

## VAN WEZEL FOUNDATION TURNS 30!



Some of the Van Wezel Foundation's past gala stars

This year marks a very special milestone for the Van Wezel Foundation – 30 Years!

In 1987, a group of performing arts supporters with a passion for the City of Sarasota's Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall came together to form the Foundation. The founding group included the late Curtis W. Haug, who served as managing director of the Hall for the preceding 17 years; Anname Sandegren, who acted as the first chair; and Harvey Rothenberg, Art Wood, John Dart, Gil Waters, Mike Pender, Jr., Jane Cook, Carolyn Michel, Foster Harmon, Bill Snow and Ernest Rice. Their goal was to help the Van Wezel continue its prized role as the "crown jewel of the bayfront" and expand the programming to be accessible to more audiences.

Since then, the Van Wezel Foundation has given more than \$13 million to the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall in support of the Hall's ongoing education efforts, community outreach and improvement programs. Children's programming has

been at the forefront since the Foundation's inception. The Schooltime Performance Program has grown to serve over 30,000 students and educators from four counties each season. Additional support is also provided for the Hall's Kennedy Center partnership, which sends visiting artists into area classrooms each year and provides professional development workshops for teachers.

In addition to supporting the educational activities of the Hall, the Foundation has made a significant investment in community outreach by subsidizing hundreds of tickets to area non-profits each year, supporting senior and military access programs, and sponsoring the free, family-friendly and always popular summer Friday Fest Series.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the continued support of our donors and friends over the years. It is because of you that we can continue our legacy and bring the arts to thousands of people in the community each year.



## A LETTER FROM MONICA VAN BUSKIRK PRESIDENT AND CEO

As I write this, our 2016/2017 season has come to a close. I thank Mary Bensel and her fine staff for producing another stellar year of programming! We had many incredible performances, several of which were special for the Foundation. The Foundation's 16th Annual Gala on February 10 featured those incredibly funny men, Steve Martin and Martin Short. I believe this was our best Gala yet with record attendance and revenue! The Foundation also held a dinner and show event on January 13th with Jay Leno. He was

as wonderful and funny as he was as our Gala star in 2014. This was another season of glamour, beauty, talent and laughs we will all remember!

The kickoff *Bravo Legacy Society* luncheon in May was another special event for the Foundation. It was well attended by both community leaders and city dignitaries. It featured keynote speaker, Darrell Ayers (Former Vice President of Education at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts) who connected the impact of arts education to the future of our youth in the community and the importance of being "inspired" to "aspire."

Last year our education program again hit new records, reaching over 30,000 students and educators across four counties. We anticipate another marvelous Schooltime season this coming year with *Dragons Love Tacos*, *The Science of Magic*, *The Money Tree*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Four Score and Seven Years Ago*, *Mummenschanz*, and one of my favorites, *Goodnight Moon*. We also have *Clementine* and *The Gruffalo*. I have been involved with the Foundation for over 12 years and continue to be thrilled at the Hall's efforts and the joy I feel seeing the young students experience live theatre for the first time. They are attentive, engaged and respectful, and it makes me proud to be a part of the program.

There were several other exciting achievements for both the Hall and the Foundation this year. For the sixth year in a row, the Hall was voted the Number 1 Performing Arts Hall in North America in the 2,000 seat category by *Venue Today*. In addition, the Foundation was voted **Best Local Non-Profit Organization** by the Sarasota Herald Tribune's Readers Choice for both Sarasota and Manatee.

Last, but certainly not least, the Foundation celebrates a very special milestone this year – 30 Years! Since 1987, the Foundation has directed more than \$13 million to the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall in support of ongoing education efforts, community outreach and engagement programs.

We thank the Board of Directors, our Donors and the staffs at both the Van Wezel Hall and the Van Wezel Foundation.

Monica Van Buskirk, President and CEO



## A LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN ALI BAHAJ

We should all be very proud!

