



16<sup>TH</sup> MALTA SPRING FESTIVAL  
**ABOUT HOPE**

MUSIC · DANCE · PERFORMANCES

**19-23 APRIL 2022**



# FOREWORD

***"Hope is the one thing that can help us get through the darkest of times"***

Now in its 16<sup>th</sup> season, this year's Malta Spring Festival, under the banner About Hope, might be the most challenging project I've ever devised. When thinking of 'Hope' I tend to imagine the new and the young, creation and talent. Keeping this in mind, as well as the centenary of Xenakis' birth, I've sought out innovation, youth and inventive passion to design an inter-woven musical journey that searches for hope among the ashes, reaching out for a better future, a finer world, through cultural, psychological and personal discovery.

This year's line-up of international artists sees the return of Malta's award-winning pianist Charlene Farrugia; Trio Klein from London tackling Xenakis, Penderecki and Schnittke in an uncompromising programme that will surprise; and the Messiaen Quartet Copenhagen. Book-ending the Festival are KorMalta under their chorus master Riccardo Bianchi; and the Novarte Ensemble from Greece, joining the distinguished Finnish mezzo-soprano, Niina Keitel, for Mahler's Rückert Lieder conducted by Dimitri Scarlato.

The 16<sup>th</sup> Malta Spring Festival brings together artists who, despite their diversity, effortlessly unite through their love for music, an international language that knows no bounds, which they are eager to impart to each and every one of us. Each year the Malta Spring Festival has its challenges, but it is always heartening when it comes together. My greatest reward is to see an audience delighted and uplifted with the prospect of new adventures in the concerts before them. Invariably much effort and collaboration has been put into the organization of this event, made possible thanks to the spirited encouragement and generous support of Arts Council Malta, sponsors and private individuals.

- KARL FIORINI  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

*COMING IN 2023:*

**17<sup>TH</sup> MALTA SPRING FESTIVAL  
11 - 15 APRIL 2023**

# OPENING CONCERT

TUESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> APRIL | ST PAUL'S ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL, 20:00

## VOX NOSTRA

MUSIC FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

GREECE, ITALY, MALTA, SPAIN

### KorMalta

**Riccardo Bianchi**  
chorus master

**Evan Plumpton**  
guitar

### **L'ombra dei boschi d'Aser (1921)**

**PIETRO CLAUSETTI (1904-63)**

*The shadow of the woods of Aser*

The first of two madrigals a cinque voci, setting a traditional popular text of probably biblical inspiration. Born in Naples, trained at the Conservatoire in Milan, Pietro Clausetti lived most of his life in Rome. One of the first Italians to write film music (famously *I due sergenti* in 1936), he was the son of the music publisher, Wagnerian and critic Carlo

Clausetti, friend of Puccini and Mascagni, who jointly ran the house of Ricordi (1919-40). His libretto translations included Korngold's *Die tote Stadt* and Ravel's *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*.

### **Cade la Sera (1942)**

**ILDEBRANDO PIZZETTI (1880-1968)**

*It falls in the evening*

Born in Parma, Pizzetti, along with Respighi, Malipiero and Casella, was





one of the so-called 'Generation of 1880', an Italian faction instrumental by inclination while not averse to opera (he alone completed nearly twenty). He was Director successively of the conservatories in Florence and Milan, and succeeded Respighi at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (1936-58). *Cade la Sera* sets words by D'Annunzio.

**À Hélène (1977)**  
**IANNIS XENAKIS (1922-2001)**

Marking the centenary of the birth of Xenakis, *À Hélène* sets Greek lines drawn from Euripides's romantic drama *Helen*, produced in Athens at the Dionysia of 412 BC. In the eyes of the old tragedian Helen of Troy, the most beautiful woman in the world, fairer even than the gods, her image in Troy but her person in Egypt, lives by compassion, virtue and oaths. 'No vibrato,' the composer says. 'Two [treble] parts (choruses) strictly equal ... No strong or weak beats ... Articulate well, emphasising the consonants ... Rough, uncultured voices ... The melodic treatment of the second voice was inspired by ancient musical theory (Aristoxenos, Euclid) but also by archaic polyphonies of current traditional music in northern Greece, the Dodecanese and Pontus, which sometimes have similarities with those of pre-Islamic Iran or of Tarento in Italy.'

**Il-Kebbies tal-Fanali (2019)**  
**VÉRONIQUE VELLA (born 1979)**  
*The Lantern Lighter*

'Every night, as the day starts fading away at dusk, there comes Majsi with his ladder and he lights up a small lantern right below my window, easing the sadness of the night'. Véronique Vella completed her studies at Edinburgh Napier University, in 2008 becoming the first woman in Malta to be awarded a PhD in Composition. *Il-Kebbies tal-Fanali* for SATB choir, commissioned by Arts Council Malta, is based on the poignant poem of the same name by Anton Buttigieg (1912-83), former President of Malta. For the premiere (Malta Premju Għall-Arti, 2019), Trevor Żahra (born 1947) provided additional closing verses. The global 'message', the composer feels, is 'one of hope in an ever-changing and often brutal world'.

**Il Giardino di Afrodite (1961)**  
**ILDEBRANDO PIZZETTI**  
*The Garden of Aphrodite*

The first of two late works for six-part chorus, setting words by Sappho of Lesbos.

