### Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 7, 2016

The Kennedy Center and Washington National Opera seek nominations for

**The Marian Anderson Vocal Award**

Winner to receive $10,000 cash prize and a recital at the Kennedy Center, plus will curate an educational residency at D.C.’s Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Submissions for the 2017 prize are due November 7, 2016

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Washington National Opera seek nominations for the 2017 Marian Anderson Vocal Award, which celebrates excellence in performance by recognizing a young American singer who has achieved initial professional success in the area of opera, oratorio, or recital repertory, and who exhibits promise for a significant career. In order to honor Marian Anderson’s musical and humanitarian legacy, the Award also encourages service and education. In addition to receiving a $10,000 cash prize and a Kennedy Center recital, the Award winner will participate in an educational residency at the opera workshop program of Washington’s Duke Ellington School of the Arts.

The nomination process for the 2017 Marian Anderson Award opens on Wednesday, September 7, 2016. Artists can be nominated by opera companies, orchestral and choral organizations, agents, professional music critics, and other organizations and individuals across the country. The nomination form and more information can be found at [kennedy-center.org/pages/specialevents/AndersonAward](http://kennedy-center.org/pages/specialevents/AndersonAward); the deadline for nominations is November 7, 2016.

Prior Award recipients include Sylvia McNair, Denyce Graves, Philip Zawisza, Nancy Maultsby, Patricia Racette, Michelle DeYoung, Nathan Gunn, Marguerite Krull, Eric Owens, Lawrence Brownlee, Indira Mahajan, Sasha Cooke, J’nai Bridges, Jamie Barton, and, most recently, Janai Brugger. Brugger’s [Kennedy Center recital](http://kennedy-center.org/pages/specialevents/AndersonAward) is Thursday, September 8, 2016, at 7:30 p.m., and her educational residency at the Duke Ellington School begins on Friday, September 9, 2016.

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The selection committee for the 2017 Award includes Harolyn Blackwell, soprano; Jeremy Geffen, Director of Artistic Planning at Carnegie Hall; Charles MacKay, General Director of the Santa Fe Opera; Francesca Zambello, Artistic Director of Washington National Opera and Artistic and General Director of The Glimmerglass Festival; and Brian Zeger, Artistic Director of the Vocal Department at The Juilliard School. The winner will be announced in the spring of 2017.

In keeping with its mission to develop programs and initiatives that connect exemplary artists with the community, the Kennedy Center will work with the 2017 Marian Anderson Vocal Award recipient to create a learning program for an educational residency at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, the District of Columbia’s public arts magnet high school. The residency will include master classes and workshops with vocal music students, as well as other events developed by the artist and the school. The school offers a dual curriculum encompassing professional arts training along with academic enrichment, helping to prepare its students for both college and future careers in the arts.

ABOUT MARIAN ANDERSON
American contralto Marian Anderson was one of the most celebrated singers of the 20th century. She became an important figure in the struggle for African American artists to overcome racial prejudice in the United States, when in 1939, the Daughters of the American Revolution refused permission for her to sing to an integrated audience in Constitution Hall. The incident thrust Anderson into the spotlight of the international community on a level unusual for a classical musician. With the aid of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and her husband President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Anderson performed a critically acclaimed open-air concert on Easter Sunday, April 9, 1939, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. before a crowd of more than 75,000 people and a radio audience of millions.

She continued to break barriers, becoming the first African American artist to perform at the Metropolitan Opera in New York on January 7, 1955. Her performance as Ulrica in Giuseppe Verdi’s Un ballo in maschera was the only time she sang an opera role on stage. She later worked for several years as a delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Committee and for the U.S. Department of State, giving concerts all over the world. She participated in the civil rights movement in the 1960s, singing at the March on Washington in 1963. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963, a Kennedy Center Honors in 1978, the National Medal of Arts in 1986, and a Grammy® Lifetime Achievement Award in 1991.

The impetus for The Marian Anderson Vocal Award was provided by June Goodman of Danbury, Connecticut, a friend of Anderson’s who wished to recognize the outstanding qualities of the groundbreaking African American singer. The Marian Anderson Award Foundation then established the Award at Fairfield County’s Community Foundation. In September 2002, the Kennedy Center and Fairfield County’s Community Foundation collaborated to create a permanent tribute to Anderson’s historic artistic achievements by presenting a cash prize of $10,000 and a recital at the Kennedy Center for one outstanding singer.

More information on The Marian Anderson Vocal Award can be found at kennedy-center.org/pages/specialevents/AndersonAward
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FUNDING CREDITS

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