

# Jessye Norman

**Jessye Mae Norman** (September 15, 1945 – September 30, 2019) was an American opera singer and recitalist.<sup>[1][2]</sup> A dramatic soprano, Norman was associated in particular with the Wagnerian repertoire, and with the roles of Sieglinde, Ariadne, Alceste, Leonore,<sup>[3]</sup> and Cassandra. Norman was inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in 1999, and became a Spingarn Medalist in 2013.<sup>[4]</sup> Apart from receiving several honorary doctorates and other awards, she also received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, the National Medal of Arts, and was a member of the British Royal Academy of Music.<sup>[2]</sup>



Norman in 2014

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## Life and career

### Early life and musical education

Norman was born in Augusta, Georgia, to Silas Norman, an insurance salesman, and Janie King-Norman, a schoolteacher.<sup>[5]</sup> She was one of five children in a family of amateur musicians; her mother and grandmother were both pianists, and her father sang in a local choir. Norman's mother insisted that she start piano lessons at an early age.<sup>[1]</sup> Norman attended Charles T. Walker

Elementary School, A.R. Johnson Junior High School, and Lucy C. Laney Senior High School, all in downtown Augusta.<sup>[3]</sup>

Norman proved to be a talented singer as a young child, singing gospel songs at Mount Calvary Baptist Church at the age of four.<sup>[5]</sup> When she was nine she was given a radio for her birthday and soon discovered the world of opera through the weekly broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera, which she listened to every Saturday while cleaning up her room.<sup>[6]</sup> Norman started listening to recordings of Marian Anderson and Leontyne Price, both of whom Norman credited as inspiring figures in her career.<sup>[5]</sup> At age 16, Norman entered the Marian Anderson Vocal Competition in Philadelphia which, although she did not win, led to an offer of a full scholarship at Howard University, in Washington, D.C.<sup>[7]</sup> While at Howard, she sang in the university chorus and as a professional soloist at the Lincoln Temple United Church of Christ, while studying voice with Carolyn Grant. In 1964, she became a member of Gamma Sigma Sigma.

In 1965, along with 33 other female students and four female faculty, she became a founding member of the Delta Nu chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota. In 1966 she won the National Society of Arts and Letters singing competition.<sup>[8]</sup> After graduating in 1967 with a degree in music, she began graduate studies at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and later at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance in Ann Arbor, Michigan, from which she earned a master's degree in 1968. During this time Norman studied voice with Elizabeth Mannion and Pierre Bernac.<sup>[9]</sup>

## Early career (1969–79)

After graduating, Norman, like many young musicians at the time, moved to Europe to establish herself. In 1969 she won the ARD International Music Competition in Munich and landed a three-year contract with the Deutsche Oper Berlin. She made her operatic début that same year as Elisabeth in Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. Critics at the time described Norman as having "the greatest voice since the German soprano Lotte Lehmann."<sup>[10]</sup>

Norman performed with German and Italian opera companies, often appearing as a princess or other noble figure. Norman was exceptional at portraying a commanding and noble bearing. This ability was partly due to her uncommon height and size, but was more a result of her unique, rich, and powerful voice. Norman's range was remarkably wide, encompassing all female voice registers from contralto to high dramatic soprano.<sup>[5]</sup> In 1970 she made her Italian début in Florence, in Handel's *Deborah*. In 1971, Norman made her début at the Maggio Musicale in Florence appearing as Sélika in Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*. That year she also sang the role of Countess Almaviva in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Berlin Festival and recorded that role with the BBC Orchestra under the direction of Colin Davis. The recording was a finalist for the Montreux International Record Award competition and brought Norman much exposure to music listeners in Europe and the United States.<sup>[7]</sup>

In 1972, Norman debuted at La Scala, where she sang the title role in Verdi's *Aida* and at London's Royal Opera at Covent Garden, where she sang the role of Cassandra in Berlioz's *Les Troyens*. Norman appeared as Aida again in a concert version that same year in her first well-publicized American performance at the Hollywood Bowl. This was followed by an all-Wagner concert at the Tanglewood Festival in Lenox, Massachusetts, and a recital tour of the country, after which she went back to Europe for several engagements.<sup>[7]</sup> Norman briefly returned to the United States to give her first New York City recital as part of the "Great Performers" series in Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center in 1973.<sup>[7]</sup>

In 1975 Norman moved to London and had no staged opera appearances for the next five years. She remained internationally active as a recitalist and soloist in works such as Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Franck's *Les Béatitudes*. Norman returned to North America again in 1976 and 1977 to make an extensive concert tour, but it was not until many years later that she would make her U.S. opera début or appear frequently in the United States. Only after Norman had established herself in Europe's leading opera houses and festivals—including the Edinburgh International Festival, Salzburg Festival, Aix-en-Provence Festival, and the Stuttgart Opera—did she set out to establish herself in the United States. Norman toured Europe throughout the 1970s, giving recitals of works by Schubert, Mahler, Wagner, Brahms, Satie, Messiaen, and several contemporary American composers, to great critical acclaim.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Mid-career (1980–89)

