SOLANGE KNOWLES ANNOUNCED AS FIRST-EVER RECIPIENT OF THE LENA HORNE PRIZE FOR ARTISTS CREATING SOCIAL IMPACT

The Celebrated GRAMMY Award-Winning Singer/Songwriter and Visual Artist Will Receive the $100,000 Prize to Be Directed to Project Row Houses

NEW YORK, NY (DECEMBER 5, 2019) – The Town Hall today announced that GRAMMY Award-winning singer/songwriter and visual artist Solange Knowles will be the first-ever recipient of the Lena Horne Prize for Artists Creating Social Impact, the first major entertainment award to be named after a woman of color, honoring excellence at the intersection of arts and activism. Knowles will be honored at a special event which will be held at The Town Hall in New York City on Friday, February 28, 2020 during which she will receive $100,000, which will be directed to Project Row Houses, a Houston-based nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering people and enriching communities through engagement, art and direct action. The organization, founded in 1993, is a catalyst for transforming community through the celebration of art and African-American history and culture.

“I am beyond humbled to be the first recipient of the Lena Horne Prize,” said Knowles in a statement. “I will never forget being a young girl and the impact of hearing the great Lena Horne so radiantly and powerfully singing the words “believe in yourself” from that remarkable moment in The Wiz. I have carried it with me closely my entire life. At the age of 12, I played this very role at the Ensemble Theatre in Houston, Texas and it was then I learned about Lena’s dedicated activism and fearless integrity as a woman and groundbreaking artist. I am honored to be receiving an award that bears her name and continue her legacy of using the arts to inspire reflection and evoke change.”

The Lena Horne Prize Advisory Board, which consists of an esteemed list of artists, entertainers, philanthropists and community leaders including Harry Belafonte; Billy Porter; Judy Collins; Deesha Dyer; Roxane Gay; Dolores Huerta and more, selected Knowles for using her platform to promote social change.

“We are thrilled for Solange as the inaugural recipient of the Lena Horne Prize and are grateful for her continuous support of Project Row Houses and the Historic Third Ward community,” said Project Row Houses Executive Director Eureka Gilkey. “For more than 26 years, Project Row Houses has proven that the intersection between art, activism and neighborhood development can be a sustainable vehicle for community transformation. This generous gift will continue to support Project Row Houses as a thought leader in socially-engaged art, and our community enrichment and neighborhood development activities.”

Knowles has used her platform to advocate for representation and justice while providing constructive and empowering messages. With the release of her critically acclaimed albums, A Seat at the Table (2016) and When I Get Home (2019), Solange has navigated through themes of self-reflection and origin, empowerment, grief and healing that have resonated with millions of voices. This coupled with her performance art work has led to a defining career of music, visual art, and activism. Solange performed for President Obama at the White House as well as at the Kennedy Center and the legendary Sydney Opera House in Australia. Solange has conducted performance art shows across the globe including The Getty Museum, Los Angeles (2019), the Guggenheim Museum in NYC (2017), the Chinati Foundation in Marfa,
Texas (2017), and the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, in Germany (2019). She has exhibited video art installations at London’s Tate Modern and premiered the interdisciplinary video and dance performance piece, Metatronia, which featured Metatron’s Cube, 2018; a sculpture conceptualized and created by Solange, at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles.

Earlier this year, Solange released her album and interdisciplinary art film entitled *When I Get Home*. The album asked the question how much of ourselves do we bring with us versus leave behind in our evolution. Solange returned to Third Ward Houston to answer this. Written, performed, and executive produced by Solange, the release resulted in her third top 10 debut on the Billboard 200, hit #1 on iTunes, and kicked off a global tour. Solange premiered an extended director’s cut of her film at museums and contemporary institutions including The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) Los Angeles, The Brooklyn Museum, New York and V&A London.

Solange’s work in music and the arts has led to her being named Harvard University’s Artist of the Year in 2018. She was honored by The New School as a pioneering figure in fashion and the arts at the 70th Annual Parsons Benefit. She has also been the recipient of Glamour’s Woman of the Year Award and Billboard’s Impact Award.

The Lena Horne Prize was created by Michael Matuza, Jeb Gutelius and The Town Hall. The event will be produced by The Town Hall, Matuza (NAACP, Peabody and Emmy-nominated MBM Entertainment), Gutelius (Sailworks) and Marion Rosenfeld. The event will feature music, art, short films and spoken word from renowned artists, entertainers and activists.

Sponsorship packages available now, including tickets to the award event, gala dinner, and ancillary events, at www.lenahorneprize.com. Tickets to the award event will be available early January 2020 through The Town Hall and Ticketmaster.

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**About The Town Hall**

The Town Hall was built by a group of suffragists in 1921. It was created as a space for people of all genders, races and persuasions to gather and perform and discuss the issues of the day. The Town Hall is where Marian Anderson, Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Bob Dylan, Judy Collins, Joao Gilberto, Isaac Stern, and Leonard Cohen performed their first concerts. It’s where Bird and Dizzy introduced bebop to the world in 1945; Coretta Scott King debuted her Freedom Concerts in 1964; in 1921, Margaret Sanger was famously arrested on stage for speaking about birth control, an incident that launched a movement and catapulted her organization into the national spotlight, an organization she later renamed Planned Parenthood. The Town Hall has been at the forefront of social progress and political movements, presenting events led by Paul Robeson, Miriam Makeba, Harry Belafonte, Diego Rivera, Anaïs Nin, James Baldwin, Amiri Baraka, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Lorraine Hansberry and Arthur Miller. Over the last 100 years, The Town Hall has been home to countless cultural and musical milestones and continues to be a forum for the people—a welcome home of expression, education and exploration.