



## POLAR MUSIC PRIZE

# **ANNA NETREBKO, SUPERSTAR SOPRANO, AND DIANE WARREN, MULTI-AWARD WINNING SONGWRITER, ANNOUNCED AS THE 2020 POLAR MUSIC PRIZE LAUREATES**

**Award Ceremony and banquet: Tuesday June 9, Stockholm**

**#polarmusicprize**

Anna Netrebko, the globally celebrated Russian-born soprano, and American Diane Warren, one of the greatest songwriters of her generation, have been announced as the 2020 Laureates of the prestigious Polar Music Prize. The 29<sup>th</sup> Polar Music Prize ceremony and banquet will take place at Stockholm's Grand Hôtel on Tuesday June 9. Each Laureate receives prize money of one million Swedish Kroner (approx. £80,800/US \$105,446). The gala ceremony will be broadcast live on Swedish national television (TV4) at 8pm CET and can be viewed throughout Europe via TV4 Play from 5.30pm CET.

Marie Ledin, managing director of the Polar Music Prize: *"I am delighted that the 2020 Polar Music Prize Laureates are Anna Netrebko and Diane Warren, two impressive, supremely talented women, who are both at the top of their respective professions."*

Anna Netrebko said: *"When I get on stage, something happens and the quality of the performance is ten times better, like I have a voice telling me what to do. It's always been with me."*

*"You are entering the stage to give everything you have. You have to put your soul, your heart and all of your knowledge to reach the souls of the audience."*

*Receiving the Polar Music Prize is a big honour. I am very much looking forward to coming to Stockholm in June."*

Diane Warren said: *"I don't have confidence in myself as a human being, but I have unshakeable confidence in my music. When I know something is right, when I know a song is right for somebody...I believe, and it's unshakeable."*

*"I remember writing 'Til It Happens To You' that Lady Gaga sang, and that song got a life of its own. I'm so proud of that song. It had a profound impact on culture and became a real defining moment for the #MeToo movement. I just love that this song, or other songs can have the power to move people to action."*

*"Getting the Polar Music Prize is amazing, I'm so honoured. When I looked at the past recipients of it, that I could be in that company is mind-blowing."*



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**Anna Netrebko** has been described as a ‘soprano with star power in the best sense, a charismatic expressivity that pervades every element of her performance’. She is considered by many to be the reigning prima donna of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Born in Krasnodar, Russia, Anna studied vocal performance at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and made her stage debut aged 22. Today, in live performance and on award-winning recordings, Anna’s portrayals of opera’s most iconic heroines have made an indelible mark on the canon.

In addition to regularly headlining productions with the world’s leading opera companies, Anna has appeared extensively in concerts and recitals across five continents and is the first classical artist ever to be named in *TIME* magazine’s list of the world’s 100 most influential people. Her honours and awards include a 2017 International Opera Award for “Best Female Singer”; the 2016 Opera News Award; Musical America’s 2008 “Musician of the Year”; Germany’s prestigious Bambi Award; and the UK’s Classical BRIT Awards for “Singer of the Year” and “Female Artist of the Year.” In 2017, she was awarded the title of Austrian “Kammersängerin”, which is bestowed upon distinguished opera singers.

Ahead of the Polar Music Prize ceremony, Anna will perform a special concert with pianist Elena Bashkirova at Konserthuset Stockholm on Monday, June 8, her recital debut in the city.

**Diane Warren** is one of the most continuously prolific and successful contemporary songwriters of our time. Her songs have been featured in more than 100 motion pictures, resulting in 11 Oscar nominations, the most recent being this year’s nomination for “I’m Standing With You” performed by Chrissy Metz for the feature film *Breakthrough*.

Her impressive career has garnered countless awards including an Emmy, Grammy, and a Golden Globe. She has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and has been inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame. Warren’s songs have sold over 250 million records worldwide. She has written 32 top-ten hits on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, nine of which have garnered the coveted No. 1 spot. To date, she is the only songwriter with more than one song listed amongst the top fifteen of Billboard’s The Hot 100’s All-Time Top 100 Songs.

