

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
PRAEMIUM IMPERIALE RECEPTION
THE WHITE HOUSE
JUNE 16, 1994**

For much of the past week we have had the pleasure of celebrating the ties that bind Japan and the United States together in special friendship. We welcomed Their Majesties, Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, holding a state dinner in their honor on Monday night.

Friendship among nations is built on many things, including an appreciation of beauty and culture.

Every spring, nature reminds us of that friendship in the bloom of cherry blossoms transplanted from Japan so long ago. The Emperor and Empress told us that they themselves performed a similar transplant many years ago, taking the seeds from a white birch tree at Blair House across the street and planting them at home, at the Imperial Palace, where four decades later, a white birch tree grows straight and strong.

So today, it is fitting that we celebrate the cultivation of beauty, in the form of the arts, with the Praemium Imperiale prizes.

It is a special honor to have all of you at the White House for this occasion. And it is privilege for our nation to host a celebration of art and artists whose contributions to our common culture unite people around the world.

[Introduce the President]

###

**President William J. Clinton
Praemium Imperiale Reception
June 16, 1994**

[Acknowledgments (need confirmation): Mr. Sejima and members of the Japan Art Association; Ambassadors Walter Mondale, Michael Armacost and Mike Mansfield; Ambassador Consul-General of Japan, Hiromoto Seki.]

I also want to acknowledge a man who gave us an exceptional treat with a cello concert on Monday night, Mstislav Rostropovich, a former winner of a Praemium Imperiale prize, who is with us here today.

America is honored to be the site for the announcement of winners of the Praemium Imperiale prizes this year.

These prizes recognize international excellence in painting, sculpture, architecture, music and theatre and film. The alumni of these prizes are artists of unique accomplishment. Among them is the man who gave us

The recommendations for the prize recipients are made to the Japan Art Association by a distinguished committee of international advisers: Jacques Chirac, Amintore Fanfani, Sir Edward Heath, Yasuhiro Nakasone, David Rockefeller Junior, and Helmut Schmidt (who could not make it here today).

Yesterday, the names of the five award winners for 1994 were announced and in October, they will be honored in award ceremonies in Tokyo.

These artists teach us and move us and they give us new ways to look at our world. Beyond creating beauty, they enlighten, and uplift and they warn us of the darker side of humanity. They stir imagination and our souls.

Katherine Anne Porter once wrote that art outlives governments, creeds, societies, and even civilizations. Art, she wrote, is what we find again when the ruins are cleared away.

Hillary and I are proud and delighted to salute the winners of the Praemium Imperiale prizes. Four of the five honorees for this year are with us here today.

For painting, this year's winner is the French artist Zao Wou-ki [pronounced almost as one word -- Zhou-woo-key]. Born in China and educated in China and France, his style has brought together East and West in a synthesis of drawing, calligraphy and traditional Chinese painting that are nothing less than lyrical.

For sculpture, the winner is Richard Serra, a Californian who broke the mold and at the same time shattered ideas about what sculpture is. His works radiate life and emotional power on a grand scale and they have given a new generation of artists a model for inspiration.

The award recipient for architecture is Charles Correa of India, who has injected sensitivity and vision in planning communities in poor countries. With his pioneering work he has sought to improve the quality of housing for the urban poor and to provide a more humane way to live.

For music, the winner is the French composer Henri Dutilleux [Do-tee-yeuh]. His distinctive compositions put into beautiful music the notion of diversity within unity, producing from instruments both lonely and together in the same orchestra what the composer himself has so aptly called the "joy of sound."

Finally, in the category of theatre and film, the Praemium Imperiale goes to the actor and director Sir John Gielgud. His career has so far spanned eight decades, reaching new heights in roles as different as Hamlet on the stage, and the butler to a tipsy millionaire in the movie "Arthur." He sent this note, which says in part: "I have just passed my 90th birthday... I so greatly regret having to refuse your very prestigious invitation and hope you will understand the circumstances."

To all the winners, our congratulations and heartfelt wishes for many more decades of creative energy. Our world is your beneficiary. For that, we all say, thank you.

