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HEADLINE: **Eric Clapton Joins** With the Entertainment Industry Foundation and Mercedes-Benz to Bring Attention to the Need for More Arts and Music Education Programs; Mercedes-Benz USA Donates \$1 Million to EIF's National Arts and Music Education Initiative

DATELINE: MONTVALE, N.J. April 27

BODY:

MONTVALE, N.J., April 27 /PRNewswire/ -- Eric Clapton has been named the new ambassador for the Entertainment Industry Foundation's National Arts and Music Education Initiative (EIF's NAMEI), and they join with Mercedes-Benz USA in a charitable campaign. The campaign in support of EIF's NAMEI, called Mercedes-Benz Drive Your Future Performance Awards, was created to inspire students to pursue their dreams, while providing more access to music and arts education programs. This spring, the critically acclaimed musician will appear in a public service announcement in support of EIF's NAMEI and the campaign.

MBUSA will donate \$1 million through the sales of 750 Premier Edition GL-Class models sold at select Mercedes-Benz dealerships across the country to benefit EIF's NAMEI, which funds exemplary arts and music programs for children and youth nationwide, including The Recording Academy's Grammy Camp (TM). EIF and The Recording Academy are partners in raising the profile of this cause.

The Entertainment Industry Foundation, the official charity of the entertainment industry, combines the power of the entertainment industry with corporate support to bring attention to important issues like arts and music education.

"I've been very blessed to have music be such an important part of my life," said Eric Clapton, EIF's Ambassador for the NAMEI program. "I'm pleased to help the Entertainment Industry Foundation bring focus to this important cause."

"We're very honored to have **Eric Clapton join** the Entertainment Industry Foundation and Mercedes Benz in this endeavor," said Paul Halata, president and CEO of MBUSA. "As one of the most celebrated artists of our lifetime, he represents that drive to achieve one's personal best, which is what Drive Your Future is all about. Through our collective commitment, we hope to encourage creativity in young people."

"Arts education is just as important as core subjects like math and science, and yet, funding for arts education programs is declining across the country," said Lisa Paulsen, EIF president and CEO. "We are so grateful for Mr. Clapton's participation because he helps put a spotlight on why it is important to

reverse this trend. And thanks to generous corporations like Mercedes-Benz, we are providing more access to exceptional art and music programs to inspire our children."

Separately, Mercedes-Benz will provide a grant of \$500,000 to fund Drive Your Future Performance Awards scholarships for graduating high school seniors who are the first generation in their families to attend college and who plan to pursue performing arts degrees. The DYF program will provide 50 high school seniors across the country with a \$10,000 scholarship (\$2,500 per year for four years). Scholarships will be made available to students pursuing degrees in music, theater, dance and film.

The new DYF Performance Awards scholarships are an extension of the Mercedes-Benz Drive Your Future scholarship program, established in 2004, which commits an average of \$1 million in scholarships annually to first generation college-bound students who demonstrate financial need and exceptional achievement in the areas of academic performance, leadership and school and community activities. Drive Your Future scholarship recipients will be announced in May 2006. For more information visit <http://www.mbusa.com/driveperformance> .

MBUSA will make its donations through the sales of the bold Premier Edition Mercedes GL-Class, which is the new full-sized luxury sport utility vehicle with room for seven passengers. The GL measures 200 inches in length is 75.6 inches wide and 72.4 inches tall and is equipped with a 4.6-liter four-valve-per-cylinder V8 engine producing 335-horsepower, seven-speed automatic transmission and 4MATIC full-time four-wheel drive.

Standard features for this edition range from stunning 20" wheels and dual chrome exhaust to an inviting interior adorned with Nappa leather seats and dual-screen dual source Rear Seat Entertainment System that is built into the front seat headrests. The Premier Edition GL's roomy interior features two third-row seats can be stowed electronically at the push of a button, either separately or together, to provide a totally flat cargo floor along with a stationary sunroof over the 3rd row seat. Interested customers may visit <http://www.mbusa.com/driveperformance> or their local Mercedes-Benz dealer for more information regarding the Premier Edition GL.

Entertainment Industry Foundation

As the philanthropic leader of the entertainment industry, the Entertainment Industry Foundation has distributed hundreds of millions of dollars -- and provided countless volunteer hours -- to support charitable initiatives addressing some of the most critical issues facing society today. The Entertainment Industry Foundation's National Arts and Music Education Initiative (NAMEI) receives widespread industry commitment to raise awareness about the need for arts education in schools and fund exemplary programs nationwide. For more information, please visit <http://www.eifoundation.org/> .

Mercedes-Benz USA

MBUSA, headquartered in Montvale, New Jersey, is responsible for the sales, marketing and service of all Mercedes-Benz and Maybach products in the United States. In 2005, MBUSA achieved an all-time sales record of 224,421 new vehicles, setting the highest sales volume ever in its history and achieving twelve consecutive years of sales growth. More information on MBUSA and its products can be found on the Internet at <http://www.mbusa.com/> and <http://www.maybachusa.com/> .

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