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100 Black Screen Icons: Who you voted for

www.100blackscreenicons.com

In results announced today, two African American actors and a Jamaican screenwriter have taken the top three places in the BFI and Every Generation Media's 100 Black Screen Icons online poll. In first place as the overall All Time favourite icon is Denzel Washington (with 13% of the vote), followed by Sidney Poitier (with 11%) and Trevor Rhone (10%). The two top UK nominees in this category are Floella Benjamin and Horace Ové.

The 100 Black Screen Icons website highlights the work of the most significant black personalities in film and television from the past 100 years and asked visitors to vote on their favourite in six different categories. The nominees came from the UK, Europe, North America, Africa and the Caribbean and included directors, actors, writers and technical innovators.

Floella Benjamin, OBE, said: 'I'm thrilled about being voted a Black Icon by the public. Over the last 38 years I have had a wide, varied and challenging career in theatre, film, television and radio. By breaking down barriers and being the "first" in many instances, I have tried to pave the way for future generations by making a difference. I have received many accolades from my peers for my work, but to be voted for by the public and included in such illustrious company is very special and rewarding. I will continue to try to be a positive role model to the best of my ability.'

The six voting categories covered All Time BSI, Female BSI, Director, Producer, Actor and Technical (writers, composers, cinematographers etc), and voting was open for three months.

In the best actors' group, Denzel again takes first place, with Morgan Freeman (USA) in second place, and Sidney Poitier, third. The top women actors in this category are Nichelle Nicholls (USA), followed jointly by Dorothy Dandridge (USA) and Hattie McDaniel (USA).

Winners in the female category are Oprah Winfrey (USA, 11% of the vote), Dorothy Dandridge joint second (7%) with Whoopi Goldberg (USA), and Halle Berry (USA) and Euzhan Palcy joint third (Martinique, 6%).

The top three directors are Spike Lee (USA) with a very decisive 41%, Horace Ové (7%), and Euzhan Palcy (6%). Oprah Winfrey was voted best producer, followed by the Wayans Family (USA), then Nadine Marsh Edwards (UK).

Composer Quincy Jones (USA) was voted top 'Technical' Icon with 43%, cinematographer/director Ernest Dickerson (USA) was second with 15%, and in third place with 10% writer Lorraine Hansberry (USA). Writer Trix Worrell was the highest placed Brit in this category with just under 10% of the vote.

A key aim of this unique poll is to raise awareness and promote the 100 Black Screen Icons website as an ongoing resource for black creative screen talent and to educate and engage audiences from all backgrounds. Devised by Every Generation Media and the BFI, and sponsored by the UK Film Council and the BBC, the original 100 Black Screen Icons list was drawn up with the help of an expert panel of film practitioners, focusing on talent from the African Diaspora.

Amanda Nevill, BFI Director, said: 'A major achievement of 100 Black Screen Icons has been to recognise the film and television personalities who are the innovators, creators, visionaries and leaders in their field and to remind ourselves of the enormous contribution they have made to our film and television heritage.'

'It is important not only to raise awareness of this influential group, but also to maintain that awareness in the future, which is why the 100 Black Screen Icons website has an important role. I also hope it will help to inspire young people to work in film themselves.'

With almost 3,000 votes cast by over 1,200 registered users, and over 11,000 unique users visiting the website during the course of the campaign, the audience response has been very pleasing, says Patrick Vernon, Publisher of Every Generation Media. 'The campaign results and the selection of 100 icons highlight not only the dominance of Hollywood and the cream of African American talent, but also a growing presence of black British talent.'

'I hope that the results and the ongoing development of the website will inspire the next generation of creative people and that they are in the position to shape and influence the British film and television industry.'

www.100blackscreenicons.com

www.bfi.org.uk

www.everygeneration.co.uk

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Notes to Editors

BFI

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archive, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

Every Generation Media

An online community resource for empowering and influencing the black community through history, family genealogy and heritage.

Heritage

Every Generation Media has an impressive track record in putting similar online polls together, including 100 Great Black Britons – launched in response to a poll of 100 Great Britons which failed to include a single black nominee.

100 Black Screen Icons is also a continuation of the BFI's earlier and tremendously influential Black World project that organised over 40 national projects and events such as local and national film seasons, film and DVD releases, education projects, workshops, and mixed-media music and film events.

Black History Month October 2007

The BFI is organising related 100BSI events to mark Black History Month in October and further information will be available closer to the time at www.bfi.org.uk. Activities will include Black Britain – a major collection of films and television programmes exploring black British identities and representation – to be launched in the Mediatheque in October. The collection will be available for anyone to view free of charge at BFI Southbank. The collection features the work of British 100BSI nominees Norman Beaton, Earl Cameron, Lenny Henry, Carmen Munroe, Sophie Okonedo, Rudolph Walker, Ashley Walters and Elizabeth Welch.

Acknowledgements

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