FOR IMMEDIATE MEDIA RELEASE

Announcing the New York 2020 ISPA Awards Recipients

Angélique Kidjo, Joseph V Melillo, Maria Hansen, and Shaw Foundation

Award Presentation to be held during the New York 2020 ISPA Congress on Thursday, January 16, 2020

New York, NY, USA (December 18, 2019) – On behalf of the Board of Directors, the International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) announces the recipients of the New York 2020 ISPA Awards. The first ISPA Award was presented in 1975 to Beverly Sills. Since then, ISPA has continued to recognize outstanding individuals for their contribution to the arts and their communities. The 2020 award recipients are as follows (biographies attached):

**Distinguished Artist Award**
Presented to artists who have made an outstanding contribution of talent, artistry, dedication, and service to the world of the performing arts.

**Angélique Kidjo** (Singer-Songwriter, Actress, and Activist)
Nominating Statement: “Angélique is an artist that crosses genres as well as continents. In addition, her commitment and advocacy on behalf of children make her the worthiest of recipients of this honor.”

**International Citation of Merit**
Presented for unique lifetime achievement which has enriched the international performing arts. This award is not for performance but rather for distinguished service working within the profession.

**Joseph V Melillo** (International Artistic Advisor for Columbia Artists; 2019 Director’s Fellow at the Center for Ballet and the Arts at New York University)
Nominating Statement: “His contribution to the arts here in New York and internationally cannot be understated.”

**Patrick Hayes Award**
Inspired by the legacy of Patrick Hayes, the founding President of the International Society of the Performing Arts Foundation, this Award recognizes an ISPA member in any stage of their career who has demonstrated transformative leadership in the performing arts

**Maria Hansen** (Executive Director, ELIA - European League of Institutes of the Arts)
Nominating Statement: “She (Maria) inspires new leaders in the performing arts to connect globally and add value to the international network at ISPA.”
Angel Award Recipient
Presented to an individual or organization which has demonstrated a significant and lasting contribution to the support of the performing arts which transcends the boundaries of one country or institution, and merits international recognition.

Shaw Foundation
Nominating Statement: “Shaw Foundation has had, and continues to have, a profound impact on countless organizations throughout the region. Their generosity has embraced arts and education and significantly enhanced the infrastructure of both.”

"While we received many worthy nominations, the Board was unanimous in their endorsement on the 2020 awardees. Each individual has contributed so very much to the global performing arts,” said ISPA Chief Executive Officer David Baile.

The awards will be presented at a ceremony to be held during the New York 2020 ISPA Congress, Reframing the Conversation: Art and Borders, on Thursday, January 16, 2020 at the Times Center. The ceremony will be hosted by Alison Friedman, Director of Performing Arts at West Kowloon Cultural District Authority in Hong Kong.

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[BIOGRAPHY OF THE AWARD RECIPIENTS]

Angélique Kidjo
2020 Distinguished Artist Award Recipient

Three-time Grammy Award winner Angélique Kidjo is one of the greatest artists in international music today, a creative force with fourteen albums to her name. Time Magazine has called her “Africa's premier diva”; The BBC, Forbes Magazine, and The Guardian have all highlighted her importance to the people of the African continent. She is the recipient of the 2015 Crystal Award given by the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, the 2016 Amnesty International Ambassador of Conscience Award, and the 2018 German Sustainability Award.

As a performer, her striking voice, stage presence and fluency in multiple cultures and languages have won respect from her peers and expanded her following across national borders. Kidjo has cross-pollinated the West African traditions of her childhood in Benin with elements of American R&B, funk and jazz, as well as influences from Europe and Latin America.

After exploring the roads of Africa's diaspora — through Brazil, Cuba and The United States — and offering an electrifying take on the Talking Heads album Remain In Light (called “one of the year's most vibrant albums” by the Washington Post), the French-Beninese singer is now reflecting on an icon of the Americas, celebrated salsa singer Celia Cruz. Kidjo's album Celia divests itself of the glamour to investigate the African roots of the Cuban-born woman who became the "Queen" of salsa.
Angelique also advocates on behalf of children as a UNICEF Ambassador. She created her own charitable foundation, Batonga, dedicated to support the education of young girls in Africa.

