

# Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe's fall gala raises more than \$250,000

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The Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe’s 23rd anniversary fall gala, “Groovin’ on the Soul Train,” raised more than \$250,000 on Nov. 11 at the Circus Arts Conservatory’s Sailor Circus Arena.

The gala, which raised funds to support WBTT’s professional productions and education programs, celebrated the music from the No. 1 television platform for R&B and soul music and featured hip décor and performances by favorite WBTT artists and its sizzling live band.

The sold-out crowd of 500 guests enjoyed a live performance by WBTT’s singers and band – led by music director Etienne “EJ” Porter – with tunes that helped guests to relive memories from “Soul Train’s” peak in the 1970s.

During the event, longtime supporters Andrew and Judith Economos were recognized as WBTT’s Heart & Soul Philanthropy honorees.

“We are so incredibly thankful for our supporters and event sponsors, who helped us to raise an extraordinary and gratifying fundraising total in support of our mission,” WBTT executive director Julie Leach said. “We are always pleased to hear that our gala is one of the most exciting and fun in town and, from the feedback we’re hearing, we are thrilled this year’s offering was no exception.”



The auctioneer for the spirited live auction featuring unique experiences was Michael Klauber. Dinner was catered by Michael’s On East. Co-chairs were Steven Krause and Angela Wood. The lead sponsors were the Dona & Sam Scott Foundation, the Brunckhorst Family, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation.

The Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe was founded in 1999 with a mission to produce professional theater that promotes and celebrates African American history and experience; engages a broad base of patrons and audiences; supports the development of a dynamic group of aspiring artists; and builds self-esteem in youth of color. For more about WBTT, visit [westcoastblacktheatre.org](http://westcoastblacktheatre.org).

*Submitted by Sharon Kunkel*