



Media Contacts:

youngARTS Communications Department
Judy Block, Vice President, Communications
Kim Hale, Director, Public Relations
305-377-1140 x 216
khale@youngarts.org

NIGHT FULL OF STARS CELEBRATE youngARTS™ GOLD AND SILVER WINNERS

MIKHAIL BARYSHNIKOV TO RAÚL ESPARZA TURN OUT TO SUPPORT AMERICA'S BEST YOUNG TALENT

MIAMI (April 3, 2009) Mikhail Baryshnikov, Raúl Esparza, Eric and Perri Peltz Ruttenberg and a bevy of New York's most prominent arts advocates joined event chairs **Agnes Gund, Veronique Pittman, Marian E. Davis** and **Sarah Arison** last night for an evening honoring the best of the next generation of artists – the 2009 youngARTS Gold and Silver Winners.

IN THE STUDIO features more than 40 of the nation's most talented young artists across the literary, performing and visual arts. These 17 and 18-year old artists were hand selected from more than 6,000 applicants to participate in this exclusive New York event. "The level of talent displayed tonight is truly inspiring," says the evening's co-chair and NFAA Board of Trustees member Agnes Gund. "It makes me very proud to be a part of this organization and its mission, and gives me great hope for the future of the arts."

The evening began with an exhibition viewing and festive cocktail reception where guests chatted with the artists while they enjoyed the remarkable works by the 12 youngARTS Photography, Visual Arts and Cinematic Arts Winners at **Affirmation Arts**. After a brief intermission, the VIPs made their way to the **Baryshnikov Arts Center** for a lively studio performance featuring the Voice, Music, Theater, Writing, Jazz and Dance Winners. A performance highlight included a special tribute to 1988 youngARTS Alumnus and three-time Tony Award Nominee **Raúl Esparza** who recently completed a critically acclaimed run in the Broadway revival of David Mamet's *Speed-the-Plow*. The night was capped off with a fabulous cabaret performance by the youngARTS Jazz Ensemble, several of whom have performed at the **Grammy Awards** as members of the Grammy Jazz Ensemble.



Christina DePaul, president and CEO of NFAA, states "This evening is not just about art for art's sake, but rather about providing the tools and encouragement talented young artists need to succeed to help ensure the vitality of a multi-billion industry in this country."

This special benefit performance raised funds and awareness to help expand NFAA's good work in providing scholarship and educational opportunities in the arts.

For photos of the event, please visit www.patrickmcmullan.com or contact Kim Hale at khale@youngARTS.org.

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About NFAA and youngARTS™:

youngARTS™, the core program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA), identifies the nation's most talented high school seniors and other 17 and 18-year olds in nine disciplines in the performing, literary and visual arts. Based on the belief that the arts can be sustained only if they are continually renewed and refreshed by the vigor and perspective of young artists, the program offers unique educational opportunities, scholarships and awards to exceptionally talented artists. Since 1981 NFAA has facilitated over \$80 million in college scholarships and gifted over \$6 million in awards. NFAA is the exclusive nominating agency to The Commission on Presidential Scholars in the Arts; a select few receive their awards at the White House each summer. Alumni include Broadway actors, award-winning playwrights, authors, musicians, vocalists and visual artists. Additionally, Educate America has designated NFAA as a "Best Charity in America." For more information, please visit www.youngARTS.org.

About Baryshnikov Arts Center (BAC):

The Baryshnikov Arts Center (BAC) was established in 2005 to serve as a creative laboratory, meeting place, and performance space for a vibrant community of artists from around the world. BAC is also dedicated to building audiences for the arts by presenting contemporary, innovative work at low or no cost to ticket buyers. The Center has been a partner of NFAA since it opened its doors in 2005.

About Affirmation Arts:

Affirmation Arts is a new arts complex located in Manhattan's Hudson Yards District. Comprised of a gallery space, offices and studios, the building provides an anchor to the up-and-coming arts neighborhood. The gallery offers temporary exhibition space for curators, galleries, artists and in-house shows. The



Affirmation Arts Fund, with the mission to raise the status within society of art as a vocation through arts education, will begin operation in 2009. Affirmation Arts is a welcome partner to NFAA's New York celebration event.