots into the mouth of fans at The Goodtime Hotel. Offset, Mary J. Blige and Timbaland were among the guests. After the event, Cardi B and hubby Offset made their way to Hyde Beach at SLS South Beach for the MAXIM party where the couple danced as 112 performed its old-school hit "Peaches and Cream." Karueche, Austin Mahone and Taye Diggs were also in the crowd.

Performance

After hours, over 500 fans lined up around the block to get into rapper Meek Mill's sold-out show at E1 E-VEN. He didn't take the stage until 3:30 a.m. Cardi B, Leonardo DiCaprio, Nina Agdal, Karueche, Migos and Marshmello stayed for the late-night performance.

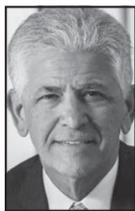
The official Art Basel fair attracted 60,000 visitors this year, according to a statement, but thousands more attended various art shows all week. At Art Miami, a \$4 million Banksy sale, a 10-year-old phenom painter and an 18 carat gold bagel avocado toast on sale for \$2.9 million at Galerie Rother generated buzz.

The ultra-futuristic Paramount Miami Worldcenter even partnered with artist Mr. Glue to host a scavenger hunt for street trash transformed into valuable artworks.

And in a week where art often borders on the absurd — remember the infamous \$120,000 banana duct tape pieces — Miami's DJ Khaled dropped "bling wings" topped with 24-karat gold dust and edible diamonds to promote his restaurant.



Former Kennedy Center honoree Herbie Hancock and his wife, Gigi Hancock, pose on the red carpet at the Medallion Ceremony for the 44th Annual Kennedy Center Honors on Saturday, Dec. 4, at the Library of Congress in Washington. (AP)



Petrocelli



Scott

Variety

HOUSTON: Several families of the 10 people who died from injuries in a massive crowd surge at the Astroworld festival have turned down an offer by headliner Travis Scott to pay for their loved ones' funeral costs.

Attorneys for the families of four of the victims said that they received a letter from Scott's attorney, Daniel Petrocelli, in which the offer was made.

In a letter sent Nov 24 to the attorneys for the family of 9-year-old Ezra Blount, Petrocelli said Scott extended his "deepest sympathies and condolences" to Ezra's father, Treston Blount, and Scott had wanted to reach out personally "but does not wish to intrude on Mr Blount's privacy during his time of grieving."

Ezra was the youngest person to die from injuries suffered during Scott's concert at the sold-out festival on Nov 5 that was attended by 50,000 people. The others who died ranged in age from 14 to 27. Some 300 people were treated at the festival site and 13 were hospitalized. "Travis is devastated by the tragedy that occurred at the Astroworld Festival and grieves for the families whose loved ones died or were injured. Travis is committed to doing his part to help the families who have suffered and begin the long process of healing in the Houston community," Petrocelli wrote.

In his reply, Robert Hilliard, an attorney representing Treston Blount in a lawsuit against Scott, the concert promoter and others, declined the offer, saying that while he believes Scott feels remorse, Scott must see "that he bears some of the responsibility for this tragedy."

"And perhaps one day, once time allows some healing for the victims and acceptance of responsibility by Mr Scott and others, Treston and Mr Scott might meet — as there is also healing in that," Hilliard said. "For

Awards

Bidens attend, draw sustained standing ovation

Kennedy Center Honors back again

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, (AP): The Kennedy Center Honors returned to tradition this year with a real-life gala Sunday night and the presence of the president for the first time since 2016.

The lifetime achievement awards for artistic excellence were presented to Motown Records creator Berry Gordy, "Saturday Night Live" mastermind Lorne Michaels, actress-singer Bette Midler, opera singer Justino Diaz and folk music legend Joni Mitchell.

This year's event at the Kennedy Center's main opera house represented a return to political normalcy, with President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden attending.

President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump skipped the show the first three years he was in office after several of the artists honored in 2017, his first year in office, threatened to boycott a White House reception if he participated. Last year, the pandemic forced a delay and major changes to the program.

The Bidens drew a sustained standing ovation when they entered the presidential box at the opera house. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma performed the national anthem and encouraged the audience to sing the final lines together.

