

**Text of Midori's Acceptance Speech on Receiving the Crystal Award
at the World Economic Forum, Davos, Switzerland, 25 January 2012**

Good afternoon and thank you. I am tremendously honored to be here and to accept this award.

Those of you here today hold a powerful key to defining what the future will look like and how we will create and "Shape New Models". As we discover how each of us can contribute to the positive impact of this year's meeting, I hope to bring a voice to how music continues to play a vital part in shaping our world.

I am a musician and, though it might sound naïve, I believe music brings us together and teaching music to children and providing them with access to creative outlets can, and will, have a beneficial impact on our future as a global society. Music allows us to communicate and express ourselves in ways that go beyond language barriers and it enriches our lives in extraordinary and necessary ways.

Today, as our world's population surges past seven billion and technological advances transform the very nature of relationships and communication, it is more important than ever to embrace the very essence of humanity. The human capacity to appreciate the arts is universal and has no generational or geographical limitations. The connections forged through music and the collaboration of playing or singing together often transcend cultural, social and political differences.

In my travels, I see families living in dire poverty. In some of the developing countries I have visited, I have observed children spending their days rummaging through huge mountains of trash looking for scrap metal in order to survive. But it is more than just issues of poverty. Recently, I, along with three young aspiring musicians, traveled to Mongolia to share our music. I would like to read a few lines from a journal kept by one of our young musicians, written on the day we visited a school for the hearing-impaired.

"In a completely spontaneous gesture, the students, who ranged in age from very young to their late teens, all reached out to put their hands on my cello in order to feel the vibrations of the sound I was producing, because they could not hear it with their ears. Having the human contact of ten or fifteen hands directly on my instrument was an overwhelming sensation for me as the music flowed out of me and into their bodies. It was one of the most moving moments of my life, and I will never forget it.

Afterwards, over and over, the students related their appreciation in sign language to the interpreter. Their honest gratitude made it clear to me that even if they couldn't hear our music properly, they could still perceive the essence of what we were doing -- the essence of music: a special, meaningful connection between human beings."

As a musician, I, along with my colleagues, may offer a different form of solace and answer to the question posed by this annual forum. But I believe that while each of us cannot fix everything, by working together, each in our own way, we will be able to ensure that this century makes great strides in improving the human condition.

Thank you again for this honor and I look forward to exploring the ways in which we might all work together.