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THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ADVANCEMENT IN THE ARTS (NFAA) SELECTS LOCAL STUDENTS FOR NFAA ARTS® AWARDS

NFAA Honors Young Artists from Across the Nation with Prestigious Award

MIAMI, FL (January 26, 2005) – Following a dramatic week-long series of final auditions and showcase performances for the NFAA Arts Recognition and Talent Search® (ARTS), the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA) has announced the award levels for the program's 160 finalists, who were selected from a pool of 6,524 applicants. NFAA recognized high school seniors from across the nation with cash prizes totaling more than \$500,000. The awards are a result of careful evaluation from world-class experts in each of the nine art forms represented during NFAA ARTS Week, which was held January 9–15, 2006 in Miami.

Awardees each received one of the following honors:

- The coveted **\$10,000 Gold Awards**, given to only six deserving finalists;
- The first-ever **\$5,000 Silver Awards**, granted to 32 deserving finalists from the nine NFAA ARTS disciplines; and
- Level IV, III, II and I Awards for NFAA ARTS Finalists, ranging from **\$500 to \$3,000**.

In addition to the top cash prize, each NFAA ARTS Week Gold and Silver Award winners will receive an all-expenses paid trip to New York City on April 24 to attend a star-studded event at the Baryshnikov Arts Center/37 Arts performing arts complex where they will perform and be presented with their cash prize.

"I am honored to be able to present these outstanding students with this prestigious award," said NFAA President Dr. William Banchs. "This year's NFAA ARTS Week finalists have revealed star-quality work and I am astonished by the immense talent these students hold. These high school seniors now know that their talent can compete professionally on a national level, and NFAA hopes that this is just the confidence they need to pursue their talent full-time."

Showcasing their talent in one of nine artistic disciplines - dance, film and video, classical, pop and jazz music, photography, theater, visual arts, voice and writing – these high school

seniors, representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as all U.S. territories, were selected in a blind judging process. NFAA ARTS Week is an once-in-a-lifetime experience allowing students to participate in master classes, workshops, readings, exhibits and enrichment activities while also given the chance to perform in front of renowned artists and arts educators. The not-for-profit organization paid all expenses, including airfare, hotel, meals and ground transportation.

Through an exclusive partnership with the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars, the U.S. Department of Education and the Presidential Scholars Program, NFAA ARTS Week finalists are the only students who are considered for the additional honor of being named a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts. Presidential Scholar finalists will be announced in early May. NFAA selected 50 students to nominate for the coveted Presidential Scholar in the Arts honor.

NFAA ARTS Week 2006 culminated in a spectacular Silver Anniversary celebration on Jan. 14th as the organization dedicates its annual *An Affair of the Arts* Performance and Arts Gala to the foundation's extraordinary 25 years of success. The evening honored actress/singer **Vanessa L. Williams** as recipient of NFAA's First Alumni Award sponsored by Gibson Guitar and Baldwin Piano, and internationally acclaimed **Michael Tilson Thomas**, New World Symphony Music Director and Artistic Director/Conductor of the San Francisco Symphony, as recipient of the Sixth Annual 2006 Arison Award sponsored by PricewaterhouseCoopers. Both awardees performed, as well as the New World Symphony, in addition to celebrated performing artists **Roy Hargrove**, 1988 NFAA ARTS Winner in Jazz Trumpet; **Jennifer Koh**, 1994 NFAA ARTS Winner in Violin; Alvin Ailey Principal Dancers **Matthew Rushing** and **Linda Sims**, 1991 and 1994 NFAA ARTS Winners in Modern Dance; and New York City Ballet Principal Dancers **Craig Hall**, 1997 NFAA ARTS Winners in Dance.

For a complete list of ARTS awardees or more information about NFAA, call 1-800-970-ARTS(2787) or please visit www.NFAA.ARTSawards.org.

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ABOUT NFAA:

Dedicated to empowering the arts for America's future, the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA) is a non-profit organization founded in 1981 by businessman and visionary Ted Arison. NFAA's mission is to identify emerging artists and assist them at critical junctures with their educational and professional development; and to raise the appreciation for, and support of, the arts in American society.

Arts Recognition and Talent Search® (ARTS) is a program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA). The NFAA ARTS program is sponsored, in part, by: Carnival Cruise Lines; The Coca-Cola Company; Gibson Guitar, Baldwin Piano and The Gibson Foundation; International Association for Jazz Education; The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Trust; The John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts; PricewaterhouseCoopers; Smithsonian Magazine; and SunTrust. ARTS Week 2006 was made possible, in part, by support from American Airlines; the Miami Herald; the City of Miami's Office of Film, Arts, Culture and Entertainment: Special Events & Cultural Grants; the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, the Cultural Affairs Council, the Tourist Development Council, and the Mayor and the Miami-Dade County Board of Commissioners; The State of Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information about NFAA, visit the website NFAA.ARTSawards.org.