



July 18, 2017

## **BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™ 2017 Returns to the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, New Jersey on August 5, 2017**

**Actress, Writer and Producer Issa Rae, Actress and Activist Yara Shahidi, Legendary Songstress Roberta Flack, Wall Street Powerhouse Suzanne Shank, Black and Missing Foundation Founders Derrica Wilson and Natalie Wilson and More to Be Honored at This Year's "[BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](#)" Awards on BET**

**["BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™"](#) 2017 Premieres Sunday, August 20, 2017 at 8PM**

**To Apply for Media Credentials for BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™ 2017:**  
[https://blackgirlsrock2017.iworldreg.com/public/apply/media\\_mass\\_apply](https://blackgirlsrock2017.iworldreg.com/public/apply/media_mass_apply)

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- BET Networks and Beverly Bond, CEO, Founder and Creator of "[BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](#)" are excited to announce this year's [BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](#) Awards taping on Saturday, August 5, 2017 at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center's Prudential Hall in Newark, NJ. The broadcast will premiere on **Sunday, August 20, 2017 at 8:00 P.M. ET/PT on BET.**

The 2017 [BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](#) celebrants are "Insecure" creator, actress, writer and producer **Issa Rae** (Star Power Award), actress and activist **Yara Shahidi** (Young Gifted and Black Award), GRAMMY Award-winning songstress **Roberta Flack** (Living Legend Award), Wall Street powerhouse and pioneer **Suzanne Shank** (Shot Caller Award) and Community organizers **Derrica Wilson** and **Natalie Wilson** of The Black & Missing Foundation (Community Change Agent Award). Created by celebrity DJ and women's empowerment advocate Beverly Bond, the 2017 "[BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](#)" Awards honors the groundbreaking achievements of Black women who have fearlessly broken barriers in the areas of art, business, entertainment and community service.

The dynamic, three - time NAACP Award winning "[BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](#)" on BET, celebrates women throughout the diaspora by shining a light on the accomplishments and successes of influential Black women and girls in a night honoring their beauty, brilliance and everlasting resilience.

"The [BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](#) Awards continues to be instrumental in propelling Black girl pride across the diaspora. Every year we are able to honor a cross section of dynamic women who represent a range of industries, genres and generations. This year's cohort of honorees is another incredible example of Black women's unparalleled contributions to the world.

[BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](#) on BET has become an annual culmination of Black girl preeminence and is a beautiful salute to our glory." says Beverly Bond, [BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](#) CEO, Founder and Creator.

BET Networks CEO and chairman, Debra Lee added, "Celebrating the incredible accomplishments of these outstanding women and girls is the highlight of my year. Black women are continuing to lead in amazing ways across a multitude of platforms and I am so proud that BET Networks has the opportunity to honor them and show the world why "Black Girls Rock"! Every year this show goes higher to showcase the beauty, talent, intelligence and sisterhood among African American women. This year won't be any different."

The "[BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](#)" 2016 celebrants included: GRAMMY Award winning recording artist **Rihanna** (Rock Star Award), ShondaLand producer and television writer **Shonda Rhimes** (Shot Caller Award), *The Walking Dead* actress and *Eclipsed* playwright **Danai Gurira** (Star Power Award), social activist, actress and musician **Amandla Stenberg** (Young, Gifted and Black) and Black Lives Matter founders **Patrisse Cullors**, **Opal Tometi** and **Alicia Garza** (Community Change Agent Award). R&B icon **Gladys Knight** (Living Legend Award) brought the audience to its feet with a medley of her most popular classics including "Love Overboard" and "Midnight Train to Georgia". Additional performers included some of R&B's reigning queens: **Andra Day**, **Brandy**, **Jazmine Sullivan**, **Monica**, **Corinne Bailey Rae**, **Marsha Ambrosius** and **Imani Uzuri**. **Lauryn Hill's** special surprise performance of "Lost Ones" closed out the epic evening.