In October 1980 Norman returned to the operatic stage in the title role of Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Hamburg State Opera in Germany. She made her United States operatic début in 1982 with the Opera Company of Philadelphia, appearing in Stravinsky's *Oedipus rex* as Jocasta and in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* as Dido.<sup>[10]</sup> Norman followed these with her début at the Metropolitan Opera in 1983, appearing in Berlioz's *Les Troyens* as both Cassandra and Dido, a production that marked the company's 100th-anniversary season. According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*: "By the mid-1980s she was one of the most popular and highly regarded dramatic soprano singers in the world."<sup>[11]</sup> She was invited to sing at the second inauguration of U.S. President Ronald Reagan on January 21, 1985, an invitation she debated accepting as an African American and a Democrat (as well as a nuclear disarmament activist). In the end, she did accept and sang the folk song "Simple Gifts". In 1986, Norman sang at Queen Elizabeth II's 60th birthday celebration.<sup>[12]</sup> That same year she appeared as a soloist in Strauss's *Four Last Songs* with the Berlin Philharmonic during its tour of the US.<sup>[13]</sup>

Over the years Norman was not afraid to expand her talent into less familiar areas. In 1988 she sang a concert performance of Poulenc's one-act opera *La voix humaine* ("The Human Voice"), based on Jean Cocteau's 1930 play of the same name.<sup>[14]</sup> During the 1980s and early 1990s, Norman produced numerous award-winning recordings, and many of her performances were televised. In addition to opera, many of Norman's recordings and performances during this time focused on art songs, lieder, oratorios, and orchestral works. Her interpretation of Strauss's *Four Last Songs* is especially acclaimed. Its slowness is controversial, but the tonal qualities of her voice are ideal for these final works of the Romantic German lieder tradition.<sup>[5]</sup>

Norman is also known for her performances of the *Gurre-Lieder* of Arnold Schoenberg and for Schoenberg's one-woman opera *Erwartung*.<sup>[5]</sup> In 1989 she appeared at the Metropolitan Opera for a performance of *Erwartung* that marked the company's first single-character production. It was presented in a double bill with Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, with Norman playing Judith. Both operas were broadcast nationally. That same year, she was the featured soloist with Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in its opening concert of its 148th season, which PBS telecast live.<sup>[13]</sup> Norman also performed at the Hong Kong Cultural Center opening and gave a recital at Taiwan's National Concert Hall.<sup>[1]</sup>

Also in 1989, Norman was invited to sing the French national anthem, *La Marseillaise*, to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution on July 14. Her rendition was delivered at the Place de la Concorde in Paris, in a costume designed by Azzedine Alaïa as part of an elaborate pageant orchestrated by avant-garde designer Jean-Paul Goude.<sup>[7]</sup> This event was the inspiration that led the South African poet Lawrence Mduduzi Ndlovu to write a poem titled "I Shall Be Heard" dedicated to Jessye Norman. The poem appears in Ndlovu's book of Poems titled "In Quiet Realm" whose foreword is penned by Ms Norman.<sup>[15]</sup>

## Later career (1990–2019)

From the early 1990s Norman lived in Croton-on-Hudson, New York, in a secluded estate known as "The White Gates" previously owned by television personality Allen Funt. In 1990 she performed at Tchaikovsky's 150th Birthday Gala in Leningrad and made her Lyric Opera of Chicago début in the title role of Gluck's *Alceste*. In 1991 she sang for the 700th Celebration Party of Swiss National Day.<sup>[1]</sup> That same year, she performed in a concert recorded live with Lawrence Foster and the Lyon Opera Orchestra at Paris's Notre Dame Cathedral.<sup>[7]</sup> In 1992 Norman sang Jocasta in Stravinsky's *Oedipus rex* at the opening operatic production at the new Saito Kinen Festival in the Japanese Alps near Matsumoto.<sup>[13]</sup> In 1993, she sang the title role in the Metropolitan Opera's production of Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*. In 1994, Norman sang at the funeral of former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.<sup>[16][17]</sup> In September 1995, she was again the featured soloist with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, this time under Kurt Masur's direction, in a gala concert telecast live on PBS marking the opening of the orchestra's 153rd season. In 1996 Norman gave a highly lauded performance as the title character in the Metropolitan Opera's premiere production of Janáček's *The Makropulos Affair*.<sup>[18]</sup>

Starting in the mid-1990s, Norman began to move away from soprano stage roles to mezzo-soprano roles.<sup>[7]</sup> She performed at the 1996 Summer Olympics opening ceremony in Atlanta, singing "Faster, Higher, Stronger." In January 1997 she performed at the second inauguration of U.S. President Bill Clinton.<sup>[1][19]</sup> Norman's 1998–99 performances included a recital at Carnegie Hall in New York City, which had an unusual program incorporating the sacred music of Duke Ellington, scored for jazz combo, string quartet and piano, and featuring the Alvin Ailey Repertory Dance Ensemble. Other performances during the season included *Das Lied von der Erde*, with Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, a television special for Christmas filmed in her home town of Augusta, Georgia, as well as a spring recital tour, which included performances in Tel Aviv, Israel. The following season also brought performances of the sacred music of Duke Ellington to London and Vienna, together with a summer European tour, which included performances at the Salzburg Festival.<sup>[13]</sup>

