The Kennedy Center Announces 2018 Honorees

**CHER, PHILIP GLASS, REBA MCENTIRE, AND WAYNE SHORTER TO RECEIVE 41ST ANNUAL KENNEDY CENTER HONORS**

**HAMILTON CO-CREATORS LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA, THOMAS KAIL, ANDY BLANKENBUEHLER, AND ALEX LACAMOIRE TO RECEIVE A SPECIAL HONORS FOR GROUNDBREAKING WORK**

At 41st Kennedy Center Honors
Sunday, December 2, 2018

Gala will be broadcast on CBS on December 26, 8 p.m. ET

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts today announced the selection of four Honorees who will receive the 2018 Kennedy Center Honors for lifetime artistic achievements, and a special Honors distinction for a work of art and its co-creators. Recipients to be honored at the 41st annual national celebration of the arts are: singer and actress Cher, composer and pianist Philip Glass, Country music entertainer Reba McEntire, and jazz saxophonist and composer Wayne Shorter. This year, the co-creators of Hamilton—writer and actor Lin-Manuel Miranda, director Thomas Kail, choreographer Andy
Blankenbuehler, and music director Alex Lacamoire—will receive a unique Kennedy Center Honors as trailblazing creators of a transformative work that defies category.

“The Kennedy Center Honors recognizes exceptional artists who have made enduring and indelible marks on our culture,” stated Kennedy Center Chairman David M. Rubenstein. “Cher is the consummate star, wowing generations of fans with her distinctive voice, blockbuster albums, and glittering on-screen presence; Philip Glass is a modern-day Mozart whose works across opera, symphony, chamber music, and film define contemporary music and simply transfix us; Country songstress Reba McEntire has inspired us over four decades with her powerhouse voice and music that conveys heartfelt, heart-warming honesty; Wayne Shorter is a seminal artist who, as both a composer and saxophonist, has carried forward the mantle of jazz; and the creators of Hamilton have literally and figuratively changed the face of American culture with daringly original, breathtakingly relevant work.”

“The world looks to America for its creative instincts and artistic courage. This year’s slate of Honorees represents the pinnacle of our nation’s originality and the rich mosaic of diverse perspectives and art forms that has come to define who we are as a people,” said Kennedy Center President Deborah F. Rutter.

“As the national cultural center, the Kennedy Center is guided by its artistic mission to pay tribute to the past, to offer a platform for artists making transformative impact in the present, and to shepherd creative innovators as we look toward the future,” Ms. Rutter continued. “Historically, the Kennedy Center Honors has celebrated lifetime achievement. In recognizing Hamilton and its co-creators, the Kennedy Center is making an unprecedented statement about an unprecedented work—a work that transcends cultural boundaries and tells America’s story in a powerful and contemporary way.”

Throughout its 40-year history, the annual Honors Gala has become the highlight of the Washington cultural and society calendar, and its national broadcast on CBS is a high point of the television season. On Sunday, December 2, in a star-studded celebration on the Kennedy Center Opera House stage, produced by Ricky Kirshner and Glenn Weiss of White Cherry Entertainment, the 2018 Honorees will be saluted by today’s leading performers from
New York, Hollywood, and the arts capitals of the world. Seated in the Box Tier of the iconic Kennedy Center Opera House, the Honorees will accept the recognition and gratitude of their peers through performances and tributes.

The 2018 Kennedy Center Honors Gala concludes with a dinner in the Grand Foyer. The Honorary Chairs of the 2018 Honors Gala are Buffy Cafritz and Ann D. Jordan.

The Kennedy Center Honors medallions will be presented on Saturday, December 1, the night before the Gala, at a State Department dinner. The Founding Chair of the State Department dinner is Elizabeth Stevens.

The Honors Gala will be recorded for broadcast on the CBS Network for the 41st consecutive year as a two-hour primetime special on Wednesday, December 26 at 8 p.m. ET.

White Cherry Entertainment is well known for producing the perennial award-winning Tony Awards® for the last 18 consecutive years, and also for producing the Primetime Emmy Awards®, NFL Opening Kickoff and Super Bowl Halftime Shows, the Democratic National Convention, Presidential Inaugural Galas, and many other special events. To date, White Cherry Entertainment has won 9 Emmy Awards®, while Kirshner and Weiss have individually received an additional 5 Emmy Awards®, 8 Directors Guild Awards, a Peabody Award, and 40 Emmy® nominations. This is the fourth consecutive year White Cherry will produce the Kennedy Center Honors.

