

# Icons of Europe

Independent historical research and creative applications

Cecilia and Jens Jorgensen founded Icons of Europe, an association registered at Brussels in 2001, with the idea of using Icons of great culture – art, music, literature and science – as a platform for dialogue and inspiration in the world of today.



Chopin's life and music took from the very beginning centre-stage in the work of Icons of Europe. In consultation with many institutions, the founders have in 2002-2010 conducted in-depth historical research on Chopin's secret relationship in 1848-1849 with Jenny Lind, the famous soprano and wealthy philanthropist known as the Swedish Nightingale.

Scholars at Warsaw and Edinburgh have commented favourably on this new research. The research continues today to explore the monumentalization of Chopin's legacy, with particular emphasis on Paris and La Belle Époque.

In 2003, the founders wrote a new kind of biography *Chopin and The Swedish Nightingale* ("a novelty in the book market"). A comment on the re-mergence of tuberculosis is signed by WHO. They subsequently created a musical drama in six acts, *The Composer and The Nightingale*, which has been staged at Brussels, Warsaw, Toronto and New York. In parallel, Cecilia and Jens Jorgensen hosted piano and string recitals at their home near Brussels with high-level patronage in tribute to Chopin and other composers of the Romantic era.

Most recently, Icons of Europe contributed to a 90-minute BBC TV documentary *Chopin: The Women Behind The Music*. This film, celebrating the composer's 200-year anniversary, is expected to reach a global audience in late 2010. Icons of Europe will publish a new book in October 2010, this time in French, which will encompass the whole Chopin / Jenny Lind story. It is an objective to find partners to turn this book into a feature film.

The longstanding Chopin / Jenny Lind project has led Icons of Europe to new discoveries on other Icons – from Voltaire and Napoleon, to Richard Wagner, Liszt and Oscar Wilde, which will be documented in the coming years.

Cecilia Jorgensen (photo above) is a former vice-president of JP Morgan, the U.S. investment bank and holds an MBA from Boston University. She became in 1982 a representative of *Christie's* Contemporary Art, London, for Belgium and Luxembourg. – Jens A. Jorgensen has previously worked in management positions at BP, McKinsey and a United Nations agency. He continues to write letters to the international press on political and cultural issues.



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