



## Vital 250-year-old to be feted with concert fireworks all over Sweden

The Royal Swedish Academy of Music has a long and illustrious history as one of the foremost pillars of Swedish musical life, providing fellowships and prestigious prizes to promote Swedish musical art. The world's largest competition for young choral directors, the Eric Ericsson Award, and the world's leading prize in classical music, the Birgit Nilsson Prize, are counted among the foremost. **The Academy was founded on September 8, 1771** and today is the oldest still-active musical academy north of the Alps. The entire Anniversary Year will be a year of music, as concert stages and orchestras celebrate the jubilee with concerts, seminars, and workshops at the initiative of the Royal Academy. Some **130 musical activities** will take place throughout Sweden during the year. And this Jubilee Year will be extra spectacular because the venues are now welcoming full audiences.

- The Academy has a proud tradition to steward, but its work is also filled with new initiatives and a vision for the future. What we do today will be tomorrow's history, says Susanne Rydén, the first woman President of the Royal Academy of Music.

The 250-year-old, **this year spryer than ever**, functions in Swedish musical life **as an innovative and enterprising force**, creating educational opportunities, making music accessible, and launching projects. Examples are **the only think tank in Swedish cultural life** 'Young Minds on Music,' whose vision is "for young musical personalities from all genres to meet, develop, network, and work together for tomorrow's inclusive, challenging, tolerant, and bold cultural life," and the digital project '**Living Musical Heritage**,' which makes available shelf meters of Swedish music from the past to be downloaded free of charge. Mention can also be made of the will to bring about change. Collaboration with the now threatened Afghanistan National Institute of Music in Kabul gave young Afghani musicians an opportunity to express themselves through music.

Today's Royal Academy is a powerful voice in Swedish musical life, applying pressure on politicians regarding gender equality in the music business and the much-neglected renewal of wind music. The Academy boasts several giants of Swedish musical life, including Nina Stemme, Peter Mattei, Martin Fröst, Anders Hillborg, Bobo Stenson, and Anne Sofie von Otter as members. Foreign members include Cecilia Bartoli, Jonas Kaufmann, Björk, Valery Gergiev, Kaija Saariaho, Quincy Jones, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Janine Jansen, Youssou N'Dour, and Yo-Yo Ma.

- The Academy's role can be seen as one of fostering an entire musical life. From the right to make your voice heard as a child to fellowship awards to young musicians, to the distinction of being elected a member of the Academy, and honorary salutes for long and outstanding musical accomplishments, says Fredrik Wetterqvist, Permanent Secretary to the Royal Academy of Music.

So this Academy has no scandals to reveal?

- **All right, one.** One of the earliest Presidents of the Academy, Clas Fredrik Horn af Åminne, was complicit in the plot to assassinate King Gustav III, the founder of the Academy. We plan to celebrate our Anniversary on September 8 in a considerably gentler fashion, with cake and live music, says Mattias Lundberg, Academy member and professor of musicology.

Out of tradition, into the future. The next 250 years of musical history are about to be created.

Also: the book about The Royal Swedish Academy of Musics first 250 years is now out as an e-book.

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