In 1999 Norman collaborated with choreographer-dancer Bill T. Jones in a project for New York City's Lincoln Center, called "How! Do! We! Do!" In 2000 she released an album, *I Was Born in Love with You*, featuring the songs of Michel Legrand. The recording, reviewed as a jazz crossover project, featured Legrand on piano, Ron Carter on bass, and Grady Tate on drums. In February and March 2001, Norman was featured at Carnegie Hall in a three-part concert series. With James Levine as her pianist, the concerts were a significant arts event, replete with an 80-page program booklet featuring a newly commissioned watercolor portrait of Norman by David Hockney. In 2002, Norman performed at the opening of Singapore's Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay.<sup>[1]</sup>

On June 28, 2001, she and light lyric coloratura soprano Kathleen Battle performed Vangelis's Mythodea at the Temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens, Greece.<sup>[20]</sup>

On March 11, 2002, Norman performed "America the Beautiful" at a service unveiling two monumental columns of light at the site of the former World Trade Center, as a memorial for the victims of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York City.<sup>[7]</sup> In 2002 she returned to Augusta to announce that she would fund a pilot school of the arts for children in Richmond County. Classes commenced at St. John United Methodist Church in the fall of 2003. In November 2004, a documentary about Norman's life and work was created. The film, directed by André Heller, with Othmar Schmiderer as director of photography and produced by DOR-Film of Vienna, chronicles the music, the social and political issues, and the inspiration and dreams that combined to make her unique in her profession.<sup>[21]</sup> In 2006, Norman collaborated with the modern dance choreographer Trey McIntyre for a special performance during the summer at the Vail Dance Festival.<sup>[1]</sup>

In March 2009, Norman curated *Honor!*, a celebration of the African-American cultural legacy. The festival honored African-American trailblazers and artists with concerts, recitals, lectures, panel discussions, and exhibitions hosted by Carnegie Hall, the Apollo Theater, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and other sites around New York City.<sup>[22]</sup>

Norman stopped performing ensemble opera, concentrating instead on recitals and concerts.<sup>[12]</sup> She served on the boards of directors for Carnegie Hall, the New York Public Library, the New York Botanical Garden, City-Meals-on-Wheels in New York City, Dance Theatre of Harlem, National Music Foundation, and Elton John AIDS Foundation. She was a member of the board as well as a national spokesperson for the S.L.E. Lupus Foundation, and spokesperson for Partnership for the Homeless. Norman served on the Board of Trustees of Paine College and the Augusta Opera Association.<sup>[13]</sup>



Norman with Tom Hall, 2014

In March 2013, the Apollo Theater and Manhattan School of Music featured Norman in *Ask Your Mama*, a 90-minute multimedia show by Laura Karpman based on Langston Hughes's "Ask Your Mama: 12 Moods for Jazz".<sup>[23]</sup>

In March 2014, Norman was featured at the Green Music Center Weill Hall on the campus of Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park (Sonoma County), California, in a recital of American standards in tributes to the likes of George Gershwin, Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald.

In April 2018, Norman was honored as the 12th recipient of the Glenn Gould Prize for her contribution to opera and the arts.<sup>[24]</sup>

In 2015, Norman suffered a spinal cord injury. She died at Mount Sinai–St. Luke's Hospital in Manhattan on September 30, 2019, aged 74, from of multiple organ failure and septic shock, secondary to complications from the injury.<sup>[25]</sup>

## The Jessye Norman School of the Arts

In 2003, the Rachel Longstreet Foundation and Norman partnered to open the Jessye Norman School of the Arts, a tuition-free performing arts after-school program for economically disadvantaged students in Augusta, Georgia. Norman was actively involved in the program, including fundraisers for its benefit.<sup>[26]</sup>

## Memoir

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On May 6, 2014, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt published Norman's memoir, *Stand Up Straight and Sing!*<sup>[27]</sup>

## Opera roles

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These are notable opera roles that Norman performed, some on studio recordings only.<sup>[28]</sup>

- Aida, *Aida* (Verdi)
- Alceste, *Alceste* (Gluck)
- Antonia, *The Tales of Hoffmann* (Offenbach)
- Ariadne, *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Richard Strauss)
- Armida, *Armida* (Haydn)
- Arminda, *Die Gärtnerin aus Liebe* (Mozart)
- Carmen, *Carmen* (Bizet)
- Cassandre, *Les Troyens* (Berlioz)
- Countess Almaviva, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart)
- Dido, *Dido and Aeneas* (Purcell)
- Didon, *Les Troyens* (Berlioz)
- Donna Elvira, *Don Giovanni* (Mozart)
- Elisabeth, *Tannhäuser* (Wagner)
- Elle, *La voix humaine* (Poulenc)
- Elsa, *Lohengrin* (Wagner)
- Emilia Marty, *The Makropulos Affair* (Janáček)
- Euryanthe, *Euryanthe* (Carl Maria von Weber)
- Giulietta, *The Tales of Hoffmann* (Offenbach)
- Hélène, *La belle Hélène* (Offenbach)
- Idamante, *Idomeneo* (Mozart)
- Isolde, *Tristan und Isolde* (Wagner) (Act II in Concert)
- Jocasta, *Oedipus rex* (Stravinsky)
- Judith, *Bluebeard's Castle* (Bartók)
- Kundry, *Parsifal* (Wagner)
- Giulietta di Kelbar, *Un giorno di regno* (Verdi)
- Leonore, *Fidelio* (Beethoven)
- Madame Lidoine, *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (Poulenc)
- Marguerite, *La damnation de Faust* (Berlioz)
- Medora, *Il corsaro* (Verdi)
- Pénélope, *Pénélope* (Fauré)
- Phedra, *Hippolyte et Aricie* (Rameau)
- Rosina, *La vera costanza* (Haydn)
- Salome, *Salome* (Richard Strauss)
- Salome, *Hérodiade* (Massenet)
- Santuzza, *Cavalleria rusticana* (Mascagni)
- Sélica, *L'Africaine* (Meyerbeer)
- Sieglinde, *Die Walküre* (Wagner)
- Third Norn, *Götterdämmerung* (Wagner)
- Woman, *Erwartung* (Schoenberg)

