



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

220 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60604-2559

News

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Press Contacts:

Eileen Chambers, 312-294-3092

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**** MEDIA ALERT ****

RICCARDO MUTI AWARDED JAPAN'S PRAEMIUM IMPERIALE IN TOKYO

Muti Among Five Honorees Who Received Illustrious Prize from His Imperial Highness Prince Hitachi

TOKYO—Riccardo Muti, Music Director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, who recently opened the Orchestra's 128th season, was one of five honorees to receive Japan's Praemium Imperiale award from His Imperial Highness Prince Hitachi at an October 23 ceremony in Tokyo. The Japan Art Association hosted the award ceremony for the 2018 [Praemium Imperiale](#) awards, which recognize internationally distinguished artists for extraordinary contributions to their art form. Other honorees this year were Pierre Alechinsky (painting), Catherine Deneuve (theatre/film), Christian de Portzamparc (architecture) and Fujiko Nakaya (sculpture). The Praemium Imperiale awards mark 30 years of excellence in 2018 and have become a significant reminder for the importance of culture in today's world in much the same way that the Nobel Prize brings attention to the sciences.

Muti expressed his joy and pride to receive the award "because it comes from the imperial family." "Today," he added, "I met the Emperor and the Empress, who were extremely gracious and perfectly informed of my activities. I love Japan very much. I find it to be a truly amazing country, with a culture and a social discipline that should be a point of reference for many countries in the world. This is why this award means so much to me—it comes from a country that I respect, that I love, and in which, since 1975, I have performed many times for this unique and extraordinary audience."

His Imperial Highness Prince Hitachi, honorary patron of the Japan Art Association, presented each of the honorees with a specially-designed gold medal and a check for 15 million yen (approximately \$136,000) at the event. Prior to the ceremony, a special reception commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Praemium Imperiale was held in the presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress and His Imperial Highness Prince and Princess Hitachi.

RICCARDO MUTI
Music Director

HELEN ZELL
Chair, Board of Trustees

JEFF ALEXANDER
President

YO-YO MA
Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

The recognition for Muti comes after receiving the Japanese government's prestigious Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star decoration in 2016 for his contributions to promote cultural exchange and mutual understanding between the citizens of Japan and Italy through music. In 2016, Muti led performances at the Tokyo Spring Festival marking the conductor's 150th performance in Japan, and also the 150th anniversary of the beginning of diplomatic relations between Japan and Italy, an occasion that was also observed with the creation of a commemorative stamp celebrating these milestones. Muti also led the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) on a highly successful 10-concert Asia Tour in 2016, which included sold-out performances at Tokyo's Bunka Kaikan. Muti and the CSO return to Japan for performances in both Tokyo and Osaka as part of 11-concert Asia Tour from January 19 to February 4, 2019. Muti also brings his Italian Opera Academy to Tokyo in March 2019.

Other past Praemium Imperiale honorees in the music category with ties to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra include Pierre Boulez, principal guest conductor and conductor emeritus (1995-2016); Daniel Barenboim, music director (1991-2006); and Claudio Abbado, principal guest conductor (1982-1985).

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Riccardo Muti - <http://www.riccardomutimusic.com/>