

# Prophets in their land

Cyprien Katsaris and Martino Tirimo have been awarded this year's Nemitsas Foundation prize

Cypriot classical musicians, Cyprien Katsaris and Martino Tirimo, have been awarded the Takis and Louki Nemitsas Foundation's Award for 2011.

Both composers and musicians of high regard, and with successful careers on the international music scene, Katsaris and Tirimo will be given their prize during a ceremony at the Presidential Palace in September or early October. Katsaris and Tirimo are also expected to give a concert, organised by the Nemitsas Foundation, next year.

The pair will share the €50,000 prize and each will also be given a commemorative scroll and gold medal.

President Demetris Christofias is expected to hand over the awards personally.

Some months ago, the Nemitsas Foundation board made its decision to recognise the arts, and classical music in particular, in its second annual award.

Last year's prize went to Professors Kypros Nicolaides and Eleftherios Diamantis recognising their contribution to the field of medical sciences.

Following the board's decision, an international panel was appointed to decide who the award should go to, eventually choosing Katsaris and Tirimo. The decision was taken based on the pair's accomplishments in the international music scene.

Katsaris and Tirimo also fulfilled the award's criteria of being Cypriots with an ongoing international career and worldwide recognition. They were also chosen for their contribution to the world and recognition they have brought to Cyprus through their actions.

The panel noted that, in spite of the island's small size, there are many talented Greek and Turkish Cypriots active in their own country and overseas in various sectors of classical music.

The Nemitsas Foundation Chairman Takis Nemitsas said that the organisation's goal was to honour Cypriot scientists and artists living on the island or abroad.

"Making this idea a reality at first seemed like an impossible dream. Over the years though, through my own life experience and the support of my wife Louki, the idea matured and became a reality," he said.

Nemitsas continued: "Awarding people who dedicate their lives to promoting knowledge for the

Martino Tirimo



good of humanity is the best recognition our society can give to show its gratitude for the dedication and hard work, usually under difficult circumstances and with personal sacrifice. The discoveries, inventions and artistic creation improve our life and make it more enjoyable."

The 2012 prize will be devoted to the sector of engineering including mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, civil engineering and architecture.

**Cyprien Katsaris** is a pianist and composer who has performed at some of the world's most prestigious venues and worked with a multitude of top conductors and orchestras.

A French-Cypriot, Katsaris first began to play the piano when he was four, in Cameroon where he grew up. Katsaris' first teacher was Marie-Gabrielle

Louwerse.

He studied piano at the Paris Conservatoire with Aline van Barentzen and Monique de la Brucholierie, and in 1969 he won the piano First Prize. As well as piano, Katsaris also studied chamber music with René Leroy and Jean Hubeau, and he won First Prize for this in 1970.

Katsaris is also well known for his recordings of the complete Liszt transcriptions of Beethoven's nine symphonies and the rare piano version of Mahler's 'Das Lied von der Erde' with Brigitte Fassbaender and Thomas Moser.

His own compositions include 'Cypriot Rhapsody' (1978) amongst many others.

Katsaris' performance schedule for 2011 includes 40 appearances in Europe, the USA and Asia as well as master classes at top schools and judging international contests.

A pianist, composer and music educator, Larnaca-born **Martino Tirimo** is based in London and active through the UK, Germany and elsewhere in Europe. He also gives master classes in the Far East and the USA.

Tirimo has also worked with world-famous orchestras and appeared at top venues around the world. His compositions include 'Odyssey' and Tirimo is also known for completing unfinished works by other great composers.

He won the Liszt Scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music at sixteen, going on to graduate with the highest honours.

Tirimo is also known for championing Michael Tippett's Piano Concerto, which he performed several times with the composer conducting, and of which they also made a recording that was released in 1991.

Over 2009 and 2010, Tirimo embarked on several series of performances devoted to Chopin on the occasion of the composer's bicentenary in 2009. In 2010, this culminated in a series of 12 concerts at Kings Place, London, where Tirimo was joined by Polish musicians including Iwona Sobotka (soprano) and the Silesian String Quartet for performances of Chopin's entire output.

Cyprien Katsaris

