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# Wham, Bam, Piano Slam

By **Camille Lamb** Thursday, Apr 21 2011

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The average middle-schooler isn't likely to list Bach or Gershwin as a musical idol. The annual event **Piano Slam**, spearheaded by the **Dranoff International Two Piano Foundation**, intends to remedy this. While piano duo **Stephanie Ho** and **Saar Ahuvia**, Miami hip-hopper **Brimstone127**, and the Miami Conservatory's **Thomas Armour Youth Ballet** perform, 15 poets from Miami-Dade public schools will read their music-themed contest-winning poems. The students, trained and prepped to perform alongside the professional artists, are in competition with each other to win two laptops and \$500 prizes. Behind the main event, though, are a handful of in-school collaborations among local and international artists, champions of education, and even star athletes. Miami Heat basketball players recently participated by reading their favorite poems aloud to students. **Carlene Sawyer**, creator of the event and Dranoff's executive director, says 61 of about 100 Miami public middle and high schools will benefit from Piano Slam visits this year, up from 28 last year. The free show, directed by celebrated theater



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producer and playwright **Teo Castellanos**, will take place at the **Arsht Center's** Knight Concert Hall.

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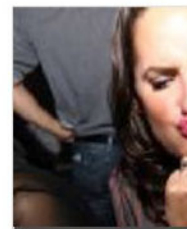
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