# Oratorio and orchestral parts performed

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These are among the notable oratorio and orchestral parts that Norman performed, some on studio recordings only.<sup>[7]</sup>

- Beethoven: Missa solennis
- Beethoven: Symphony No. 9
- Alban Berg: "Der Wein"
- (Alban Berg), *Sieben frühe Lieder, Altenberg Lieder, Jugendlieder*
- (Berlioz), *Les Nuits d'été*
- (Berlioz), *La mort de Cléopâtre*, Cléopâtre
- (Berlioz), *Romeo et Juliette*, soloist
- (Brahms), Lieder
- (Brahms), A German Requiem
- (Brahms), Alto Rhapsody
- (Bruckner), *Te Deum* [and] *Helgoland* [and] *150 Psalm*
- (Chausson), *Poème de l'amour et de la mer*, op. 19
- (Chausson), *Chanson perpétuelle*, op. 37
- (Debussy), *L'Enfant prodigue* [and] *La damoiselle élue*
- (Henri Duparc), *Mélodies*
- (César Franck), *Les Béatitudes* (oratorio)
- (Handel), *Deborah*, Deborah
- (Mahler), *Das Lied von der Erde*
- (Mahler), *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*
- (Mahler), *Songs of a Wayfarer*.
- (Mahler), *Kindertotenlieder*.
- (Mahler), *Symphony No. 2 "Resurrection"*, soloist
- (Mahler), *Symphony No. 3*, soloist
- (Poulenc), *Mélodies*
- (Ravel), *Shéhérazade*
- (Ravel), *Deux mélodies hébraïques*
- (Ravel), *Chansons madécasses*
- (Satie), *Mélodies*
- (Schoenberg), *Brettli-Lieder*
- (Schoenberg), *Erwartung*
- (Schoenberg), *Gurrelieder*
- (Schubert), Lieder
- (Schubert), *Erkönig*
- (Schumann), *Frauenliebe und Leben*, op. 42
- (Schumann), *Liederkreis*, op. 39
- (R. Strauss), *Four Last Songs* (Philips, 1983).
- (R. Strauss), Lieder with piano
- (Tippett), *A Child of Our Time*
- (Wagner), *Wesendonck Lieder*
- (Verdi), *Requiem*
- (Hugo Wolf), Lieder

## Concert and recital work

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Throughout her career, Norman spent much of her time giving recitals and concerts encompassing the classical German repertory as well as contemporary masterpieces, such as Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* and the French moderns, which she invariably performed in the original tongue.<sup>[13]</sup> This combination of scholarship and artistry contributed to her consistently successful career

as one of the most versatile concert and operatic singers of her time. Often cited for her innovative programming and fervent advocacy of contemporary music, she earned recognition as "one of those once-in-a-generation singers who isn't simply following in the footsteps of others, but is staking out her own niche in the history of singing."<sup>[13]</sup>

Norman premiered the song cycle *woman.life.song* by composer [Judith Weir](#), a work commissioned for her by [Carnegie Hall](#), with texts by [Toni Morrison](#), [Maya Angelou](#) and [Clarissa Pinkola Estés](#);<sup>[12]</sup> performed a selection of sacred music of [Duke Ellington](#); recorded a jazz album, *Jessye Norman Sings Michel Legrand*; and was the soprano co-lead in [Vangelis](#)'s project *Mythodea*. In Moscow, Norman performed songs of [Mussorgsky](#) in the original Russian.<sup>[5]</sup> Other projects included her 1984 album *With a Song in My Heart*, which contains numbers from films and musical comedies, and a 1990 performance of American spirituals with soprano [Kathleen Battle](#) at Carnegie Hall.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Voice type

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Norman is most often considered a [dramatic soprano](#) but unlike most dramatic sopranos, she became known for roles more traditionally sung by other types of voices. From her student days Norman was selective about her repertoire, heeding her own instincts and interests more than the advice of her teachers or requests of her management. In the beginning of her career, this tendency put her at odds with the Deutsche Oper and compelled her to seek out musical works on her own that she felt better suited her. Norman told John Gruen of the *New York Times*: "As for my voice, it cannot be categorized—and I like it that way, because I sing things that would be considered in the dramatic, mezzo or spinto range. I like so many different kinds of music that I've never allowed myself the limitations of one particular range."<sup>[7]</sup>

Some vocal critics say that Norman was not a dramatic soprano but in fact had a rare soprano voice type known as a [Falcon](#). The Falcon voice is closer to a mezzo-soprano timbre, but closer to a dramatic soprano tessitura. Falcon roles specifically refer to parts written for sopranos instead of mezzos, as was written for Falcon. The roles are thus often sung by lyric mezzos. This mix of sound is why many fans, conductors, and critics unhesitatingly refer to her as a soprano or a mezzo. At age 23, when asked by an interviewer in Germany how she would characterize her voice, she replied that "pigeonholes are only comfortable for pigeons."<sup>[29]</sup>

