

**SARAH ARISON APPOINTED BOARD CHAIR AT
NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION BACKYARD BALL
RAISING MORE THAN \$1.5M TO SUPPORT ASPIRING AND EMERGING ARTISTS
ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY RECEIVES ARISON ALUMNI AWARD

Torrance Hall Accepts 2017 Max Mara Young Visionary Award

**Alumni Performances Directed by Grammy Award-Winning
Singer-Songwriter Grace Weber**

IMAGES AND B-ROLL AVAILABLE



Miami, FL (January 16, 2018) – On Saturday, January 13, 2018, the National YoungArts Foundation (YoungArts) announced the appointment of **Sarah Arison** as Chair of the Board of Trustees during the organization’s largest annual fundraiser, the Backyard Ball performance and gala. Ms. Arison will assume the position immediately. The celebratory evening honored Academy Award-winning playwright and YoungArts master teacher **Tarell Alvin McCraney** (1999 YoungArts Winner in Theater) with the 2018 Arison Alumni Award for his contributions and commitment to the arts.

“I am honored and humbled to have been appointed Chair by the Board of Trustees,” said Sarah Arison. “YoungArts has always been a part of my life. My grandparents, Ted and Lin Arison, founded the organization nearly 40 years ago to help ensure that the artists of tomorrow would receive the validation, personal support and resources they need to pursue their passions. Since then, the organization has nurtured more than twenty thousand rising artists. I look forward to working with Carolina García Jayaram, our President and CEO, and YoungArts’ dedicated staff and Board of Trustees to find even more ways to support the next generation of artists.”

Sarah Arison is active across a broad cross-section of national arts organizations. She has served as a trustee of YoungArts since 2005, developing strategic partnerships with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Sotheby's New York, Sundance Film Festival, and others to provide aspiring talent with presentation and mentorship opportunities. In 2016, she helped initiate Max Mara's Young Visionary Award, an annual prize for an exceptional YoungArts winner.

"The National YoungArts Foundation is profoundly grateful to Sarah Arison for her strong commitment to the organization and we look forward to all that we will be able to do together with Sarah as our Chair," said Carolina García Jayaram, YoungArts President & CEO. "There is truly no one better to help us take our next vital steps as an organization, as we expand and strengthen our programs to support aspiring artists at critical junctures in their careers."

Bolstered by the announcement, the Backyard Ball raised more than \$1.5M to support aspiring and emerging artists across the country; and for the fourth consecutive year, the Backyard Ball was presented by **Max Mara**, an Italian luxury brand aligned with YoungArts' mission to support young artists in their educational and professional development. Hosted by Chairs **Dr. Kira** and **Mr. Neil Flanzraich** the Backyard Ball brought together the nation's most promising artists, industry leaders, alumni and celebrities including **Amy and Richard Kohan, Jorge and Darlene Pérez, Klaus Biesenbach, Todd Bishop**, Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools **Alberto Carvalho, Jeffrey Davis and Michael Miller, Diana and Joseph DiMenna, Annette Felder, Bernardo Fort-Brescia, Marvin Ross Friedman and Adrienne Bon Haes, Matt Haggman and Danet Linares, Alex Hurst, Alan and Diane Lieberman, George Lindemann, Bob Lynch**, Max Mara US Director of Retail **Maria Giulia Maramotti, Ariel Penzer and Jeremy Milgroom, Oti and Remi Roberts, Victoria Rogers, Ellen Salpeter, Dennis and Debra Scholl**, and artists and musicians **Derrick Adams, Robert Chambers, Gerald Clayton, Teresita Fernández, Naomi Fisher, José Parlá and Betty Wright**, to name a few.



The awards program featured remarks from YoungArts leadership who applauded **McCraney** on his accomplishments. Welcomed by a standing ovation, McCraney recalled a moment earlier during the day with the 2018 YoungArts winners, where the emerging artists called for a more inclusive, equitable and diverse future. The Academy Award-winner recounted with emotion the way that their very instinct is to take care of each other and the marginalized communities that need the most support.

Following McCraney's acceptance speech, Maria Giulia Maramotti, Max Mara Director of US Retail and Global Brand Ambassador presented **Torrance Hall** (2017 YoungArts Winner in Photography) with the Max Mara Young Visionary Award, an accolade reserved for an exceptional YoungArts winner. The award aims to financially support a young artist in the development of their craft, foster art education and encourage the artist to continue the pursuit of their dreams.

The evening was emceed by WPLG-Local 10 News Anchor and Reporter and local celebrity **Louis Aguirre**, and featured a cocktail reception showcasing pieces from the Max Mara Spring/Summer 2018 collection and a seated dinner catered by STARR Catering Group. The YoungArts campus shimmered with stunning iridescent visual elements, gold accents and art works by **Hall** installed throughout the space.

