



Ίδρυμα Θεοφανώ
THEOPHANO
FOUNDATION

EMPRESS THEOPHANO PRIZE

2023

Thessaloniki • November 9, 2023



THE EMPRESS THEOPHANO PRIZE

a pan-European initiative
inspired by a Byzantine woman
that bridged the East and the West

an award to express the urgent need
for mutual understanding
for building bridges
for cooperation to address global challenges

With Thessaloniki at its heart, an award of pan-European status and scope was instituted in 2019, the Empress Theophano Prize. With the symbolic selection of the name of Byzantine Empress Theophano –whose contribution was critical in the cultural rebirth of the Western European region– and with the Rotunda as the Award Ceremony setting –a landmark monument signifying the Roman, Byzantine, Orthodox, Ottoman, and Greek influence on the shaping of Europe– the award aims to:

Reward individuals or Organisations for their contribution to the understanding and strengthening of the modern European Idea;

Promote, at this crucial juncture, the recognition of the common heritage shared by different geographic areas of Europe and the historic interdependence of its peoples, as well as their importance to current European cooperation and the relations of Europe with its neighboring cultures;

Underline and highlight the contribution of the parties receiving the Prize, in broadening our understanding of the European Union, European cooperation, and our common roots in history.



THE ROTUNDA MONUMENT

UNESCO World Heritage Site

A monument of Thessaloniki,
part of European history and culture.



The emblematic monument of Thessaloniki was constructed in the early 4th century AD, on the turning point between the pagan with the Christian world, probably as a temple for ancient cult worship or as a mausoleum for Constantine the Great (306-337). This circular, domed building measures 29.80 meters in height, 24.50 meters in diameter; its walls are 6.30 meters thick and can only be compared architecturally to the Pantheon in Rome. Not long after it was built and during the early years of the long-lived Byzantine Empire (330-1453), the Rotunda was turned into a Christian church with the addition of a sanctuary on its eastern side. The interior was decorated with Early Byzantine (4th-6th c. AD) wall mosaics of unique artistry and beauty. It was Thessaloniki's cathedral church (metropolis) between 1524 and 1591, the year in which it was converted to a mosque by the Ottoman conquerors. It remained in use as a mosque until the city's liberation in 1912. Its dedication since that time to Saint George (Agios Georgios) is owing to the small neighboring church of this name. The mosaic decoration of the Rotunda is a masterpiece of Late Antique art.

Text source: galeriuspalace.culture.gr/en/monuments/rotonta/



CEREMONY PROGRAMME

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- 18:30** Prize Ceremony – Welcome remarks by Presenter Mr. **Alexis Papahelas**, journalist and Executive Editor of *Kathimerini* newspaper
- 18:35** Address by the Vice-President of the European Commission, Mr. **Margaritis Schinas**
- 18:45** Address by the First Vice-President of the European Committee of the Regions, Mr. **Apostolos Tzitzikostas**
- 18:50** Welcome Speech by Mr. **Stavros Andreadis**, Chairman of Governing Council, Theophano Foundation
- 19:00** Prize speech by President **Herman Count van Rompuy**, Chairman of Advisory Council, Theophano Foundation
- 19:15** Prize Winner's Address by H.E. Mr. **António Guterres**, Secretary-General of the United Nations
- 19:20** Awarding by the Chairmen of the Theophano Foundation's Councils, Mr. Stavros Andreadis and President Herman Count van Rompuy
- 19:30** Remarks by H.E. Mr. **Miguel Ángel Moratinos**, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, representing the United Nations Secretary-General
- 19:40** **Music Performance**
Yannis Constantinidis, *Dodecanesian suite* (1948)
George-Emmanuel Lazaridis | piano
Simos Papanas | violin
video projection: images of the Rotunda mosaics, emphasizing on the humanitarian dimension of the Prize and the image of Human
- 20:00** Event Closing



MUSIC PERFORMANCE

Dodecanesian suite (1948)

Yannis Constantinidis (1903-1984),
Greek composer of an Asia Minor descent.

A music composition that brings out elements
of identity and multiculturalism.

*Dodecanesian suite consists of 22 folk melodies
from the islands of the Dodecanese, that the
composer drew from the collection “Songs from the
Dodecanese / Chansons du Dodecanese” by Samuel
Baud-Bovy, a Swiss composer and leading researcher
of Greek traditional music.*



George-Emmanuel Lazaridis

(piano)

Assistant Professor,
Department of Music
Science and Art,
University of Macedonia,
former Artistic Director,
Thessaloniki Concert Hall



Simos Papanas

(violin)

Artistic Director, Thessaloniki
State Symphony Orchestra



VIDEO PROJECTION

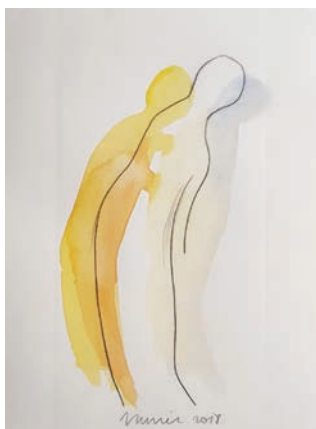
The unique mosaics of Rotunda are being brought closer to us and presented on the northern niches of the monument, in a video mapping that aims to be a visual narration, giving emphasis on the humanitarian dimension of the Prize and the image of Human.





THE AWARD ARTWORK & ARTIST

For the award of the Empress Theophano Prize **Jan Vanriet** made an original watercoloured drawing of a elegant woman's silhouette with a



warm yellow brush stroke that may refer to the sophistication and the richness of the Byzantine art – this in contrast with a smaller blue stroke referring to the reticence of Carolingian society. The represented figure is an 'open' one: a person that is willing to receive the

specific spiritual, symbolic and educational values of a different culture and to assemble these; a leading woman as an ambassador for both the East and the West of Europe.

The Byzantine figure fits into Vanriet's recent work as shown in his exhibition *Collected Stories* that brings a series of oil paintings inspired by ancient Roman and Greek statues from the collection of the 'Glyptothek' in Munich. Also here the drawings of the figures are 'enlightened' with polychromic abstractions and discrete colourfields.



EMPRESS THEOPHANO PRIZE

Empress Theophano Prize 2020

Focused on Education

Awarded to the Erasmus Programme, received by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen on behalf of 10 million young Europeans participants



Empress Theophano Prize 2021

Focused on Science

Awarded to Dr. Uğur Şahin and Dr. Özlem Türeci for their dedication to the Common Good



Empress Theophano Prize 2022

Focused on Art as a common ground for mutual understanding

Awarded to the leading pianist and conductor, Daniel Barenboim and his initiative of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra





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AWARD CEREMONY**
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