**Romancero Gitano, Op 152, for mixed choir and guitar  
(1951)**

**MARIO CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO (1895-1968)**

Falling foul of Italy's Fascist laws and anti-Jewish persecution in the 1930s, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, a student of Pizzetti mentored by Casella, emigrated to America in the summer of '39, befriending Toscanini, Heifetz and Piatigorsky, and carving an impregnable place for himself as one of Hollywood's starriest film composers and influencers. Romancero Gitano sets seven poems by Federico García Lorca (1898-1936), written in November 1921 and published ten years later in his Poema del cante jondo collection, respectively Nos 1, 3, 11, 22, 42, 45 and 48. 'Baladilla de los tres ríos' [Little Ballade of the Three Rivers] – 'La guitarra' [Siguiriyas] – 'Puñal' [Poem of the Sun] – 'Procesión' [Poem of the Arrow] – 'Memento' [Flamenco Vines] – 'Baile' [Flamenco Dance] – 'Crótalo' [Caprice]. A substantial concert work, the challenging guitar obbligato reminds that Castelnuovo-Tedesco, who knew Segovia, was one of the 20th century's foremost writers for the instrument.

*Programme Notes © Ateş Orga, Malta Spring Festival 2022*

**Meet the Artists:** Riccardo Bianchi, from Varese, is Artistic Director and Chorus Master of KorMalta as well as Musical Director of the Orchestra Sacro Monte di Varese. He studied in Trieste, Turin and Milan, furthering his training in at the Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana, Lugano, and Accademia Musicale Chigiana, Siena. He gave his début in St Petersburg in 2012, conducting the State Hermitage Orchestra. Evan Plumpton studied at the University of Malta and is a Fellow of London College of Music. Tutored by among others Michael Laus, Simon Schembri, Carlos Bonell, Aliro Diaz and John Mills, his eclectic background transitions classical, folk, pop and rock music.

**KORMALTA**

**Malta's National Choir**

*an initiative of Arts Council Malta within the  
Ministry for National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government*



PIANO RECITAL

WEDNESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL | TEATRU MANOEL, 20:00

# CHARLENE FARRUGIA

... FROM KHACHATURIAN'S ARMENIA TO XENAKIS'S  
GREECE TO FIORINI'S PARIS ...

**Charlene Farrugia**

piano

*introduced by Ateş Orga*

**Seven Recitatives & Fugues**

**(1928-29 rev 1966-70)**

**ARAM KHACHATURIAN (1903-78)**

A Georgian-born Eastern Armenian, witness to the birth of the Soviet nation, Khachaturian's gift was one of rampant imagination, his legacy a Pandora's box of unfettered exuberance. In 1991, with the restoration of independence,

Armenia claimed him back for its own. 'He disproved our myth of fewness,' famously eulogised the poet Hamo Sahyan, 'he became the symbol of measuring our small people with great ones ... our certificate of civilization'. Rhythm, regular and irregular, was his engine. Melody was his soul, 'speaking' ornament his monogram and caprice. 'Under Mikhail Gnessin [in Moscow] I



composed seven Fugues for piano, which must have been far from perfect ... viewing them with the eyes of a mature musician after the lapse of more than four decades, I have rewritten some of them while noting with gratification that many contain intonations I have been partial to all my life'. The substitution of narrative Recitatives for figurative preludes, yielding a freely inventive harvest, places the collection in a genre largely its own. Fugue in the Russian tradition – from Tsarist through Soviet to Federation, before Tchaikovsky to beyond Shostakovich – has always been an indicator of application and attainment. Descended from the leaner side of Bach, Khachaturian's paraphrastic essays – polarised around D, C, D, G, C, E flat, F – hover between modes major, minor, Dorian and Aeolian, facets of all four constructs meeting in the codas of II and V.

**À r. (Hommage à Ravel) (1987)**  
**IANNIS XENAKIS (1922-2001)**

'An alien shard, glimmering in the heart of the West' (Ben Watson). Born to Greek parents in Romania, Xenakis fought in the Greek Resistance during the Second World War. Blinded in one eye, condemned to death, he sought political refuge in France in 1947, taking French nationality in 1965. He trained as an architect and civil engineer, collaborating with Le Corbusier, before completing his musical studies under Hermann Scherchen and Messiaen. The words of his Paris publisher, Salabert, are his centenary epitaph. 'Innovator of mass concept, stochastic and symbolic music through introducing probability calculus and set theory into instrumental, electro-acoustic and computerized musical composition; inventor of several compositional techniques constituting the "lingua franca" of the avant-garde.' Commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Ravel's death, À r. (Hommage à Ravel) was commissioned by the Festival International de Radio France et de Montpellier. Aphoristic (21 bars), outwardly florid (hemi/demisemiquaver active), inwardly pillared (crotchet 46), its organisation is distinctive, Makis Solomos reminding that 'contrary to a somewhat widely held opinion, Xenakis's forms have nothing narrative about them ... They are simply there, like steep cliffs made out of heterogeneous blocks of stone'.



**A Little Suite for Christmas, AD 1979 (1980)**  
**GEORGE CRUMB (1929-2022)**

'Shy, yet warmly eloquent,' the Pulitzer Prize/Grammy Award-winning composer and influencer George Crumb, who died in February aged 92, defined music as 'a system of proportions in the service of spiritual impulse'. Composed for Lambert Orkis, the Little Suite for Christmas was inspired by Giotto's frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel, Padua. Using an often delicate, involingly rich palette of resources, timbres, dynamics and playing means, occidental/oriental, it falls into seven movements. I The Visitation, II Berceuse for the Infant Jesu, III The Shepherds' Noël, IV Adoration of the Magi, V Nativity Dance, VI Canticle of the Holy Night, VII Carol of the Bells.

