



YO-YO MA RECEIVES 2022 BIRGIT NILSSON PRIZE

World famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma is the fifth recipient and first instrumentalist to be awarded the Birgit Nilsson Prize by King Karl XVI Gustav. The ceremony took place on October 18 in a packed Konserthuset Stockholm and was followed via live stream by viewers world-wide.

Receiving the Prize, Yo-Yo Ma said "As I leave Sweden tomorrow, I will carry with me these forever memories, the memory of this evening, with such moving performances ... But I will also leave with a promise, a commitment to practice the values Birgit Nilsson held so dear: joy and humor, closeness to the land and to nature, and a life in balance with others and with our planet."

The Prize will support Yo-Yo Ma's ongoing work to explore how culture can strengthen our connections to one another and to the natural world. Over the next several years, Yo-Yo will continue a journey that began in 2018 with the Bach Project, visiting places that epitomize culture and nature's potential to move the human soul, creating collaborative works of art and convening conversations that seek to strengthen our relationship to our planet and to each other.

Long-time friend and musical partner, pianist Kathryn Stott, paid tribute to Yo-Yo Ma by saying "we often talk about what someone brings to the table. Well Yo-Yo - your generosity of spirit is legendary. You have brought the world a feast - a positive bounty of musical treasures and wisdom."

The Prize Ceremony was accompanied by a musical celebration featuring the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and conductor Patrik Ringborg, the Swedish Radio Choir, Royal Swedish Opera Choir, Maria Bengtsson (soprano) and rising star soloists Amalie Stalheim (cello), Johanna Wallroth (soprano) and Emma Sventelius (mezzo-soprano).

Earlier in the week, Yo-Yo Ma met with ten young cellists from cultural schools around Sweden who also had the opportunity to attend his rehearsal and concert with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert.

Susanne Rydén, President of the Birgit Nilsson Foundation said "Witnessing the joy that Yo-Yo Ma's presence in Stockholm has generated this week makes us proud of having presented him with the 2022 Prize and the ceremony was a beautiful occasion to celebrate both Yo-Yo Ma's achievements and the legacy of Birgit Nilsson."

The Birgit Nilsson Prize is awarded to artists and institutions who have contributed an important chapter to music history. Previous recipients are Plácido Domingo, Riccardo Muti, The Vienna Philharmonic and Nina Stemme.

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