

**HELENA VAZ DA SILVA AWARD CEREMONY**  
**Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, 12 October 2015**



**Special Message by Maestro Plácido Domingo,**  
**President of Europa Nostra**

*Excellences,  
Ladies & Gentlemen,  
Dear Friends,*

It is my great pleasure to greet you all on this special evening.

How I would have liked to be with you in Lisbon to congratulate in person the eminent laureate of this year's Helena Vaz da Silva Award: **Maestro Jordi Savall**, one of the greatest European musicians of our time! His life-time achievement is a true embodiment of that European spirit, and that passion for our cultural heritage, which were the driving force of Helena Vaz da Silva whose memory and legacy we honour tonight.

I also salute the "power of example" provided by the two journalists whose outstanding work has been recognised with a Special Mention of the Jury – **Adrian Lloyd Hughes** from Denmark and **Rafael Fráguas**. May their work **inspire** new generations of **cultural communicators** across Europe, in the best tradition of **cultural activism** so dear to our Helena Vaz da Silva.

As **President** of Europa Nostra – who happens to be a **musician**, I am, of course, delighted that after having honoured in 2013 and 2014 two European writers – **Cláudio Magris** from Italy and the Nobel Prize winner **Orhan Pamuk** from Turkey – this year's Award goes to a renowned musician who even happens to come from my native country Spain.

Like all of you, I have **great admiration and esteem** for Jordi Savall....

not only for Jordi Savall **the Artist**...

but also Jordi Savall **the European**...

Jordi Savall **the enlightened Humanist**... and

Jordi Savall **the Messenger of Peace**.

It is the **combination of all those commitments** that makes Jordi Savall an **ideal laureate** of a Helena Vaz da Silva Award.

**As an artist**, Maestro Savall – performing together with many extraordinary artists of different nationalities, cultures, religions and languages – has demonstrated the **power of music to connect human beings across time, and also across physical and mental barriers**. He has made a unique contribution to the enjoyment and understanding of the beauty and the meaning of the “unity in diversity” of Europe’s ancient music, which forms such an important part of our shared cultural inheritance. Moreover, he has placed a **special emphasis on linking Europe’s intangible heritage – music – with Europe’s tangible heritage**. He performed and recorded his music in exceptional historical buildings, often on ancient musical instruments. He also took special care to place those performances and recordings in a wider historical, artistic, and philosophical context. **Maestro Savall**, his late wife **Montserrat Figueras**, his many ensembles and especially **Hespèrion XXI, Le Concert des Nations** and **La Capella Reial de Catalunya**, have thus bestowed an enchanting melody and voice upon Europe’s artistic and architectural heritage.

**As a committed European**, Maestro Savall has made a huge contribution in promoting “*L’Europe de la Culture*”. In the same way, Europa Nostra is convinced that **Europe is first and foremost a cultural project**. Therefore, we need to give culture a much more central role within the ongoing process of the building of Europe. And this is **even more true today** when Europe’s values and ideals are seriously undermined by dangerous forms of fragmentation, divisions and extremism. Europe **urgently** needs to deploy and unite **all its positive forces and voices** in order to **revive hope** and to **build bridges** between Europeans, as well as between the Europeans and the rest of the world.

Finally, at a time when peace is threatened on too many places around the Globe, and even here in Europe, we wish to pay special tribute to the **visionary** and, *dare I say*, **missionary** work of Maestro Savall as a **Messenger of Peace**. All his life has been marked by his endeavor to use music as an instrument of peace and dialogue. Not only dialogue between cultures or religions but above all the much needed “dialogue between souls” – “**le dialogue des âmes**”, to quote the French-Lebanese writer **Amin Maalouf** from his inspiring foreword to the beautiful booklet & CDs produced by Maestro Savall under the title “MARE NOSTRUM”.

Let me end by expressing the hope that Europa Nostra and I, together with Centro Nacional de Cultura and the Gulbenkian Foundation, will indeed **join our forces and voices** with Jordi Savall and his musicians of many different origins, to **celebrate Our Europe** through the **beauty** and the **enchantment** of our shared cultural heritage.