Guests enjoyed a series of inspiring alumni performances with artistic direction by Grammy Award winner **Grace Weber** (2006 Winner in Voice & U.S Presidential Scholar in the Arts) and featuring **Thirdstory** (**Ben Lusher**, 2010 Winner in Voice; **Richard Saunders**, 2008 Winner in Voice & U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts; **Elliott Skinner**, 2013 Winner in Voice), **Nadia Alexander** (2012 Winner in Theater & U.S Presidential Scholar in the Arts), **Amanda Krische** (2012 Winner in Dance), **Jasmine “Jaz” Sinclair** (2012 Winner in Theater), **Jose “BOY BOI” Tena** (2012 Winner in Dance), **Elliot Wu** (2017 Winner in Classical Music), and an all-star alumni jazz band led by four-time Grammy-nominated pianist and composer **Gerald Clayton** (2002 Winner in Jazz & U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts) with **Braxton Cook** (2010 Winner in Jazz), **Julius Rodriguez** (2014 Winner in Jazz), **Zack Ostroff** (2011 Winner in Jazz & U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts) and **Benny Benack** (2009 Winner in Jazz). Guest were mesmerized by the performances, enjoying Thirdstory’s “Still in Love” and eventually singing along to Weber’s renditions of “Somewhere over the Rainbow” and “Through the Fire.”



The evening concluded with the Backyard Bash after-party on the YoungArts Plaza with dancing and dessert under the stars, with music by legendary DJ and producer **Arthur Baker**.

The Backyard Ball capped off **National YoungArts Week**, YoungArts’ signature program beginning January 7 for 166 Finalists in the visual, literary, design and performing arts selected from approximately 8,000 applicants. Additional support for the Backyard Ball performance and gala was provided by EventStar Structures, Bacardi, Miami Herald and MIAMI Magazine.

Images and B-roll of the Backyard Ball are available at youngarts.org/press-kits

ABOUT SARAH ARISON

Sarah Arison is a passionate supporter of the arts, who is committed to cultural institutions that increase access to arts education, support aspiring and emerging artists, and encourage world-class artistry. She is known throughout the artistic community for her stewardship of young talent and for building networks among organizations, individuals, and companies who share her vision.

Born and raised in Miami, Arison is President of the Arison Arts Foundation, a private grant-making organization that supports emerging artists and the institutions that foster them. She was immersed in the arts from a young age by her grandparents, visionary philanthropists Ted and Lin Arison, who founded Arison Arts Foundation, the National YoungArts Foundation, and the New World Symphony, among their many philanthropic endeavors.

Arison is Vice-Chair of the board of MoMA PS1; a trustee and member of the Committee on Education of MoMA; a trustee of American Ballet Theatre and Chair of the Education Committee; a trustee of the Brooklyn Museum and Chair of the Education Committee; a trustee at New World Symphony; a member of the Board of Directors of Americans for the Arts; and a trustee of the Americas Foundation of the Serpentine Galleries.

In addition to creating alliances between cultural institutions, Arison has capitalized on her professional experience in the fashion industry to help build partnerships between luxury brands, such as Swarovski and Khirma Eliazov, and like-minded non-profit organizations.

Arison has also ventured into film producing, supporting projects that shed light on lesser known aspects of the

arts. In 2015, she produced her first feature film, *Desert Dancer*, starring Freida Pinto. She later went on to co-produce *The First Monday in May*, a documentary film chronicling the creation of The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute blockbuster exhibition *China: Through the Looking Glass*.

Arison earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business and French with a minor in Art History from Emory University.

ABOUT TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY

Tarell Alvin McCraney (1999 YoungArts Winner in Theater) is an award-winning playwright best known for his acclaimed trilogy, *The Brother/Sister Plays*, which include *The Brothers Size*, *In the Red and Brown Water*, and *Marcus; Or the Secret of Sweet*. Other plays include *Head of Passes*, *Choir Boy* and *Wig Out!*

His original play, *In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue*, is the basis for the Academy Award-winning film *Moonlight*, for which McCraney and director Barry Jenkins also won an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. Among its many other honors, the film won a Golden Globe for Best Drama, Gotham Award for Best Feature, NAACP Image Award for Best Independent Film, WGA Award for Best Original Screenplay, the Human Rights Campaign's Visionary Arts Award and six Independent Spirit Awards including Best Picture and Best Screenplay.

McCraney has also worked on TV and film projects with Playtone, HBO and Disney. McCraney is the recipient of a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship, the Whiting Award, Steinberg Playwright Award, the Evening Standard Award, the New York Times Outstanding Playwright Award, the Paula Vogel Playwriting Award, the Windham Campbell Award and a Doris Duke Artist Award. He was the International Writer-in-Residence for the Royal Shakespeare Company from 2008-2010, and a former resident playwright at New Dramatists.

He is an ensemble member at Steppenwolf Theatre Company and a member of Teo Castellanos/D- Projects in Miami. McCraney is a graduate of the New World School of the Arts in Miami, the Theatre School at DePaul University and the Yale School of Drama. He also received an honorary doctorate from the University of Warwick. As Professor of Theatre and Civic Engagement at University of Miami, he created a three-year program in partnership with the University, Miami-Dade County and the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center. He was recently named Chairman of the Playwriting Department at the Yale School of Drama, as well as Playwright in Residence at Yale Repertory Theater.

ABOUT TORRANCE HALL

Torrance Hall (2017 YoungArts Winner in Photography) is a photographer interested in self-portraiture, self-exploration, the daily experience and masculinity within his practice. Driven by endless curiosity and his playfulness with texture, Hall creates captivating images that evoke genuine emotion. Hall's work explores the relationship between the imagination, dreams and the everyday vision of human experiences with dark and fantastical narratives, often touching on the idea of masculinity and the process of growth and development from adolescence to adulthood. He began experimenting with self-portraiture at a young age and today it is used in the majority of his work. Hall graduated from Deep Run High School in Glenn Allen, VA in 2017, and now attends the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, MD.

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, 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,, 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 winners Doug Blush and Tarell Alvin McCraney.

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

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