

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Linda Greenberg Gross, Executive Director
Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation
Office: (310) 396-4557
Fax: (310) 450-5959
smmef@smmusd.org
www.smmef.org

(EVENT PHOTOS AVAILABLE TO MEDIA UPON REQUEST)

**Tenth annual Artists for the Arts concerts raise more than
\$125,000 for SMMUSD school arts programs**

Jackson Browne, Gary Wright, and Venice team with student musicians to deliver rousing shows benefiting Santa Monica-Malibu public schools

SANTA MONICA, CA, May 20, 2013 -- Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee Jackson Browne headlined the 10th Annual Artists for the Arts benefit concerts this past weekend at Santa Monica High School's historic Barnum Hall, but it was the student musicians who stole the show.

Joining Browne as co-headliners were fellow rock icon Gary Wright, known for "Dreamweaver" and other classic rock hits, and local rock band Venice, a touring group with more than 20 years playing with the biggest names in music. All three headliners took turns on stage, joined throughout the night by student orchestra, choir, and soloists from Santa Monica, Malibu, and Olympic High Schools, respectively.

Emceed by longtime KLOS radio personality Cynthia Fox, the Saturday night show also featured an auction of music treasures including signed guitars, a drum set, tickets to the 2014 Grammys, and other unique items, all supporting the cause.

Among the many highlights of the evening was a rousing rendition of the Beatles' classic "With A Little Help from My Friends" featuring all the artists on stage together, joined by student and faculty musicians and student vocalists. The crowd was on its feet throughout the song, which preceded the closing number, the classic '70s anthem "Take It Easy," led by Browne.

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May 20, 2013**

Over the course of two nights this year, Browne, Wright, and Venice teamed with students and faculty to deliver rousing performances that raised more than \$125,000 to benefit arts programs in the 16 public schools comprising the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. The funds raised will be added to the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation's For The Arts endowment, supporting visual and performing arts education throughout the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District.

Browne, the artist who originated this annual benefit concert with Venice a decade ago, was playing for the fifth time in the event's 10-year history, and he and the other artists committed to a second night this year when the Saturday show sold out so quickly.

"It's amazing because every year we do this gig we get to work with kids and do something special," Browne states. "We do it once...when people come to see one of these shows, they see a completely different show than what they saw last year."

"Arts in high school are really important," Browne continues. "Arts make the individual complete. Arts connect us to the rest of society. They give us a chance to express ourselves and to channel our emotions...and to have a healthy emotional life you have to have an outlet for that. And arts, like sports, are really important for people who are developing."

Since 2004, the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation has been the beneficiary of annual benefit concerts that bring featured artists onstage with student musicians for a truly magical evening of music and philanthropy. Produced by the Artists for the Arts Foundation, these concerts have now raised nearly \$900,000 for arts programs in Santa Monica and Malibu public schools over the past decade. Featuring Venice every year as the house band, past concerts have included David Crosby, Billy Idol, America, and many other music icons, all of whom have donated their time and talents to perform onstage alongside musicians and singers from all three Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District high schools.

"Our annual collaboration with Artists for the Arts Foundation creates truly unique opportunities for our students and faculty to work hand-in-hand with amazing professional musical talents to create once-in-a-lifetime experiences while raising funds to ensure our arts programs can continue to benefit future generations of students," says Linda Greenberg Gross, Executive Director of the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation. "We're so thankful for the support of Artists for the Arts, Jackson Browne, the members of Venice, and the community members and parents who support this event every year."

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About Artists for The Arts Foundation

Artists for The Arts Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to helping public school districts sustain and create arts programs. With the help of the community and corporate and private sponsorships, AFTA produces unforgettable and inspiring concerts featuring well known, professional musicians performing with local student musicians from public schools. At every event, 100% of ticket sales go directly to fund arts education programs in public schools.

To learn more about Artists for The Arts Foundation, visit www.aftafoundation.org.

About the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation

Established in 1982 in response to devastating federal and state education budget cuts, the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation (SMMEF) was organized by a dedicated group of parents, community leaders, and local business owners to enhance and supplement the curriculum of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. The Foundation's mission is to ensure equity and access to a vibrant educational experience for all students. Dollars raised by the Foundation are distributed equitably throughout the entire District. The Foundations works hand-in-hand with the District to allocate funds in ways that result in the greatest impact. The Foundation supports programs in academics, the arts, and athletics throughout the 16-school Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District.

To learn more about Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation, visit www.smmeff.org.

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