**Piano Sonata No 1 (2017)**  
**KARL FIORINI (born 1979)**

'Art must reflect the society of its time. A true artist captures the Spirit of their Age'. Wrestling for change, questioning perceptions and values, rejecting complacency, going out on a limb, getting grass to grow in rocky landscapes, is Karl Fiorini's grail. Beethoven's sonatas and Chopin's studies are his daily catechism, referencing his thinking and conversation. He believes in roots. But in 'new winds' too. Cyclic and concentrated, his First Sonata, he maintains, 'shifts unmistakably Eastwards'. Less the Orient as Teutonic worlds East of Paris. Liszt's Weimar, Berg's Vienna, Bartók's Budapest, Feinberg's Moscow. Precipitously difficult, massively gestured, of a colouring, textural layering and sonic density intrinsically orchestral, three joined chapters – fast/slow/fast – comprise its single-movement continuum. Cross-referenced cells, contoured relationships, taut motivic development, rhythmic metabolism, repetition and reprise determine its profile. The 'fine pen' style of the central collonade is ruminatively concerned with plains of lissom catharsis. The 'finale' is mettlesome, rampant battle chargers racing the glory moments.

**Meet the Artists:** Charlene Farrugia studied with Dolores Amodio and then Diana Ketler at the Royal Academy of Music in London. For several years subsequently she was mentored by Boris Petrushansky. She gained her doctorate in performance under Kenneth Hamilton with a thesis on piano repertory for the left hand. In 2018 she received Malta's International Achievement Award. For her contribution to the music profession she was made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music in 2020. An ambassador of EMMA for Peace, the Euro Mediterranean Music Academy, under the auspices of UNESCO, she is Professor of Piano at the Music Academy, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Croatia. Her commercial recordings include Charles Camilleri's First Piano Concerto with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra (Naxos); and two recent international releases for Grand Piano Records: Khachaturian's Children's Albums and Recitatives and Fugues, and Karl Fiorini's world premiere conspectus In the Midst of Things.

## STRING TRIOS

THURSDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> APRIL | MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY, 20:00

# TRIO KLEIN

## SPECTRES AND SOUNDS

**Kamila Bydlowska**  
violin

**Shiry Rashkovsky**  
viola

**Ella Rundle**  
cello

**Ikhoor (1978)**  
**IANNIS XENAKIS (1922-2001)**

*Ikhoor, Ichor*: the ethereal fluid that is the blood of gods and immortals, toxic to humans. Xenakis wrote this technically strenuous six-section eleven-minute piece, premiered at the Palais Garnier in early April 1978, for the Trio à Cordes Français. Less Haydn than Stravinsky,

his former Canadian student James Harley rightly observes of its dynamic – Stravinsky, transiently, pondering *Le sacre*. 'These are not the genteel [Greek] gods of "evolved" civilizations and this is not tea they are drinking. This is powerful, gritty music, taking the primal pulsations of rhythm as a starting point'. Xenakis spent a lifetime challenging norms and conventions. Always the Resistance



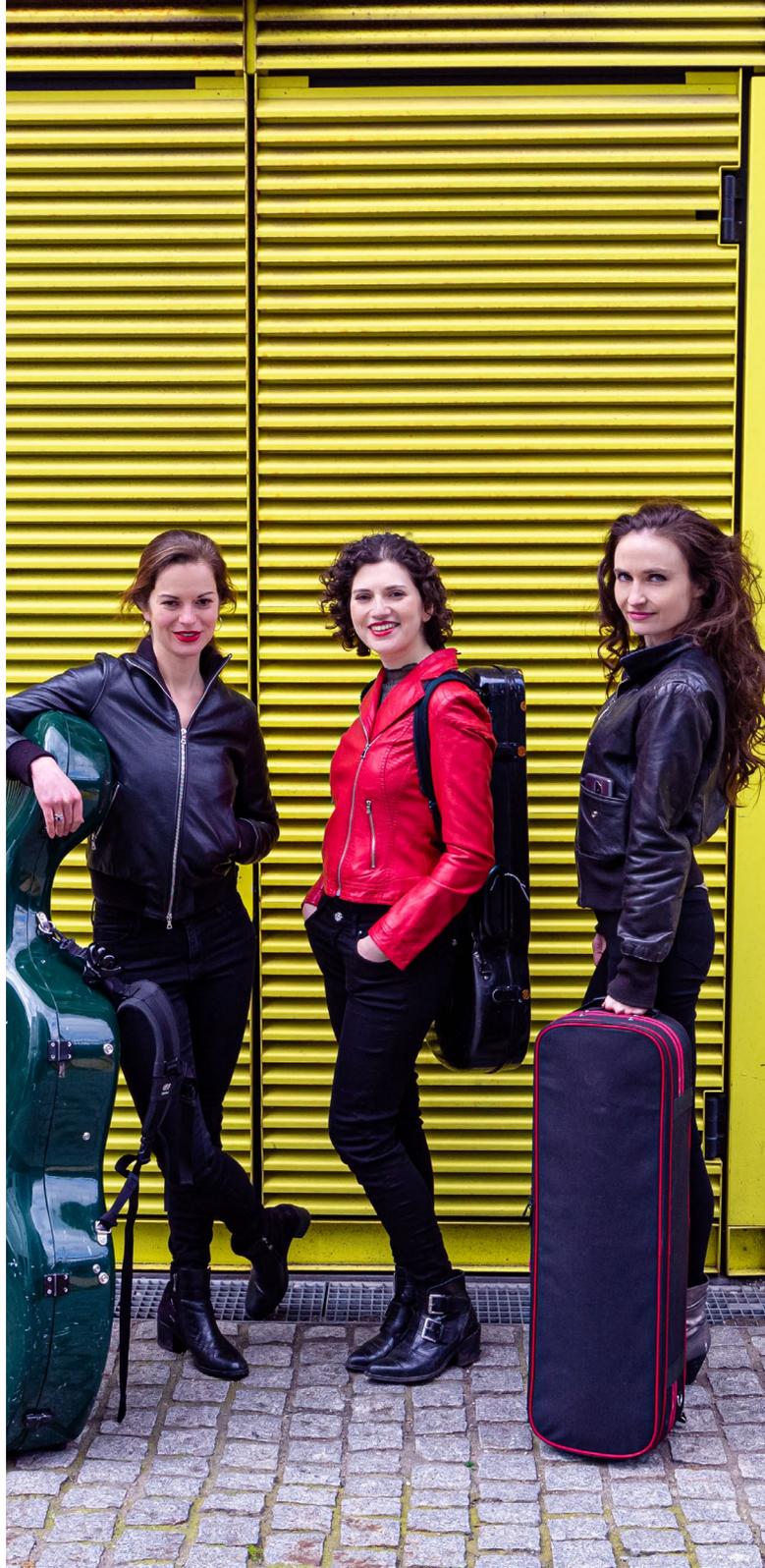
fighter. 'He simply moved his field of battle into music' (Nouritza Matossian).

