

Arvo Pärt, awardee in the Music and Opera category (12th edition)

I feel deep gratitude for having received the Frontiers of Knowledge Award in Music. It is a great honour for me to be accepted into the ranks of such distinguished personalities.

The fact that I am receiving this honor from Spain has a very special personal meaning for me. Spain has played a much greater role in my life than you could imagine:

In the end of the 1960s I found myself in a creative crisis that lasted for 8 years. I was searching for my own musical language. Two Spanish artists accompanied and influenced me by giving me a direction during my time of "silence" – Tomás Luis de Victoria with his music and El Greco with his painting. They gave me the impulses that were decisive for my musical future.

A further intense experience was a commission from the Festival de las Canarias in 1998. I composed my first work using a text in Spanish: *Como cierva sedienta* for soprano and orchestra. This first immersion in the sound of the Spanish language was a great discovery for me. I realized that I felt very connected to the culture behind this language.

A few years later another composition in Spanish came into being – *Virgencita*. A choral work about the Mother of God, which Víctor García de Gomar programmed in a touching concert last year in Montserrat, "From Pain to Hope".

And of course there is Jordi Savall. We are bound together by a long and productive collaboration and friendship. He brought to life my two *Lullabies* with his wife Montserrat who has sadly already passed away, and his daughter Arianna. And he then wished for another work from me. This resulted in *Da pacem Domine* that I composed under the sad impression of the terrible terror attack in Madrid in 2004.

Three years ago, in 2018, I received another call from Spain. My choral work *And I Heard a Voice...* premiered on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the University of Salamanca.

21 de septiembre de 2021

In the autumn of the same year, 2018, the Arvo Pärt Centre was opened in the forests near Tallinn, designed and constructed according to the plans and concepts of the Spanish architects Fuensanta Nieto and Enrique Sobejano. It makes me proud that this wonderful architecture received a lot of attention in professional circles and was nominated for several international architecture awards. Here is also my studio that I treasure a lot.

As you can see, Spain has never ceased to inspire me.

I feel that this prize is the crowning moment of a musical career. But not only that: it also closes a circle that started in the 1960s and that is still part of my artistic thinking today.

From this "Spanish" building in Estonia, I send you my warmest greetings and wishes.

Once more, thank you very much.