

STAR MUSICIAN SIGNS UP FOR CHILDREN

UNICEF appoints violinist Maxim Vengerov as
Honorary Envoy for Music

Siberian violinist and international superstar, Maxim Vengerov, was appointed Honorary Envoy for Music by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The appointment was made on July 14, 1997 by Stephen Lewis, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF.

At age 22, Vengerov is already recognized as one of the most gifted classical artists in the world. But alongside his passion for music, he finds room for another love - children.

As UNICEF Honorary Envoy for Music, Vengerov is joining an illustrious group of celebrities who support the work of UNICEF, including Sir Peter Ustinov, Liv Ullmann, Harry Belafonte, Roger Moore, Judy Collins, Julio Iglesias and George Weah. These well-known figures put their own talents to work for children by participating in fundraising events and advocacy initiatives. Vengerov is the first classical music artist to be appointed to such a role.

Through his work with UNICEF, Vengerov will bring his music to disadvantaged children all over the world. His first mission will be to war-torn Sarajevo where he will travel, this fall, to see UNICEF-assisted projects and to meet and play for children who have survived the bitter war. Vengerov will be working closely with UNICEF in the U.S. as well, beginning this September when he returns to perform as soloist with the New York Philharmonic. UNICEF has already benefitted from the magic of Vengerov's music in recent years through a number of fundraising concerts held in Germany, London and Geneva.

"Music has given so much to me, from a very early age," said Vengerov. "Sharing classical music with young people is perhaps the greatest responsibility of my life. I know the joy and the meaning that music can bring to children, even in the most difficult circumstances. If I can touch them and perhaps inspire them, I'll feel very proud."

Vengerov is the youngest artist to ever win Gramophone's "Record of the Year" (1995), and recently received two 1996 Grammy nominations for "Classical Album of the Year" and "Instrumental Soloist with Orchestra" honoring his recording of Shostakovich and Prokofiev concertos.

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Born in 1974 in Novosibirsk, the capital of Western Siberia, in a family of musicians, Vengerov had his first violin lesson at age four on a sixteenth-size violin. He played his first concert with orchestra at age five. Since then his stellar performances have graced the stages of the premiere music venues of the world. Vengerov has dazzled as a recitalist with the world's finest orchestras under the direction of such maestros as Mehta, Masur, Barenboim, Abbado and Rostropovich, and has recorded with these maestros as well. Vengerov records exclusively for Teldec Classics International, a Warner Music Group company.

"It is a great honour for UNICEF to count among its supporters this young virtuoso who is so committed to putting his extraordinary talent at the service of the world's children. Through his violin, Vengerov will speak to children and for children," says Stephen Lewis.

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