

CYPRIEN KATSARIS

“A strong individualist with glittering fingers... He has a pronounced musical profile which puts him in a class far above the cut and dried exponents of the international school of modern pianists.”

(Excerpt taken from “The Great Pianists – from Mozart to the present”, by Senior Music Critic Emeritus of the New York Times, Harold C. Schonberg)

Cyprien Katsaris, the French-Cypriot pianist and composer, was born on May 5th 1951 in Marseilles. He first began to play the piano at the age of four, in Cameroon where he spent his childhood. His first teacher was Marie-Gabrielle Louwerse.

A graduate of the Paris Conservatoire where he studied piano with Aline van Barentzen and Monique de la Bruchollerie (piano First Prize, 1969), as well as chamber music with René Leroy and Jean Hubeau (First Prize, 1970), he won the International Young Interpreters Rostrum-Unesco (Bratislava 1977), the First Prize in the International Cziffra Competition (Versailles 1974) and he was the only western-European prize-winner at the 1972 Queen Elisabeth of Belgium International Competition. He was also awarded the Albert Roussel Foundation Prize (Paris 1970) and the Alex de Vries Foundation Prize (Antwerp 1972).

He gave his first public concert in Paris, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on 8 May 1966, as a “Knight” of the youth competition “The Kingdom of Music”; he performed the *Hungarian Fantasy* by Franz Liszt, with the Orchestre Symphonique d’Ile-de-France conducted by René-Pierre Chouteau.

His major international career includes performances with the world’s greatest orchestras, most notably The Berlin Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Dresden, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, SWR Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra Washington D.C., Detroit Symphony, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, Toronto Symphony, The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Residenz Orchestra Den Haag, Brabant Orchestra, The NHK Symphony Orchestra (Tokyo), Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, Korean Chamber Orchestra, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Bucharest George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra, Milan RAI Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, The Oxford Philomusica, The Auckland Philharmonia and The City of Mexico Philharmonic Orchestra whose inaugural concert’s and subsequent tour he was the featured soloist (1978). He has collaborated with conductors such as Leonard Bernstein, Mstislav Rostropovich, Sir Simon Rattle, Myung Whun Chung, Christoph von Dohnanyi, Charles Dutoit, Antal Dorati, Ivan Fischer, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Kent Nagano, James Conlon, Sir Charles Mackerras, Rudolf Barshai, Sandor Végh, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Leif Segerstam, Dmitri Kitajenko, Andrey Boreyko, Christopher Warren-Green, Zdeněk Mácal, Xian Zhang, Paul Mann, Marios Papadopoulos... and Karl Münchinger, who on the festive occasion of his farewell concert in 1986, with the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, personally invited Mr. Katsaris to perform the Haydn *D major Concerto*.

In addition to his activities as a soloist he founded the “Katsaris Piano Quintet”. This has received a very enthusiastic response from both the press and audiences in the Americas, Europe and Japan.

Mr. Katsaris has recorded extensively for Teldec (Grand Prix du Disque Frédéric Chopin, Warsaw 1985; Grand Prix du Disque Franz Liszt, Budapest 1984 and 1989; British Music Retailer’s Association’s Award 1986; Record of the Year 1984, Germany, for the 9th *Symphony* of Beethoven/Liszt), Sony Classical, EMI, Deutsche Grammophon, BMG-RCA, Decca, Pavane, and now on his own label, PIANO 21.

His discography consists of solo works by most of the greatest masters as well as works for piano and orchestra including Bach Concertos with the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra, Brahms’s *Concerto no. 2* with Eliahu Inbal conducting the Philharmonia (London), both Concertos of Mendelssohn with Kurt Masur and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra (of which Mendelssohn had been music Director), and the complete Concertos by Mozart, recorded live and performed in Salzburg and Vienna with Yoon K. Lee and the Salzburger Kammerphilharmonie.

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In addition to the standard repertory, Cyprien Katsaris has recorded, as world premières, long lost works such as the Liszt/Tchaikovsky *Concerto in the Hungarian style* with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, Beethoven's own piano arrangement of his ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus* and Gustav Mahler's original piano version of *Das Lied von der Erde* with Mezzo Brigitte Fassbaender and Tenor Thomas Moser.

In 1992, the Japanese NHK TV produced with Cyprien Katsaris a thirteen-program series on Frédéric Chopin which included masterclasses and his own performance. On 17 October 1999, the New York concertgoers offered him a standing ovation in Carnegie Hall for his recital dedicated to Frédéric Chopin, performed on the day of his 150th death Anniversary. This concert was recorded (audio and video) and has been issued on the Piano 21 label. On 27 January 2006, the day of the 250th Anniversary of Mozart's birth, he was the soloist at the inaugural concert of the Mozart Orchestra Mannheim founded and conducted by Thomas Fey. In March 2006 Cyprien Katsaris was the first pianist ever to give masterclasses in Franz Liszt's house in Weimar since Liszt, who taught there for the very last time in 1886, the year of his death. In August 2008, he was invited to give two concerts on the occasion of the Beijing Olympic Games at the National Centre for the Performing Arts. In addition to the world premier of a concerto for ten pianos and orchestra – *China Jubilee* – by the composer Cui Shiguang, he improvised on an ancient Greek melody, and on, *inter alia*, Chinese melodies, in tribute to the universality of the Olympic Games.

Two famous film directors, Claude Chabrol and Oscar-winner François Reichenbach, have made films of Mr. Katsaris in live concert performances.

Cyprien Katsaris is mentioned in the following works: *The Great Pianists: From Mozart to the Present*; *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*; *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Music (MGG)*; *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*; *Harenberg Klaviermusikführer: 600 Werke von Barock bis zur Gegenwart*; *David Dubal, The Art of the Piano: Its Performers, Literature and Recordings*.

Mr. Katsaris has been a member of the jury of the following International Competitions: Chopin (Warsaw 1990), Liszt (Utrecht 1996), Vendôme Prize (Paris 2000), Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud – Ville de Paris (2001) and Beethoven (Bonn 2005).

He has also conducted masterclasses at the Mannes College of Music, in New York City, the University of Toronto, the Salzburg Mozarteum, the Arts Academy in Mexico, The Academy of Performing Arts in Hong-Kong, the Royal Conservatory of The Hague and the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. In addition he was appointed Artistic Director of the Echternach International Festival (Luxembourg) from 1977 to 2007.

Mr. Katsaris's work has been honoured and recognized by the following awards: "Knight of Merit of Cameroon" (1977), "Artist of Unesco for Peace" (1997), "Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters" (France, 2000). He also received the "Vermeil Medal of the City of Paris" (2001).

- For more info on Cyprien Katsaris and PIANO 21 please visit www.cyprienkatsaris.net
- You may stream and order the complete catalogue of PIANO 21 on www.cyprienkatsaris.com

"I was lucky enough to hear Cyprien Katsaris in his dazzling interpretation of Rachmaninov's *Third Concerto* and also in his magnificent performance of the last piece of my *Vingt Regards*. His steel technique, his ardour spirit and his authority, and lastly his brilliance, make Cyprien Katsaris a marvellous pianist, and I have the fullest confidence in his future."

Olivier Messiaen

"I am convinced that Cyprien Katsaris represents the greatest artistic value of his generation."

György Cziffra

"He is a major pianist and, even better, a major artist. And he has a true feeling for the romantic style."

Harold C. Schonberg