

**ACCADEMIA DEI BAMBINI PRESENTS THE WORKSHOP AND CONCERT BY NATALIE MERCHANT "SOTTO IL LUME DELLE STELLE (UNDER THE LIGHT OF THE STARS)" AT FONDAZIONE PRADA IN MILAN ON 28 JANUARY 2024**

Milan, 17 January 2024 – Fondazione Prada's Accademia dei bambini presents the workshop and concert "Sotto il lume delle stelle (Under the Light of the Stars)" by artist and songwriter Natalie Merchant. The musical performance, conceived for children and dedicated to the memory of the late Giannetta Ottilia Latis who originally initiated the project with the artist, will feature new songs adapted by Merchant and inspired by poems from writer and educator Lina Schwarz. The event will take place at the Cinema Godard in Milan, on Sunday 28 January 2024 at 5 pm. Bookings are available free of charge at [fondazioneprada.org](http://fondazioneprada.org)

Accademia dei bambini is Fondazione Prada's educational project developed specifically for children. It was developed in 2015 by the neuropsychiatrician Giannetta Ottilia Latis, who laid the theoretical and operational groundwork of the program while also curating its content. She was succeeded in September 2019 by pediatrician and neonatologist Gabriele Ferraris, who is currently the curator of the program. Accademia dei bambini presents multidisciplinary activities with the aim of promoting an intergenerational dialogue and inviting to gameplay with others through creative learning experiences. Every workshop is conducted by a different "master". The "masters" are architects, artists, educators, scientists, film directors and musicians who are not only fond of teaching, but also open to acquiring new perspectives.

Over her forty-year career, Natalie Merchant has earned a reputation as one of America's most respected recording artists. A songwriter and a captivating stage performer, Merchant has distinguished herself as a social justice and environmental activist. As stated by her, "I have spent many years in the company of children, sharing music, teaching them folk songs and games, and I have written music specifically for them. I think it's some of the most important and rewarding work I've ever done."

The workshop "Sotto il lume delle stelle (Under the Light of the Stars)" features a musical performance for children led by Merchant who, joined by Italian folk music ensemble Domo Emigrantes, will present new songs in Italian, adapted from poems by Lina Schwarz. The Italian language is part of Natalie Merchant's origins, as she explains: "My family emigrated to the United States in 1902 from Sicily, the same year that Lina published her first poetry book for children. I grew up surrounded by Southern Italian culture and language. Italian is my ancestral language and I feel a strong connection to it and have enjoyed singing Lina's poetry." During the concert, children will be encouraged to follow the song lyrics and participate in the musical experience by interacting with Natalie Merchant, the musicians, and their instruments.

Lina Schwarz (1876-1947) was a Jewish-Italian poet, scholar, educator, social activist, and author of renowned Italian children's books and poems, such as "Stella, stellina, la notte si

avvicina". Schwarz was the first scholar to translate Rudolph Steiner's writings on *Anthroposophy* from German into Italian and was co-founder of the Waldorf school in Milan, one of the first in Italy. As stated by Natalie Merchant, "The more I learned about Lina Schwarz's life and work, the more passionately inspired I have become to make a full-scale multi-media tribute to her. I have been so moved by her poetry with its beautiful language and themes of nature, beauty, peace, and love."

## **Biographical notes**

### **Natalie Merchant**

Merchant began her musical career as the lead vocalist and lyricist of the pop music band 10,000 Maniacs and released six albums – including one platinum, two double-platinum, and one triple-platinum records – with the group: *The Wishing Chair* (1985), *In My Tribe* (1987), *Blind Man's Zoo* (1989), *Hope Chest* (1990), *Our Time in Eden* (1992), and *10,000 Maniacs MTV Unplugged* (1993). Merchant left the band in 1994 and has subsequently released nine albums as a solo artist with combined sales of seven million copies: *Tigerlily* (1995), *Ophelia* (1998), *Natalie Merchant Live* (1999), *Motherland* (2001), *The House Carpenter's Daughter* (2003), *Leave Your Sleep* (2010), *Natalie Merchant* (2014), *Paradise Is There* (2015), *Butterfly* (2017), and *Keep Your Courage* released on Nonesuch Records last year.

Merchant has collaborated with a wide range of artists, including Billy Bragg, Gavin Bryars, David Byrne, The Chieftains, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Cowboy Junkies, Philip Glass, Kronos Quartet, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Mavis Staples, REM, and Wilco. She served on the New York State Council on the Arts from 2007–2011 at the appointment of Governor Elliot Spitzer and was recently appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Library of Congress' American Folklife Center by New York State Senator and Majority Leader Chuck Schumer. Merchant's 1995 hit single 'Wonder' inspired the multi-million-selling young adult novel by RJ Palacio and the film of the same name. Merchant's awards include: The Library Lion Award from the New York Public Library (2011), The American Society of Authors Composers & Publishers (ASCAP) Champion Award (2019), and The John Lennon Real Love Award (2019).

### **Domo Emigrantes**

Domo Emigrantes is an award-winning musical ensemble formed in 2009, blending popular melodies and original compositions inspired by Southern Italy and the Mediterranean's rich cultural heritage. Their eponymous debut album, released in 2011, laid the foundation for their sonic exploration, capturing the essence of regional musical traditions. Their 2015 album, *Kolymbetra*, achieved global acclaim and was awarded Album of the Year at the International Acoustic Music Awards (IAPA). *Aquai*, released in 2017, continued their success, earning another IAPA accolade, and they celebrated their first decade with the release of *Ten Years: Domo Emigrantes Live* in 2019. They have captured attention around the world, with awards in Italy and elsewhere, and performances on renowned international stages. Domo Emigrantes consistently transcends boundaries, weaving the rich musical

traditions of Southern Italy into a captivating, innovative, and globally celebrated tapestry. Their performances have enchanted audiences across Europe, Asia, and the Americas, solidifying their international presence.

**Press contacts**

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**Information**

“Sotto il lume delle stelle (Under the Light of the Stars)”  
A workshop and concert presented by Accademia dei bambini at Fondazione Prada in Milan.

Cinema Godard  
Largo Isarco 2, Milan  
28 January 2024  
Doors open: 4:30 pm  
Concert: 5:00 pm

Bookings are available at Fondazione Prada’s website [fondazioneprada.org](http://fondazioneprada.org)  
This event is for children accompanied by an adult.  
Each adult can register a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 4 children age 4+.

**Accademia dei bambini**

The activities of Accademia dei bambini will restart on 3 February 2024 with a series of workshops titled “Sogno” conceived by visual artist and photographer Ilaria Turba. The complete program is available at the following link: [fondazioneprada.org/accademia-dei-bambini/](http://fondazioneprada.org/accademia-dei-bambini/)

**Accademia delle scuole**

Accademia dei bambini extends its activities to Milan’s primary and preschools. Every Wednesday, classes can participate in the workshops of the Accademia. Each workshop can host a maximum of 25 children. The program is available at the following link: [fondazioneprada.org/accademia-delle-scuole/](http://fondazioneprada.org/accademia-delle-scuole/)  
Booking is required by contacting Fondazione Prada’s Visitor Services:  
+39 0256662612 / [education@fondazioneprada.org](mailto:education@fondazioneprada.org)