

≡ 2019 International ≡ OPERA AWARDS

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Legendary soprano Leontyne Price honoured at 2019 International Opera Awards

- **Gareth Malone and Opera Holland Park Community Chorus, featuring members of Grenfell community, reunite for performance of 'Help Me Believe'**
- **Sonya Yoncheva wins Readers' Award in public vote. Full list of winners below**
- **Highlights from ceremony to be broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on Monday 6 May**

**2019 International Opera Awards sponsored by Mazars
Broadcast in association with BBC Radio 3
Founding Media Partner: Opera Magazine**



Leontyne Price in the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Tosca* © Metropolitan Opera/Louis Mélançon

Download pictures from the 2019 Awards Ceremony [here](#).

Legendary soprano **Leontyne Price** was tonight [29 April 2019] awarded the prestigious Lifetime Achievement award at the 2019 International Opera Awards (IOA) at a glittering red-carpet gala event at London's Sadler's Wells theatre. The Awards, considered opera's answer to the Oscars, celebrate achievements in opera around the globe over the last calendar year in a wide range of categories. The IOA acknowledged the pioneering singer's many achievements over her illustrious career, stating *"in a ground-breaking career that for the first time placed a great African-American artist at the very pinnacle of the operatic profession, both in her native United States and throughout Europe, Leontyne Price upheld the highest vocal standards that led to her receiving universal acclaim wherever and whatever she sang."*

With her exceptional voice, huge repertoire and role as a fierce advocate and trailblazer for the civil rights movement in the US, Price is regarded not only as one of the greatest opera stars of our time but also an inspiration to millions across the globe. In 1955 she became the first African-American to sing a leading role in a televised opera in NBC's live production of *Tosca*.

Ms Price sang more than 200 performances at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, including the opening of the new Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center in an opera written especially for her, Samuel Barber's *Anthony & Cleopatra*. She was also the first African-American to become a prima donna with the Metropolitan Opera.

This award is the latest in an illustrious line of accolades for Ms. Price, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1964), the National Medal of Arts (1985), one of the first Opera Honours from the National Endowment of the Arts (2008), 19 Grammys – more than any other classical singer – and many more.

Although unable to attend the ceremony, Price passed on a message of thanks to the Awards, stating: *"To say that I am overwhelmed is an understatement. I am always delighted when my artistry meets such high-level recognition. It has always served to remind me that it is the artists' mission to take their art to the people. It was an honour to be able to share my art with so many people. Please express my gratitude to the nominating and selection committee for this honour. I appreciate this tribute more than words could ever express."*

As in previous years, performances formed a central part of the ceremony. Star choirmaster and broadcaster **Gareth Malone** and the **Opera Holland Park Community Chorus**, featuring members of the Grenfell community, reunited for the first time since Opera Holland Park's Hope for Grenfell Memorial Gala last year in a performance of '[Help Me Believe](#)'. The piece was written in collaboration with members of the local community and composer/pianist Will Todd, who also performed from the piano. Commissioned by the company in memory of staff member Debbie Lamprell and all the victims of the tragedy, the performance featured a choir of children and adults from the Grenfell community. Winners of the International Opera Award's Education and Outreach award last year, Opera Holland Park have used that win to expand their work with local residents.

There were also performances from past and present IOA Award winners and finalists, including opera stars **Charles Castronovo** (winner of this year's Male Singer award), **Vivica Genaux** and **David Butt Philip**. Bursary recipients of the Opera Awards Foundation including **Anna Patalong** and **Oliver Johnston** also performed, bolstered by the London Philharmonic Choir who performed at the Awards for the first time. Performances were accompanied by the Orpheus Sinfonia, led by their Principal Guest Conductor Oliver Gooch.

Female Singer of the year was presented to soprano **Asmik Grigorian**, only 3 years after she won the Young Singer prize back in 2016. Another soprano celebrated on the night was **Sonya Yoncheva**, chosen by the public as their Readers' Award winner after garnering an astonishing half of all votes cast. The glamorous opera star expressed her gratitude to the jury and to the thousands of fans who voted for her in a video acceptance speech, stating *'it's always a very special moment when a singer receives such a great recognition, and especially in this case I'm really, really happy that it comes from the audience: from the people who are here every night, to support our art and to give so much power to our personality and our work'*. Mezzo-soprano **Marina Viotti** was presented with the Mazars Young Singer award.

The Good Governance Award for Leadership in Opera, specially chosen by the jury, went to **Waldemar Dąbrowski** for his pioneering work in championing Polish opera and music, both in his work in the Polish Ministry of Culture and in running the Teatr Wielki in Warsaw. The **Fondation Bru** was presented with the award for Philanthropy, for its tireless dedication to the preservation and revival of music emanating from France in the period 1780 to 1920.

