



**National YoungArts Foundation *Backyard Ball*  
Celebrates the 2015 YoungArts Winners from Across the Nation and Honors  
Jeff Koons and YoungArts Alumni Josh Groban and Chris Young**

**Evening Includes Alumni Performance Directed by Renowned  
Dancer, Choreographer and YoungArts Artistic Advisor Bill T. Jones and Will Be  
Emceed by YoungArts Alumna and Actress Zuzanna Szadkowski**

**Saturday, January 10, 2015 on the YoungArts Campus in Miami**

**Co-Chaired by Tracey & Bruce Berkowitz and Elizabeth & Facundo Bacardi**

**Presented by Max Mara**

**MIAMI, FL (December 3, 2014)** – On Saturday, January 10, 2015 the [National YoungArts Foundation](#) (YoungArts) will host the organization's annual [Backyard Ball](#) on the YoungArts Campus (2100 Biscayne Boulevard). The **2015 Arison Award Honoree** is renowned visual artist **Jeff Koons** and this year's **Arison Alumni Honorees** are Grammy Award-nominated recording artist, singer, songwriter, actor, YoungArts Master Teacher and 1999 YoungArts Winner in Theater, **Josh Groban**, and Grammy and Country Music Association Award-nominated singer-songwriter and 2003 YoungArts Winner and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts, **Chris Young**.

The celebratory evening of artistic immersion will bring together prominent artists, community leaders, philanthropists and celebrities to recognize the 2015 YoungArts Winners, 786 of the nation's most outstanding young artists in the literary, visual, design and performing arts. The Gala is YoungArts' largest annual fundraiser and the culmination of YoungArts' signature program, [National YoungArts Week](#), which provides a select group of YoungArts Winners with life-changing experiences, including master classes, workshops, interdisciplinary activities, performances and exhibitions.

The 2015 Gala Co-Chairs are **Tracey and Bruce Berkowitz** and **Elizabeth and Facundo Bacardi**. The Presenting Sponsor of the 2015 *Backyard Ball* is **Max Mara**.

The evening will be emceed by YoungArts Alumna and Master Teacher, actress **Zuzanna Szadkowski** (1997 Winner in Theater and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts) and will include a post-dinner performance directed by renowned Tony Award-winner, dancer, choreographer and YoungArts Artistic Advisor, **Bill T. Jones**. The performance will feature YoungArts Alumni from around the nation, including jazz musicians **Pascal Le Boeuf** (Piano, 2004 Winner), **Martin Jaffe** (Bass, 2012 Winner and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts), **Jake Goldbas** (Drums, 2007 Winner), **Gabe Schneider** (Guitar, 2011 Winner); vocalists **Julia Easterlin** (Voice, 2008 Winner) and **Tatiana Mayfield** (Jazz Voice, 2006 Winner); classical musicians **Rebecca Hargrove** (Soprano, 2008 Winner), **Aaron Casey** (Tenor, 2011 Winner), **Molly Joyce** (Composer, 2010 Winner), **Jeanette Fang** (Piano, 2003 Winner and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts), **Mariella Haubs** (Violin, 2014 Winner) and **Anna Litvinenko** (Cello, 2012 Winner); tap dancer **Joseph Wiggan** (Dance, 2004 Winner and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts) and modern dancers **Alexandra Sarmiento** (Dance, 2011 Winner), **Maxwell Perkins** (Dance, 2011 Winner and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts), and **Rory Freeman** (Dance, 2006 Winner); as well as actors **Katie Kleiger** (Theater, 2011 Winner) and **Ryan Brophy** (Theater, 2014 Winner). In addition, YoungArts alumni **Caleb Teicher**

(Dance, 2011 Winner) and **Danny Rothschild** (Writer, 2011 Winner) are serving as the assistant director and playwright, respectively. The magical evening will conclude on the YoungArts Plaza with dancing and dessert under the stars.