First and foremost, thanks to each and every one of you, our loyal supporters, for your generous contributions and continued support of the Van Wezel Foundation.

Because of you, we were able to reach over 30,000 students and educators from four counties (Sarasota, Manatee, DeSoto and Charlotte) with our Schooltime shows. These programs positively influence and help educate young minds through the performing arts.

We are very proud that the Van Wezel Foundation was selected by the Sarasota Herald Tribune Reader's Choice as the Best Non-Profit Organization in Sarasota and Manatee. Please join me in congratulating Monica Van Buskirk, the Foundation's President and CEO, as well as her entire staff on this well-deserved honor and recognition!

This year's annual Gala was another smash! The money raised from the Gala supports our Schooltime program as well as improvements made to the Van Wezel Hall.

Speaking of the Hall, we are also very proud that the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall has once again been ranked as the No. 1 Performing Arts Hall in North America in the 2,000-seat category. What an achievement!

Please join me in congratulating Mary Bensel, the Executive Director of the Hall, and her hard working and dedicated staff and volunteers on this wonderful recognition.

Thank you once again for your continued generous support of the Van Wezel Foundation. We could not achieve these milestones without you.

Ali Bahaj  
Chairman of the Board

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# EVENT ROUNDUP

## JAY LENO

In celebration of Jay Leno's return to Sarasota, the Van Wezel Foundation hosted a very special event prior to his performance on Friday, January 13. This fun-filled evening was a tribute to Jay's collectible car hobby. Guests enjoyed cocktails, craft beers and creative cuisine by Michael's on East while viewing vintage cars and motorcycles on display by the bay. A mini auction was held during the dinner, raising money for arts education programs at the Van Wezel.



Tom and Sherry Koski with Jim Selinski (Chief Development Officer)

The fun continued when the stand-up legend took the stage to deliver plenty of his signature comedy and laughs.



Ali Bahaj (Chairman of the Board), Gloria Bahaj, Susan and Jim Travers

## 16TH ANNUAL GALA WITH STEVE MARTIN AND MARTIN SHORT

It was a picture-perfect evening on the bay at the 16th Annual Van Wezel Foundation Gala. The sold-out event featured an outstanding performance by comedic legends, Steve Martin and Martin Short!



Co-chairs Wendy Merriman and Brenda Maraman

A brand new VIP area was added this year where guests were treated to specialty wines from Porter Vineyards, a Tito's Vodka Luge and live artist, Eric Waugh, painted pictures of Steve Martin and Martin Short which were later auctioned off for \$11,000.

Following cocktails, dinner and a hilarious performance by Martin and Short, guests were swept along to an after-party in the grand foyer for more fun and dancing to the sounds of the Soul Sensations.

A great big THANK YOU to our incredible group of committee volunteers and a very special thanks to our terrific co-chairs, Brenda Maraman and Wendy Merriman. Also, thank you to Mary Kenealy Events for designing such a stunningly beautiful event.

Because of YOUR support and the combined efforts of our staff and committee, we raised close to \$300,000 in support of arts education programming at the Van Wezel.



Suzanne Atwell, Monica Van Buskirk, Michael Klauber, Ali Bahaj, Tom Barwin and Mary Bense



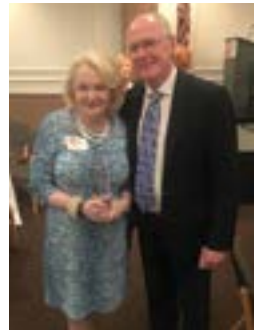
Artist, Eric Waugh, live painting outside VIP tent.

## FOUNDATION PRESIDENT RECEIVES AWARD FROM LEADERSHIP SARASOTA

The Sarasota Chamber of Commerce recently held its Celebrate Outstanding Leadership Luncheon where three renowned area business leaders were honored for their contributions to the community, including our own President and CEO, Monica Van Buskirk, who was bestowed with the "Dedication Award." Many of our staff and board members were in attendance to share in this special day with her. "Leadership boils down to loving what you do," Monica said in her remarks. "You must feel passionate about whatever it is you are involved in or do!"



