

Press Release

Ticket sales for award ceremony of The Birgit Nilsson Prize to open

Plácido Domingo will receive the Birgit Nilsson Prize in a festive award ceremony at the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm on 13 October 2009 – Tickets available at birgitnilssonprize.org

Stockholm, 3 August 2009

On 4 August 2009, ticket sales for the first award ceremony of the Birgit Nilsson Prize will start on www.birgitnilssonprize.org. The festive ceremony will take place at the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm on 13 October 2009 in the presence of the Royal Family and the designated winner Plácido Domingo. The musical programme stars soprano Nina Stemme and the conductor Gregor Bühl.

The Birgit Nilsson Prize is dedicated to outstanding achievements in the field of opera and classical music. On 13 October 2009, the life and work of both the founder of the Prize and its first winner will be honoured in a festive ceremony at the Royal Opera House in Stockholm. Many prominent figures from the music world, culture and politics will attend.

Programme of Award Ceremony

H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf will hand over the Prize personally to Plácido Domingo who was chosen by the late Birgit Nilsson to be the first Prize winner. Soprano Nina Stemme will perform at the ceremony, accompanied by the Royal Swedish Opera Orchestra under the baton of Gregor Bühl. Hans-Peter Lehmann, former General Manager of the State Opera of Hannover and Assistant Director at the Bayreuth Festival, will pay homage to Birgit Nilsson. A prominent person from the music world will hold a laudatory speech for Plácido Domingo.

The public award ceremony will start at 6 p.m. at the Royal Swedish Opera (doors open at 5 p.m.). After the ceremony, the audience will be invited to a cocktail reception in the Royal Opera by the Birgit Nilsson Foundation.

A gala dinner for invited guests in the presence of H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf and H.M. Queen Silvia will follow the ceremony in honour of Plácido Domingo.

Ticket Sales

The award ceremony is open to the general public. Tickets can be ordered at www.birgitnilssonprize.org and www.ticnet.se beginning 4 August 2009 at noon or at the box office of the Swedish Royal Opera in Stockholm after 18 August 2009. There is a limited number of tickets available. Ticket prices range from 200 SEK to 350 SEK.

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Notice to editors

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

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.

Birgit Nilsson 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.

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.

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

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