CBS is the Exclusive Sponsor of the Kennedy Center Honors.

Boeing is the Exclusive Underwriter of the Kennedy Center Honors Gala.

Delta Air Lines is the Official Airline of the Kennedy Center Honors.

The Kennedy Center Honors Founding Producer is George Stevens, Jr.

The Honors recipients recognized for their contributions to American culture through the performing arts—whether in music, dance, theater, opera, motion pictures, or television—are
confirmed by the Executive Committee of the Center’s Board of Trustees. The primary
criterion in the selection process is excellence. The Honors are not designated by art form or
category of artistic achievement; the selection process, over the years, has produced balance
among the various arts and artistic disciplines.

The Honoree selection process includes solicitation of recommendations from the Kennedy
Center Board of Trustees, the artistic community, and the general public. This year’s
selected Honorees were chosen based on the recommendation of the Center’s Special
Honors Advisory Committee, which is chaired by Elaine Wynn and includes Deborah F.
Rutter, David M. Rubenstein, Shonda Rhimes, David Bohnett, Michael Lombardo, and Cappy
McGarr, along with past Honors recipients and distinguished artists Julie Andrews, Martina
Arroyo, Herbie Hancock, Yo-Yo Ma, Chita Rivera, and Twyla Tharp. These individuals play a
critical role in the evaluation and selection process, and the Kennedy Center is indebted to
them for their involvement.

ABOUT THE HONOREES

Cher (singer, actress)
A worldwide superstar and household name for more than 50 years, Cher has conquered
more challenges than a handful of other talents put together—recording, concerts, film and
Broadway acting, television, and directing. Along the way she has been richly rewarded with
an Academy Award®, a Grammy®, an Emmy®, three Golden Globes, a Cannes Film Festival
Award, and a People’s Choice Award.

Beginning as a studio backing singer in the 1960s, Cher met fledgling producer Sonny Bono
and they quickly became pop sensations with the worldwide smash “I Got You Babe.” Their
attention-grabbing hair and clothes were an early hint of Cher’s subsequent profound
influence on the world of fashion. The couple’s popularity peaked with The Sonny and Cher
Comedy Hour TV series until they split up in the mid-1970s. In 1982, Cher took a huge
gamble to appear on Broadway in Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy
Dean. It worked, however, and prompted a hugely successful acting career which included
Mask, Silkwood, and Mermaids, and culminated in an Academy Award® for Best Actress in
Moonstruck.

Cher stunned the music world with a complete musical reinvention in the mid-1980s,
highlighted by her controversial hit video for “If I Could Turn Back Time.” But it would be her
venture into the world of dance music with the Grammy®-winning “Believe” in 1998 that
eclipsed it all. “Believe” made Cher the oldest woman (at 52) to have a number one hit in the
Hot 100 rock era. It made her the only female artist to have Top 10 hits in every decade from
the 1960s to 2000s. The subsequent three-year “Farewell Tour” played to more than three million fans, was captured in an Emmy®-winning TV special, and is one of the most successful tours in history.

Cher remains very active as a stage performer, actress, and recording artist, with a starring role in the current movie *Mamma Mia! 2! Here We Go Again*, a new album scheduled for September release, and a stage musical about her life debuting on Broadway in December.

**Philip Glass (composer, pianist)**

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Philip Glass is a graduate of the University of Chicago and the Juilliard School. In the early 1960s, Glass spent two years of intensive study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger and, while there, earned money by transcribing Ravi Shankar’s Indian music into Western notation. By 1974, Glass had a number of innovative projects creating a large collection of new music for The Philip Glass Ensemble and for the Mabou Mines Theater Company. This period culminated in *Music in Twelve Parts* and the landmark opera *Einstein on the Beach*, for which he collaborated with Robert Wilson. Since *Einstein*, Glass has expanded his repertoire to include music for opera, dance, theater, chamber ensemble, orchestra, and film. His scores have received Academy Award® nominations (*Kundun, The Hours, Notes on a Scandal*) and a Golden Globe (*The Truman Show*). In the past few years, several new works were unveiled, including an opera on the death of Walt Disney, *The Perfect American* (co-commissioned by Teatro Real, Madrid, and the English National Opera), a new touring production of *Einstein*, the publication of Glass’s memoir, *Words Without Music*, by Liveright Books, and the premiere of the revised version of Glass’s opera *Appomattox*, in collaboration with librettist Christopher Hampton, at Washington National Opera in November 2015.

