



## **Jessye Norman awarded The Twelfth Glenn Gould Prize**

Toronto, ON (April 13, 2018) – One of the great singers of her generation, renowned for her extraordinary voice and musical versatility, American opera singer and recitalist Jessye Norman has been chosen as The Twelfth Glenn Gould Prize Laureate. Throughout her career, the sheer size, power and luster of her voice has shared equal acclaim with that of her thoughtful music-making, innovative programming of the classics, and fervent advocacy of contemporary music. More than forty years after making her operatic debut, Jessye Norman continues to maintain a busy performance schedule, now concentrating on recitals and concerts.

“It is with the utmost humility and gratitude that I accept this magnificent honor, The Glenn Gould Prize. I was thrilled to have answered the telephone myself and to have heard this most wonderful news first hand! My admiration for the artistic genius of Glenn Gould began very early on in my studies and was further supported in my having had Walter Homburger as the first presenter to invite me to perform in Canada. His work with Glenn Gould is of course, legendary,” stated Jessye Norman. “It was he who made certain that I could experience on film the music of Bach played by a master of the keyboard and intellect of the highest order. Thank you, Walter. Thanks to The Glenn Gould Foundation. To have been chosen to receive this auspicious recognition is quite simply breath-taking!”

“We had a very thorough series of discussions that helped us to gradually narrow down an impressive list of nominees, always bearing in mind Glenn Gould’s legacy and impact as a unique artist,” said Viggo Mortensen, Chair of The Glenn Gould Prize Jury. “The day-long winnowing process became increasingly challenging as we got down to a handful of finalists, but we were united in our admiration for The Twelfth Glenn Gould Prize Laureate, the incomparable Jessye Norman.”

“All of us at The Glenn Gould Foundation are beyond thrilled at the inspired selection made by this year’s jury. Jessye Norman is undoubtedly one of the great vocal artists of our time, or any time, but so much more. Her career has provided a positive role model for countless artists coming from disadvantaged circumstances as she did and overcoming the very real racial barrier that thwarted so many careers. Her triumph is an expression of the power of art to transcend all human boundaries,” said Brian Levine, Executive Director of The Glenn Gould Foundation.

Jessye Norman made her operatic debut in 1969 at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and has since won acclaim for her performances in a wide range of leading roles with the world’s premier opera companies, in solo recitals and in concerts with preeminent orchestras around the globe. Her exceptional artistry has earned her the reputation as one of the most versatile concert and operatic singers of her time. She has more than seventy-five recordings of her eclectic repertoire to her credit. She is well known for her mastery of the music of Richard Strauss one of Glenn Gould’s favourite composers. Given the exceptional range of her voice, she has sung the repertoire of sopranos, mezzo-sopranos and altos throughout her career. She has also begun to sing jazz, in concert and in multi-media collaborations, and she has performed an extensive repertoire of contemporary music.

Ms. Norman is the recipient of many international awards and honours including The Kennedy Center Honor, five Grammy awards including the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award for Classical Music, The National Medal of Arts, and her many other prestigious distinctions include

honorary doctorates at more than forty colleges, universities and conservatories around the world.

Known as a devoted mentor and generous supporter of young artists and emerging talent, Ms. Norman is also admired for her humanitarian contributions and attributes her citizenship and sensitivity to the examples of community service set by her parents. She helped to establish The Jessye Norman School of the Arts in her hometown of Augusta, Georgia and is often called upon to speak to her passionate involvement and advocacy of arts education. Ms. Norman serves on the Boards of Directors for numerous organizations including The New York Public Library, Carnegie Hall, The Dance Theatre of Harlem, and The New York Botanical Gardens. She is national spokesperson for The Partnership for the Homeless and a lifetime member of the Girl Scouts of America.

Jessye Norman was chosen from a distinguished list of international candidates across a broad spectrum of creative disciplines, nominated by members of the general public worldwide. Ms. Norman will receive a cash award of \$100,000 (CAD) and The Glenn Gould Prize statue by Canadian artist Ruth Abernethy.

Ms. Norman will choose an outstanding young artist or ensemble to receive The City of Toronto Glenn Gould Protégé Prize of \$15,000 (CAD), one who embodies the qualities of creative promise, innovation and career potential demonstrated by Gould in his youth. The recipient of the Protégé Prize will be announced later this year. Both Ms. Norman and her protégé will receive their award at a gala ceremony and their work will be honoured through a series of public events presented within the next year.

The Twelfth Glenn Gould Prize Jury was chaired by Academy Award-nominated actor, painter, poet, and musician Viggo Mortensen (United States/Denmark); Academy and Grammy Award-winning director of film, opera and theatre, and accomplished screenwriter François Girard (Canada); singer and actress Ute Lemper (Germany); writer and former Chief Justice The Right Honourable Beverley McLachlin (Canada); painter and conservationist Naeemeh Naeemaei (Iran); acclaimed soprano Sondra Radvanovsky (Canada/United States); Academy Award-winning composer and conductor Howard Shore, OC (Canada); kora virtuoso and composer Foday Musa Suso (Gambia/United States); and award-winning composer and Chairman of the China Musicians' Association Professor Ye Xiaogang (China).

#### About The Glenn Gould Prize

An international symbol of creative excellence, The Glenn Gould Prize is awarded biennially to a living individual for a unique lifetime contribution that has enriched the human condition through the arts. A tribute to Glenn Gould's artistry and his multifaceted contributions to culture, the prize promotes the vital connection between artistic excellence and the transformation of lives. With its guiding principals of Celebration, Inspiration and Transformation, The Glenn Gould Prize stands as a symbol of artistic excellence and achievement, open to all nationalities and a wide range of creative disciplines. Past laureates include Philip Glass (2015), Robert LePage (2013), Leonard Cohen (2011), Dr. José Antonio Abreu (2008) founder of El Sistema, Pierre Boulez (2002), Yo-Yo Ma (1999), Oscar Peterson (1993) and Lord Yehudi Menuhin (1990). For more information visit [www.glenn Gould.ca](http://www.glenn Gould.ca) .

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