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International *Play Me, I'm Yours* project will kick off in Mesa on February 27

Young Pianist and Composer Emily Bear Commissioned for Street Pianos Mesa Unveiling

For Immediate Release:

February 3, 2016



Mesa, AZ – *Play Me, I'm Yours*, an international touring artwork devised by British artist Luke Jerram, will be presented by Mesa Arts Center and the Mesa Arts Center Foundation March 1 – April 9, 2016, with celebratory events on Feb. 26 and 27. This project has been produced in 50 cities worldwide, but never before in Arizona. **For six weeks, 24 playable donated pianos, transformed into works for art by teams of artists paired with community groups, will live in public spaces in and around downtown Mesa for residents and visitors to play and enjoy.**

World-renowned musical talent Emily Bear, age 14, has been commissioned to arrange an original piece of music for 25 pianos to celebrate the project. Titled "The Bravest Journey," the piece was composed by Emily when she was 13 years old in honor of war veterans, and debuted in 2015 with the Rockford Symphony Orchestra. The arrangement will have its world premiere at the **Mesa Arts Center Foundation's Annual Gala event on Friday, February 26**, when the Mesa pianos are revealed. Emily, who has performed at Carnegie Hall, the White House and Lincoln Center, to name a few, will perform along with 24 musicians playing the transformed pianos.

Tickets for the fundraiser event include an appetizer buffet, hosted bar, dessert selection, additional entertainment and more, and are \$150 available now through the Mesa Arts Center Box Office, at mesaartscenter.com or by calling 480-644-6500. Funds raised from the Gala event ensure that students Valleywide have access to arts experiences through the Engagement programs of Mesa Arts Center.

The piece will be performed one more time by Emily and musicians at the **public kickoff of Street Pianos Mesa on Saturday, February 2, from 2-5 p.m.** The free event will celebrate the project and display the 24 pianos before they are dispersed into the community where they will be installed for the duration of the project.

When the installation launches on March 1, the pianos will be located in Downtown Mesa along Main Street, near Mesa museums and libraries, on Mesa Arts Center's campus and at numerous other accessible and open-to-the-public locations, including several satellite locations

throughout the city. The free exhibition of pianos will invite and encourage public engagement through art, performance and music 24/7.

“This project celebrates the creative spirit of our community, inviting passersby to engage with, perform with, and observe the pianos in an unlikely environment – the streets of our city. We are thrilled to bring this wildly creative project to Mesa, and to be able to involve so many different people in making it happen,” said Cindy Ornstein, Arts and Culture Director, City of Mesa.

Groups involved in transforming a piano for the project include several Mesa public schools, Boys and Girls Club of the East Valley – Mesa Arts Academy, Community Asset and Resource Enterprise (CARE) Partnership, The Chinese Community, Eastmark, East Valley Institute of Technology, Mesa Association of Hispanic Citizens, A New Leaf, Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum Docents, Mesa Urban Garden, New School for the Arts, Oakwood Creative Care, Phonetic Spit, Southwest Maker Fest, Creative Catalysts and First United Church of Mesa.

Touring internationally since 2008, the *Play Me, I'm Yours* project has reached over ten million people worldwide with over 1,500 pianos. The Street Pianos Mesa is presented by www.streetpianosmesa.com

Editor's Note: Images are available for download in Mesa Arts Center's [online Press Room](#) at (Password is macmedia).

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About Mesa Arts Center

Mesa Arts Center, owned and operated by the City of Mesa, is a unique, architecturally stunning facility located in the heart of downtown Mesa. Arizona's largest multidisciplinary arts center is home to four theaters, five art galleries in the Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum, and 14 art studios. Guests, patrons, and students come to Mesa Arts Center to enjoy the finest live entertainment, performances and festivals, world-class visual art exhibitions, and outstanding arts education classes. The Mesa Arts Center mission is to inspire people through engaging arts experiences that are diverse, accessible, and relevant. For more information, visit mesaartscenter.com.

Street Pianos Mesa project information: <http://bit.ly/1Ozl2xQ>. #streetpianosmesa