**String Trio (1990 rev 1991)**  
**KRZYSZTOF PENDERECKI (1933-2020)**

'My grandfather was German and a Protestant. My father, a lawyer, was Greek-Catholic and played the violin. My [Polish] mother was very religious and went to church twice a day. My grandmother was Armenian. So I was raised with three different faiths - that's why I am so open'. The rhythmically alive two-movement String Trio (*Allegro molto/Vivo/Adagio, Vivace*) dances with a variety of elements - from cyclic cells (a three-note one in particular) and cadenzas (viola, cello, violin respectively in the first movement, exploring the personalities of each instrument) to (neo-baroque) fugings and random reminiscences (the *Sacre/Psycho* opening, spectrally the avantgardist of the Warsaw Autumn sixties). A 'wild ride' it's been called.

**String Trio (1985)**  
**ALFRED SCHNITTKE (1934-98)**

'I would wake up in Moscow or somewhere else, my heart beating fast, feeling bitter and helpless.' German-Jewish by descent, Christian through conversion, born in Engels in the Soviet Volga-German Republic, Schnittke settled in Moscow in 1948, the fateful year of Zhdanov's post-war purges. At the Conservatoire he studied with Evgeny Golubev, Miaskovsky-trained. Mistrusted, penalised and banned by the authorities during the Brezhnev years, plagued by ill health, he moved to Hamburg in 1990. Inscribed to Alexander Popatov, the doctor who twice saved his life, the polystylistic *String Trio* - sharing material with Schnittke's contemporaneous First Cello Concerto and arranged subsequently as a Piano Trio - was commissioned to mark the centenary of Alban Berg's birth. 'Conjuring ghostly quiet and longing', the spirit of Vienna's First, Second and Secessionist schools - Schubert, Berg, Mahler - veils the landscape. As a boy in the city (1946-48), witness to its scars, *Third Man* aftermath and displaced people, dreams torn apart, Schnittke remembered the place for imparting 'a certain Mozart-Schubert sound which I carried around for years'. A metropolis that



barely thirty-five years before he was born had been 'simultaneously the capital of the aristocracy and liberal intellectuals, home of the magnificent Ringstrasse and endless slums, a place of anti-Semitism and Zionism, rigid conservatism and the onset of modernity' (Leopold Museum). Two organically locked, cross-quotation movements (*Moderato, Adagio*) travel a fragmented mystic journey. Memorial, autobiography, reminiscence. Pain, shades of sonatas, quartets, the Winterreise of a life ... Nothing defined, everything felt.

*Programme Notes © Ateş Orga, Malta Spring Festival 2022*

**Meet the Artists:** Known for their varied, innovative programming, featuring masterpieces from the canon alongside rarely-heard gems and cutting edge new repertory, Trio Klein was formed by three critically acclaimed, award-winning musicians. Achieving early success, they gave their London debut at St James's Piccadilly in 2018 and have since performed extensively in the UK, with recital and festival engagements from St Martin in the Fields to Prussia Cove. They've broadcast for BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4, RAI and New York's WQXR, and have recorded for the NMC and Toccata Classics labels. Polish-born, London-based, Kamila Bydlowska went to Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and the Royal College of Music. Shiry Rashkovsky, on the music faculty at Royal Holloway, studied at Cambridge University and the Royal College of Music. A member of the Philharmonia Orchestra, Ella Rundle attended the Yehudi Menuhin School and Guildhall School of Music and Drama, completing her Masters degree at the Universität der Künste, Berlin.



DANCE & MUSIC

THURSDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> APRIL | MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY, 21:30

# MUSE & MADNESS

... WITHOUT HOPE IT CANNOT BE ...

