

# Proclamation



## Will Smith

Whereas: Will Smith has been an ambassador for the autoharp in a long career spanning nearly five decades, exposing modern autoharp playing to the wider world of Nashville and beyond through his studio work and personal recordings, And,

Whereas: Will's longevity in playing autoharp – almost from the beginning of its popular revival in the 1970s to his active presence today – puts him in the small group of people who have introduced the instrument to masses of people. His contributions to the instrument and its players have run the gamut of tuning, mechanical innovations, teaching, performing, songwriting, and generosity of spirit while he has pursued a career in the music business of which most people can only dream, And,

Whereas: His first album, *Across the Seven Seas*, produced in 1984, was the first autoharp-centric album to feature fully chromatic, diatonic, and pentatonic selections including *Meadowlands*, *Malaguena*, and *Sakura*, which have deservedly become classics in the genre, And,

Whereas: He has developed innovative ways of playing, tuning, and modifying the physical instrument itself, including his unique “Deleter” system; and he has pioneered developments in alternative tunings, radical configurations, altered chords, unusual scales, classical and ethnic melodies, arranging with non-traditional instruments, using open fifths, flatpicking washboard style, key modulation, and many other techniques that are now widely adopted in the autoharp community, And,

Whereas: He has performed on recordings by John Anderson, Mark Chesnutt, Blake Shelton, Kathy Mattea, Pam Tillis, Reba McEntire, Loretta Lynn, and many others, and has most recently done studio work for a recent Loretta Lynn album, And,

Whereas: Over many years, he has taught autoharp and guitar privately in the Nashville area as well as traveling to virtually all the major festivals and workshops to teach in group settings all over the United States and in the United Kingdom, And,

Whereas: Will has developed his own teaching method over the past 10 years, still based on learning songs, but breaking them down into the smallest parts and integrating melody and rhythm playing right from the start, and using advancing technology to produce an e-book with associated interactive features; and he has augmented his teaching by releasing nearly 30 videos during the past few years, with one selection, *Chopin's Nocturne in E Flat*, being chosen by the curators of a string zither exhibit at the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, to play on a loop along with videos of a handful of other pioneering autoharppers, And,

Whereas: These examples of the international autoharp exposure fostered by Will's efforts demonstrate that nothing going on with autoharp today could possibly be more far-reaching to audiences of all kinds than what Will has done, and is still doing, with his music professionally, Therefore, let it be resolved that Will Smith be inducted with highest commendation as the 2016 contemporary member of the Autoharp Hall of Fame.

So it is proclaimed on this, the 25th day of June in the year Two Thousand and Sixteen.