“The YoungArts *Backyard Ball* exemplifies all that YoungArts works to accomplish. It celebrates the incredibly talented 2015 YoungArts Winners; includes a world-class performance featuring YoungArts Alumni directed by the outstanding Bill T. Jones; and honors Jeff Koons, Josh Groban and Chris Young, three remarkable individuals who serve as inspirations for emerging artists everywhere,” stated Paul T. Lehr, National YoungArts Foundation President & CEO. “I look forward to welcoming guests to our home on the YoungArts Campus and acknowledging the hard work and dedication of all of these passionate artists.”

Previous Gala honorees have included YoungArts alumni **Doug Aitken** (Visual Arts, 1986 Winner), **Kerry Washington** (Theater, 1994 Winner), **Adrian Grenier** (Theater, 1994 Winner) and **Andrew Rannells** (Theater, 1997 Winner); and renowned artists **Debbie Allen**, **Joshua Bell**, **Zaha Hadid**, **Rita Moreno** and **Robert Redford**.

Additional support for the *Backyard Ball* is provided by Bacardi, Braman Motors, EventStar, James Royal Palm Hotel, the *Miami Herald*, *MIAMI Magazine*, Rolls Royce, and Seabourn.

For more information, or to purchase tickets, visit: [www.youngarts.org/gala](http://www.youngarts.org/gala).

### **About the 2015 Awardees**

#### **Jeff Koons**

Jeff Koons is one of the world’s most influential artists.

His work is the subject of a major exhibition organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, Jeff Koons: A Retrospective (June 27 - October 19, 2014), on view at the Centre Pompidou Paris (November 26, 2014 - April 27, 2015) and then travels to Guggenheim Bilbao (June 12 - September 27, 2015). And his public sculptures, such as the monumental floral Puppy and Split-Rocker, have captivated audiences at Rockefeller Center New York, Chateau Versailles, the Papal Palace Avignon, and the Guggenheim Bilbao.

Mr. Koons is an Officier of the Legion d’Honneur, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, an Honorary Royal Academician, and holds honorary doctorates from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Corcoran College of Art and Design, Washington, DC. Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton presented Koons with the State Department’s Medal of the Arts for his outstanding commitment to the Art in Embassies Program and international cultural exchange.

Among his many philanthropic activities, Mr. Koons is a member of the Board of Directors of the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC), and he and his wife Justine are the co-founders of the Koons Family Institute on International Law and Policy, an initiative of ICMEC.

Mr. Koons lives and works in New York.

#### **Josh Groban**

Possessing one of the most outstanding and instantly recognizable voices in music, singer, songwriter, and actor Josh Groban has entertained fans across the globe with his multi-platinum albums and DVDs (25 million sold worldwide), electrifying live performances, and comedic film and television appearances. The 32-year-old Los Angeles native is the only artist who has had two albums appear on the Top 20 Best-Selling Albums list of the past decade, according to *Billboard*. He has appeared in the feature film *Crazy, Stupid, Love*, as well as on NBC’s *The Office* and CBS’ *The Crazy Ones*, and in 2011 completed a sold-out world tour. As part of a recent HBO YoungArts special *Josh Groban: Sing Your Song: A YoungArts MasterClass*, Groban guided three YoungArts

Alumni on a musical journey that included writing, recording and performing a song born out of their collaboration.

In February of last year, Josh released his 6<sup>th</sup> studio album entitled 'All That Echoes' which debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Top 200 chart. In October of 2013, Groban kicked off the North American leg of his "In The Round" tour, which brings the intimate feel of a theater to an arena setting with its one-of-a-kind, 360-degree, interactive concert experience. The tour is Groban's best-reviewed one to date. An active arts education philanthropist and advocate, Groban is a member of Americans for the Arts Artists Committee and Groban's Find Your Light Foundation helps enrich the lives of young people through arts, education, and cultural awareness.

### **Chris Young**

At 29, Chris Young has accomplished more than some artists do in a lifetime. A Grammy-nominated recording artist, he's also a dynamic live performer consistently in demand, an international ambassador for country music, and a talented singer-songwriter with six number one singles, four albums, and plenty of Grammy, ACM, and CMA nominations.

