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; 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.

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 Haub’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.
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