**Alessandra Reiner**  
percussion

**Anna Maria Pammer**  
soprano

**Katharina Themessl**  
guitar

**Gyöngyvér Szentkereszty**  
dancer, choreography

*Four women bring to life different facets of Lady Macbeth in a unique performance embodying words, movement and music.*

Themed around the eponymous figure of Lady Macbeth and her hopes for a fulfilled life, ending in blind greed for power and ultimately murder, *Muse & Madness* spans a wide dramatic arc: the hope for continuity, the fact of death, the hope that overcomes death. Hope is needed like daily bread because without hope it

cannot be. Johannes Ockeghem's 15th century *spiritualia* arranged for vocals and instrumentals frame and interleaf an otherwise contemporary programme including Hans Werner Henze's *Mad Lady Macbeth* for guitar (*Royal Winter Music*, Sonata II, 1976), works for percussion by Alexej Gerassimez (born 1987) and Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001), and settings for voice by Andor Losonczy (1932-2018) and Rudolf Jungwirth (born 1955).

'The mad lady clad in a long robe, her





hair undone, her crazy eyes following the smoky flickering light of a candle on a Georgian candle-stick which she herself supports with one arm as if it were a torch, while the other points a sword at her breast. She moves through the bleak halls of her cold, black palace, a thunderstorm is raging outside, the wind is howling, she is totally mad, talks incoherently, sings dirty ditties, swears and shouts. For all that she is immensely royal, her madness is majestic.' Hans Werner Henze (1926-2012) translated Stefan de Haan.

© Malta Spring Festival 2022

**Meet the Artists:** Alessandra Reiner studied classical percussion at the Joseph Haydn Conservatory, Eisenstadt, and the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna. Working and touring with a number of Austrian symphonic, chamber and opera orchestras, she is further active as a percussion and marimba soloist, leading her own ensemble, Phildrumonic. Busy educationally, she teaches classical percussion and drum kit from primary level upwards. Anna Maria Pammer studied singing, cello, song and oratorio at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, and was formerly a member of the International Opera Studio, Zürich. She subsequently read history at the University of Vienna, specialising in music during the Third Reich. An impassioned modernist, artistic director of the Austrian Ensemble for New Music, she has created a number of high profile roles as well as appearing with both Patricia Kopatchinskaja and András Keller in Kurtág's *Kafka Fragments*. From Innsbruck, Katharina Themessl studied guitar at the Vorarlberg State Conservatory, switching subsequently to social pedagogy at the Institute for Social Pedagogy, Stams/Tyrol. Currently she's undertaking postgraduate studies with Adriano del Sal at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna. For a time, 2014-15, she worked for the international Catholic peace movement, Pax Christi, its mission 'to transform a world shaken by violence, terrorism, deepening inequalities, and global insecurity'. Her artistic focus is on the development of projects at the interface between artistic development and socio-political concerns. Hungarian by birth, trained at the University of Performing Arts, Graz, and the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, living by the motto 'you never stop learning', Gyöngyvér Szentkereszty sees herself as a citizen of the world. Originally a violist and experimental improviser, she switched to expressive dance and choreography in 2007. Holistic perception, promoting non-verbal communication, and bringing music closer to audiences through movement are central to her philosophy.

THE COMPASS OF TIME

FRIDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> APRIL | TEATRU MANOEL, 20:00

# MESSIAEN QUARTET COPENHAGEN

## QUARTET FOR THE END OF TIME

Alessia Bonnici piano

### MESSIAEN QUARTET COPENHAGEN

Viktor Wennesz clarinet  
Malin William-Olsson violin  
Carl-Oscar Østerlind cello  
Kristoffer Hyldig piano

**Sonata in B Minor, Kk27, L449 (1738)**  
**DOMENICO SCARLATTI (1685-1757)**  
*Allegro*

**Sonata in B Minor, Hob. XVI:32**  
**JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)**  
*I Allegro Moderato; II Menuet & Trio; III Presto*

**Prelude No 1 (1926)**  
**GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898-1937)**  
*Allegro ben ritmato e deciso*

**Die 4 Himmelsrichtungen**  
**STEINGRÍMUR ROHLOFF (born 1971)**  
*The Four Cardinal Points (2020)*

'At first glance my music only consists – if at all – of a beautiful surface. Whoever enters [this sound world] and proceeds to the music's interior will find a complexity influenced by the organic structures of nature - with all their layerings and



branches' (2013). Steingrímur Rohloff was born in Reykjavik to an Icelandic mother and German father. He grew up near Hanover, subsequently studying with Krzysztof Meyer in Cologne and then in Paris at the Conservatoire national supérieur and IRCAM. Back in Cologne between 2001 and 2003 he worked with Hans-Ulrich Humpert, Eimert's successor at the Musikhochschule's electronic music studio. Scandinavia, the northern lands, lies close to his heart, it's been said, but 'Central European modernism has always stimulated him more' (Stefan Amzoll, 2015). Dedicated to the Messiaen Quartet Copenhagen, *Die 4 Himmelsrichtungen* divides into four untitled 'parts' linked by three transitions, the 'sound of air' and white note finger-gliding first and third of the latter identical harmonically, temporally and conceptually.

### **Quatuor pour la fin de temps**

**OLIVIER MESSIAEN (1908-92)**

*Quartet for the End of Time (1940-41)*

The Sainte-Trinité of Messiaen's chamber achievement, 'perhaps the greatest artistic miracle of our times' (Michael Linton), this was written and first played in Stalag VIII-A, a German prisoner-of-war camp in Lower Silesia near modern day Zgorzelec in Poland, housing 50,000 French and Belgian inmates in thirty barracks, underfed, under-clothed and unprotected from the winter cold. In eight movements, each prefaced by the composer, the work was inspired by the *Book of Revelation*.