A Murfreesboro, TN native, Young found his way into musical theater, jazz training, and six years of classical voice, which honed his emerging baritone into something truly special. At the age of 18, Young was selected to be a YoungArts Winner and a 2003 U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts, the highest honor that can be bestowed upon an artistically talented graduating high school senior. Two years later, after playing hundreds of dates a year on the Texas honky tonk circuit, Young was signed to a deal with the historic RCA Records. He's been named a top tour opener by *Entertainment Weekly* and has shared the stage with such icons as Alan Jackson, Brad Paisley, Dierks Bentley, George Strait, Jason Aldean, Miranda Lambert and Rascal Flatts.

Chris Young's latest album [A.M.](#) has already yielded his Gold certified, sixth chart-topper "Who I Am With You." His latest hit, "Lonely Eyes," is quickly climbing the charts. Young has sold-out 21 headlining shows in the U.S. since this summer. The Grammy-nominated singer recently announced his *2015 World Tour*, with dates set for Australia, Ireland, Germany and the UK.

### **National YoungArts Week 2015 Highlights**

YoungArts will kick off 2015 with their signature program, which nurture hundreds of talented young artists across the country through life-changing artistic enrichment experiences. From January 4 to 11, 2015, **National YoungArts Week** will welcome approximately 170 YoungArts Winners to Miami for a week-long program designed to support young artists at a critical juncture in their lives and to encourage them to pursue a career in the arts.

Artists will participate in master classes, workshops and interdisciplinary activities with distinguished teachers and mentors including YoungArts alumni **Chris Young** (Voice, 2003 Winner and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts), **Lucas Leyva** (Cinematic Arts, 2005 Winner), **Chat Travieso** (Visual Arts, 2003 Winner and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts), and **Shalita Grant** (Theater, 2006 Winner and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts); and **Carrie Mae Weems** (Interdisciplinary); **Andy Adams** (Photography); **Jeffrey Zeigler** (Classical Music); **Chris Sampson** (Voice); **Shelly Berg** (Jazz); **Judine Somerville** (Dance); **Desmond Child** (Voice) and **Campbell McGrath** (Writing).

Participants will also have the opportunity to share their work with the public through performances and a film screening at the **New World Center**; as well as events on the YoungArts Campus including an art, design and photography exhibition in the YoungArts Gallery, writers' readings in the Jewel Box, and a jazz combo performance at **Ted's at YoungArts**. Following National YoungArts Week, the organization will provide Winners

with additional experiences through three regional programs across the United States in **Los Angeles** (February 17 –22), **Miami** (March 10 – 15), and **New York** (April 27 – May 3).

YoungArts Week is supported by YoungArts' National Premier Sponsor Carnival Foundation; the 2015 YoungArts Week Performance Sponsor SunTrust; as well as Aon; James Royal Palm Hotel; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; the *Miami Herald*; *MIAMI Magazine*; and the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

For the most up to date details of National YoungArts Week and information on tickets to events and performances, please visit: [youngarts.org/youngarts-week](http://youngarts.org/youngarts-week).

### **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 700 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 \$6 million in monetary awards; facilitated in excess of \$150 million in college scholarship opportunities; 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 debuted the European classical music phenomenon *Yellow Lounge* in partnership with Universal Music; held salons 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; 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; and premiered HBO's *Joshua Bell: A YoungArts MasterClass*.

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](#).

### **About Max Mara**

Max Mara, the premiere collection within the Max Mara Fashion Group, is the epitome of Italian luxury and style; a contemporary collection for the confident woman consisting of opulent fabrications with couture details applied to Women's ready-to-wear. Known for classic silhouettes with a timeless sensibility, constructed with the most luxurious fabrics, Max Mara is revered for the classification of the coat, sharp suiting and elegant accessories. Max Mara, was founded by the late visionary Achille Maramotti in 1951. The collection is now

available in 2,368 locations in 100 countries. Max Mara Fashion Group counts 19 different collections. The company remains privately held and managed by the Maramotti family.

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