



Internationally-Acclaimed Cellist Yo-Yo Ma Receives Fred Rogers Legacy Award, Gives Benefit Recital at Saint Vincent College

Saint Vincent College Public Relations
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Internationally-acclaimed cellist Yo-Yo Ma was honored as the inaugural recipient of the Fred Rogers Legacy Award and gave a recital to benefit the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media today (Friday, May 23) at Saint Vincent College.

Ma, who appeared twice with Fred Rogers on *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* and became a lifelong friend of the late public television legend, was invited to receive the honor by Joanne Rogers, honorary chairperson of the Center's Advisory Council, in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Center.

The Fred Rogers Legacy Award recognizes individuals who have made exemplary professional contributions and personal commitments to service that pay forward elements of Fred Rogers' legacy as a person embodying universal human values, a creative artist, a teacher and model of core principles for early learning and development, an innovator, and an advocate for the dignity and potential of all children. In their work, recipients also demonstrate the mission of the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media, as catalysts for communication, collaboration, and creative change in their fields.

Through his commitment to education and cultural enrichment, Ma founded the Silk Road Project to promote the study of cultural, artistic, and intellectual traditions internationally as well as a multidisciplinary educational program for middle school U.S. students. Like Fred Rogers, Ma expertly uses the power of popular culture and media to engage “students” of all ages in learning about and through music.

In keeping with the life and legacy of Fred Rogers, Ma has used his many talents to inspire, nurture, and educate, and it is in the spirit of these unique endowments that the Fred Rogers Center is greatly honored to recognize him with the inaugural Fred Rogers Legacy Award.

The evening included a reception at the Rogers Center, and the award ceremony and solo cello recital by Ma in the Basilica.

The program included a welcome by Archabbot Douglas R. Nowicki, O.S.B., chancellor of Saint Vincent College; opening remarks by Rick Fernandes, executive director of the Fred Rogers Center; award presentation by Joanne B. Rogers, honorary chair of the Fred Rogers Advisory Council; concert by Yo-Yo Ma; and closing remarks by Archabbot Douglas.

Legacy sponsors of the event included Edward and Anna Dunlap Jr., the McFeely-Rogers Foundation and Charles J. and JoAnn Queenan Jr.

Presenting sponsors included the Broadhurst Family, J. Christopher and Ann Donahue Charitable Fund, Mr. and Mrs. Seward Prosser Mellon with the R.K. Mellon Family Foundation, Arnold and Kit Palmer, Sharon and Jim Rohr, Saint Vincent Archabbey and College, Jim and Mary Ellen Will, Federated, Highmark, Pittsburgh Steelers, PNC and Parkhurst Dining. Leadership sponsors included Joseph and Linda Bartolacci, Mark and Maureen Rossi, Henry L. Hillman Foundation, The Heinz Endowments and Kennametal. Discovery sponsors were Ralph and Donna Liberatore, Ron and Lauren Raimondo and Hirtle Callaghan and Co. Pioneer sponsors include Blue Tip Energy, Giant Eagle, First Energy Foundation and Dick and Ginny Simmons. Pittsburgh Magazine was a media partner.

The Fred Rogers Legacy Award Committee’s honorary chairs were Joanne Rogers, Nancy Rogers Crozier, Teresa Heinz Kerry, Sandy and Prosser Mellon and Arnold and Kit Palmer.

The planning committee included Jim Will, chair, Art and Greta Rooney, co-chairs, Suzy and Jim Broadhurst, Carlos and Christina Cardoso, Chris and Ann Donahue, William Isler, Anne Lewis, James Okonak, Margaret M. Petruska, Charles J. Queenan Jr. and Jim Rohr.

The event committee consisted of Joseph Bartolacci, Gregg Behr, Eva Blum, Charles R. Burke Jr., Carole King, Nick and Tracy Certo, Phil Dymond, Michelle Figlar, Greg Quinlan, Maureen Lally-Green, Henry and Elsie Hillman, Max and Peggy King, Carl Kurlander, Cathy Lewis, Rob Long, Lucine Marous, Joseph Massaro, Robert W. McCutcheon, Susan McGalla, Mary Lou McLaughlin, Marie Miltenberger, Grant and Aradhna Oliphant, Ron and Lauren Raimondo, Todd Owens, Jami Rutherford, Anne and Raymond Sekula, Dottie Saffen, Jane Werner, Sally Wiggin and Todd Wolynn.