### ***I Liturgie de cristal (Crystal Liturgy)***

'Between three and four in the morning, the awakening of birds: a solo blackbird or nightingale improvises, surrounded by a shimmer of sound, by a halo of trills lost very high in the trees. Transpose this onto a religious plane and you have the harmonious silence of Heaven.'

### ***II Vocalise, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps (Vocalise, for the Angel who announces the end of Time)***

'The first and third parts (very short) evoke the power of this mighty angel, a rainbow upon his head and clothed with a cloud, who sets one foot on the sea and one foot on the earth. In the middle section are the impalpable harmonies of heaven. In the piano, sweet cascades of blue-orange chords, enclosing in their distant chimes the almost plainchant song of the violin and cello.'



**III Abîme des oiseaux (Abyss of birds)** [solo clarinet]

'The abyss is Time with its sadness, its weariness. The birds are the opposite to Time; they are our desire for light, for stars, for rainbows, and for jubilant songs.'

**IV Intermède (Interlude)** [violin, cello, clarinet]

'Scherzo, of a more individual character than the other movements, but linked to them nevertheless by certain melodic recollections.'

**V Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus (Praise to the eternity of Jesus)** [cello, piano]

'Jesus is considered here as the Word ... the eternity of the Word, powerful and gentle.'

**VI Danse de la fureur, pour les sept trompettes (Dance of fury, for the seven trumpets)**

'The four instruments in unison imitate gongs and trumpets ... Music of stone, formidable granite sound; irresistible movement of steel, huge blocks of purple rage, icy drunkenness.'

**VII Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps (Tangle of rainbows, for the Angel who announces the end of Time)**

'The angel appears in full force, especially the rainbow that covers him (the rainbow, symbol of peace, wisdom, and all luminescent and sonorous vibration). In my dreams, I hear and see ordered chords and melodies, known colours and shapes; then, after this transitional stage, I pass through the unreal and suffer, with ecstasy, a tournament; a roundabout co-penetration of superhuman sounds and colorus. These swords of fire, this blue-orange lava, these sudden stars: there is the tangle, there are the rainbows!'

**VIII Louange à l'Immortalité de Jésus (Praise to the Immortality of Jesus)**

'Large violin solo, counterpart to the cello solo of the fifth movement. Why this second eulogy? It is especially aimed at the second aspect of Jesus, Jesus the Man, the Word made flesh, immortally risen for our communication of his life. It is all love. Its slow ascent to the acutely extreme is the ascent of man to his god, the child of God to his Father, the being made divine towards Paradise.'

Programme Notes © Ateş Orga, Malta Spring Festival 2022



**Meet the Artists:** 'When words are not an option ... music speaks'. Pianist/music therapist Rosetta Debattista has been a pivotal influence nurturing **Alessia Bonnici** at the Malta School of Music. Carrying the banner for autism and disability, Alessia, mentored by Gabi Sultana, has additionally benefited from the encouragement and inspiration of Marcelle Zahra, Veronique Vella, Tom Armitage and Tricia Dawn Williams. 'Music is everywhere, it is my world.'

The Danish **Messiaen Quartet Copenhagen**, established in 2018, is based in the Østerbro Koncertforening/Unitarernes Hus, Copenhagen. A close working relationship with Danmarks Radio P2 sees regular broadcasts of the ensemble's public concerts. Given the relatively limited core repertory at its disposal – specifically Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* - new commissions as well as arrangements of familiar works (most recently a critically well received Debussy CD on Danacord) are regular programming policy. Viktor Wennesz studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music. Familiar from her work with Spira Mirabilis and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Malin William-Olsson was appointed joint concertmaster of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra in 2011. Carl-Oscar Østerlind studied at the Royal Academy/Edsberg Institute, Stockholm, the Royal Danish Academy of Music, and the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. He won the 2010 Danish String Competition. Kristoffer Hyldig, a noted Messiaen specialist, attended the Royal Danish Academy of Music.

CLOSING CONCERT

SATURDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> APRIL | TEATRU MANOEL, 20:00

# NOVARTE ENSEMBLE, SCHOOL OF MUSIC PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE, NIINA KEITEL, DIMITRI SCARLATO

**Niina Keitel**  
mezzo soprano

**Dimitri Scarlato**  
conductor

**Water Wheel (2008)**  
**KRISTEN SHINER MCGUIRE (born 1958)**  
'You only get one life ~ I live mine as a musician'

*Aidan Myles Aquilina, marimba,  
Kurt Calleja, vibraphone*

**Study No. 1 for membrances (1995)**  
**MARIO GAETANO (born 1955)**  
'The careful guidance of an excellent

teacher in combination with daily practice and a fine method book are the most important components for successful musical study'

*Jack Paul Mallia, snare drum,  
Samuel Attard, bongos.  
Matthew Sant, bass drum,  
Gabriel Cini, timpani*



## **Rhyme or Reason (2019)**

**NATHAN DAUHTREY (born 1975)**

'A musical chameleon who uses his wide-ranging talents to adapt comfortably to a variety of environments'

