

Emily Tepe – Swedish-American of the Year 2015

Emily Tepe, a professional singer under the artist name of IVA, has been appointed Swedish-American of the Year 2015. The Swedish-American of the Year is appointed by the two Swedish districts of the Vasa Order of America. The Vasa Order of America is a Swedish-American cultural organization founded by Swedish emigrants at the end of the 19th century. It was founded as an Order and initially functioned as a help organization for newly arrived Swedes, but has evolved into a cultural organization with member lodges across the United States, Canada, and since 1924 even Sweden.

The distinction Swedish American of the Year has been awarded since 1960 to U.S. and Canadian residents. Since its inception, more than 50 prominent individuals of Swedish descent have received the award, including astronaut Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin, actresses Signe Hasso and Ann-Margret, Nobel Prize winner Glenn Seaborg, Chairman of the Supreme Court William Rehnquist, and entrepreneur Curtis Carlson.

The award ceremonies have been held in Stockholm, Karlstad and Växjö, the latter two on account of the Vasa Order’s collaborative work with the emigrant institutes. The Vasa Order will be the main host for Emily Tepe’s visit to Sweden.

Emily Tepe lives in Wilmington, Delaware and is a twelfth-generation descendant of Peter Cock and Megaret Lom, who traveled to America with the Kalmar Nyckel in 1641. It was the ship’s third transatlantic journey, and she arrived in Delaware. The couple was the first to marry in the colony known as New Sweden.

Throughout the generations, her family has always held their Swedish heritage in high esteem. Emily Tepe began her professional career as an opera singer, but expanded her repertoire to include popular music following a series of applauded performances on NBC’s Late Night with Conan O’Brien. Her voice struck a chord with bandleader Max Weinberg, leading to several appearances on the show.

She has attended Juilliard School and the Manhattan School of Music, and has performed at various New York clubs and in the Off-Broadway theatre. In 2004, Emily Tepe received a Fulbright scholarship for Scandinavian classical music. During her time in Stockholm, she secured a role in a production at Kungliga Operan.

Emily combines her stage performances with vocal coaching and singing lessons. She also writes her own music, and has released several albums with her own compositions.

This year’s celebration will be held in Värmland, in an arrangement with the Swedish Migration Center. The arrival in Karlstad will be quite spectacular. Emily Tepe will be arriving with the Swedish Ship Götheborg on Tuesday, July 14th, as the vessel is making its tour of Lake Vänern. Arriving at the harbor, Emily will be formally greeted by the hosts as she steps ashore. The Swedish American of the Year will be participating in the John Ericsson Day, a Sweden-America celebration for Värmland held July 18th in Filipstad and Karlstad. During the festivities, representatives of the Vasa Order of America will present Emily with the award.