All guests received a copy of a special commemorative booklet that was prepared for the occasion to recognize the event's sponsors and underwriters. It includes photos of Fred Rogers and Yo-Yo Ma, essays by Rogers Center Senior Fellows Margaret Kimmel and Maxwell King, and selections from photojournalist Lynn Johnson's collection of more than 12,000 photographs of Fred amassed over a 35-year period. Portions of that collection were also on display during the event.

All proceeds benefit scholarships and fellowships at the Rogers Center, the Fred Rogers Early Career Fellows Program which fosters the next generation of professionals dedicated to children's media, and the Fred Rogers Scholars Program which is designed for Saint Vincent College students interested in pursuing careers involving children, early learning and media for young children.

Ma's multi-faceted career is testament to his continual search for new ways to communicate with audiences, and to his personal desire for artistic growth and renewal. Whether performing new or familiar works from the cello repertoire, coming together with colleagues for chamber music or exploring cultures and musical forms outside the Western classical tradition, Ma strives to find connections that stimulate the imagination.

Ma maintains a balance between his engagements as soloist with orchestras throughout the world, his recital and chamber music activities, and his work with the Silk Road Project, for which he serves as artistic director. He draws inspiration from a wide circle of collaborators, each fueled by the artists' interactions. Ma is also widely recognized for his strong commitment to educational programs that bring the world into the classroom and the classroom into the world. While touring, he takes time whenever possible to conduct master classes as well as more informal programs for students – musicians and non-musicians alike. He has also reached young audiences through appearances on *Arthur*, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* and *Sesame Street*.

One of Ma's goals is the exploration of music as a means of communication and as a vehicle for the migration of ideas across a range of cultures throughout the world. Expanding upon this interest, in 1998, Ma established the Silk Road Project to promote the study of the cultural, artistic and intellectual traditions along the ancient Silk Road trade route that stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to the Pacific Ocean. Since the project's inception, more than 60 works have been commissioned specifically for the Silk Road Ensemble, which tours annually. At the invitation of the New York City Department of Education, in 2009, the Silk Road Project began a multi-year partnership with cultural and educational organizations to pilot Silk Road Connect, a multidisciplinary middle school engagement program designed to spark a lifelong passion for learning. In Silk Road Connect, visual and aural elements are used alongside the experiences of creating and collaborating, making direct connections to classroom work in subjects such as social studies, English language arts, the sciences and the arts.

Ma is an exclusive Sony Classical artist, and his discography of over 75 albums (including more than 15 Grammy Award winners) reflects his wide-ranging interests. He has made several successful recordings that defy categorization, among them "Hush" with Bobby McFerrin, "Appalachia Waltz" and "Appalachian Journey" with Mark O'Connor and Edgar Meyer, and three albums with the Silk Road Ensemble. Ma's recent recordings include Mendelssohn Trios

with Emanuel Ax and Itzhak Perlman; “Songs of Joy and Peace.” His album, “The Goat Rodeo Sessions,” with Edgar Meyer, Chris Thile and Stuart Duncan, was released in October 2011. His latest album, “A Playlist without Borders,” was released in 2013 with the Silk Road Project and he was the featured soloist on the tracks. Across this full range of releases, Ma remains one of the best-selling recording artists in the classical field. All of his recent albums have quickly entered the Billboard chart of classical best sellers, remaining in the Top 15 for extended periods, often with as many as four titles simultaneously on the list. In fall 2009, Sony Classical released a box set of more than 90 albums to commemorate Ma’s 30 years as a Sony recording artist.

Ma was born in 1955 to Chinese parents living in Paris. He began to study the cello with his father at age four and soon came with his family to New York, where he spent most of his formative years. Later, his principal teacher was Leonard Rose at The Juilliard School. He sought out a traditional liberal arts education to expand upon his conservatory training, graduating from Harvard University in 1976.

Ma has received numerous awards, including the Avery Fisher Prize (1978), the Glenn Gould Prize (1999), the National Medal of the Arts (2001), the Dan David Prize (2006), the Sonning Prize (2006), the World Economic Forum’s Crystal Award (2008), and the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2010). Ma serves as a UN Messenger of Peace and as a member of the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities. He has performed for eight American presidents, most recently at the invitation of President Obama on the occasion of the 56th Inaugural Ceremony.

Ma plays two instruments, a 1733 Montagnana cello from Venice and the 1712 Davidoff Stradivarius.

Ma and his wife, Jill, have two children.

The mission of the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children’s Media at Saint Vincent College is to advance the fields of early learning and children’s media by acting as a catalyst for communication, collaboration, and creative change. The Center houses the Fred Rogers Archive including materials from Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood. The national signature programs of the Center are the Early Career Fellows program, the Fred Rogers Center Early Learning Environment™ (*Ele*), and the *Fred Forward Conference Series*.