The theater was packed to capacity and there were no social distancing restrictions, but vaccinations and recent negative COVID tests were required for all who attended.

The tributes featured testimonials and performances that were kept secret from the honorees. Mitchell's tribute featured performances of her songs

by Nora Jones, Brandi Carlile, Ellie Goulding and Brittany Howard. Diaz was honored with a performance from the opera "Carmen" and a song from his two daughters, Katya and Natascia.

For Michaels, organizers put together three "Weekend Update" segments onstage with multiple generations of mock news anchors — Kevin Nealon, Seth Myers and Amy Poehler, and the current duo of Michel Che and Colin Jost. He joked that Biden would be asleep before the end of the show and Poehler poked at the Toronto-born Michaels by proclaiming that Joni Mitchell had been declared "the best Canadian of all time."

Testimonials

Midler received testimonials from close friends Goldie Hawn and Barbara Hershey, and a performance by Tony Award winner Billy Porter of her iconic song, "The Wind Beneath My Wings." Gordy's career was celebrated with performances of multiple Motown hits by Andra Day and Stevie Wonder and an extended tribute from close friend Smokey Robinson. The event ended with several of the night's performers joining for a performance of Wonder's hit "Higher Ground."

Prior to the Kennedy Center event, Biden revived another tradition that had gone dormant under Trump and held a White House reception for the honorees.

"We welcome everyone back," he told a crowd of about 150 seated in the East Room, decked out with Christmas trees and wreaths. Guests included

Vice President Kamala Harris, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Caroline Kennedy, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Chita Rivera, Steve Martin and Herbie Hancock.

"Our nation is stronger, more dynamic and more vibrant because of you," Biden told the honorees.

Biden praised the work of the artists, their "sixth sense" that helps them create and move so many people, saying: "I don't think you fully appreciate what you do for so many people."

He spoke of Diaz's "sound of soul," Gordy's creation of "one of the most iconic businesses" in American history with Motown Records. With Michaels, he joked: "Finally, it's my turn to say something about him," poking fun at Michaels' SNL show, which routinely mocks presidents, including the current commander in chief.

"You make me laugh at myself a lot," Biden said, then went on to say Michaels was auditioning actors right now to play him next on SNL. Biden asked Steve Martin to stand as an example of the type of talent Michaels has cultivated over the past decades.

Martin paused and asked the president, "Do you want me to play you?" The crowd erupted in laughter.

Biden then professed his admiration for both Mitchell and Midler, telling Midler that "people will never forget how you make them feel. That's your gift, it's incredible."

And lastly: "Joni. Your words and melodies touch the deepest parts of our soul," Biden said.

now, Mr Scott must respect the fact that his pain and his devastation pale to Treston's, Ezra's mom, and the other victims." (AP)

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va: A special grand jury found that a Virginia Beach police officer was justified in fatally shooting a Black man armed with a gun during a

chaotic night of violence on the city's oceanfront this spring, authorities has said.

The death of Donovan Lynch has drawn heightened scrutiny because he is a cousin of Virginia Beach native and Grammy-winning musician Pharrell Williams. Lynch's father also filed a \$50 million wrongful death lawsuit against police Officer Solomon D. Simmons, who is also Black, and the city of Virginia Beach for allegedly failing to train its officers.

During a two-hour news conference, the city's prosecutors said Simmons was justified in protecting himself and others in the moments after Lynch racked a round into his handgun's chamber and stood — pointing his weapon toward a parking lot filled with multiple people and police.

Prosecutors said Lynch began to turn toward Simmons, who yelled something at Lynch. However, Simmons never explicitly stated that Lynch pointed the gun directly at him, prosecutor's said.

"There were numerous people in that parking lot when Officer Simmons saw Mr Lynch starting to come up with the firearm," Virginia Beach Commonwealth's Attorney Colin Stolle said. "So it is not only just whether the weapon was pointed at Officer Simmons. It was also — are the people in the parking lot at risk?" (AP)



Pharrell Williams poses as he arrives for an event celebrating 100 years of the fragrance Chanel No. 5 during Miami Art Week, Friday, Dec. 3, in the Design District neighborhood of Miami. (AP)