

# BIRGIT NILSSON STIFTELSEN

## ABOUT BIRGIT NILSSON'S LEGACY

By emphasising the importance of planning, sustaining and reaching the full potential over the long term, Birgit Nilsson hoped to generate an incentive for artists at the beginning of their careers. In 1969 she created a Stipendium for talented young singers in Sweden and from 1981-1991 gave annual masterclasses at the Manhattan School of Music, where she also established a Scholarship. Towards the end of her long and distinguished career she then conceived the idea for an international Prize, honouring established artists and institutions for their important contributions to music.

Awarded approximately every three years, the **Birgit Nilsson Prize** was first presented in 2009 to **Plácido Domingo**, chosen by Birgit Nilsson herself. Successive recipients have been proposed by an international Advisory Panel of experts and voted on by the Board of the Birgit Nilsson Stiftelsen. **Riccardo Muti** was the Prize recipient in 2011, followed by the **Vienna Philharmonic** in 2014 and in 2018, the year which celebrated the 100th anniversary of Birgit Nilsson's birth, the Prize was awarded to Swedish dramatic soprano, **Nina Stemme**. In 2022 the Birgit Nilsson Prize was awarded to cellist **Yo-Yo Ma**, the first instrumentalist to receive the Prize.

The 2025 Advisory Panel comprises **Susanne Rydén**, Chairperson / President of the Birgit Nilsson Stiftelsen, **Manuel Brug**, opera and classical music critic for Die Welt, **John Allison**, Editor of Opera with Opera News, **George Loomis**, music critic writing for the Financial Times, New York Times, Opera and Musical America and **Lilli Katriina Paasikivi-Ilves**, Artistic Director of the Bregenzer Festspiele and mezzo soprano.

The **Birgit Nilsson Stipendium** is awarded annually and supports the continued musical education of young Swedish singers at the start of their careers. First presented in 1973 this year's recipient **Karolina Bengtsson** is the 48th singer to receive the award which is currently worth 250 000 Swedish Krona. Previous recipients include Hillevi Martinpelto (1990), Nina Stemme (1996), Malin Byström (2008), Christina Nilsson (2015), Emma Sventelius (2020), Ida Ränzlöv (2023) and Matilda Sterby (2024). Karolina makes her Festival d'Aix-en-Provence debut this summer performing in the new production of Charpentier's opera *Louise*.

The youngest edition to the legacy is the **Birgit Nilsson Festival** which was created in 2018, the year that celebrated the 100th anniversary of her birth. Nestled in and around the farmhouse where Birgit grew up in South Sweden, the festival's focus is on young talent and the community. This year's programme (3 – 9 August) includes master classes led by Camilla Tilling, daily concerts and talks at the **Birgit Nilsson Museum** and a new exhibition entitled "Home", exploring the singer's life-long relationship with the region.

## PRESS CONTACTS

International: Lucy Maxwell-Stewart [lucy.maxwell-stewart@birgitnilsson.com](mailto:lucy.maxwell-stewart@birgitnilsson.com) +46 70 38 80 255  
Swedish: Torbjörn Eriksson [torbjorn.eriksson@birgitnilsson.com](mailto:torbjorn.eriksson@birgitnilsson.com) +46 706 34 43 53