



Ίδρυμα Θεοφανώ  
THEOPHANO  
FOUNDATION

EMPRESS  
THEOPHANO  
PRIZE

2025

THESSALONIKI  
06.II.2025



# 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 29.80m in height, 24.50m in diameter; its walls are 6.30m 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 into 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 owed 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/](http://galeriuspalace.culture.gr/en/monuments/rotonta/)*



# CEREMONY PROGRAMME

Thessaloniki • November 6, 2025

- 18:30** Prize Ceremony -  
Welcome remarks by Presenter  
Mr **Apostolos Mangiriadis**,  
journalist/news anchor of ERT
- 18:35** Address by H.E. the President  
of the Hellenic Republic,  
Mr **Constantine An. Tassoulas**
- 18:45** Welcome Speech by Mr **Stavros Andreadis**,  
Chairman of Governing Council,  
Theophano Foundation
- 18:55** Prize Speech by President  
**Herman Count van Rompuy**,  
Chairman of Advisory Council,  
Theophano Foundation
- 19:10** Award Announcement by H.E.  
the President of the Hellenic Republic,  
along with the Chairmen of the  
Theophano Foundation Councils
- 19:15** Prize Winner Speech by  
**Prof. Dr. Hermann Parzinger**,  
Executive President  
& Mrs **Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović**,  
Secretary General of EUROPA NOSTRA



# CEREMONY PROGRAMME

Thessaloniki • November 6, 2025

**19:40**

*Place, Space and Celebration*

Music from 7 composers and 7 countries, celebrating the diversity of European cultural heritage. Performed by musicians from 9 European countries.

Marshall Marcus, EUYO Executive & Artistic Director

**Phanfára** - A fanfare Introduction

Benjamin Britten *Fanfare for St Edmundsbury*

**Enthuméomai** - Considering

Claude Debussy *Syrinx for Solo Flute, L. 129*,  
Luciano Berio *Duets for Two Violins: I. Béla & 31. Mauricio*, Sofia Gubaidulina *Ten Preludes for Solo Cello: I. staccato - legato*, Béla Bartók *44 Duos for Two Violins: I. Párosító (Teasing Song) & 44. Erdélyi tánc (Transylvanian Dance - Ardeliana)*, Sokratis Sinopoulos *Echoes of Byzantium (improvisation on lyra)*

**Eortasmós** - Celebration

Johann Sebastian Bach *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G major, BWV. 1048: I. (Allegro)*

European Union Youth Orchestra

Violins: Almudena Quintanilla Andrade (ESP),

Dora Merelli (CRO-ITA), Miiia Ruubel (EST)

Violas: Maria Corall Bellon (ESP), Marinha Machado

Campos (POR), Bénédicte Leclerc (FRA)

Cellos: Eva Sánchez -Vegazo (ESP),

Douwe Eisses (NED), Damien Hugon (FRA)

Double bass: Severi Huhdanpää (FIN).

With the participation of EUYO special guests:

Ljubiša Jovanović (SRB), *flute*,

Sokratis Sinopoulos (GRE), *lyra*

MOYSA-Megaro Youth Symphony Orchestra -

Kyriaki Ketikoglou, Symeon Ketikoglou,

Christos Armeniakos (GRE), *trumpets*.

**20:00**

Event Closing



## MUSIC PERFORMANCE



# European Union Youth Orchestra

*Place, Space and Celebration:*

*Music from 7 composers and 7 countries, celebrating the diverse work and extended cultural heritage orbit of EUROPA NOSTRA*

With the participation of EUYO special guests:

**Ljubiša Jovanović**, *flute*

**Sokratis Sinopoulos**, *lyra*

MOYSA-Megaro Youth Symphony Orchestra,  
*trumpets*

The European Union Youth Orchestra is one of the world's leading symphony orchestras, acclaimed for its excellence, energy, and élan. It unites the best young musicians aged 16–26 from all 27 EU Member States. Around 3000 candidates audition annually for ca. 100 places, and the EUYO's 4000 alumni can be found worldwide as soloists, conductors, teachers, and leading orchestral players.

The EUYO is supported by the European Union's Creative Europe Programme, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport, Grafenegg, the Department of Art and Culture of the Provincial Government of Lower Austria (St. Pölten), the Italian Ministry of Culture, the Comune di Bolzano, and the European Union's 27 Member States.



## 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.

Additionally, a celebratory finale will bring the abstract images of Europe's cultural heritage symbols in the space of the Rotunda.





## THE AWARD ARTWORK & ARTIST

For the award of the Empress Theophano Prize, the Belgian artist and poet **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

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## 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.

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## Empress Theophano Prize 2021

Focused on Science



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

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## 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.



# EMPRESS THEOPHANO PRIZE

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## **Empress Theophano Prize 2023**

Focused on the humanitarian role of multilateral leadership

Awarded to the United Nations in the person of António Guterres, UN Secretary General, for its contribution to world peace and international cooperation.



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## **Empress Theophano Prize 2024**

Focused on the role in using sport to overcome adversity

Awarded to Special Olympics, in the name of Chairman, Dr. Timothy Shriver, for their aim to highlight intellectual disability rights and to build a more inclusive society.





Ίδρυμα Θεοφανώ  
THEOPHANO  
FOUNDATION

MEMBERS  
OF THE THEOPHANO FOUNDATION

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**EPT**

[www.theophano.eu](http://www.theophano.eu)