The full list of winners can be found below.

Aside from the Readers' Award, all winners were chosen by an international jury of opera professionals chaired by John Allison, editor of *Opera* magazine (the Founding Media Partner of the Awards) and classical music critic of *The Daily Telegraph*. Over 100 finalists from six continents were shortlisted, demonstrating the truly global reach of the Awards.

Presented by BBC Radio 3 presenter Petroc Trelawny for the fourth year running, highlights from the Awards will once again be broadcast on Radio 3 on Monday 6 May at 7.30pm.

Harry Hyman, founder of the International Opera Awards, said: *'Our winners this year demonstrate that not only is the world of opera thriving but that it has the power to transform lives. Leontyne Price not only possessed one of the greatest voices of all time but as one of the first African-American opera stars she was a trailblazer in an era of segregation. We all owe her a huge debt of gratitude and there couldn't be a more fitting recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award. Opera Holland Park's work in its local community continues to thrive and we are delighted that Gareth Malone has reunited their community choir of local residents that includes so many directly affected by the Grenfell Tower tragedy. While there are no easy fixes to heal the wounds caused by such a tragedy we know that music and performing music gives voice to many who can feel marginalised.'*

The Awards, founded in 2012, aim to raise the profile of opera as an art form, to recognise and reward success in opera and to generate funds to provide bursaries for aspiring operatic talent from around the world. Since 2012 over £300,000 has been raised by the Opera Awards Foundation.

#OperaAwards2019
operaawards.org

Download pictures from the 2019 Awards Ceremony [here](#).

Watch highlights from the 2019 Awards Ceremony [here](#) (available from 01.00am 30 April)

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FULL LIST OF WINNERS

CHORUS

Bolshoi Opera

CONDUCTOR

Marc Albrecht

DESIGNER

Rebecca Ringst

DIRECTOR

Katie Mitchell

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Umculo Cape Festival

FEMALE SINGER

Asmik Grigorian

FESTIVAL

Janáček Brno Festival

GOOD GOVERNANCE AWARD FOR LEADERSHIP IN OPERA

Waldemar Dąbrowski

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Leontyne Price

MALE SINGER

Charles Castronovo

MAZARS YOUNG SINGER

Marina Viotti

NEW PRODUCTION (supported by the KT Wong Foundation)

Janáček: *From the House of the Dead*, d. Krzysztof Warlikowski (Royal Opera House)

NEWCOMER

Maxim Emelyanychev

OPERA COMPANY

Opera Vlaanderen

OPERA ORCHESTRA

Royal Opera House

PHILANTHROPY

Fondation Bru

READERS' AWARD

Sonya Yoncheva

RECORDING (COMPLETE OPERA)

Rossini: *Semiramide* (Opera Rara)

RECORDING (SOLO RECITAL)

Stéphane Degout: *Enfers* (Harmonia Mundi)

REDISCOVERED WORK

Hasse: *Artaserse* (Pinchgut Opera)

WORLD PREMIERE (sponsored by The Vineyard)

Kurtág: *Fin de partie* (Teatro alla Scala)

NOTES TO EDITORS

Mazars

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<http://www.mazars.com>

BBC Radio 3

Since it launched in 1946, the Third Programme/BBC Radio 3 has been a bold innovator in the cultural world. It is one of the world's foremost presenters, creators, commissioners and curators across classical, folk, world, jazz and contemporary music as well as drama, philosophy and ideas. The station is also the most significant commissioner of new and contemporary music in the UK, with 35 new works commissioned annually and broadcasts over 600 concerts a year, including live broadcasts from the greatest classical music festival in the world (BBC Proms). Radio 3's In Concert programme alone reaches the equivalent of 250 packed concert halls a week, and the BBC Orchestras and Choirs give around 400 concerts a year in over 60 UK locations. The station has always nurtured extraordinary artistic talents, provided a platform for important scientific and political debates/announcements, and broadcast ground-breaking experimental drama – always while delivering its core aim of connecting audiences with pioneering music and culture.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3>

Opera Magazine

Described by *The Daily Telegraph* as 'the bible of the industry', *Opera* magazine has been the world's leading commentator on the lyric stage since 1950. Providing coverage of operatic events through a mixture of features, reviews (live performances, recordings,

books) and analysis, plus monthly listings of events worldwide and its famous 'We hear that' section, the magazine has an unrivalled network of international correspondents, covering performances from around the globe.

<http://www.opera.co.uk>