Joseph V Melillo
2020 International Citation of Merit Recipient

Joseph V. Melillo was BAM’s executive producer from 1999 to 2018. Mr. Melillo was responsible for BAM’s artistic direction, overseeing programming in all its performance spaces: the Howard Gilman Opera House, Harvey Theater, BAM Fisher and Rose Cinemas. He previously served as BAM’s producing director and founding director of the Next Wave Festival, which debuted in 1983. Spanning a 35 year-tenure at BAM, Melillo fostered the work of emerging and established artists, and forged numerous international partnerships. Awards include the Commandeur, Chevalier, and Officier de L'ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France), OBE (Great Britain), Knight of the Royal Order of the Polar Star (Sweden), and Knight of the National Order of Québec (Canada). He has served as both a 2017 Gish Award panelist and a 2017 Heinz Award juror. Melillo is currently the International Artistic Advisor for Columbia Artists' and the 2019 Director’s Fellow at the Center for Ballet and the Arts at New York University. He is a lecturer at colleges and universities nationally and internationally.

Maria Hansen
2020 Patrick Hayes Award Recipient

Maria Hansen is Executive Director of ELIA, the globally connected European network of Higher Arts Education. She was born and raised in Germany and holds an MBA from the University of Ottawa. Coming from a youth of music making, Maria has worked in the performing arts for more than 30 years. She was Fundraiser and later Executive Director of Opera Lyra Ottawa until 1995 when she moved to the Netherlands. For 11 years, Maria managed the Netherlands Bach Society, a baroque ensemble she toured internationally. In 2007, she became Managing Director of the Municipal Theater and Concert Hall Philharmonie in Haarlem. After 10 years in Haarlem, she made the move to ELIA and the international field of arts education. She has been a member of ISPA for more than 20 years and served ISPA as Board and Executive member and congress chair, including ISPA’s June 2018 Congress in the European Capital of Culture Leeuwarden/Friesland. Maria is a member the Supervisory Board of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and the Board of Directors of the Gergiev Festival Rotterdam. Other board appointments include Oorkaan, the only music ensemble in The Netherlands dedicated exclusively to the creation of high quality staged concerts for young audiences. Maria chairs the Hogenbijl Foundation which awards two annual prizes in film making and classical music in the Netherlands. She is treasurer of the 4 May Concert Foundation, member of the Supervisory Board of Frommermann and a member of the Royal Holland Society of Sciences and Humanities.
Shaw Foundation
2020 Angel Award Recipient

Founded in 1973 in Hong Kong by Run Run Shaw, Shaw Foundation Hong Kong Limited is dedicated to supporting education, healthcare and the arts internationally, with a focus on China and Hong Kong.

Over a legendary career spanning some eighty years, Mr. Shaw established himself as one of the most successful filmmakers of all time -- his namesake Shaw Studios produced over one thousand movies, many of which are now considered classics of Chinese cinema. His media empire – studios, theatres, television network, property assets – extended from Asia to North America.

As if running one of the world’s biggest media empires was not enough, Mr. Shaw and his wife Ms. Mona Fong, a powerful media executive in her own right, managed to summon the energy to build the Shaw Foundation into a venerated organization which to date has supported over 6,000 projects. These include museums, cultural foundations, music academies, art galleries, opera and dance performance theatres throughout China and Hong Kong, and a historic theatre in London.

Beyond the arts, the Foundation in 2002 established the Shaw Prize, bestowed annually upon distinguished international academicians in Astronomy, Life Science and Medicine, and Mathematical Sciences.

Among numerous awards, Mr. Shaw was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1977. In later years, he and his wife Mona preferred to be known simply as “Mr. and Mrs. Shaw.” Sadly, Mr. Shaw left us in 2014 and Mrs. Shaw in 2017, but their tireless dedication continues through the work of the Foundation today.


About ISPA: The International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) is a global association of more than 500 arts management leaders from 56 regions, who come together with the shared goal of strengthening and developing the arts internationally. We achieve this by building leadership ability, by recognizing and discussing field-wide trends and new developments, and by deepening global exchange through the arts. ISPA members include presenters, performing arts organizations, artist managers, competitions, funders, consultants and other professionals working in the performing arts. Founded in 1948 by Patrick Hayes, 2019 marked ISPA's 70th Anniversary.

About ISPA Awards: As a leadership network, ISPA is committed to recognizing excellence in the performing arts globally. There is an annual call for award nominations. All nominations are reviewed by the Nominating Committee Members and then a slate of nominees is recommended to the Board of Directors for approval.

For more information on the ISPA Awards, visit [www.ispa.org/page/awards_landing](http://www.ispa.org/page/awards_landing)

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