*Crispin Gauci Peresso, xylophone, bells, ribbon crasher, temple blocks*

*Kurt Calleja, vibraphone, bongos, splash cymbal*

*Gabriel Cini, marimba, tambourine*

*Jake Paul Mallia, marimba, 2 congas, china cymbal*

*Samuel Attard, drum kit (bass drum, toms, snare drum, hi-hat, crash cymbal), crotales*

## **Phlegra (1975)**

**IANNIS XENAKIS (1922-2001)**

'Musicologists may analyse scores and come up with their conclusions - and they may be perfectly right - but their findings need not indicate anything conscious on my part'. Premiered by Michel Tabachnik in London, January 1976, *Phlegra* for eleven instruments was commissioned by the Gulbenkian Foundation for the London Sinfonietta. In 4/4 at an unchanging crotchet=48, without perceived accented downbeats, resonating spheres of advanced playing techniques and strings without vibrato, the title refers to the Macedonian/Balkan peninsula, the volcanic 'place of burning' where in Greek mythology the Gigantes, Strabo's 'impious, lawless' creatures of great size and strength, were overthrown by the Olympian gods. Listening to these primal, alien, spatial sounds, simian clamberings, furtive scurrings and ancient calls, each *fff* and *ppp* proportionate to instrument and context, is rather like looking through reversed lenses. Subjectively less a battlefield, more the distant songs and blooms, the wing-footed winds of before and after.

## **Lumière à la tombée de la nuit (2022)**

**DIMITRI SCARLATO (born 1977)**

*Malta Spring Festival Commission - 1<sup>st</sup> performance*

*The composer writes: 'Inspired by the theme of the 16th Malta Spring Festival, 'About Hope', this piece aims to portray an imaginary journey, full of obstacles, that eventually leads to a hopeful outcome. The light (lumière) is the symbolical internal compass that we need to get*



through difficult moments in our life. The composition of the work was in part influenced by developments in Ukraine during February and March 2022, and tries to depict the sorrow and uncertainty of this history-changing moment, leaving still space for light at the end of the night.'

### **Concordanza (1971)**

**SOFIA GUBAIDULINA (born 1931)**

'I wouldn't say [a] piece fights me, but there is a certain resistance, a discrepancy or gap between what my unconscious intuition wants and the structures I want to impose. For me the most important thing is not to interfere with intuition, not to get in its way.' Scored for ten woodwind, percussion and string players, Concordanza was premiered at the 1971 Prague Spring Festival 'The title,' the composer says, 'arose from the desire to find consonance in the midst of a world of sound filled with dissonance. Formally, this was reflected in the interrelationships between individual instruments and groups of instruments as well as between different types of structure and sound production, thereby addressing the contrast between harmony and discord.' Beethoven's celestial E, unharmonised, pianissimo, is the first and last vibration we hear.

### **In the Roar of your Torrents (2022)**

**KARL FIORINI (born 1979)**

*Aleks Farrugia writes:* 'Deep calls to deep in the roar of your torrents': so Psalm 42 describes the "downcast soul" in search for a beacon of hope. Yet equally it can be about the "downcast soul" of a whole Nation at war for survival as much as an intimate lament about the woes of the Self. Following Psalm 42, the music from the outset bares a lingering pain that builds inexorably until long wailing notes reach desperation with occasional outbursts from the strings sounding like screams rising from accumulated stress. Tensions/torrents, in the plural. Growing/consuming, from different directions. A trumpet rings the alarm, tensions escalate, becoming one sustained voice of long, agonised notes. A string of long drawn sighs. Then a defiant trumpet solo in the middle announces impending conflict. Parallel rhythms, breaking music, new tensions, energy, the struggle takes over. Beneath, the

tension continues to brew, there is darkness, danger. Yet it's countered by vigorousness, motion, perhaps even a playful cheekiness, ever defiant. Come the end we part ways with the psalmist: there is no hope in an ever-loving God. The strife of the previous struggle drops to a single long-drawn note. A new voice: the tension has been loosened, the threat suspended. But it is a non-ending, a cadence without resolution. There is no peace here, no catharsis. Just waiting.

### **Rückert-Lieder (1901-02)**

**GUSTAV MAHLER (1860-1911)**

arr Daniel Grossmann (2009)

'Along with Strauss, Sibelius and Schoenberg, Mahler sang the last rueful songs of 19th century romanticism [...] his destiny was to sum up, package, and lay to ultimate rest the fantastic treasure that was German-Austrian music from Bach to Wagner' (Leonard Bernstein). Setting poems by the German poet and orientalist, Friedrich Rückert, the so-called *Rückert-Lieder* – five independent numbers grouped together rather than a themed cycle - date from between the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies. The first four were orchestrated by Mahler, the fifth by the publisher and critic Max Puttmann.

*I Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder! Do not peer into my songs;*

*II Ich atmet' einen linden Duft I sensed a delicate fragrance, the fragrance of lime;*

*III Um Mitternacht At midnight I kept watch and looked up to heaven; no star of the host of stars smiled upon me;*

*IV Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen I am lost to the world; I live alone in my own heaven, in my love, in my song;*

*V Liebst du um Schönheit If you love me for beauty, youth, or riches, don't love me; if you love me for love, love me for ever.*

(Ordering according to the Mahler Critical Edition, 1984.)

