

Today in Kadriorg, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves presented the Order of the White Star to Toomas Siitan, Professor at the Estonian Academy of Music and renowned conductor Paul Hillier.

“Music plays a very important role in bringing Estonia’s message to the world and to those people who do not understand the Estonian language. Toomas Siitan and Paul Hillier have both made a substantial contribution to the propagation of Estonia’s message. The Estonian people and I personally thank them for this,” said President when presenting the state decorations.

Toomas Siitan has worked with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (1981–88) and conducted concert programs with several ensembles, such as the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, the Estonian National Men’s Choir, the Estonian Radio Choir, Haapsalu Festival Choir and many others; and since 1994, Studio Vocale, an ensemble dedicated to Early Vocal Music, has functioned under his direction; starting in the same year, the Haapsalu Early Music Festival has taken place every summer under his direction. Toomas Siitan is the Chairman of the Estonian Musicological Society and the Estonian Hymnology Society, and the Vice-Chairman of the Estonian Music Council.

Paul Hillier has been the Principal Conductor of the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir since the fall of 2001. He has cooperated closely with many composers, the best known of them are Steve Reich and Arvo Pärt. Hillier has conducted such musical ensembles as the Concerto Copenhagen, Concerto Palatino, Collegium Vocale Ghent, Netherlands Chamber Choir, and Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Recordings with many of the world’s musicians have brought Paul Hillier many record awards. This year, Hillier received a Grammy Award for the recording Arvo Pärt: Da Pacem made with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir at St. Nicholas’s Church.

Office of the President, Public Relations Department  
Kadriorg, 21 March 2007