Over the years Norman's technical expertise was among her most critically praised attributes. In a review of one of her recitals at New York City's Carnegie Hall, New York Times contributor Allen Hughes wrote that Norman "has one of the most opulent voices before the public today, and, as discriminating listeners are aware, her performances are backed by extraordinary preparation, both musical and otherwise." Another Carnegie Hall appearance prompted these words from *New York Times* contributor [Bernard Holland](#): "If one added up all the things that Jessye Norman does well as a singer, the total would assuredly exceed that of any other soprano before the public. At Miss Norman's recital ... tones were produced, colors manipulated, words projected and interpretive points made—all with fanatic finesse."<sup>[7]</sup>

## Honors and awards

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- [National Society of Arts and Letters](#) singing competition (1966)<sup>[8]</sup>
- First prize at the [ARD International Music Competition](#) in [Munich](#) (1968)<sup>[1]</sup>
- [Gramophone Award](#) for her recording of Strauss' *Four Last Songs* (1982)<sup>[1]</sup>
- [Musical America](#) magazine's Musician of the Year.<sup>[30]</sup>
- Honorary doctorate from [Howard University](#) (1982)<sup>[31]</sup>
- Honorary doctorate from the [Boston Conservatory of Music](#) and the [University of the South](#) (1984)<sup>[31]</sup>
- [Grammy Award](#) for Best Classical Vocal Soloist Performance for "Ravel: Songs of Maurice Ravel" (1984)<sup>[1]</sup>
- [Commandeur de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres](#) (France, 1984)<sup>[32]</sup>
- France's [National Museum of Natural History](#) named an orchid for her (1984)<sup>[32]</sup>
- [Grammy Award](#) for Best Opera Recording for "Wagner: Lohengrin" (1988)<sup>[1]</sup>
- [Grammy Award](#) for Best Opera Recording for "Wagner: Die Walkuere" (1989)<sup>[1]</sup>

- Légion d'honneur (France, 1989)<sup>[32]</sup>
- Honorary Ambassador to the United Nations by UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (1990)<sup>[32]</sup>
- Honorary Doctor in Music from Juilliard School of Music (1990)<sup>[33]</sup>
- Norman's home town, Augusta, Georgia, dedicated Riverwalk Augusta's amphitheater, named in her honor (1991)<sup>[34]</sup>
- Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art, 1st class (1995)<sup>[35]</sup>
- Norman was a featured performer during the opening ceremonies of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia<sup>[12]</sup>
- Winner of the 1997 Radcliffe Medal, presented annually by the Radcliffe College Alumnae Association to honor individuals whose lives and work have had a significant impact on society.<sup>[32]</sup>
- Norman was honored by New York's Associated Black Charities at the 11th Annual Black History Makers Awards Dinner for her contributions to the arts and to African-American culture (March 1997)<sup>[36]</sup>
- Kennedy Center Honors (youngest recipient in the Honors' 20-year existence) (December 1997)<sup>[13]</sup>
- Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording for "Bartók: Bluebeard's Castle" (1998)<sup>[1]</sup>
- Honorary doctorate from Harvard University(1998)<sup>[31]</sup>
- Georgia Music Hall of Fame (1999)<sup>[12]</sup>
- Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal for her work in the fight against lupus, breast cancer, AIDS, and hunger (2000)<sup>[12]</sup>
- Outstanding Alumnae by Howard University (2000)<sup>[1]</sup>
- Inducted into the American Classical Music Hall of Fame (2002)<sup>[37]</sup>
- Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award (2006)<sup>[1]</sup>
- Member of the Royal Academy of Music<sup>[1]</sup>
- Awarded France's Grand Prix du Disque for albums of lieder by Wagner, Schumann, Mahler and Schubert.<sup>[38]</sup>
- Won Amsterdam's Edison Award; and recording honors in Belgium, Spain, and Germany.
- She was winner of an Ace Award from the National Cable Television Association for "Jessye Norman at Notre Dame."<sup>[38]</sup>
- 2009 National Medal of Arts presented by President Barack Obama in a ceremony at The White House in February 2010.<sup>[39][40]</sup>
- 2011 Honorary Doctorate Degrees from the Manhattan School of Music and Northwestern University in June 2011.<sup>[41]</sup>
- Jessye Norman has received honorary doctorates from more than 30 colleges, universities, and conservatories including Jesus College, Cambridge, the Manhattan School of Music, University of Michigan, Yale University, Northwestern University and Brandeis University.<sup>[42]</sup>
- 2013 Spingarn Award from the NAACP.<sup>[43]</sup>
- 2015 Wolf Prize in Arts (with Murray Perahia)<sup>[44]</sup>
- 2018 12th Glenn Gould Prize from the Glenn Gould Foundation<sup>[45]</sup>
- 2018 Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal<sup>[46]</sup>