Glass celebrated his 80th birthday on January 31, 2017 with the world premiere of Symphony No. 11 at Carnegie Hall. His 80th birthday season featured curated programming around the globe, including the U.S. premieres of operas *The Trial* and *The Perfect American*, and world premieres of several new works, including Piano Concerto No. 3, String Quartet No. 8, and his first Piano Quintet.

Other recent accolades include the U.S. National Medal of Arts, presented to Glass by President Barack Obama in 2015. In 2016, Glass was named the 11th recipient of the Glenn Gould Prize, a lifetime achievement award given to prominent musicians. He was also honored to hold Carnegie Hall’s Richard and Barbara Debs Composer’s Chair throughout the 2017–2018 season.

On January 10, 2019, the Los Angeles Philharmonic will present the world premiere of Glass’s Symphony No. 12, based on David Bowie’s album *Lodger*, and a completion of three symphonies based on Bowie’s *Berlin Trilogy*. Glass continues to perform solo piano and chamber music evenings with world renowned musicians, and he regularly appears with the Philip Glass Ensemble.

**Recent Kennedy Center history:** Glass’s opera *Appomattox* was performed by Washington National Opera in November 2015. Glass also made his Kennedy Center performance debut in the Center’s inaugural DIRECT CURRENT festival in March 2018, having participated in a
five-pianist account of his complete Etudes for piano; his 1982 cinematic tone poem Koyaanisqatsi was also featured as part of DIRECT CURRENT.

Reba McEntire (Country music entertainer)
Multi-media entertainment mogul Reba McEntire has become a household name through a flourishing career that spans music, television, film, theater, and retail. She marked her 13th summit as Sing It Now: Songs of Faith & Hope topped both the Billboard Country and Christian/Gospel charts, bolstering McEntire’s successful record of 35 No. 1 singles and over 56 million albums sold worldwide across four decades. The double-disc collection earned McEntire her third Grammy Award® and first GMA Dove Award. The Country Music Hall of Fame, Grand Ole Opry, and Hollywood Bowl member has also won 16 ACM Awards, 15 American Music Awards, 9 People’s Choice Awards, and 6 CMA Awards. Her leadership and philanthropic endeavors have been recognized with the Andrea Bocelli Foundation Humanitarian Award, Leadership Music Dale Franklin Award, the Music Biz Chairman’s Award, the National Artistic Achievement Award from the U.S. Congress, and with joining the Horatio Alger Association.

McEntire returned for the 15th time to host the ACM Awards in April and led the 2017 ratings-high CMA Country Christmas television special. In 2005, she partnered with Dillard’s to launch her own lifestyle brand, and launched the REBA by Justin™ collection at select retailers nationwide for holiday 2017. The Oklahoma native is an acclaimed actress with 11 movie credits to her name, a lead on Broadway in Annie Get Your Gun, and starred in the six-season television sitcom, Reba. As part of the longest-running Country act in The Colosseum’s history, she will join with superstar pals for another round of Reba, Brooks & Dunn: Together in Vegas at Caesars.

Recent Kennedy Center history: Reba McEntire was among the guest cast paying tribute at previous Kennedy Center Honors for Honorees Loretta Lynn (2003), Carol Burnett (2003), Dolly Parton (2006), and Lily Tomlin (2014).

Wayne Shorter (jazz saxophonist, composer)
Wayne Shorter has been called a genius, a trailblazer, a visionary, and one of the world’s greatest composers. Born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1933, he grew up poring through comic books and imagining adventures in undiscovered universes. He studied music at New York University, and upon graduating, was drafted into the U.S. Army.

In 1959, Shorter joined Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers as a saxophonist, eventually composing for the group and becoming its music director. After four years, Miles Davis invited him to join his second historical quintet, with Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams, and Ron Carter. This marked the beginning of Shorter’s exploration of unchartered territories that led him to form—with pianist Joe Zawinul—the world’s first fusion band, Weather Report.

Over the next decade, Shorter produced a succession of jazz albums for the Columbia label. During this period, he became known for collaborations with greats across many genres, including Joni Mitchell, Steely Dan, Carlos Santana, and Don Henley. In 1996, he released High Life, which received the Grammy® for best contemporary jazz album. Two years later, he reunited with longtime friend Herbie Hancock for an intimate duet recording entitled 1+1, winning another Grammy® for their collaboration. In 2000, he formed his first acoustic group
under his name, The Wayne Shorter Quartet, featuring Danilo Shorter, John Patitucci, and Brian Blade, which still performs today. At the same time, Shorter began exploring the world of classical music. He paired with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Royal Concertgebouw, and the BBC Chamber Orchestra, unveiling his new symphonic repertoire.

