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Janis Ian to serve as Toastmistress at 2009 Nebula Awards Weekend

LOS ANGELES – Grammy-winning singer/songwriter Janis Ian has been named Toastmistress by the Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America for the 2009 Nebula Awards® Weekend in Los Angeles, Calif.

The Nebula Awards Weekend will be held April 24-26 in Los Angeles, Calif., at the Luxe Hotel Sunset Boulevard, with the awards presentation banquet to be held on the UCLA campus to tie in with the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books.

"I will tell you that to be asked to host the Nebulas is right up there with being nominated for a Grammy, in my book. Or books," Ian said. "I was raised on the ABC's - Asimov, Bradbury, Clarke. My father spent long hours telling me stories of robots that sang, dwarfs who rescued princesses (only to be abandoned by them for a handsome, though toadishly-minded, prince), and other worlds filled with incredible beings who, I was quite sure, were my 'real family.' I used to sit in front of my open bedroom window and look up at the stars, wondering when they would come and rescue me."

Ian wrote and recorded her first hit record in 1965 at the age of 15, and in 1967 hit no. 1 on the singles charts with "Society's Child." That year also saw Ian garner her first Grammy nomination with her self-titled debut nominated for best folk album. Her 1975 album, *Between the Lines*, earned five Grammy nominations, winning two, including best pop female performance. She won another Grammy in 1982 for the children's record *IN Harmony II*, and earned additional nominations in 1978 for her collaboration with Mel Torme on "Silly Habits" (best jazz duet) and in 1992 for *Breaking Silence* (best contemporary folk album).

Ian has also published a number of speculative fiction short stories and co-edited an anthology with Mike Resnick titled *Stars: Original Stories Based on the Songs of Janis Ian*. Her autobiography, *Society's Child*, was published in 2008.

"I believe that science fiction, like jazz, like folk music, like the music I do, is an outsider genre," Ian said. "Those of us who practice in those genres know what it is to spend our lives with our noses pressed up against the glass, watching everyone else dancing at the ball while our own feet beat out a solitary rhythm no one else can hear.

"I've lived my life as an artist influenced by everything from Kirinyaga to *Ender's Game*, from *The Ship Who Sang* to Bob Silverberg's brilliant *Science Fiction 101* and Bradbury's *Zen and the Art of Writing*, two books that have taught me and sustained me since they first appeared," she said.

Ian has lived in Nashville, Tenn., since 1988. She maintains a website at www.janisian.com.

About SFWA

Founded in 1965 by the late Damon Knight, Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America brings together the most successful and daring writers of speculative fiction throughout the world.

Since its inception, SFWA® has grown in numbers and influence until it is now widely recognized as one of the most effective non-profit writers' organizations in existence, boasting a membership of approximately 1,500 science fiction and fantasy writers as well as artists, editors and allied professionals. Each year the organization presents the prestigious Nebula Awards® for the year's best literary and dramatic works of speculative fiction.

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