Mary Bense, Sharyn Weiner, Monica Van Buskirk



Monica and Richard Van Buskirk

## FOUNDATION IS AWARDED "BEST NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION"

In late February, the Van Wezel Foundation was recognized with the Sarasota Herald Tribune's Readers' Choice Award for "Best Non-Profit Organization" (Sarasota & Manatee). The Foundation is honored to be recognized with this prestigious award in the community and sends special thanks out to the readers who voted.



Monica Van Buskirk with Erin Guzzo

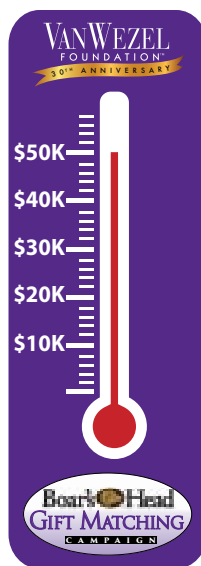
## FOUNDATION SELECTED AS FINALIST FOR "BEST NON-PROFIT OF THE YEAR" BY CHAMBER

The Van Wezel Foundation was honored to be selected as a finalist for Best Non-Profit of the Year at the Sarasota Chamber's Frank G. Berlin, Sr. Awards on June 2nd. Although we didn't take first place, it is still an honor to be recognized as one of only three finalists in this category among so many worthy organizations in town.



Foundation and Hall staff attended the luncheon award ceremony.

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT: BOAR'S HEAD PROVISIONS CO., INC.



Boar's Head Provisions has generously supported the Van Wezel Foundation since 2006 as a member of the Founders Society, a Lead Sponsor of the Gala and through special gift match campaigns. In addition to this, they donate the food that our Friends enjoy in the Founders Lounge each evening before shows.

Most recently in May, they partnered with us on a Gift Match Campaign in honor of the Foundation's 30th Anniversary with the goal of raising \$50,000 in new donations by May 31st to be matched dollar-for-dollar. We are proud to share that we reached our fundraising goal and thank Boar's Head for this incredible opportunity.

We are so grateful for their ongoing support of our mission to enrich the community, support arts education and inspire young minds. Mike Martella, President of Boar's Head Provisions Co., Inc. said "Boar's Head Brand is proud to call Sarasota our home and we value the powerful role that arts and culture play in our local community. We are honored to support

the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall and the Van Wezel Foundation in their mission to bolster programming and events that foster creativity, provide access to the arts, promote self-expression and celebrate diversity."

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT: NANCY DENTON, DONOR RELATIONS SPECIALIST

Nancy Denton joined the Foundation last November. She provides concierge service to Friends of the Foundation.

Nancy moved to Sarasota from Las Vegas in 2009 and earned her Master of Nonprofit Management from the University of Central Florida in 2012. She has been immersed in the arts for over 20 years, having performed on-stage around the country both professionally and as a hobby. She chose Sarasota for its amazing arts community, and is a fixture with several local theatre companies and the troupe Random Acts.

Prior to moving to Las Vegas, Nancy lived in the Philadelphia area and worked as the assistant to the President and CEO for the Foundation for New Jersey Public Broadcasting. There she worked on fundraising and development in support of New Jersey Network, New Jersey's public television and radio station.



## BOARD SPOTLIGHT: NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND APPOINTMENTS:

**DAVID KOFFMAN** started his career in 1980 at The Securities Groups, an early hedge fund, and was subsequently recruited to work in his family business in 1982. Since then, he has been involved in acquisitions, mergers, divestitures, IPO's, LBO's, developments, general operations and many different types of restructures. Additional business ventures include chemical businesses, food processing, distribution, importing, finance, venture capital, hospitality and real estate. He and his wife, Donna, moved to Sarasota with their three children in 2004 and are very active in the local community.