Shorter is the recipient of the NEA Jazz Masters Award (1998), the Grammy® Lifetime Achievement Award (2015), and most recently, the prestigious Polar Music Prize (2017). With a total of 11 Grammy Awards® under his belt, Shorter refuses to slow down. Currently, in collaboration with Esperanza Spalding, he is composing his first opera, Iphigenia, his ultimate expression honoring the nobility of humanity—to awaken one’s inherent power. Wayne Shorter believes that there are no limits: “To me, jazz means: I dare you.”

Recent Kennedy Center history: Wayne Shorter has performed at the Kennedy Center on multiple occasions throughout his career, most recently in November 2016, performing The Unfolding, a Kennedy Center co-commissioned work. In May 2014, Shorter participated in Blue Note at 75, an all-star salute to the iconic record label. He also participated in the musical tribute to Honoree Herbie Hancock at the 2013 Kennedy Center Honors.

The Co-Creators of Hamilton

Lin-Manuel Miranda (writer and actor)
Lin-Manuel Miranda is a Pulitzer Prize, Grammy®, Emmy®, and Tony® award-winning composer, lyricist, playwright, and performer. He is the creator and original star of Broadway’s Tony®-winning Hamilton and In the Heights. His additional Broadway credits include Bring It On: The Musical (co-composer/co-lyricist, Tony® nomination for Best Musical), and West Side Story (2009 revival, Spanish translations). Miranda received an Emmy® Award with Tom Kitt for their song, “Bigger,” from the 67th Annual Tony® Awards. A 2015 MacArthur Foundation Award recipient, Miranda composed songs for Disney’s Moana (2017 Oscar® and Golden Globe nominations for Best Original Song; 2018 Grammy® Award). TV/Film credits include Curb Your Enthusiasm (2018 Emmy® nomination, Guest Actor), Saturday Night Live (2017 Emmy® nomination, Guest Actor), Sesame Street, The Electric Company, House, How I Met Your Mother, DuckTales, 200 Cartas, The Odd Life of Timothy Green, and Disney’s upcoming 2018 holiday release, Mary Poppins Returns. In addition to his work as an artist, Miranda has worked with the Hispanic Federation since Hurricane Maria to support the rebuilding of Puerto Rico and most recently announced the launch of the Flamboyan Arts Fund to provide grants for artists, cultural institutions, and programs on the island. Miranda received his B.A. from Wesleyan University in 2002. He lives with his family in New York City.

Thomas Kail (director)
Thomas Kail received the 2016 Tony Award® for his direction of the Broadway production of Hamilton. He received a Tony nomination for his direction of In the Heights. His additional Broadway credits include the new plays Lombardi and Magic/Bird. Other credits include the world premiere of Hamilton, Kings, Tiny Beautiful Things, and Dry Powder at the Public Theater; the world premiere of In the Heights; Broke-ology and the world premiere of When I Come to Die at Lincoln Center Theater; the world premiere of Daphne’s Dive at the Signature
Theatre; Randy Newman’s *Faust*, as well as *The Wiz* at New York City Center; the world premiere of *The Tutors* at Second Stage Uptown; the world premiere of *Broke-ology* at Williamstown Theater Festival; the world premiere of A.R. Gurney’s *Family Furniture* at The Flea; and the national tour of *In the Heights*. He is the co-creator and director of the Hip Hop improv group Freestyle Love Supreme. He won the 2016 Emmy® for his direction of *Grease Live* for FOX. He is also the recipient of a Drama Desk Award, an Obie, a Callaway Award, the Lucille Lortel Award, and the Martin E. Segal Award from Lincoln Center. He is a graduate of Wesleyan University.

**Andy Blankenbuehler (choreographer)**

Andy Blankenbuehler is a proud three-time Tony Award® winner for his choreography in the Broadway productions of *Hamilton*, *Bandstand*, and *In The Heights*. The recent production of *Bandstand* (director/choreographer) also received the Drama Desk and Chita Rivera awards for Best Choreography. Other Broadway credits include *Bring It On* (Tony nomination), *9 To 5* (Tony nomination), *The People In The Picture*, *The Apple Tree*, *Annie*, and the recent revival of *CATS*. Other theatrical work includes *Desperately Seeking Susan* (West End), the world premiere of the new musical *FLY* (Dallas Theatre Center), *The Wiz* (City Center Encores), *A Little Princess* (Andrew Lippa), and the recent international tour of *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Upcoming projects include the new musical *Only Gold* with British singer/songwriter Kate Nash.