The televised special, "[BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](#)" on BET is a BET Networks, B.G.R. Enterprises Inc./BONDVISION MEDIA and Jesse Collins Entertainment production. The executive producers are Beverly Bond, CEO, Founder and Creator of "[BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](#)," Connie Orlando, BET Interim Head of Programming, and Jesse Collins and Jeannae Rouzan - Clay of Jesse Collins Entertainment.

For updates or more information about [BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](http://www.BET.com/blackgirlsrock) visit <http://www.BET.com/blackgirlsrock> and [www.blackgirlsrock.com](http://www.blackgirlsrock.com)

Join the conversation on social media by logging on to our social media platforms:

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- On Instagram @betnetworks and @BLACKGIRLSROCK

#### **ABOUT BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™:**

Founded by celebrity DJ, model and executive producer, Beverly Bond, [BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](http://www.BET.com/blackgirlsrock) is a multifaceted movement dedicated to shifting the culture of media images depicting Black women and girls. Since 2006, [BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™](http://www.BET.com/blackgirlsrock) has been committed to empowering women through media and enriching girls through leadership, education, and positive identity development programs. For additional information on BLACK GIRLS ROCK!™, visit <http://www.blackgirlsrock.com>.

#### **ABOUT BET NETWORKS:**

BET Networks, a subsidiary of Viacom Inc. (NASDAQ: VIA, VIA.B), is the nation's leading provider of quality entertainment, music, news and public affairs television programming for the African-American audience. The primary BET channel reaches more than 90 million households and can be seen in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, the United Kingdom and sub-Saharan Africa. BET is the dominant African-American consumer brand with a diverse group of business extensions: [BET.com](http://www.BET.com), a leading Internet destination for Black entertainment, music, culture, and news; CENTRIC, a 24-hour entertainment network targeting the 25- to 54-year-old African-American audience; BET Digital Networks - BET Gospel and BET Hip Hop, attractive alternatives for cutting-edge entertainment tastes; BET Home Entertainment, a collection of BET-branded offerings for the home environment including DVDs and video-on-demand; BET Event Productions, a full-scale event management and production company with festivals and live events spanning the globe; BET Mobile, which provides ringtones, games and video content for wireless devices; and BET International, which operates BET in the United Kingdom and oversees the extension of BET network programming for global distribution.

#### **ABOUT JESSE COLLINS ENTERTAINMENT:**

Jesse Collins Entertainment is a full service television and film production company founded by entertainment industry veteran and multi-Image Award® winner Jesse Collins. Collins has played an integral role in producing many of television's most memorable moments in music entertainment. Most recently Collins was the executive producer of the critically-acclaimed film, *The New Edition Story*, a biopic on the boy band that aired as a 3-part mini-series on BET in January 2017 and posted record ratings for the network and attracted nearly 30 million viewers. Collins has also produced award-winning programming including the BET Awards, BET Honors, UNCF's *An Evening of Stars*, ABFF Honors, Soul Train Awards and the BET Hip Hop Awards, is a consulting producer for the iconic GRAMMY Awards and executive producer of BET's hit TV series, *Real Husbands of Hollywood* starring Kevin Hart and VH1 shows *Dear Mama* and *Hip Hop Squares* with Ice Cube. Will Smith, Beyonce, Chris Rock, Jay-Z, Rihanna, Kanye West, Kendrick Lamar, Drake, Prince and Mariah Carey are a few of the myriad of superstar talent that Collins has worked with through the years. Follow Jesse Collins Entertainment @JesseCollinsEnt on Twitter and Instagram and go to <http://www.jessecollinsent.com/> for more information on the company.

#### **ABOUT NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER:**

New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), located in downtown Newark, New Jersey, is among the largest performing arts centers in the United States. It is the artistic, cultural, educational and civic center of New Jersey -- where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day. As New Jersey's Town Square, NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the State's and the world's best artists, while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has attracted over seven million visitors (including more than one million children) since opening its doors in 1997, and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. Visit <http://www.njpac.org> or call 1-888-GO-NJPAC for more information.

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