

Patti Smith wins 2011 Polar Music prize

Written by AFP / The Swedish Wire

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The Kronos Quartet and the legendary US rock singer and poet Patti Smith have won this year's Polar Music prize, organisers said Tuesday.

"For almost 40 years, the Kronos Quartet has been revolutionizing the potential of the string quartet genre when it comes to both style and content," the jury said in its citation.

"The same type of chamber music ensemble -- two violins, a viola and a cello -- for which Mozart and Beethoven wrote can also be used to comment on international politics, interpret avant-garde rock and incorporate music from every corner of the world," it added.



The quartet is made up of violin-players David Harrington and John Sherba, Hank Dutt on the viola and cello player Jeffrey Zeigler.

As for 64-year-old rocker Smith, she "has demonstrated how much rock'n'roll there is in poetry and how much poetry there is in rock'n'roll," the jury said.

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"Patti Smith is a Rimbaud with Marshall amps. She has transformed the way an entire generation looks, thinks and dreams. With her inimitable soul of an artist, Patti Smith proves over and over again that people have the power," it added.

The winners will receive one million kronor (165,000 dollars, 110,000 euros) in prize money from Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf at a ceremony in August.

The Polar Music Prize was founded in 1989 by the late Stig Anderson, the publisher, lyricist and manager of iconic Swedish pop group ABBA.

The prize, which has been awarded since 1992 when it went to former Beatle Paul McCartney, has also been won by American jazz star Dizzy Gillespie, Elton John, Peter Gabriel, Pink Floyd and US soprano Renee Flemming.

Icelandic singer Bjork and Italian composer and conductor Ennio Morricone won last year.

