

Press Release

Plácido Domingo will receive The Birgit Nilsson Prize at Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm on 13 October 2009

H.M. King Carl Gustaf to personally hand over the award

Stockholm, 11 June

On 13 October 2009, H.M. King Carl Gustaf will personally hand over the Birgit Nilsson Prize, worth one million dollars, to the winner Plácido Domingo. Apart from the Royal Family, well-known figures from the fields of opera, culture and politics are expected to attend the first-ever award ceremony of the biggest prize in classical music history.

The Birgit Nilsson Foundation today confirmed the presence of H.M. King Carl Gustaf and H.M. Queen Silvia at the award ceremony of the Birgit Nilsson Prize. The public award ceremony will take place on 13 October 2009 in the Royal Opera House in Stockholm. The Birgit Nilsson Prize is given in recognition of outstanding achievements in the field of opera and concert.

‘The presence and personal handing over of the Prize by H.M. King Carl Gustaf gives even greater weight and importance to the award ceremony. The dignified and festive ceremony corresponds with the wishes of the late Birgit Nilsson, said the President of the Foundation, Rutbert Reisch.

Many renowned persons from the world of opera, culture and politics will be invited to this evening. The award ceremony is also open to all admirers and fans of Birgit Nilsson and Plácido Domingo. Tickets can be ordered at www.birgitnilssonprize.org from 4th August 2009 onwards.

Plácido Domingo chosen as the first winner by the late Birgit Nilsson

As long ago as in the early 1980s the world-famous dramatic soprano Birgit Nilsson decided to establish a foundation to honour outstanding musical achievements with a prize. She chose the Spanish tenor and conductor Plácido Domingo to be the first winner, but kept her choice a secret during her lifetime. The name of the winner was only revealed by the Birgit Nilsson Foundation on 20 February 2009. With one million dollars, the Birgit Nilsson Prize is the biggest prize in classical music and will be awarded every second or third year.

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About the Birgit Nilsson Prize

In the early eighties, towards the end of her long and distinguished career, the legendary Swedish dramatic soprano Birgit Nilsson decided to establish a foundation for a Prize to be awarded every second or third year in the amount of one million dollars for outstanding achievements by:

- A singer in the field of opera and/or concert and/or oratorio
- A conductor in the classical field of opera and/or concert
- A specific production by an opera company, as long as this production is outstandingly cast and conducted and, most importantly, staged in the spirit of the composer.

According to the provisions of the Birgit Nilsson Foundation, its Council shall appoint a jury consisting of prominent figures in the classical music field for a three-year term. The jury shall give its recommendation to the Foundation Council. In keeping with Ms Nilsson's wishes, the Prize may be given to two designees, in which case the Prize is split in half. Also, the Prize may never be awarded to the same person twice.

About Birgit Nilsson

Birgit Nilsson (1918–2005) was the world's leading dramatic soprano of her time, excelling in the operas of Wagner ("The Ring Cycle" and "Tristan und Isolde"), Strauss ("Salome", "Elektra" and "Die Frau ohne Schatten"), Puccini ("Tosca" and "Turandot"), Verdi ("Aida", "Un Ballo in Maschera" and "Macbeth") as well as many other operas.

During her legendary career, she performed regularly at all major opera houses like Stockholm, Bayreuth, Vienna, Milan, London, Paris, Munich, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Buenos Aires and others.

Following her debut at the Stockholm Opera in 1946, her international career began in the early fifties with debuts in Glyndebourne, Bayreuth, Vienna and Munich, to be followed by debuts in North and South America in the mid-fifties. Her opening of La Scala season 1958 as Turandot, her 1959 New York debut as Isolde at the Metropolitan Opera and her performances as Isolde and Brunhilde in Wieland Wagner's productions in Bayreuth were considered milestones in her career.

Ms Nilsson took her farewell from the operatic stage in the role of Elektra in 1982.

Notice to editors

For receiving the press accreditation form for the award ceremony on 13 October 2009 in Stockholm please, send an email to Barbara Koster, press@birgitnilssonprize.org.

Further information on the Birgit Nilsson Prize and pictures of Birgit Nilsson at www.birgitnilssonprize.org.

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