

Sandi Toksvig honoured to receive prestigious CoScan International Award

12th March 2017 – Sandi Toksvig, the Danish-British comedian, writer and presenter was delighted and honoured to be presented this evening with CoScan's renowned International Award 2017.



Sandi Toksvig being presented with the CoScan International Award 2017 by CoScan President, Mark Elliott, and CoScan Chairman, Eva Robards, at Southbank Centre's WOW - Women of the World festival 2017 © Alice Boagey / Southbank Centre

Sandi accepted this prestigious award in front of a capacity audience of nearly 3,000 people at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, London. Sandi was hosting "Dane Sandi Toksvig's Mirth Control Goes Nordic!", an evening of comedy and music inspired by great women and the finale of Southbank Centre's annual *WOW-Women of the World* festival, supported by Bloomberg. This year the festival includes speakers and artists from across the Nordic region as part of *Nordic Matters* - a year-long programme of Nordic arts and culture at Southbank Centre throughout 2017.

Mark Elliott, CMG, President of CoScan, provided the introduction. "The Confederation of Scandinavian Societies – CoScan for short – links and supports over thirty of the main groups which bring together Scandinavians living in this country and others here with a close interest in the region. All five Nordic countries are covered, and our total membership runs to several thousand, spread throughout Britain."

"The five Nordic embassies in London are our patrons, and recognise that we are all working for the same cause. Our member societies maintain their Scandinavian links with lectures,

film evenings, cultural outings, etc. CoScan keeps them in touch with each other and also publishes an excellent magazine."

Dr Eva Robards, Chairman of CoScan, presented the award to Sandi saying, "The CoScan International Award recognises an achievement of outstanding merit by an individual, body or group related to one or more of the five Nordic countries. This award recognises those who have added public lustre to any of the Nordic countries and who have caused the British, and others outside the region, to view those countries with even greater affection and respect."

"The first recipient was the city of Lillehammer, for the extraordinary achievement in hosting the Winter Olympics in 1994; among other recipients have been the famous tennis star, Stefan Edberg, The Nordic Optical telescope and The Øresund Consortium, who built the bridge between Denmark and Sweden"

"Sandra Birgitte Toksvig, OBE, or Sandi, you are a most worthy winner of the CoScan International Award, as you for years have made people in the UK aware of Scandinavia – Denmark in particular – and thus bridging across from this country to Scandinavia. It runs in the family, having started with your father Claus - celebrated Danish journalist, broadcaster, and politician. He was a famous voice, and so are you. Your Danish origin is well known and you are a high-profile writer, actor, comedian, presenter and producer on British radio and television, and political activist for numerous worthwhile causes."

"We are proud to present the CoScan International Award 2017 to you"

In accepting the award, Sandi Toksvig said, "To say the least I am overwhelmed to be in the same company as an optical telescope and a world famous tennis star but I am of course, delighted, honoured and a little bashful. Awards are for things like literally bridging the divide between two nations, as in the Øresund Bridge. All I have done is continue to be Danish and that's easy. I am extremely proud of my heritage. My Danish grandmother Karen Toksvig was a true hero. A member of the resistance in the second world war, she risked her life and those of her children to help facilitate the escape of the Danish Jews to Sweden. In these dark times where we must constantly battle against unkindness or indifference to those in trouble I dedicate this to her and hope that her spirit runs through me in everything I try to do. Thank you to CoScan and thank you to all my British friends who understand that difference is neither to be feared nor shunned but celebrated. Finally for my dear departed Father some words from the Danish poet and mathematician Piet Hein, "Den som kun tar spøg for spøg og alvor kun alvorligt, han og hun har faktisk fattet begge dele dårligt." Which roughly translates as - Those who take humour only humorously and the serious only seriously have frankly understood neither.

Thank you very much."

About Sandi Toksvig

Sandi Toksvig, OBE, is a Danish-British comedian, writer, actor, presenter and producer on British radio and television, and a political activist.

You can read more about Sandi on her website: www.sanditoksvig.com

About CoScan

Established in 1950, CoScan (the Confederation of Scandinavian Societies) is a not-for-profit organisation that links and supports Scandinavian societies in the UK. With over 30 member societies and numerous individual members, it represents over 30,000 total members with links to Scandinavia. CoScan's member societies and members maintain their Scandinavian links with lectures, film evenings, cultural outings, etc.

You can read more about CoScan here:

<http://www.coscan.org.uk/about/>

The prestigious CoScan International Award, recognises an achievement of outstanding merit by an individual, body or group related to one or more of the five Nordic countries. The award recognises those whose achievements in any field have added public lustre to any of the Nordic countries – who have caused the British and others outside the region to view those countries with even greater affection and respect.

Previous winners have included, Mika Häkkinen the Finnish racing driver and world-famous tennis star Stefan Edberg.

You can read more about the CoScan International Award here:

<http://www.coscan.org.uk/international-award/>

About WOW – Women of the World

Southbank Centre's **WOW – Women of the World** festival is a global festival movement launched by Jude Kelly CBE in London in 2010 (with the first festival in March 2011) that celebrates women and girls, and looks at the obstacles that stop them from achieving their potential. To date, *WOW* has reached over one million people worldwide and this number is growing year on year. With the HRH Duchess of Cornwall as President, Southbank Centre is now planning a *WOW* Commonwealth festival at the Commonwealth Games in 2018 with all 53 nations. Each festival across the world - made up of talks, debates, music, activism, mentoring, pop ups and performance - celebrates women and girls, takes a frank look at what prevents them from achieving their potential, and raises awareness globally of the issues they face and possible solutions. It reaches girls and women, boys and men from a broad range of social backgrounds and supplies a completely different sense of action and energy than a conventional conference approach. Speakers have included Malala Yousafzai, Christine Lagarde, Salma Hayek, Annie Lennox, Gordon Brown, Julie Walters, Patrick Stewart and many more including hundreds of women and men who don't have public profiles but are working every day to achieve gender equality. Over 25,000 people came to *WOW* London in 2016, thousands more have come to *WOWs* across the world and festival organisers have collaborated on cross-continental projects.

wow.southbankcentre.co.uk

About Nordic Matters

Nordic Matters is the first year-long programme of Nordic arts and culture that the UK has seen and takes place at Southbank Centre throughout 2017. It is a major international collaboration between Southbank Centre and the eight Nordic countries and territories – the Åland Islands, Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. *Nordic Matters* features much-loved Nordic favourites, from the **Moomins**, **Lego®**, **hygge** and a **sauna** to Nordic art, literature, dance, design, theatre, talks and music. The programme explores the idea that play fosters curiosity and creativity in all ages and focuses on three areas where the Nordics are perceived as world-leaders: children and young people, gender equality and sustainability.

For more information contact:

Tony Bray, CoScan

Email: tony.bray@coscan.org.uk

Mobile: +44 (0)7778 648082