**MARGUERITE ANDRICH** joined the Foundation board in 2016 through the CYD Star Student program. She attends Pine View School and is very involved with the local community. She is also the founder of Bag Up The Love, which partners with local businesses to purchase and pack over 200 new duffel bag sets annually for children entering the Sarasota County foster care system.

**A perfect PARTNERSHIP**

**WHEN TWO COME TOGETHER TO CREATE SOMETHING GREAT.**

The Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall and the Van Wezel Foundation, continuing to work together to deliver first class children's educational programming for our community. With the Foundation's support, more than 30,000 students from four counties are provided with programs and access to the theatre each season to experience the arts through the Schooltime Program.

**Won't you show your support and help us continue to keep the children coming?**

**Van Wezel**  
THE CITY OF SARASOTA'S PERFORMING ARTS HALL

**VAN WEZEL FOUNDATION™**  
30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

To learn more, please contact us at (941) 366-5578 or visit us at [vwfoundation.org](http://vwfoundation.org).

## NEW FRIENDS AT THE VWF!

We'd like to say thank you and recognize our brand new friends at the Van Wezel Foundation! All our donors are special to us and we could not accomplish our mission without your help! We are so grateful to our new friends, longtime friends and all who have helped the Van Wezel Foundation in its continued success.

Jeff and Dee Arnold

Shari and Stephen Ashman

Eve and Richard Biller

Colette Crisp

George and Jane Famiglio

Mark and Jennifer Frechette

Jennifer Hibner

Debi and Dan Isaac

David and Josie Nichols

Tom and Jane Rudbeck

Edwin and Maureen Schloss

Ron and Janice Steger

Glen and Jackie Tilton

## NEW FOUNDERS SOCIETY/ INSPIRATION MEMBERS AT VWF

Jim and Susan Travers

WHERE  
*Inspiration*  
TAKES CENTER STAGE

VAN WEZEL  
FOUNDATION

## A Warm Welcome To Our New Presidents Society Members!

We are thrilled to welcome new and returning members into the Presidents Society program.

Larry and Joan Castellani

Karl and Ricky Newkirk

Joel and Diane Schleicher

Yvonne Martin

Christopher M. and Sara Connor

If you would like more information on how you can become a part of this program, visit our website at [www.vwfoundation.org](http://www.vwfoundation.org) or contact us at 941-366-5578



VAN WEZEL  
FOUNDATION

BRAVO  
LEGACY  
SOCIETY

## VAN WEZEL FOUNDATION LAUNCHES BRAVO LEGACY SOCIETY!

On May 24, 2017, the Van Wezel Foundation hosted a special luncheon to celebrate the launch of the brand-new *Bravo Legacy Society*. The event was generously sponsored by Herta Cuneo and Williams Parker Harrison Dietz & Getzen and featured keynote speaker Darrell Ayers (former Vice President of Education at the

Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts) who linked the impact of arts education to the future of youth in the community and emphasized that "one must be inspired to aspire."

The *Bravo Legacy Society* was formed to recognize and honor the dedicated individuals and families who feel inspired to leave a legacy gift to sustain the future of the Van Wezel Foundation. The Society is made up of a circle of friends with a shared vision and commitment to the future of the organization and its mission to create a world-class Performing Arts Center that enriches the community, supports arts education and inspires young minds. The goal is to engage new legacy donors through planned giving, bequests, wills, beneficiary-naming and cash contributions to help increase the endowment and support the future of the Foundation, arts education and outreach programs.



Darrell Ayers with Monica Van Buskirk

For more information on the **Bravo Legacy Society**, contact **Jim Selinski** or **Melissa Lane** at **941-366-5578**. Additional information may also be found on our website at [www.VWfoundation.org](http://www.VWfoundation.org)

## WANT TO EARN FREE SHOW TICKETS & DINNERS?

Our Refer-A-Friend program is an easy way for friends to earn free tickets to shows at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall and free pre-show dinners at the delicious Mattison's Bayside. Refer one friend and receive (2) tickets to the show of your choice. Refer a second friend and receive (2) show tickets PLUS (2) dinners. Call us at 941-366-5578 for more details.

