

History - Polar Music Prize

When, in 1989, Stig Anderson donated MSEK 42 it was with the intention of endowing “the world’s biggest music prize” and that is exactly what he accomplished.

The Polar Music Prize was endowed for the purpose of awarding, annually if possible, The Polar Music Prize to one or more persons.

The donor’s breadth of musical vision, characterized by an insistence that it is not only “good” music in the conventional sense which deserves to be rewarded, because “good” music can mean such a wide variety of things, is reflected by the statutes of the foundation. Without any restrictions of nationality, the prize is to “awarded for significant achievements in music and/or musical activity, or for achievements which are found to be of great potential importance for music or musical activity, and it shall be referable to all fields within or closely connected with music”.

The first award, in 1992, when an extra large sum of money was available for distribution because the fund had been accumulating during the build-up phase, clearly manifested the wide scope of the prize, with one award going to Sir Paul McCartney – who received MSEK 1, of which he immediately donated part to a hospital, while using the other to help in the setting up of a Performing Arts School in his native Liverpool – for his achievements in popular music – the field in which Stig Anderson himself had achieved the successes enabling him to endow the prize in the first place – and at the same time each of the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania received MSEK 1 towards the establishment of a performing rights organization corresponding to STIM in Sweden.

The Polar Music Prize is globally unique through its combination of breadth and size.

Nominations are handled by a prize committee, which is entitled to nominate candidates of its own. This committee includes representatives from SKAP (the Swedish Society of Songwriters, Composers and Authors), FST (the Society of Swedish Composers), representatives from the Anderson family, musicians, previous Laureates and Musikförläggarna (the Swedish Music Publisher