

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Vilcek Foundation Awards \$100,000 Prize in Music to Du Yun

*Born in China, composer, performer, and advocate Du Yun defies expectations or categorization.*

**New York, NY, February 14, 2023** — Du Yun receives a [2023 Vilcek Prize in Music](#) for her open approach to composition, which stretches the boundaries of traditional classical music by incorporating influences from punk, electronic, experimental music, and spoken word traditions. The composer, performer, and advocate is renowned for her artistic leadership as a founding member of the International Contemporary Ensemble, and for her groundbreaking operas *Zolle* and *Angel's Bone*.

“Du Yun’s phenomenal range is apparent in the span of her work—from her operas to her electrifying postmodern compositions,” says Vilcek Foundation President Rick Kinsel. “From the atonal jazz of her band OK MISS to the haunting movements of *A Cockroach's Tarantella*, her work bridges sound art and classical composition.”

The Vilcek Prize in Music is a \$100,000 prize awarded by the Vilcek Foundation as part of the Vilcek Foundation Prizes. The prizes are awarded annually in recognition and celebration of immigrant vanguards in the arts and in biomedical science whose work has had a profound impact on culture and society. In addition to providing direct support to immigrant artists and scientists, the purpose of the prizes is to raise awareness of the importance of immigration to intellectual and cultural life in the United States.

In recognition of Du Yun’s receipt of the Vilcek Prize, the Vilcek Foundation has published a video biography and in-depth profile on the foundation’s website, [Du Yun: “You can’t think of things that don’t work as a failure.”](#)

At the age of 4, Du Yun asked for a piano, and for music lessons. Her parents—both factory workers in Shanghai—let her know they would be willing to make the financial sacrifices necessary to support her pursuit of music, but that such sacrifice would require Du Yun’s commitment and dedication. Du Yun didn’t hesitate. This tenacity has characterized Du Yun’s career. She insists that her talent is not innate but has come from years of work—her own, and that of her family.

“To be an artist is such a privilege,” she says. “So many people worked so that you can do the thing you want to do.”

Du Yun receives the Vilcek Prize in Music, as does Benin-born singer and songwriter Angélique Kidjo. In 2023, the Vilcek Foundation is also awarding three smaller prizes of \$50,000 each—the Vilcek Prizes for Creative Promise in Music—to young immigrant musicians whose work demonstrates a unique perspective and represents an important contribution to their genre. The 2023 Vilcek Prizes for Creative Promise in Music are awarded to Arooj Aftab (b. Saudi Arabia to Pakistani parents), Juan Pablo Contreras (b. Mexico), and Ruby Ibarra (b. Philippines).

**Read more at the Vilcek Foundation:** [Du Yun: “You can’t think of things that don’t work as a failure”](#)

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## **The Vilcek Foundation**

The Vilcek Foundation raises awareness of immigrant contributions in the United States and fosters appreciation of the arts and sciences. The foundation was established in 2000 by Jan and Marica Vilcek, immigrants from the former Czechoslovakia. The mission of the foundation was inspired by the couple's respective careers in biomedical science and art history. Since 2000, the foundation has awarded over \$7 million in prizes to foreign-born individuals and supported organizations with over \$6 million in grants. The Vilcek Foundation is a private operating foundation, a federally tax-exempt nonprofit organization under IRS Section 501(c)(3).

To learn more, please visit [vilcek.org](http://vilcek.org).