\*Tickets are for the 2017-18 season are based on availability at time of redemption.

## THE VAN WEZEL'S 2017-18 SEASON PREVIEW

### WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE NEW DANCE/ CLASSICAL/BROADWAY SERIES FOR THE 2017-18 SEASON!

Headlining next year's Broadway line-up will be *Motown: The Musical* (Mar. 27-Apr. 1, 2018), the true American dream story of Motown founder Berry Gordy's journey from featherweight boxer to the heavyweight music mogul who launched the careers of Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Smokey Robinson and many more.



Other **BROADWAY** shows include: *Buddy-The Buddy Holly Story*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder*, *A Night with Janis Joplin*, *Cabaret*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Neil Berg's 109 Years of Broadway*, *Peter Pan – 3D Stage Spectacular*, *Jersey Boys* and *A Chorus Line*.

The **CLASSICAL** Series will include *Salute to Vienna Classical Special*, *National Symphony of Cuba*, *Academy of St. Martin in the Fields with Joshua Bell*, *The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo Yo Ma*, and the return of the lovely and talented Renee Fleming.

The **DANCE** Series will feature *Tango Fire*, *BalletBoyz*, *Travis Wall's Shaping Sound – After the Curtain*, *Moscow Festival Ballet – Carmen and Romeo & Juliet*, *Dance to the Movies* and *Mummenschanz* "you & me."

Friends (Donors) of the Foundation should have received a mailing in early April to order tickets. Call Elsie or Nancy at 941-366-5578 for questions or to reserve your seats if you have not done so already.

A TheatreworksUSA Production  
Oct. 11 & 12, 2017 (Van Wezel)  
Oct. 13, 2017 (North Port)

A Bill Blagg Production  
Nov. 6, 2017

Dec. 4, 2017

A TheatreworksUSA Production  
Jan. 19, 2018 (North Port)  
Jan. 23, 2018 (Van Wezel)

ArtsPower's  
Jan. 18, 2018

Feb. 20, 2018

Apr. 27, 2018

A TheatreworksUSA Production  
May 1, 2018

The Gruffalo: Live on Stage  
A Tall Stories Production  
May 10, 2018

Performances, Dates, and Times are subject to change without notice.

Kelli Maldonado  
Director of Education & Community Engagement



## FRIDAY FEST SCHEDULE

Everyone's favorite family-friendly outdoor summer concert series is back starting in June. The diverse line-up has something for everyone! All shows are 5-9pm, rain or shine.

**Foundation Friends, please remember to RSVP to join us in the VIP area on the Grand Foyer Terrace.**

**June 16** – Doug Demming & the Jewel Tones (Be Bop)

**July 21** – Kettle of Fish (Contemporary Rock, Blues, Country)

**August 25** – Jah Movement (Reggae)

**September 15** – Reverend Barry & the Funktastic Soul (Funk, R&B)



## DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT!

Many organizations and retirement plans support matching gift programs where they will match any qualified charitable contribution made by their employees. This is a great way to further your impact and could possibly double or triple your annual gift.

If you have any questions about this program, please contact our finance department at 941-366-5578.

### VAN WEZEL FOUNDATION STAFF

**Monica Van Buskirk**, President and CEO

**Barbara Brosius**, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Operations

**Jim Selinski**, Chief Development Officer

**Melissa Lane**, Director of Development

**Erin Guzzo**, Marketing and Events Manager

**Elsie Merrill**, Donor Relations Manager

**Nancy Denton**, Donor Relations Specialist

**Cathleen Mai**, Database Coordinator

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**Mary Bense**, Ex Officio

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Beatrice Friedman

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Michael R. Pender, Jr.

Harvey Rothenberg, Founding Vice Chair

Harvey Rothenberg, Founding Vice Chair