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

**NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION HONORS
JAZZ PIANIST JASON MORAN AND CHOREOGRAPHER JESSICA LANG AT
ANNUAL BACKYARD BALL PERFORMANCE AND GALA**

Saturday, January 14, 2017

Presented by Max Mara

Evening Features Alumni Performance Directed by Tony Yazbeck

Emceed by TV Personality and Theater Alumna Amanda Seales

WHAT: On Saturday, January 14, 2017, the **National YoungArts Foundation (YoungArts)** will host its largest annual fundraiser, the ***Backyard Ball performance and gala***, as the culmination of the organization's signature program, National YoungArts Week, from January 8 – 15. The celebratory evening will welcome prominent artists and alumni, community leaders, philanthropists and celebrities to the YoungArts Campus to applaud the 2017 YoungArts Winners—691 of the nation's most promising young artists in the literary, visual, design and performing arts. The event will honor jazz pianist **Jason Moran** (1993 YoungArts Winner in Jazz) as this year's Arison Alumni Award recipient, and choreographer **Jessica Lang** as the Arison Award Honoree for their vital contributions and commitment to the arts.

The *Backyard Ball* is presented by Italian luxury brand **Max Mara**, who continues to reinforce their ongoing commitment to supporting the arts, especially education focused, as this is their third consecutive year as a partner. The evening will be hosted by **Dr. Kira and Mr. Neil Flanzraich**, emceed by comedian and actress **Amanda Seales** (1999 YoungArts Winner in Theater), and will feature an elegant black-tie reception and seated dinner by **STARR Catering Group**.

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

In the YoungArts Gallery, an exhibition of visual art, design and photography by

2017 YoungArts Winners and curated by Pérez Art Museum Miami Director **Franklin Sirmans** will be on view.

The evening will conclude with the Backyard Bash on the YoungArts Plaza with dancing and dessert under the stars, featuring music by **DJ Walshy Fire**. Tickets are priced at \$100 in advance / \$125 at the door (taxes, fees+) and can be purchased at backyardbash2017.eventbrite.com.

National YoungArts Week aims to foster cross-disciplinary collaboration and community, while offering young artists the guidance needed to prepare for the next stage of their artistic development. During the intensive, week-long and all-inclusive program, 167 artists across 10 disciplines participate in master classes and workshops with internationally recognized leaders in their field, including YoungArts Legacy Master Teachers artistic director, choreographer and dancer **Bill T. Jones**, and celebrated photographer **Sylvia Plachy**; American painter **Will Cotton**; acclaimed actress **Olympia Dukakis**; legendary saxophonist and composer **Jimmy Heath**; Academy Award-winning director **Doug Blush** (1984 Winner in Cinematic Arts), among others. Throughout the week, winners' work will be further adjudicated to determine additional award levels.

Throughout National YoungArts Week, audiences can experience the work of the next generation of artists through performances in voice, jazz, theater, dance and classical music, as well as film screenings at **New World Center**, writers' readings in the **YoungArts Jewel Box**, and a visual arts, photography and design exhibition in the **YoungArts Gallery**. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit <http://www.youngarts.org/youngarts-week>.

WHO: Expected guests include **Maria Giulia Maramotti** (Max Mara US Director of Retail), **Sarah Arison & Thomas Wilhelm**, **Dr. Kira and Mr. Neil Flanzraich**, **Armando & Margarita Codina**, **Alan Faena & Ximena Caminos**, **Bill T. Jones**, **Marvin Ross Friedman & Adrienne bon Haes**, **Alex Blavatnik**, **Will Cotton**, **Anthony & Sandy Tamer**, **Alan & Diane Lieberman**, **Dennis & Debra Scholl**, **Daniel Novela**, **Jared & Stacy Galbut** and more.

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

WHEN: Saturday, January 14, 2017
Media check-in: 5:00 PM (YoungArts Tent, Biscayne Blvd & 22nd Street)
Red carpet arrivals begin: 5:15 PM
Doors open at 6:30 PM
Program begins: 7:30 PM
***all media must be credentialed in advance

SUPPORT & TICKETS: The *Backyard Ball* Performance and Gala is supported by Presenting Sponsor MaxMara, VIP Host Sponsor UBS, Gala Committee Sponsor Deutsche Bank and Raffle Sponsors Braman Motor Cars, Vespa Miami and Seabourn Cruise Line.

Tickets to the *Backyard Ball* start at \$1,000 and tables are available starting at \$10,000. Tickets can be purchased [here](#) or contact Everett Ford at gala@youngarts.org / 305-377-1140 ext. 1808.

For media tickets, please contact Heike Dempster at hdempster@youngarts.org / 305-377-1140 ext. 1304 (after-party only).

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

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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