



Save the Date: The European Culture Prize will be awarded this year in Amsterdam +++ Grand Gala on September 4, 2026, at the famous Concertgebouw +++ First artists already announced +++ International stars expected

Press release from April 24, 2026

Just in time for the tulip spring, excitement begins to build for a very special event in the Dutch capital: The European Culture Prizes will be awarded this year at the world-famous Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

On September 4, 2026, artists from all over Europe will gather in one of the most prominent concert halls in the world to celebrate one of the most important events in the European cultural scene during a grand gala.

"We are very pleased that we were able to secure the Concertgebouw, one of Europe's most significant sound spaces, for our gala," says Reiner Schränkler, Chairman of the European Cultural Forum. "Amsterdam represents, more than almost any other city, cultural openness and international influence."

The evening will not only focus on internationally successful artists from the Netherlands, who represent their country as cultural ambassadors on stages around the world, but also intentionally bring together a new generation of extraordinary talents on one stage. In this way, the European Culture Prize once again highlights the diversity of European culture. The names of the award winners will be announced in the coming weeks.

A New Generation in the Spotlight

The 24-year-old pianist Nikola Meeuwsen is one of the most prominent musical personalities of his generation. He was the first Dutch musician to win the first prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels in 2025 – the absolute top tier. With stunning technical precision and a clear musical sensibility, he has already established himself on international stages at a young age and is now considered one of the most exciting young pianists in Europe.

"Being awarded the European Culture Prize is a great honor for me. It means a lot to me to receive this award in my home country and to perform in a venue like the Concertgebouw," says Nikola Meeuwsen.

Emma Kok will receive an award as a singer who, after early successes on television, has reached a large audience not only due to her performances with her fellow countryman André Rieu. Only recently turned 18, she will receive the European Young Talent Award at the Concertgebouw. Last year, Emma, as the youngest pop artist ever, took the stage at the Concertgebouw twice with her own show. Her voice already touches the soul and reveals great emotional depth. In addition to her fantastic stage presence, Emma Kok is also socially engaged, and her personal story inspires many people: despite health challenges, she has found her own path and uses her voice to convey hope and unity.

"I am incredibly happy and honored to receive this award. To me, music means connecting people and sharing feelings. Being able to experience this on this special evening is something really extraordinary," says Emma Kok.

Also still very young are the highly talented musicians of the National Youth Orchestras of the Netherlands which, under the direction of Dutch conductor Antony Hermus, will shape the evening as the musical host. The orchestra, which brings together the best Conservatoire students in the Netherlands and is one of Europe's leading youth orchestras, will also be honored with the European Young Talent Award.

"For our young musicians, it is a great honor to be part of this evening. The European Culture Prize shows how important it is to support young talent," says Ewout van Dingstee, director of the National Youth Orchestras of the Netherlands.

A Prize with European Influence

The European Culture Prize honors individuals and institutions that have made significant contributions to art, culture, and Europe. Past winners include Mario Adorf, the band Die Toten Hosen, the rock band Scorpions, singer Katie Melua, violinist Nigel Kennedy, and visual artists Gerhard Richter and Neo Rauch.

The Concertgebouw: A Jewel

The award ceremony has already taken place in many European metropolises, including the Vienna State Opera, the Tonhalle Zurich, the Bonn Opera, the Frauenkirche Dresden, and the Philharmonie Luxembourg.

This year, it will be held in one of the noblest and most renowned concert halls in the world, which can actually be called "royal": 125 years after its opening, Queen Beatrix bestowed the official title "Koninklijk" upon the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam in 2013, formally honoring it in the same way the orchestra based there had been recognized a quarter of a century earlier.

The Concertgebouw is located in the heart of the city's elegant museum district, which presents itself as a wonderfully cosmopolitan metropolis. The surrounding area beautifully merges history and modernity, from the picturesque canals and merchant houses of the Golden Age to avant-garde architectural projects. At the heart of the Concertgebouw is the imposing Grote Zaal (Main Hall), whose excellent acoustic quality is equally admired by musicians and

conductors. Here, hundreds of concerts are held annually—not only featuring the world-renowned Royal Concertgebouw but also international top orchestras and soloists.

Tickets Now Available

The presale for the gala at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam has begun. Regular tickets can be purchased now via the following link:

<https://tix.concertgebouw.nl/nl/buyingflow/tickets/57401/118695/>

VIP tickets are available from the event organizer at **www.europaeischer-kulturpreis.de**

An Award for the Friendship of European Peoples

The European Culture Prize honors individuals, initiatives, artists, politicians, and institutions for their outstanding contributions and achievements for Europe and its people. The European Cultural Forum, as the organizer, aims to promote the friendship of European peoples, shape a modern concept of culture, and connect different genres.

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