

Ennio Morricone and John Williams, Princess of Asturias Award for the Arts 2020

For crossing the screen with his music

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USPA NEWS - Composers Ennio Morricone and John Williams have been awarded the Princess of Asturias Award for the Arts 2020, as announced by the jury in charge of its concession this Friday. The jury for this Award - convened by the Princess of Asturias Foundation - was chaired by Miguel Zugaza Miranda and made up of fourteen personalities from Spanish art and culture. The candidacy of the two composers was proposed by Juan Barja de Quiroga Losada, member of the jury for the Princess of Asturias Award for Social Sciences 2020.

“The music of the cinema, with its power to communicate and evoke images, stories and situations, has transcended on many occasions the films for which it was created. The innumerable compositions that Morricone and Williams have written have not only been a backdrop to accentuate atmospheres or define characters, but have transcended the screen and have known how to perfectly mix the backgrounds of the history of music with the sound of their time, without forgetting his own idiosyncrasy,” stated this Friday the Princess of Asturias Foundation in a press release.

Ennio Morricone (Rome, November 10, 1928) was trained in all the specialties of musical composition and in 1961 he made his film debut with the soundtrack of the film 'The Federal', by Luciano Salce. Subsequently, he gained international fame with music from Sergio Leone's western genre films, such as 'Per un pugno di dollari' and 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly', starring the recent nonagenarian Clint Eastwood, among others. He is one of the most prolific film composers in the world, with more than four hundred soundtracks for film and television, among which those of films such as 'The Missión' (1986), 'Cinema Paradiso' (1988), 'Frantic' (1988) and 'Starman' (1995), among others.

He has composed chamber music, symphonic pieces, operas and hundreds of songs for light and pop music artists. In 2018, on the occasion of its 90th anniversary, Morricone started the 'The Final Concerts World Tour' to definitively say goodbye to the stage. He toured more than 35 European cities in more than fifty concerts. Knight of the French Legion of Honor and Commander, Grand Officer and Knight of the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, has received 27 Gold Records and 7 Platinum and numerous awards: various BAFTAs, Golden Globes, Grammy, David de Donatello, the Golden Lion for a whole career in Venice (1995) and the Polar of Music (Sweden, 2010).

In 2007, he was awarded the Honorary Oscar for his entire career and in 2016 he won the Oscar and his third Golden Globe for the soundtrack of Tarantino's 'The Hateful Eight' and premiered his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. In 2019 Pope Francis presented him with the Pontifical Gold Medal and in 2020 he received the Camille Award from the European Alliance of Authors and Composers for the achievements of a lifetime.

John Williams

John Williams (New York, February 8, 1932) was formed collaborating with some of the most prominent personalities in American classic cinema, such as Alfred Newman, Franz Waxman and Bernard Herrmann. Considered one of the most popular orchestral composers of the modern era, he has created the music for some of the most iconic soundtracks in film history, such as 'Jaws,' 'ET,' 'The Extra-Terrestrial,' 'Superman,' 'Indiana Jones,' 'Schindler's list,' 'Jurassic Park,' 'Memoirs of a Geisha,' the first three films in the Harry Potter series and what is considered the most popular soundtrack in film history, the from the 'Star Wars' saga.

With jazz influences, his music ranges from the symphonic sound of the great orchestras to intimacy, going through popular or folk styles. He is the author of the music of more than one hundred films, has created symphonies and concerts for flute, violin, clarinet, viola, oboe, cello and tuba and has composed on commission for various orchestras. In 1980 he was appointed conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra, from which he retired in 1993, and maintains a relationship with many other orchestras, such as the Boston Symphony and the New York Philharmonic.

He has received five Academy Awards in the categories of best music adapted for 'Fiddler on the Roof' (1971) and best original music

for 'Jaws' (1975), 'Star Wars' (1977), 'ET, the Extra-Terrestrial' (1982) and 'Schindler's list' (1993). In addition, the 52 nominations he has received throughout his career make him the living person with the most nominations for these awards, the second after Walt Disney. He has honorary degrees from various universities, the IOC Olympic Order, twenty-five Grammy Awards, four Golden Globes and seven BAFTAs, the National Medal of Arts (USA, 2009) and, among others, the AFI Life Achievement Award from the American Film Institute (2016), which fell for the first time on a composer.

The Princess of Asturias Awards are intended, according to the Foundation Statutes, to award "the scientific, technical, cultural, social and humanitarian work carried out by people, institutions, groups of people or institutions in the international arena." In accordance with these principles, the Princess of Asturias Award for the Arts is awarded to "the work of cultivation and improvement of cinematography, theater, dance, music, photography, painting, sculpture, architecture and other manifestations artistic."^[2]

In this edition, a total of 42 candidates from 21 countries participated in the Arts award. This has been the second of the eight Princess of Asturias Awards to be awarded this year, in which they celebrate their fortieth edition. Previously, the Princess of Asturias Award for Concord was awarded to Spanish doctors and nurses who work on the front line against COVID-19. Each of the Princess of Asturias Awards is endowed with a sculpture by Joan Miró - a representative symbol of the award - a diploma, a badge and the cash amount of 50,000 euros.

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