

MEDIA ALERT * * * MEDIA ALERT * * * MEDIA ALERT

**JAZZ PIANIST JASON MORAN AND CHOREOGRAPHER JESSICA LANG
HONORED BY NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION**

**Annual *Backyard Ball* Performance and Gala Raised more than \$1.5M to Support
Aspiring Artists Across the Country**

Javon Jones Accepted 2016 Max Mara Visionary Artist Award

**Alumni Performance Directed by Tony Yazbeck
Celebrates Individuality and the Power of Art**



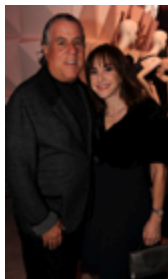
WHAT: On Saturday, January 14, 2017, the **National YoungArts Foundation (YoungArts)** hosted its annual fundraiser in Miami, the ***Backyard Ball* performance and gala**, to help support the artistic development of the nation's most promising young artists. In addition to recognizing the talent of this year's 691 YoungArts Winners, the event honored jazz pianist **Jason Moran** (1993 Winner in Jazz) with the Arison Alumni Award, and choreographer **Jessica Lang** as the Arison Award Honoree for their vital contributions and commitment to the arts. The event also featured **Javon Jones's** acceptance of the inaugural 2016 Max Mara Young Visionary Award presented by **Maria Giulia Maramotti**, Max Mara's Director of retail for North America.

The inspiring evening raised more than \$1.5M in support of YoungArts' programs in Miami, New York, Los Angeles and Washington D.C., which offer aspiring young artists life-changing opportunities to work with leading artists in their fields, present their work to the public, and collaborate across disciplines. *Backyard Ball* guests applauded the 2017 Winners and celebrated the culmination of the organization's signature program, National YoungArts Week, which took place from January 8 - 15.

The *Backyard Ball* was presented for the third consecutive year by Italian luxury brand **Max Mara**, with **VIP Host Sponsor UBS**, and was hosted by **Dr. Kira and Mr. Neil Flanzraich**. The joyous evening welcomed more than 700 guests, including renowned artists and alumni, such as painter **Will Cotton**; choreographer and dancer **Bill T. Jones**; **Javon Jones** (2016 Winner in Dance and Max Mara Young Visionary Award recipient); jewelry designer **Paris Kain**; musician **Dr. Ronald C. McCurdy**; writer **Joan Morgan**; artist and author **Michele Oka Doner**; artist **José Parlá**; choreographer and dancer **Desmond Richardson** (1986 Winner in Dance and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts); actress **Zuzanna Szadkowski** (1997 Winner in Theater and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts); photographer and filmmaker **Bruce Weber**; and singer-songwriter **Chris Young** (2003 Winner in Voice and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts).

Community leaders in attendance included **Lisa Schejola Akin**; **Silvia Karman Cubiñá**; **Ximena Caminos**; **Bernardo Fort-Brescia**; **Howard Herring**; **Alan and Diane Lieberman**; **Bob Lynch**; **John Richard**; **Victoria Rogers**; **Dennis and Debra Scholl**; and **Franklin and Jessica Sirmans**.

Philanthropists present at the event included **Sarah Arison and Thomas Wilhelm**; **Ana Codina Barlick and Robert Barlick**; **Tracey and Bruce Berkowitz**; **Olga Blavatnik**; **Paul and Trudy Cejas**; **Armando and Margarita Codina**; **Diana DiMenna**; **Alan Faena and Ximena Camino**; **Bernardo Fort-Brescia and Laurinda Spear**; **Marina Kellan French**; **Marvin Ross Friedman and Adrienne bon Haes**; **Jared and Stacey Galbut**; **Patricia Garcia Velez Hanna**; **Rose Ellen Greene**; **Lisa Heiden-Koffler and Adam Koffler**; **Richard Kohan**; **Daniel Novela**; **Soledad Picon Fernandez**; **Oti and Remi Roberts**; **Jackie Soffer**; **Anthony and Sandy Tamer**; **Blaine Trump**; and **Terry Zucker**.



The evening was emceed by comedian and actress **Amanda Seales** (1999 Winner in Theater), and featured an elegant black-tie reception and seated dinner by **STARR Catering Group**. The design concept for the event was developed by **Hannah Taurins** (2016 Winner in Visual Arts), and featured a white origami theme with suspended paper butterflies that appear to fly over the space, fragmented candle holders and vases, and Edison bulb chandeliers.

