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Maestro Jordi Savall wins Helena Vaz da Silva European Award 2015

Lisbon / The Hague, 16 July 2015 – Maestro Jordi Savall, the world renowned musician and conductor from Spain (Catalonia) is this year's winner of the Helena Vaz da Silva European Award for Raising Public Awareness on Cultural Heritage. The award pays tribute to this exceptional artist and humanist for his unique contribution to celebrating the multicultural story of Europe through its rich musical heritage. The Jury also gave Special Mentions to the Danish radio and TV journalist **Adrian Lloyd Hughes** and to the Spanish cultural journalist **Rafael Fraguas**. The ceremony will be hosted on 12 October in Lisbon by the Gulbenkian Foundation, the main supporter of this prestigious European Award.

The Award, established in 2013 by **Centro Nacional de Cultura** in cooperation with the leading European heritage organisation **Europa Nostra** and **Clube Português de Imprensa**, acknowledges exceptional contributions by individuals to the protection and promotion of cultural heritage and European values.

Reacting to the news, Maestro Jordi Savall said: "I am very honoured and grateful to receive the Helena Vaz da Silva European Award. It is certainly an important recognition of our work in the International Ancient Music Centre Foundation and the activity undertaken throughout my entire career, dedicated to the recovery and promotion of the musical heritage of the Spanish and European Renaissance and Baroque; as well as my personal involvement in the intercultural dialogue between East and West, and the twinning of diverse cultures through music."

"It gives me great joy to receive this award, in particular because it is conferred by prestigious organisations which cherish and are dedicated to safeguarding cultural heritage and promoting European ideals. It is very rewarding to obtain this support, particularly in these difficult times for all of us who work so that music, beauty and culture can reach a growing number of people and countries, and be accessible to all levels of society, without exceptions," added Savall.

"As an artist, and also as the President of Europa Nostra, I have great admiration for Jordi Savall. We have many things in common: we believe in the power of music to enlighten and enchant the hearts and minds of people and to connect human beings across physical and mental barriers. Europe's formidable musical heritage is the result of many centuries of human and artistic encounters; it is therefore essential to promote awareness of this heritage which is so fundamental to what Europe is all about. Today, more than ever, we need to unite all the voices who - like Jordi Savall - promote peace and dialogue through celebrating our shared cultural inheritance", stated **Maestro Plácido Domingo**, President of Europa Nostra.

"Through his concerts, recordings and teachings, Jordi Savall has made an exceptional contribution to the rediscovery and enjoyment of our shared heritage through an exemplary interpretation and communication of a broad repertoire of Europe's musical heritage and its connections with other cultures of the world. The profound intercultural dimension of his work, which highlights the similarities in the Jewish, Christian and Muslim cultures and traditions as well as the richness of their diversities, contributes to the better understanding and respect between those cultures and communities. By using music as an inspirational 'lingua franca' between Europeans, in the past and today, he has contributed to the culture of peace and dialogue which ought to form part of the much needed New Narrative for Europe", affirmed **Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins**, President of the Jury.

In a career spanning over 50 years, Jordi Savall has become the world's leading performer and promoter of early musical heritage. He has recorded more than 230 albums covering Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque

and Classical music repertoires, with a special focus on Hispanic and Mediterranean music. Together with renowned mezzo-soprano **Montserrat Figueras**, his late wife, he established the International Ancient Music Centre Foundation (CIMA) and a number of ensembles that embody the Foundation's concert activity: the instrumental ensemble *Hespèrion XX* (1974), the vocal ensemble *La Capella Reial de Catalunya* (1987) and the orchestra *Le Concert des Nations*, which performs Baroque music on original instruments (1989). Jordi Savall has inspired a worldwide movement of early music musicians and enthusiasts. He is also the founder and artistic leader of the famous summer *Festival de l'Abbaye de Fontfroide*, whose 11th edition will take place this year from 15-19 July. In 2008, Jordi Savall was appointed European Union Ambassador for Intercultural Dialogue and in 2009, along with Montserrat Figueras, he was named a UNESCO Artist for Peace for his outstanding musical commitment to intercultural dialogue.

“Through a particularly large number of activities, ranging from performing and organising concerts and festivals, to researching and recording, and finally to teaching and lecturing for the benefit of new generations of musicians, Jordi Savall is tirelessly committed to his core mission of bringing music to the people and people to the music. In addition to being an outstanding musician, Savall is also a great communicator when presenting his concerts and also a thoughtful and inspiring author in the beautiful multilingual books which accompany his CD recordings”, added the President of the Jury of the Helena Vaz da Silva European Award.

This year, the Jury of the Award – comprised of independent experts in the fields of culture, heritage and communication from various European countries – also decided to honour two European journalists active in the field of culture.

A Jury's Special Mention was given to the Danish radio and TV journalist **Adrian Lloyd Hughes** for his outstanding contribution to raising public awareness about European art and its influence on Danish cultural heritage. Over the last 30 years he has worked for the leading national public radio and TV stations and has become a prominent and influential figure taking on the important role of 'cultural guide' for the wider public in Denmark. His radio and TV programmes have covered a broad spectrum of cultural topics and reached a very large audience.

“Adrian Lloyd Hughes has the ability to make cultural topics widely accessible by taking the public on an exciting journey through art and heritage. He stimulates and enlightens his radio listeners and TV viewers with his outstanding ability to communicate the significance and relevance of art and heritage for today's society”, the Jury commented.

The Spanish journalist **Rafael Fraguas** was also granted a Special Mention for years of dedication to promoting the values of cultural and natural heritage in the media, mainly through his writings in the leading Spanish daily newspaper *El País*. He has focused in particular on raising awareness of endangered heritage and encouraging the protection of this heritage in a positive spirit.

“During his distinguished career as a journalist, Rafael Fraguas has managed to strike the right balance between the immediacy of news reporting and the longer term historical dimension and significance of our cultural inheritance. Through his pro-active and engaged communication, he has had a great influence on his readership and thus contributed to the renewed consciousness of Spaniards about the value of their heritage and the need for its preservation, as part of the safeguarding and promotion of Europe's cultural identity,” said the Jury.

The European Award for Raising Public Awareness on Cultural Heritage is named after Helena Vaz da Silva (1939-2002), Portuguese journalist, writer, cultural activist and politician, in memory and recognition of her remarkable contribution to the promotion of cultural heritage and European ideals. It is presented annually to a European citizen whose career has been distinguished by activities that disseminate, defend and promote Europe's cultural heritage, in particular through literary or musical works, news items, articles, chronicles, photographs, documentary features, films, and radio and/or television programmes. The previous laureates of this award are the Italian writer **Claudio Magris** (2013) and the Turkish writer and Nobel Prize laureate **Orhan Pamuk** (2014).

Nominations for the next edition of the Helena Vaz da Silva European Award can be submitted until 31 December 2015 by the organisations promoting the Award: Europa Nostra, Centro Nacional de Cultura and Clube Português de Imprensa.

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