



**GRAMMY AWARD WINNER SINGER-  
SONGWRITER MARY J. BLIGE AND “ROYAL”  
CELLIST SHEKU KANNEH-MASON SET TO  
PERFORM AT THE T.J. MARTELL FOUNDATION  
43<sup>RD</sup> NEW YORK HONORS GALA**

*Actor and Comedian Bill Bellamy to Host*

Monday, October 15, 2018 – Cipriani 42<sup>nd</sup> Street

**New York, New York – (October 10, 2018)** – The T.J. Martell Foundation, Music’s Promise for Curing Cancer has announced Grammy Award-winning singer, songwriter **Mary J. Blige**, and British cellist **Sheku Kanneh-Mason** are set to perform at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual New York Honors Gala to be held at Cipriani on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street on Monday, October 15, 2018. The annual event will honor **Jeffrey Harleston**, Universal Music Group’s General Counsel and Executive



Vice President, Business and Legal Affairs, who is receiving the “Lifetime Music Industry Award,” and **Drew Nierporent**, Founder of Myriad Restaurant Group, who will be presented with the “Lifetime Business Leadership Award.” The New York Honors Gala is the T.J. Martell Foundation’s most successful fundraiser of the year. Actor and Comedian, **Bill Bellamy** will host the sold-out event.

Iconic Grammy Award-winning singer, songwriter, actress, and philanthropist Mary J. Blige is a figure of inspiration, transformation and empowerment making her one of the defining voices of the contemporary music era. With a track record of eight multi-Platinum records, nine Grammy awards, (plus a staggering 32 nominations), two Academy Award nominations, two Golden Globe nominations, and a SAG award nomination among many other, Blige has cemented herself as a global superstar. And in the ensuing years has attracted an intensely loyal fan base – responsible for propelling worldwide sales of more than 50 million albums.

Born in the Bronx, New York, Blige began moving people with her soulful voice at age 18 when she signed with Uptown Records becoming the label's youngest and first female artist. Blige brought her own gritty, urban-rooted style to the forefront on her 1992 debut album "What's the 411."

The multi-platinum set, executive produced by Sean "Diddy" Combs quickly spun off several hits including two R&B No. 1s: "You Remind Me" and "Real Love." Her second album "My Life" (1994) forged her own unique niche in the industry. She is loved for her chart-topping hits "Be Without You," "No More Drama" and "Family Affair." Albums that followed included "Share My World" (1997), "Mary" (1999), "No More Drama" (2001), "Love & Life" (2003), the multiple Grammy-winning and hit-spewing "The Breakthrough" (2005), "Growing Pains" (2007) and "Stronger with Each Tear" (2009). Along the way, she's lined up a string of hit singles, including "Not Gon' Cry," "Love Is All We Need," "Seven Days," "All That I Can Say," "Family Affair" "Just Fine." In 2014, Blige released her 13th studio album, The London Sessions, which reached the No.1 position on the Top R&B Albums chart and included a behind-the-scenes documentary of her recording sessions that premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival 2015.



As an actor, Blige has also appeared in Tyler Perry's "I Can Do Bad All by Myself" (2009) and starred in "Rock of Ages" alongside Tom Cruise, Alex Baldwin and Russell Brand (2012). In a more dramatic role, Blige starred as Betty Shabazz in the TV movie "Betty & Coretta" and as the mysterious guardian angel in "Platinum Fro." She also played Evillene, the Wicked Witch of the West in the NBC musical "The Wiz LIVE!" Most recently Blige starred as Florence Jackson in the Netflix breakout film "MUDBOUND" (2017) and will star in the upcoming Netflix series "The Umbrella Academy."



Sheku Kanneh-Mason is one of the brightest young stars on the classical music scene and winner of the 2016 BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition. In January 2018 his debut recording for Decca Classics, Inspiration was released, featuring the Shostakovich Cello Concerto No. 1 with the city of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Mirga Grazinyte-Tyla.

The phenomenal success of the album propelled Sheku to #1 on the Billboard's Classical Overall & Classical Traditional Charts, #13 on Billboard's Top Current Albums and #1 on US and UK Amazon charts and US iTunes charts. His arrangement of Bob Marley's "No Woman No Cry," went viral on social media clocking 1 million streams in its first month alone. He has made successful debuts with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, City of Birmingham Symphony, and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, Barcelona Symphony, and the Philharmonia Orchestra.

In May 2018, Sheku became a household name worldwide after playing at the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex at Windsor Castle. His performance was met by universal enthusiasm and seen by over 2 billion viewers worldwide. He began learning the cello at age 6 and is currently a full-time ABRSM student at the Royal Academy of Music. Sheku has also been awarded The South Banks Sky Arts Breakthrough Award.

Chairman of the T.J. Martell Foundation's National Board of Trustees and Greenberg Traurig entertainment attorney Joel Katz explains, "The music industry's long-time support of the T.J. Martell Foundation dates to 1975 when music executive Tony Martell established the organization in memory of his son, T.J., who was lost to leukemia at the age of 19. Since then, more than \$280 million has been raised for ground-breaking treatment and support of cancer-related illnesses. This year's honorees Jeffrey Harleston, Universal Music Group's General Counsel and Executive Vice President, Business & Legal Affairs, and Drew Nieporent, Founder of Myriad Restaurant Group personify leadership, as well as an unwavering commitment to make the world a better place. We are proud to recognize their achievements at this year's 43rd annual New York Honors Gala."

Co-chairs of the 43<sup>rd</sup> New York Honors Gala are Jay Brown of Roc Nation, Steve Gawley of Universal Music Group, Jody Gerson of Universal Music Publishing Group, and Chairman of the T.J. Martell Foundation's National Board of Trustees Joel Katz of Greenberg Traurig.

Past hosts, presenters, performers, and notable guests have included Bryan Adams, Indie Arie, Garth Brooks, former President William J. Clinton, former President George H. W. Bush, Clive Davis, Foreigner, Joe Jonas, DJ Khaled, Doug Morris, Bill Murray, REO Speedwagon, Sting, Stevie Wonder, Yoko Ono and many other luminaries. Past honorees have included John Amato, Irving Azoff, Steve Boom, Scott Borchetta, Jennifer Breithaupt, Drew Carey, Charlie Daniels, Clive Davis, John Esposito, Berry Gordy, Randy Jackson, Quincy Jones, Joel Katz, Monte and Avery Lipman, Kenny Loggins, Arnold Palmer, Bea Perez, the late Frances Williams Preston, Sarah Stennett, Julie Swidler, Carrie Underwood, Afo Verde, Russell Wallach, Brett Yormark, among many others.

## **ABOUT THE T.J. MARTELL FOUNDATION**

The T.J. Martell Foundation is the music industry's leading foundation that funds innovative medical research focused on finding treatments and cures for cancer. The Foundation was founded in 1975 by music industry executive Tony Martell and his colleagues in loving memory of his son T.J., who died of leukemia. The Foundation has provided more than \$280 million for research at eight flagship hospitals in the United States. For more information on the T.J. Martell Foundation visit [www.tjmartell.org](http://www.tjmartell.org). For more information follow us on [www.facebook.com/tjmartellfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/tjmartellfoundation), [www.twitter.com/tjmartell](https://www.twitter.com/tjmartell), [www.pinterest.com/tjmartellfndn](https://www.pinterest.com/tjmartellfndn), and [www.instagram.com/tjmartellfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/tjmartellfoundation).

Media is requested to confirm attendance for coverage with press contact noted below.

## **PRESS CONTACT**

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