And now, Richard Serra will say a few words on behalf of this year's award recipients.

DRAFT

1st time awards
being acknowledged.
in U.S.

**President William J. Clinton
Praemium Imperiale Reception
June 16, 1994**

[Acknowledgments (need confirmation): Mr. Sejima and members of the Japan Art Association; Ambassadors Walter Mondale, Michael Armacost and Mike Mansfield; Ambassador Consul-General of Japan, Hiromoto Seki.]

All week we have been celebrating the ties that bind Japan and the United States together in special friendship. We welcomed Their Majesties, Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, holding a state dinner in their honor on Monday night. And as they continue their tour of our nation, our wish is that they see the best of America and America at its best.

Whole books have been and will be written about the American-Japanese relationship in terms of mutual economics and security, and that's understandable. But, if we think about it, it may be the beauty that our cultures appreciate that best illustrates our friendship.

Here in our nation's capital, nature reminds us the friendship whose gift literally blooms every Spring in the form of cherry blossoms on trees transplanted from Japan so long ago. The Emperor and Empress told Hillary and me that they themselves performed a similar transplant many years ago, taking the seeds from a white birch tree at Blair House across the street and planting them at home, at the Imperial Palace, where four decades later, a white birch tree grows straight and strong.

So today, it is fitting that we celebrate the cultivation of beauty, in the form of the arts, with the Praemium Imperiale prizes.

These prizes recognize international excellence in painting, sculpture, architecture, music and theatre and film. The alumni of these prizes are artists of unique accomplishment. Among them is the man who gave us an exceptional treat with a cello concert on Monday night, Mstislav Rostropovich, who is with us here today.

The recommendations for the prize recipients are made to the Japan Art Association by a distinguished committee of international advisers, all of whom, I'm happy to say, are also here today: Jacques Chirac, Amintore Fanfani, Sir Edward Heath, Yasuhiro Nakasone, David Rockefeller Junior, and Helmut Schmidt.
Representative U.S.

Yesterday, the names of the five award winners for 1994 were announced and in October, they will be honored in award ceremonies in Tokyo.

See enclosure

These artists teach us and move us and they give us new ways to look at our world. Beyond creating beauty, they enlighten, and uplift and they warn us of the darker side of humanity. They stir imagination and our souls.

Katherine Anne Porter once wrote that art outlives governments, creeds, societies, and even civilizations. Art, she wrote, is what we find again when the ruins are cleared away.

Hillary and I are proud and delighted to salute the winners of the Praemium Imperiale prizes. Four of the five honorees for this year are with us here today.

For painting, this year's winner is the French artist Zao Wou-ki [pronounced almost as one word -- Zhou-woo-key]. Born in China and educated in China and France, his style has brought together East and West in a synthesis of drawing, calligraphy and traditional Chinese painting that are nothing less than lyrical.

For sculpture, the winner is Richard Serra, a Californian who broke the mold and at the same time shattered ideas about what sculpture is. His works radiate life and emotional power on a grand scale and they have given a new generation of artists a model for inspiration.

The award recipient for architecture is Charles Correa of India, who has injected sensitivity and vision in planning communities in poor countries. With his pioneering work he has sought to improve the quality of housing for the urban poor and to provide a more humane way to live.

For music, the winner is the French composer Henri Dutilleux [Do-tee-yeuh]. His distinctive compositions put into beautiful music the notion of diversity within unity, producing from instruments both lonely and together in the same orchestra what the composer himself has so aptly called the "joy of sound."

Finally, in the category of theatre and film, the Praemium Imperiale goes to the actor and director Sir John Gielgud. His career has so far spanned eight decades, reaching new heights in roles as different as Hamlet on the stage, and the butler to a tipsy millionaire in the movie "Arthur." He sent this note, which says in part: "I have just passed my 90th birthday... I so greatly regret having to refuse your very prestigious invitation and hope you will understand the circumstances."

To all the winners, our congratulations and heartfelt wishes for many more decades of creative energy. Our world is your beneficiary. For that, we all say, thank you.

And now, Richard Serra will say a few words on behalf of this year's award recipients.