## Discography

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### Opera

- Bartók, *Bluebeard's Castle* (*A Kékszakállú herceg vára*, Sz. 48, op. 11) (Judith), cond. Pierre Boulez, with László Polgár (live, 1993, Deutsche Grammophon)
- Beethoven, *Fidelio* (Leonore), cond. Bernard Haitink (Philips)
- Bizet, *Carmen* (Carmen), cond. Seiji Ozawa, with Neil Shicoff and Mirella Freni (Philips)
- Debussy, *L'Enfant prodigue* (Lia), cond. Gary Bertini, with José Carreras and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (Orfeo)
- Fauré, *Pénélope* (Pénélope), cond. Charles Dutoit with Alain Vanzo and José Van Dam (Erato)
- Gluck, *Alceste* (Alceste), cond. Serge Baudo, with Nicolai Gedda and Siegfried Nimsgern (Orfeo)
- Haydn, *Armida* (Armida), cond. Antal Dorati (Philips)
- Haydn, *La vera Costanza* (Rosina), cond. Antal Dorati (Philips)



- Mascagni, *Cavalleria rusticana* (Santuzza), cond. Semyon Bychkov, with Dmitri Hvorostovski (Philips)
- Meyerbeer, *L'Africaine* (Sélica), cond. Riccardo Muti (live in Florence, 1971) (Opera d'oro)
- Mozart, *Idomeneo* (Idamante), cond. Colin Davis, with Heather Harper and Nicolai Gedda (live in Rome, 25 March 1971) (Opera d'oro)
- Mozart, *Die Gärtnerin aus Liebe*, German version allemande of *La finta giardiniera* (Arminda), cond. Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, with Helen Donath, Werner Hollweg, Ileana Cotrubas, Hermann Prey and Tatiana Troyanos (Philips)
- Mozart, *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Countess), cond. Colin Davis, with Mirella Freni (Philips)
- Offenbach, *La Belle Hélène* (Hélène), cond. Michel Plasson with Gabriel Bacquier and Jean-Philippe Lafont (EMI)
- Offenbach, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (Giulietta), cond. Sylvain Cambreling, with Neil Shicoff and José Van Dam (EMI)
- Offenbach, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (Antonia), cond. Jeffrey Tate, with Anne-Sofie von Otter, Francisco Araiza, Samuel Ramey and Cheryl Studer (Philips)
- Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas* (Dido), cond. Raymond Leppard (Philips)
- Schoenberg, *Erwartung*, cond. James Levine (Philips)
- Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Primadonna/Ariadne), cond. Kurt Masur, with Julia Varady, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Edita Gruberova (Philips)
- Strauss, *Salome* (Salome), cond. Seiji Ozawa, with James Morris (Philips)
- Strauss, *Elektra* (Elektra), cond. Claudio Abbado, with Cheryl Studer, Helga Dernesch, Victor Braun, Vienna Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon - unreleased to date)
- Stravinski, *Ædipus Rex* (Jocaste), cond. Seiji Ozawa, with Peter Schreier, Bryn Terfel and Georges Wilson (narrator) (Philips)
- Stravinski, *Ædipus Rex* (Jocaste), cond. Colin Davis, with Thomas Moser, Siegfried Nimsgern and Michel Piccoli (narrator) (Orfeo)
- Verdi, *Il corsaro* (Medora), cond. Lamberto Gardelli, with Montserrat Caballé and José Carreras (Philips)
- Verdi, *Un giorno di regno* (Giulietta), cond. Lamberto Gardelli, with Fiorenza Cossotto and José Carreras (Philips)
- Verdi, *Aida* (Aida), cond. Nino Sanzogno, with Fiorenza Cossotto (live, Paris, 1973 - Opera d'oro)
- Wagner, *Isolde Liebestod*, cond. Herbert von Karajan (live, Salzburg, 1987 - Deutsche Grammophon)
- Wagner, Opera Scenes (*Tristan und Isolde*- Prelude and Liebestode, *Tannhäuser*-Elisabeth, extr. acts II & III, *The Flying Dutchman*- extr. act II, *Götterdämmerung*- final scene), cond. Klaus Tennstedt (EMI)
- Wagner, *Lohengrin* (Elsa), cond. Georg Solti, with Plácido Domingo (Decca)
- Wagner, *Die Walküre* (Sieglinde), cond. James Levine, with Gary Lakes, James Morris, Hildegard Behrens and Christa Ludwig (Deutsche Grammophon)
- Wagner, *Die Walküre* (Sieglinde), cond. Marek Janowski, with Siegfried Jerusalem, Kurt Moll and Theo Adam (RCA)
- Wagner, *Parsifal* (Kundry), cond. James Levine, with Plácido Domingo (Deutsche Grammophon)
- Weber, *Euryanthe* (Euryanthe), cond. Marek Janowski, with Nicolai Gedda (Berlin Classics)

## Lieder, songs

- Berg, *Sieben frühe Lieder*, *Altenberg Lieder*, London Symphony Orchestra, cond. Pierre Boulez — *Jugendlieder*, *Zwei Lieder*, Ann Schein (piano) (Sony)
- Berg, *Der Wein*, New York Philharmonic, cond. Pierre Boulez (Sony)
- Berlioz, *Cléopâtre*, Orchestre de Paris, cond. Daniel Barenboim (Deutsche Grammophon)
- Berlioz, *Les Nuits d'été*, London Symphony Orchestra, cond. Colin Davis (Philips)
- Berlioz, *Roméo et Juliette*, Philadelphia Orchestra, cond. Riccardo Muti (EMI)
- Brahms, Lieder, piano Daniel Barenboim (Deutsche Grammophon)
- Brahms, Lieder, piano Geoffrey Parsons (Philips)
- Brahms, Rhapsodie pour alto, Philadelphia Orchestra, cond. Riccardo Muti (Philips)
- Chausson, *Poème de l'amour et de la mer*, *Chanson perpétuelle*, Mémoires, Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra, cond. Armin Jordan, piano Michel Dalberto (Erato)
- Duparc, *Mémoires*, piano Dalton Baldwin (in *Les Chemins de l'amour*, Philips)
- Mahler, *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, Berliner Philharmoniker, cond. Bernard Haitink (Philips)
- Mahler, *Kindertotenlieder*, Boston Symphony Orchestra, cond. Seiji Ozawa (Philips)

