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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE START OF SOMETHING BIG Black-Tie Gala and Opening-Week Events to Celebrate Launch of The MAX

Ever since the Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience (The MAX) officially broke ground on October 3, 2015 in downtown Meridian, Miss., anticipation has been building locally, throughout the state, and across the country for this first-of-its-kind, multimedia museum that will celebrate the legendary artists and entertainers from all creative mediums who hail from the Magnolia State. A full schedule of gala and opening-week events is planned to launch The MAX, and guests from all over Mississippi will flock into Meridian to experience the excitement.

On April 27, from 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., staff members from The MAX will kick off Grand Opening Week during a live broadcast in front of the museum with SuperTalk Mississippi radio 103.3. Everyone is encouraged to stop by and meet the staff, purchase memberships and tickets to the Grand Opening Gala and Paul Thorn concert, grab a snack, and win a t-shirt.

From 7:30 p.m. to midnight the same day, “An Evening at The MAX Grand Opening Gala” is a black-tie soirée that will include cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and an open bar. Guests will dance under the stars to the sounds of the Jackson, Miss., band Compozitions. Tickets are \$200, and patron tables are available for \$10,000 by contacting MAX Development Director Erica Rivers at 601-581-1550 or Erica@msarts.org.

On April 28, an official ribbon-cutting ceremony with Meridian Mayor Percy Bland and other local officials will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The ceremony is free and open to the public.

At the conclusion of the ribbon-cutting, MAX members, those wishing to purchase memberships, and the general public will have the opportunity to visit the museum.

Special events which are free to visitors are scheduled throughout the 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. day. “Building the Experience” panel discussion features individuals instrumental in bringing The MAX and its exhibits to life. “Southern Symbolism in Stained Glass” is a lecture by Pearl River glass artist Andy Young, who designed and built the “Father Mississippi” stained-glass window centerpiece for The MAX church gallery. Artist Sharon McConnell-Dickerson will demonstrate and lecture on “A Cast of Blues,” her breathtaking exhibit of life-cast masks of Mississippi blues musicians past and present. Closing out the day, a screening of the Coen Brothers’ Mississippi-set film comedy “O Brother, Where Art Thou?” in The MAX amphitheater.

The weekend continues on April 29 with a Children’s Make + Take Workshop, “200 Years of Mississippi Music” lecture by University of Mississippi Blues Archivist Greg Johnson, and “Mississippi Writers and Their Autobiographies: Writing History through Life Stories” lecture by Center for the Study of Southern Culture Director Ted Ownby.

Special events are scheduled throughout grand opening week, culminating in a May 5 concert by Tupelo singer-songwriter Paul Thorn.

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