Throughout the night, a series of performance vignettes directed by Tony Award-nominated actor, singer and dancer and 1997 Winner in Theater **Tony Yazbeck** featured YoungArts alumni: **Melinda Sullivan** (2005 Winner in Dance/Tap), **Isai Jess Muñoz** (1997 Winner in Voice & Musical Theater), **Daniel Winshall** (2016 Winner in Jazz), **Pascal Le Boeuf** (2004 Winner in Jazz), **Evan Sherman** (2011 Winner in Jazz), **Bri Ray** (2016 Winner in Voice/Singer/Songwriter and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts), **Mariella Haubs** (2014 Winner in Music/Violin) and **Madison Hicks** (2013 Winner in Dance/Modern).



The performance celebrated individuality and the power of art to help overcome personal challenges. The show was brought to a stop by a **roaring standing ovation** for Melinda Sullivan's remarkable tap dance performance. Attendees were brought to their feet once again following Bri Ray's original song "Safe", which closed the show. Additional highlights include Mariella Haubs's harrowing tale of overcoming acute anxiety disorder through playing the violin and Madison Hicks's commentary on strength and vulnerability as portrayed through contemporary dance. The evening concluded with the Backyard Bash on the YoungArts Plaza with dancing and dessert to music by **DJ Walshy Fire**.

Additional support for the *Backyard Ball* Performance and Gala was provided by Gala Committee Sponsor Deutsche Bank and Raffle Sponsors Braman Motor Cars, Vespa Miami and Seabourn Cruise Line.

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

WHEN: Saturday, January 14, 2017

IMAGES: Click [HERE](#) to download

MORE INFO: <http://www.youngarts.org/galas>

ABOUT THE NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION

The National YoungArts Foundation (YoungArts) was established in 1981 by Lin and Ted Arison to identify and nurture the most accomplished young artists in the visual, literary, design and performing arts, and assist them at critical junctures in their educational and professional development. Through a wide range of annual programs, regular performances, and partnerships with some of the nation's leading cultural institutions, YoungArts aspires to create a strong community of alumni and a platform for a lifetime of encouragement, opportunity and support.

YoungArts' signature program is an application-based award for emerging artists ages 15 – 18 or in grades 10 – 12 from across the United States. Selected through a blind adjudication process, YoungArts Winners receive valuable support, including financial awards of up to \$10,000, professional development and educational experiences working with renowned mentors—such as Debbie Allen, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Rebecca Walker, Plácido Domingo, Frank Gehry, Jeff Koons, Wynton Marsalis, Salman Rushdie and Carrie Mae Weems—and performance and exhibition opportunities at some of the nation's leading cultural institutions, including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Washington, D.C.), The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), The Museum of Modern Art (New York) and New World Center (Miami). Additionally, YoungArts Winners are eligible for nomination as a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students who exemplify academic and artistic excellence.

YoungArts Winners become part of a thousands-strong alumni network of artists, which offers them additional professional opportunities throughout their careers. YoungArts alumni who have gone on to become leading professionals in their fields include actresses Viola Davis, Anna Gunn, Zuzanna Szadkowski and Kerry Washington; Broadway stars Raúl Esparza, Billy Porter, Andrew Rannells and Tony Yazbeck; recording artists Josh Groban, Judith Hill and Chris Young; Metropolitan Opera star Eric Owens; musicians Terence Blanchard, Gerald Clayton, Jennifer Koh and Elizabeth Roe; choreographers Camille A. Brown and Desmond Richardson; visual artists Daniel Arsham and Hernan Bas; internationally acclaimed multimedia artist Doug Aitken; *New York Times* bestselling author Sam Lipsyte; and Academy Award-winning filmmaker Doug Blush.

Carnival Foundation is the YoungArts National Premier Sponsor.

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

TOP ROW (left to right): Maria Giulia Maramotti and Javon Jones, photo by Gustavo Caballero © Getty Images; Sarah Arison, Jessica Lang, Jason Moran, Carolina García Jayaram, photo by Gustavo Caballero © Getty Images; Tony Yazbeck and Amanda Seales, photo by Gustavo Caballero © Getty Images; Neil, Kira and Jordan Flanzraich, photo by Ryan Troy © World Red Eye. MIDDLE ROW (left to right): Jared and Stacey Galbut, photo by Gustavo Caballero © Getty

Images; Franklin and Jessica Sirmans, photo by Ryan Troy © World Red Eye; Alan and Diane Lieberman, photo by Ryan Troy © World Red Eye; Diana Dimenna, Sarah Arison, Marina Kellan French, photo by Gustavo Caballero © Getty Images; Bill T. Jones and Desmond Richardson, photo by Gustavo Caballero © Getty Images; Olga Blavatnik and Soledad Picon Fernandez, photo by Gustavo Caballero © Getty Images. BOTTOM ROW (left to right): Mariella Haubs, photo by Gustavo Caballero © Getty Images; Melinda Sullivan, photo by Gustavo Caballero © Getty Images; Bri Ray, photo by Gustavo Caballero © Getty Images; Madison Hicks, photo by Gustavo Caballero © Getty Images.

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