- Mahler, *Das Lied von der Erde*, London Symphony Orchestra, cond. Colin Davis, with Jon Vickers (Philips)
- Mahler, *Das Lied von der Erde*, Berliner Philharmoniker, cond. James Levine, with Siegfried Jerusalem (Deutsche Grammophon)
- Mahler, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, cond. Bernard Haitink, with John Shirley-Quirk (Philips)
- Mahler, Lieder, piano Irwin Gage (in *Schubert/Mahler*, Philips)
- Poulenc, *La Fraîcheur et le Feu, Tu vois le feu du soir*, piano Irwin Gage (EMI)
- Poulenc, *Voyage à Paris, Montparnasse, La Grenouillère, Les Chemins de l'amour*, piano Dalton Baldwin (in *Les Chemins de l'amour*, Philips)
- Ravel, *Shéhérazade*, London Symphony Orchestra, cond. Colin Davis (Philips)
- Ravel, *Chansons madécasses*, membres de l'Ensemble intercontemporain, cond. Pierre Boulez (Sony)
- Ravel, *Chansons madécasses, Chanson du rouet*, piano Dalton Baldwin, cello Renaud Fontanarosa, flute Michel Debost (EMI)
- Ravel, *Deux mélodies hébraïques*, piano Dalton Baldwin (in *Les Chemins de l'amour*, Philips)
- Satie, *La Statue de bronze, Daphnéo, Le Chapelier, Je te veux*, piano Dalton Baldwin (in *Les Chemins de l'amour*, Philips)
- Schoenberg, *Brettli-Lieder*, piano James Levine (Philips)
- Schoenberg, *Gurrelieder* (Tove), Boston Symphony Orchestra, cond. Seiji Ozawa with Tatiana Troyanos and James McCracken (Philips)
- Schoenberg, *Lied der Waldtaube*, Ensemble intercontemporain, cond. Pierre Boulez (Sony)
- Schubert, Lieder, piano Phillip Moll (Philips)
- Schubert, Lieder, piano Irwin Gage (in *Schubert/Mahler*, Philips)
- Schumann, *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Liederkreis op. 39, piano Irwin Gage (Philips)
- Strauss, *Vier letzte Lieder*, and other Lieder with orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, cond. Kurt Masur (Philips)
- Strauss, Lieder, piano Geoffrey Parsons (Philips)
- Wagner, *Wesendonck Lieder* and *Isoldes Liebestod*, London Symphony Orchestra, cond. Colin Davis (Philips)
- Wagner, *Wesendonck Lieder*, BBC Symphony Orchestra, cond. Pierre Boulez (live, Londres, BBC Proms, 1974 - Gala)
- Wagner, two *Wesendonck Lieder* : "Schmerzen" et "Träume", BBC Symphony Orchestra, cond. Colin Davis (live, London, Royal Albert Hall, 1972, included in the CD *The Last Night of the Proms*, Philips)
- Wagner, *Wesendonck Lieder*, piano Irwin Gage (EMI)
- *Schubert/Mahler: Lieder*, piano Irwin Gage (Philips)
- *Les Chemins de l'amour* (*Duparc, Ravel, Poulenc, Satie*), piano Dalton Baldwin (Philips)
- *Tchaikovsky Gala in Leningrad*, cond. Yuri Temirkanov, with Itzhak Perlman and Yo-Yo Ma : Chansons françaises op. 65, n° 1 "Sérénade" & 6 "Rondel" ; "Adieu, forêts", extr. de *La Pucelle d'Orléans* (live, Leningrad, 1990 - RCA)
- *Jessye Norman: Edinburgh International Festival 1972* (Brahms, Ravel, Schubert, Strauss) (Arkadia)
- *An Evening with Jessye Norman* (Purcell, Wagner-Wesendonck Lieder, Mahler-Rückert Lieder, Ravel-Mélodies hébraïques, Spirituals, Wolf, Debussy), piano Irwin Gage (non mentionné sur le cd) (live, années 70 - Opera d'oro)
- *Live at Hohenems* (1987) (Haendel, Schumann, Schubert, Brahms, Strauss, Spirituals), piano Geoffrey Parsons (Philips)
- *Jessye Norman Live - Geoffrey Parsons* (1987) (Haydn, Haendel, Berg, Mahler, Strauss, Spirituals, Ravel) (Philips)
- *Salzburg Recital* (1990) (Beethoven, Hugo Wolf, Debussy), piano James Levine (Philips)
- *La Marseillaise*, dir. Semyon Bychkov (Philips, 1989, bicentenaire de la Révolution française)

