



POLAR MUSIC PRIZE

METALLICA

AND

**THE AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MUSIC
& Dr. AHMAD SARMAST, ITS FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR**

ANNOUNCED AS

THE 2018 POLAR MUSIC PRIZE LAUREATES

**Award Ceremony takes place on 14 June in Stockholm
in the presence of the Swedish Royal Family**

#polarmusicprize

London, Wednesday 14 February 2018: The Polar Music Prize, the world's most prestigious music award, now in its 27th year, has announced that **Metallica**, the Grammy-Award winning and genre defining hard rock band, and **The Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM) with Dr. Ahmad Sarmast, its founder and director**, are this year's recipients. The Awards will be presented at a gala ceremony and banquet at Stockholm's Grand Hôtel by His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden on Thursday 14 June. The event will be broadcast live on Swedish national television (TV4) at 8pm CET and can be viewed throughout Europe via TV4 Play. Each Laureate receives prize money of one million Swedish Kronor. (approx. GB £90,000 / US \$130,000).

Lars Ulrich, drummer and co-founder of Metallica, born in Gentofte, Denmark said:

"Receiving the Polar Music Prize is an incredible thing, it puts us in very distinguished company.. It's a great validation of everything that Metallica has done over the last 35 years. At the same time, we feel like we're in our prime with a lot of good years ahead of us. Thank you very much."

James Hetfield, singer, guitarist and co-founder of Metallica said:

"I feel very honoured to be in such great company with the others who have accepted the Polar Music Prize. As myself and as Metallica I'm grateful to have this as part of our legacy, our history. Thank you."

Robert Trujillo, bass player with Metallica, said:

"Receiving the Polar Music Prize is such an honour, especially sharing it with artists (previous Laureates) such as Joni Mitchell, Keith Jarrett and Wayne Shorter, who I admire dearly. It's incredible to be recognised and honoured in this way, to me, it's very prestigious. Hopefully this will inspire younger generations of musicians to keep the music alive."

Kirk Hammett, guitarist with Metallica, said:

“It means a lot to me because we’ve been added to a list of very distinguished artists and musicians who I respect. And to be acknowledged for the work we’ve done. I know how important this is and how much of an honour it is.”

Metallica are: James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Kirk Hammett and Robert Trujillo.

Dr Ahmad Sarmast, founder and director of ANIM, said:

“I’m very excited, honoured and privileged to be a recipient of the 2018 Polar Music Prize alongside The Afghanistan National Institute of Music.”

Marie Ledin, managing director of the Polar Music Prize, said:

“We believe that our two recipients, although from very contrasting worlds, exemplify the mission of the Polar Music Prize, and that is to honour musicians and music organisations, whose work has made a difference to people’s lives. Metallica are loved and admired by millions of hard rock fans across the globe. They have led where other bands have followed and their 2017 world tour broke all records. Dr Ahmad Sarmast founded the Afghanistan National Institute of Music to restore the joy and power of music to children’s lives. ANIM’s work with young people and disadvantaged children is truly inspirational.”

The Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM) was founded in 2010 in Kabul by Dr. Ahmad Sarmast, in response to the civil war’s destruction of Afghanistan’s centuries old rich musical tradition. In the 1980’s alone there was a thriving pop and film music industry, with hundreds of ensembles and a unique radio orchestra playing Western and Afghan instruments. Between 1996 and 2001, music was completely banned in Afghanistan.

Today ANIM provides a dynamic, challenging, and safe learning environment for all students regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religious sect, or socio-economic circumstances. The institute also has a special focus on supporting the most disadvantaged children in Afghanistan – orphans, street-working vendors and girls.

A quote from the Prize citation said: “Today, ANIM preserves and revives Afghan music, and shows you can transform lives through music”

Metallica was formed in 1981 by drummer Lars Ulrich and guitarist/vocalist James Hetfield. The band is one of the most influential and commercially successful rock acts in history, having sold 110 million albums worldwide, with 1991’s *Metallica* (commonly referred to as *The Black Album*), achieving sales of nearly 17 million copies in the United States alone, making it the best-selling album in the history of Soundscan.

Metallica has garnered numerous awards and accolades, including nine Grammy Awards, two American Music Awards and multiple MTV Video Music Awards. The band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in 2009. In December 2013, Metallica made history when they performed a rare concert in Antarctica, becoming the first act to ever play all seven continents all within a year, and earning themselves a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records.

Metallica's latest album *Hardwired...To Self Destruct* was released on November 18, 2016 via their own Blackened Recordings record label. It debuted at No. 1 around the world, selling over 800,000 copies worldwide in its first week. Metallica recently wrapped the North American leg of the WorldWired stadium tour and will take it to Europe this Spring.

A quote from the Prize citation said: "Through virtuoso ensemble playing and its use of extremely accelerated tempos, Metallica has taken rock music to places it had never been before."

The Polar Music Prize Award Committee is an independent 12-member Award Committee which selects the Laureates. The committee receives nominations from the public as well as from the International Music Council, the UNESCO founded NGO which promotes geographical and musical diversity.

Announcement video and photos www.polarmusicprize.org.

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Note to Editors:

Metallica citation:

The 2018 Polar Music Prize is awarded to the American band Metallica. No one has defined the power of Metallica's music better than the band itself, in their lyrics: "Sound is ripping through your ears, the deafening sound of metal nears." Not since Wagner's emotional turmoil and Tchaikovsky's cannons has anyone created music that is so physical and furious, and yet still so accessible. Through virtuoso ensemble playing and its use of extremely accelerated tempos, Metallica has taken rock music to places it had never been before. In Metallica's world, both a teenage bedroom and a concert hall can be transformed into a Valhalla. The strength of the band's uncompromising albums has helped millions of listeners to transform their sense of alienation into a superpower.

Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM) & Dr. Ahmad Sarmast citation:

The 2018 Polar Music Prize is awarded to the Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM) and Dr Ahmad Sarmast, its visionary founder and director, in recognition of how this inspirational organization has used the power of music to transform young people's lives. In the 1990's, Afghanistan's rich musical heritage, which thrived for centuries, was abruptly halted by the civil war and from 1996 until 2001, music was forbidden and silenced throughout the country. In 2008, Dr. Sarmast, the son of a famous conductor, returned to Kabul, at great personal risk, to establish ANIM. ANIM, a decade on, flourishes and is committed to preserving Afghanistan's rich musical heritage and to providing a safe learning environment for hundreds of boys and girls.

The Polar Music Prize:

The Polar Music Prize was founded in 1989 by the late Stig "Stikkan" Anderson, a true legend in the history of Swedish popular music. Stig Anderson was the publisher, lyricist and manager of ABBA, and he played a key role in their enormous success. The name of the prize stems from Anderson's legendary record label, Polar Music.

The Polar Music Prize celebrates the power and importance of music and is awarded to individuals, groups or institutions for international recognition of excellence in the world of music. The roll call of former Laureates reads like a who's who of music: Paul McCartney, Dizzy Gillespie, Patti Smith, Bob Dylan, Ravi Shankar, Renee Fleming, Ray Charles, Youssou N'dour, Mstislav Rostropovich and Kronos Quartet, to name but a few.

The Polar Music Prize awards two Laureates in order to celebrate music in all its various forms and to emphasize the original intention of the Polar Music Prize: To break down musical boundaries by bringing together people from all the different worlds of music.