On television Mr. Blankenbuehler’s work has been seen on the Lionsgate/ABC remake of *Dirty Dancing, America’s Got Talent, So You Think You Can Dance, The Sopranos, MTV, Sesame Street* featuring Janelle Monae, and many commercials. He has staged concert work for both Elton John and Bette Midler, and he conceived, directed, and choreographed the hit Caesars Palace production *Nights On Broadway*. His work will be seen on the big screen next year in a yet-to-be-titled film with writer/director Adam McKay, starring Christian Bale and Steve Carell.

As a performer, Mr. Blankenbuehler has danced on Broadway in *Fosse, Contact, Man of La Mancha, Saturday Night Fever, Steel Pier, Big*, and *Guys and Dolls*. Originally from Cincinnati, Mr. Blankenbuehler resides in New York City with his wife Elly and two children, Luca and Sofia. He is a recipient of a special 2015 Drama Desk Award for his achievement in the theater.

**Alex Lacamoire (music supervisor/orchestrator/co-arranger)**

Alex Lacamoire is a three-time Tony® and three-time Grammy® winner for his work on the Broadway musicals *Hamilton, Dear Evan Hansen,* and *In the Heights*. His film credits include *The Greatest Showman* (executive music producer) and *Incredibles 2* (arranger/orchestrator). As music director, arranger and/or orchestrator on Broadway: *Annie* (2011 Broadway revival); *Bring It On; The People In The Picture; 9 to 5* (Drama Desk and Grammy nominations); *Legally Blonde; High Fidelity; Wicked*. Other credits: *Bat Boy: The Musical, Godspell* (2001 National Tour); and orchestrations for The Rockettes and the Oscars. He is an Emmy®-nominated composer for *Sesame Street*.
Recent Kennedy Center history: Two musicals from this collaborative team have enjoyed recent runs at the Kennedy Center. In the Heights (March 2018) and Hamilton (now through September 2018).

Ticket Information:
For ticket inquiries, please contact Honors@kennedy-center.org.

Statements, full bios, and photos of the 2018 Kennedy Center Honorees are available to media upon request.

For photos and statements, please visit here.

For more information about the Kennedy Center, please visit our website.

Discover the Kennedy Center Honors on social media:

#KCHonors

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2018 KENNEDY CENTER HONOREE STATEMENTS

“When I was very young I saw *Dumbo* and *Cinderella* and knew then what I wanted to be and the path my life would take and here I am! I am very grateful to the Kennedy Center for this honor. Whether I’m acting in a film or singing to my fans, I never forget those who helped me along the way and the element of luck I’ve had throughout my career. Most importantly, “Thank you, Mom” for believing in my dream. I share this honor with you.”
~ Cher

“I am very pleased to be named a Kennedy Center Honoree this year. The vital importance of the Arts in American culture cannot be overstated. As a musician and composer, I recognize the social responsibility to portray stories of importance in my operatic works—from Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.’s nonviolent resistance, to Einstein and Galileo’s groundbreaking scientific work—many of my works focus on leaders from different cultures around the world. I hope that my work will allow future audiences and performers to continue the longstanding tradition of cultural acceptance and exploration in the Arts. Thank you, the Kennedy Center, for this once-in-a-lifetime honor.”
~ Philip Glass

“Growing up on a small ranch in Oklahoma we were taught the value of hard work, faith, and humanity. I never would have imagined the harmonies my mother taught my siblings and me as we traveled to see our dad compete in rodeos would change the course of my life. Music has taken me on so many wonderful adventures, but receiving a prestigious Kennedy Center Honors acknowledgement is truly a marquee moment. I am so grateful for the generations of creators who have and will continue to inspire and entertain.”
~ Reba McEntire

“Being inducted into the prestigious ranks of Kennedy Center honorees will forever remain one of the great moments in my life! Guided by compassion and wisdom, I strive to create value for others and all life on this planet—not only through my art—but by igniting the glow of light that elevates the human condition to its noblest form.”
~ Wayne Shorter

“The Kennedy Center Honors is the highest achievement an artist can receive. For the Board to break with its custom of honoring an individual and choosing instead to bestow this recognition on a single piece of work is humbling beyond our wildest expectations for our show.”
~ Lin-Manuel Miranda, Thomas Kail, Andy Blankenbuehler, and Alex Lacamoire

I’m pretty sure Rita Moreno, mi reina, snuck into their offices and stuffed the ballot box.”
~ Lin-Manuel Miranda