Diane’s songwriting talent began when she was growing up in Southern California’s San Fernando Valley listening to Top 40 Radio and idolising songwriters such as Carole King, Leiber and Stoller and Burt Bacharach. She currently works with many of today’s most popular artists, across a wide range of genres, including Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, Justin Bieber, Christina Aguilera, Kelly Clarkson, Carrie Underwood, Mary J Blige, Jennifer Hudson, Paloma Faith, Andra Day, Demi Lovato, LeAnn Rimes, Common, Janelle Monáe, Missy Elliott and Zendaya, among others. She has written for iconic artists such as Whitney Houston, Cher, Aerosmith, Céline Dion, Aretha Franklin, Toni Braxton, Mariah Carey, and many more.



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Warren says the key to her songwriting is tapping into a universal connection: "I just love writing a great ballad, sounding so essential that it reaches across genres. You could almost say the best songs are 'genre-transcendent' – they translate well into a variety of styles sung by different artists.' This is brilliantly illustrated by two of her mega hits, "How Do I Live", which holds the record for the longest weeks on the Billboard 100 Chart, and "Unbreak My Heart". Diane is not only an incredible songwriter she's also an astute business women, in charge of her creative career, owning Realsongs her publishing company – the most successful female-owned and operated business in the music industry.

Cher, whose hit 'If I Could Turn Back Time' was written by Warren, commented: "She's a great writer. There's nobody better than her."

The Polar Music Prize Award Committee is an independent 11-member Award Committee which selects the Laureates. The committee receives nominations from the public as well as from the International Music Council, the UNESCO founded NGO which promotes geographical and musical diversity.

**Announcement videos, publicity shots and biographies are available on the website [www.polarmusicprize.org](http://www.polarmusicprize.org).**

[Annanetrebko.com](http://Annanetrebko.com)

[Realsongs.com](http://Realsongs.com) (Diane Warren)

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For further information contact Claire Singers Consultants:

E: [Karen@marapublicity.com](mailto:Karen@marapublicity.com)

T: 07545 377928



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### NOTES TO EDITORS:

#### 2020 CITATIONS:

##### **Anna Netrebko:**

The Polar Music Prize 2020 is awarded to Russian operatic soprano Anna Netrebko. Star quality has a deeper meaning in the opera world. Being a virtuoso vocalist is not enough. As an art form, opera is also about capturing the audience's attention. No one in the modern era does that better than opera diva Anna Netrebko. As a reviewer put it, she defines the word 'extra'. With her magnificent voice and glowing charisma, she is a larger-than-life singer who keeps the classics alive, sells out every performance and also catches the attention of audiences new to opera; Anna Netrebko opens doors. She was the first classical musician to be included in Time Magazine's 'The Top 100 Most Influential People'. When Anna Netrebko performs, it's impossible to look away.

##### **Diane Warren:**

The Polar Music Prize 2020 is awarded to American songwriter Diane Warren, a master of writing for the human voice. Her pop songs embody the rare combination of being catchy and yet complex enough to be heard hundreds of times, and still resonate with the listener. Diane Warren is the reigning Queen of the American popular song. Writing for artists like Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, Céline Dion, Cher, Whitney Houston and Aerosmith, as well as crafting songs for major Hollywood movies and garnering 11 Oscar nominations, she's perfected the art of the power ballad. Diane Warren is the founder of Realsongs, the most successful female-owned music publisher in the world. As a singer, to be given a Diane Warren song, is a gift.

##### **ABOUT - THE POLAR MUSIC PRIZE:**

The Polar Music Prize was founded in 1989 by the late Stig "Stikkan" Anderson, a true legend in the history of Swedish popular music. Stig Anderson was the publisher, lyricist and manager of ABBA, and he played a key role in their enormous success. The name of the prize stems from Anderson's legendary record label, Polar Music.

The Polar Music Prize celebrates the power and importance of music and is awarded to individuals, groups or institutions for international recognition of excellence in the world of music. The roll call of former Laureates reads like a who's who of music: Paul McCartney, Dizzy Gillespie, Patti Smith, Bob Dylan, Ravi Shankar, Renee Fleming, Ray Charles, Youssou N'dour, Mstislav Rostropovich and Kronos Quartet, to name but a few.