## Symphonies, masses, oratorios

- Beethoven, *Missa Solemnis*, Wiener Philharmoniker, cond. James Levine with Cheryl Studer, Plácido Domingo and Kurt Moll (Deutsche Grammophon)
- Beethoven, *Symphony No. 9*, Wiener Philharmoniker, cond. Karl Böhm, with Brigitte Fassbaender, Plácido Domingo and Walter Berry (Deutsche Grammophon)
- Beethoven, *Symphony No. 9*, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, cond. Georg Solti, with Reinhild Runkel, Robert Schunk and Hans Sotin (Decca)

- Brahms, *A German Requiem* (*Ein deutsches Requiem*), London Philharmonic Orchestra, cond. Klaus Tennstedt, with Jorma Hynninen (EMI)
- Bruckner, *Te Deum*, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, cond. Daniel Barenboim, with Samuel Ramey, David Rendall and Yvonne Minton (Deutsche Grammophon)
- Franck, *Les Béatitudes* (oratorio), Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, cond. Rafael Kubelik, with Brigitte Fassbaender, René Kollo, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (Gala)
- Mahler, *Symphony No. 2*, Orchestre philharmonique de Vienne, cond. Lorin Maazel, with Eva Marton (Sony)
- Mahler, *Symphony No. 2*, Musicians against Nuclear Arms Orchestra, cond. Leonard Bernstein, with Barbara Hendricks (live, Washington, 1984, Rare Moth)
- Mahler, *Symphony No. 3*, Wiener Philharmoniker, cond. Claudio Abbado (Deutsche Grammophon)
- Mahler, *Symphony No. 3*, Boston Symphony Orchestra, cond. Seiji Ozawa (Philips)
- Tippett, *A Child of Our Time* (oratorio), BBC Symphony Orchestra, cond. Colin Davis, with Janet Baker and John Shirley-Quirk (Philips)

## Others

- *Spirituals*, piano Dalton Baldwin (Philips)
- *Spirituals in concert*, cond. James Levine, with Kathleen Battle (live, New York - Deutsche Grammophon)
- *With a song in my heart* (Richard Rodgers, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern ...) (Philips)
- *Lucky to be me* (Leonard Bernstein, George Gershwin, Kurt Weill, Michel Legrand, Billy Joel, Richard Rodgers) (Philips)
- *I was born in love with you : Jessye Norman sings Michel Legrand* (Philips)
- *Jessye Norman at Notre-Dame*, cond. Lawrence Foster (Philips)
- *In the Spirit: Sacred Music for Christmas* (Philips)
- *Christmastide* (Philips)
- *Les plus beaux Ave Maria et chants sacrés*, cond. Kurt Redel (Philips)
- *Sacred Songs*, cond. Alexander Gibson (Philips)
- *Amazing Grace* (Philips)
- *Roots: my Life, my Song* (Sony)

## Video

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- Berlioz, *Les Troyens* (Cassandra), cond. James Levine, with Placido Domingo and Tatiana Troyanos (DVD Deutsche Grammophon-Universal)
- Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Primadonna/Ariadne), cond. James Levine, with James King, Kathleen Battle and Tatiana Troyanos (DVD Deutsche Grammophon-Universal)
- Stravinski, *Œdipus Rex* (Jocaste), cond. Seiji Ozawa, with Philip Langridge and Bryn Terfel (DVD Philips-Universal)
- Vangelis, *Mythodea: Music for the NASA Mission: 2001 Mars Odyssey*, with Kathleen Battle (DVD Sony)
- Verdi, *Requiem*, cond. Claudio Abbado, with Margaret Price, José Carreras and Ruggero Raimondi (DVD Arthaus Musik)
- Wagner, *Die Walküre* (Sieglinde), cond. James Levine, with Gary Lakes, James Morris, Hildegard Behrens and Christa Ludwig (DVD Deutsche Grammophon-Universal)
- Wagner, *Isolde's Liebestod*, dir. Herbert von Karajan (+ an extract of the rehearsal), in *Karajan in Salzburg* (VHS Deutsche Grammophon)
- *Jessye Norman sings Carmen*, cond. Seiji Ozawa (DVD Philips)
- *Hohenems Recital* (Haendel, Schumann, Schubert, Brahms, Strauss, Spirituals), piano Geoffrey Parsons (VHS Philips)
- *Spirituals in concert*, cond. James Levine, with Kathleen Battle (VHS Deutsche Grammophon)
- *The Seattle Symphony Orchestra Live From Benaroya Hall*, cond. Gerard Schwarz (VHS Lark)
- *Jessye Norman at Christmas* (concert à Notre-Dame de Paris), cond. Lawrence Foster (DVD Philips-Universal)
- *Christmastide* (VHS Philips)
- *Amazing Grace with Bill Moyers* (VHS)

- *Symphony for the Spire*, with Placido Domingo, Kenneth Brannagh, Ofra Harnoy and Charlton Heston (DVD Warner)
- *The People's Passion: A Musical for Easter*, with Thomas Allen (DVD Warner)
- *Marian Anderson* (VHS Kultur Video)
- *Jessye Norman: A Portrait* (DVD Decca-Universal)

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- *Jessye Norman* (<https://www.discogs.com/artist/310388>) discography at *Discogs* 
- *Jessye Norman's School for the Arts Official Site* ([https://web.archive.org/web/20130625043453/http://jessyenormanschool.org/JNSA\\_Website/Home.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20130625043453/http://jessyenormanschool.org/JNSA_Website/Home.html))

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