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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AJR plaque to honour Sir Rudolf Bing, Founder of The Edinburgh Festival**

The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) is delighted to announce the unveiling of a special commemorative plaque in honour of Sir Rudolf Bing on Sunday 27 August 2017 as part of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Edinburgh International Festival that he founded. Sir Rudolf was born in Vienna in 1902 and came to Britain as a refugee from the Nazi regime in 1934.

Following the unveiling of the plaque at The Hub on The Royal Mile a 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert was held at Usher Hall, a mixture of music, archive film and filmed interviews, with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Martyn Brabbins. The programme included two pieces of music played at the first Festival in 1947. Before the concert a second plaque to Rudolf Bing was unveiled at Usher Hall, organised by the Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue.

Sir Rudolf studied music and art history at the University of Vienna before relocating to Berlin in 1927 where he served as General Manager of opera houses, and later in Darmstadt. In February 1934, at the request of fellow émigré Fritz Busch, Bing negotiated the contracts for European singers to perform at Glyndebourne before arriving there himself in the summer of 1934. In 1936 Bing took over as General Manager of Glyndebourne, a job he held until 1939 and took up again in 1945 until he left to become the General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1949.

Sir Rudolf became a British subject in 1946, a year before founding the Edinburgh International Festival. He was knighted in 1971 and died in September 1997, aged 95, in New York.

Founded in July 1941, the AJR represents and supports Jewish victims of Nazi oppression who rebuilt their lives in Britain. Alongside our social and welfare services we are committed to perpetuating the legacy of the refugees and are prominent supporters of several leading institutions engaged in Holocaust memorialisation in the UK.

AJR Trustee Frank Harding, said: "Through the AJR plaque scheme we are honouring prominent Jewish émigrés from Nazism who made a significant contribution to their adopted homeland. Last year we unveiled a first plaque to Sir Rudolf Bing at Glyndebourne and arranged for nearly 100 AJR members to be present and attend a performance of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Other plaques have commemorated the biochemist and Nobel Prize winner Sir Hans Krebs, Sir Ludwig Guttmann who founded the

Paralympics, and the theologian, teacher and rabbi, Dr Leo Baeck. We have also installed a plaque on the site of the Cosmo restaurant in Swiss Cottage, in London, a famous meeting place for the refugees.

“We believe that these commemorative plaques will help form a tangible link between the illustrious earlier residents and the local community as well as fascinating residents and visitors. As well as being instructive and informative, they bring the past into the present, and they perpetuate the memory of the person being honoured.”

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Notes on the AJR for Editors:

The AJR is the leading national charitable organisation exclusively delivering social, welfare and volunteer services to Jewish victims of Nazi oppression living in Great Britain.

The AJR is also the largest supporter of Holocaust educational programmes, projects and initiatives to commemorate the Holocaust in the UK.

The AJR has produced the ground-breaking audio-visual testimony archive, Refugee Voices. This collection of 200 filmed interviews creates a legacy of the experiences of the refugees and will advance and enhance Holocaust research for future generations. Refugee Voices enables Holocaust researchers and scholars to watch up to 500 hours of film and read fully edited and transcribed accounts. For the first time, researchers will also be assisted by time-codes that, together with a summary sheet and key words section, direct users to specific sections of the films. Details are at [www.refugeevoices.co.uk](http://www.refugeevoices.co.uk)

AJR Chief Executive, Michael Newman, is a member of the UK delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which brings together governments and nongovernmental organisations to raise awareness of the Holocaust and places political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance, and research.