



**\*\*\*POST-EVENT MEDIA ALERT\*\*\***

**THE NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION HONORED  
JEFF KOONS AND YOUNGARTS ALUMNI JOSH GROBAN AND CHRIS YOUNG**

**2015 BACKYARD BALL RAISED OVER \$1.7 MILLION TO SUPPORT  
AMERICA'S NEXT GENERATION OF ARTISTS**

*YoungArts Winners Celebrated on the YoungArts Campus*

**WHAT:**

On Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, the [National YoungArts Foundation \(YoungArts\)](#) kicked off the Miami social season with its annual **Backyard Ball and Alumni Performance** hosted at their national headquarters and campus in the city's burgeoning downtown neighborhood. The sold out event, which is YoungArts' largest annual fundraiser, raised more than \$1.7 million – \$200,000 more than 2014 – to directly support the organization's contributions to the artistic development of talented young artists from around the nation. The *Backyard Ball* was the culmination of the **2015 National YoungArts Week**, during which 170 YoungArts Finalists in the visual, literary, design, and performing arts spent the week in Miami working with distinguished master teachers such as **James Caan, Phylicia Rashad, Jeff Koons, Sylvia Plachy, Livingston Taylor, Tierney Sutton, Rebecca Walker, Desmond Child and Carrie Mae Weems**, and sharing their talents with the public.

The 2015 *Backyard Ball* was hosted by National YoungArts Foundation President & CEO, **Paul T. Lehr**, co-chaired by **Tracey & Bruce Berkowitz** and **Elizabeth & Facundo Bacardi**, and emceed by YoungArts alumna, Master Teacher, 1997 YoungArts Winner in Theater and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts, and former *Gossip Girl* and current *Girls* actress, **Zuzanna Szadkowski**. The 2015 Arison Award was presented to renowned visual artist **Jeff Koons**, and the 2015 Arison Alumni Awards were presented to GRAMMY® Award-nominated recording artist, singer, songwriter, actor, YoungArts Master Teacher, and 1999 YoungArts Winner in Theater, **Josh Groban**; and GRAMMY® Award and Country Music Association (CMA) Award-nominated singer, songwriter, and 2003 YoungArts Winner in Voice and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts, **Chris Young**.

The *Backyard Ball* was highlighted by a multidisciplinary performance directed by Tony Award®-winner, dancer, choreographer, and YoungArts Artistic Advisor, **Bill T. Jones**. The performance featured YoungArts alumni from around the nation, was assistant-directed by 2011 Winner in Dance, **Caleb Teicher** and written by 2011 Winner in Writing, **Danny Rothchild**.

The festive evening welcomed more than 800 guests, including Tony Award® winner, **Phylicia Rashad**; Academy Award-nominated actor, **James Caan**; renowned photographer, **Bruce Weber**; famed musician, songwriter, and producer, **Desmond Child**; celebrated classical dancer and choreographer, **Jacques D'Amboise**; 2014 YoungArts Finalist in Dance and winner of FOX's *So You Think You Can Dance* season 11, **Ricky Ubeda**; **Sarah Arison**; **Jorge & Darlene Perez**; **Alex & Olga Blavatnik**; **Don Soffer**; **Armando Codina**; **Dennis & Debra Scholl**; **Adriana Cisneros**; **Martin Margulies**; **Lourdes Lopez & George Skouras**; **Dr. Luigi Maramotti**, Chairman of Max Mara Fashion Group; **Lisa Heiden-Koffler**; **Russell Galbut**; **Andres Fanjul Jr.**; **Paul & Marie-France Bloch**; **Daniel & Marcella Novela**; **Marvin Ross Friedman & Adrienne Bon Haes**; **Eugene & Frances Sevilla-Secasa**; **Andreea Baclea**; **John Lin**; **Sarah & Austin Harrelson**; **Paul & Swanee DiMare**; **Nancy Batchelor**; **Eilah Campbell-Beavers**; **Alan & Diane Lieberman**; and **Paloma Kiki Soyka**.

The exquisite evening concluded with dancing and dessert under the stars on the YoungArts Plaza and music by famed deejay, **DJ Cassidy**.

The annual *Backyard Ball* was presented by fashion label Max Mara and catered by Stephen Starr Events. Additional sponsors include Bacardi, Rolls Royce, Braman Motors, EventStar, James Royal Palm Hotel, the *Miami Herald*, *MIAMI Magazine*, and Seabourn.

**WHERE:** National YoungArts Foundation Campus  
2100 Biscayne Boulevard  
Miami, Florida 33137

**WHEN:** Saturday, January 10, 2015

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### **About the National YoungArts Foundation**

The National YoungArts Foundation (YoungArts) was established in 1981 by Lin and Ted Arison to identify and support the next generation of artists in the visual, literary, design and performing arts; assist them at critical junctures in their educational and professional development; and raise appreciation for the arts in American society. Each year, there are approximately 11,000 applications to YoungArts from 15-18 year old (or grades 10-12) artists, and from these, approximately 800 winners are selected.

YoungArts provides these emerging artists with life-changing experiences and validation by renowned mentors, access to significant scholarships, national recognition and other opportunities at critical junctures throughout their careers to help ensure that the nation's most outstanding emerging artists are encouraged to pursue careers in the arts. To date, YoungArts has honored more than 20,000 alumni, including Doug Aitken, Josh Groban, Jenji Kohan, Desmond Richardson and Kerry Washington, with over \$12 million in monetary awards; facilitated in excess of \$60 million in college scholarship opportunities in the past two years; and enabled its participants to work with master teachers who are among the most distinguished artists in the world, such as Marina Abramović, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Plácido Domingo, Zaha Hadid, Robert Redford and Bruce Weber.

YoungArts is working with world-renowned architect and YoungArts Artistic Advisor Frank Gehry to transform the former Bacardi Tower and Museum buildings and three-and-a-half acre campus into its national headquarters, which will support expanded local activities in Miami and across the country. The new campus will feature a Gehry-designed performing arts center and park with state-of-the-art sound and video capabilities. Since opening the campus for programming in November 2013, YoungArts has held salons sponsored by Knight Foundation with Marina Abramović, Robert Redford, Justin Peck & Sufjan Stevens, Joshua Bell, and Ben Folds; hosted Olafur Eliasson and his *Little Sun* installation in partnership with MoMA PS1 and Fondation Beyeler; launched a Visual Artist in Residency program supported by The Related Group; held master classes for local music students with jazz icon Wynton Marsalis and opera star Plácido Domingo; produced an interdisciplinary performance on the campus with Robert Redford and Sibylle Szaggars Redford, Living Colour's Will Calhoun, and YoungArts alumni Dave Eggar and Desmond Richardson; premiered HBO's *Joshua Bell: A YoungArts MasterClass*; and hosted a concert series in partnership with III Points Presents featuring FKA twigs, James Blake and SBTRKT.

For more information, visit [youngarts.org](http://youngarts.org), [facebook.com/YoungArtsFoundation](https://facebook.com/YoungArtsFoundation) or [twitter.com/YoungArts](https://twitter.com/YoungArts). To watch a brief video about YoungArts, click [here](#).

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