*Programme Notes © Ateş Orga, Malta Spring Festival 2022*

**Meet the Artists:** Making a welcome return to the Malta Spring Festival, **Dimitri Scarlato** is Professor and Area Leader in Masters Programmes in Composition for Screen at the Royal College of Music, his multi-disciplinary composition, conducting and creative initiatives eclectically spanning classical, contemporary, opera, theatre, film and pop repertory. In 2020 his mini opera *A Life Reset* was a prize-winning entry in Opera Harmony's digital opera festival. Last October the Hungarian National Choir premiered a new Dante-related commission during the Budapest Liszt Fest. He is working currently on a piano piece for Peter Jablonsky.

The acclaimed Finnish mezzo-soprano **Niina Keitel**, former Director of the Lempi Festival, has appeared in leading roles on the world's most prestigious stages. Her broad concert repertory ranges from oratorio and song to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, Sibelius's *Kullervo*, and Verdi's *Requiem*, collaborating with such conductors as Kent Nagano, Philippe Jordan, Alan Gilbert, Leif Segerstam, Hannu Lintu, Mikko Franck and Santtu-Matias Rouvali. She studied at the Sibelius Academy, Helsinki.

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*Oboe/d'Amore/Cor Anglais* Christina Pantelidou

*Bassoon* Andreas Spyropoulos

*Horn* Emmanouil Ventouras

*Trumpet* Spyridon Arkoudis

*Trombone* Georgios Krimperis

*Percussion* Joseph 'Bibi Camilleri Jr

*Piano* Charlene Farrugia



# LUNCHTIME CONCERT

WEDNESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL | MALTA SOCIETY OF ARTS, 12:30

## RISING STARS I

*'Any musical piece is akin to a boulder with complex forms, with striations and engraved designs atop and within, which men can decipher in a thousand different ways without ever finding the right answer or the best one.'*

- IANNIS XENAKIS

**GEORG ZAMMIT**

tenor

**ANGELO MUSCAT**

tenor

**JAMES AGIUS**

baritone

**SOFIA NARMANIA**

piano

*presented by Andriana Yodanova*

**Tamino's Aria, Die Zauberflöte/The Magic Flute (1791)**

**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-91)**

**Don Giovanni's Aria, Don Giovanni (1787)**

**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**

**Duke of Mantua's Aria, Rigoletto (1850-51)**

**GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813-1901)**

**Lensky's Aria, Eugene Onegin (1877-78)**

**PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-93)**

**Duet 'O, Mimi tu piu non torni', La bohème (1893-95)**

**GIACOMO PUCCINI (1858-1924)**

**Sou-Chong's Aria, Das Land des Lächelns/The Land of the smiles (1929)**

**FRANZ LEHÁR (1870-1948)**

**Malatesta's Aria, Don Pasquale (1842)**

**GAETANO DONIZETTI (1797-1848)**

**Alfred Germont's Aria, La Traviata (1852-53)**

**GIUSEPPE VERDI**

**Zurga's Aria, Les pêcheurs de perles/The Pearlfishers (1862-63)**

**GEORGES BIZET (1838-75)**

**Cavaradossi's Aria, Tosca (1895-99)**

**GIACOMO PUCCINI**

**Duet 'Au fond du temple saint', Les pêcheurs de perles/The Pearlfishers**

**GEORGES BIZET**

**Meet the Artists: Georg Zammit**, singer and percussionist with the Malta Armed Forces Band, has been studying with the Bulgarian-born soprano Andriana Yordanova since the age of fifteen. Besides masterclasses with Joseph Calleja, he has worked with concert with Karl Jenkins, Raoul Lay and Wayne Marshall.

Competition-winning **Angelo Muscat** from Gozo began singing with Chorus Urbanus (John Galea) before proceeding to opera and classical training with Juliette Bisazza Zanni and then Andriana Yordanova. Appearing in opera, musicals and oratorio and in concerts with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra and Kaliningrad Symphony Orchestra, he is currently a student at the Malta School of Music. In 2021 he won a scholarship to study at the Conservatorio di Musica Santa Cecilia in Rome.

**James Agius** studied at the Johann Strauss School of Music, furthering his music studies at the University of Malta. During Valletta 2018 he appeared in the premiere of Monique Krüs's opera Corto Maltese: The Ballad of the Salty Sea, commissioned and co-produced by the Valletta 2018 Foundation and Teatru Manoel. In addition to his opera work, he is a member of the Goldberg Ensemble Choir (Michael Laus) and Schola Cantorum Jubilate (Marouska Attard).

From the Caucasus, the Abkhazianian pianist **Sofia Narmania**, based in Malta, gave her first concerts at the age of seven, going on to study with Irina Plotnikova at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory.



# LUNCHTIME CONCERT

THURSDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> APRIL | MALTA SOCIETY OF ARTS, 12:30

## RISING STARS II

*'Music is like truth; and truth is like rain. It does not concern itself with who gets wet when it pours.'* - CHARLES CAMILLERI

**RACHEL NAPOLI**

piano

*presented by Marco Rivoltini*

**Tocatta No 5 in E minor, BWV 914 (1707-09)**

**JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)**

**Impromptu in E flat major, D 899 No 2 (1827)**

**FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)**

**Trois nouvelles études, KK IIb/3 (1839)**

**FRYDERYK CHOPIN (1810-49)**

*No 1 in F minor Andantino*

*No 2 in A flat major Allegretto*

**Intermezzo in A Major Op 118 No 2 (1893)**

**JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-97)**

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**NIKOLAI MATVEI MIFSUD**

saxophone

**YVETTE GRIXTI**

piano

*presented by Joseph Vella*

**Histoires (1922)**

**JACQUES IBERT (1890-1962) arranged Jacques Larocque**

I La meneuse de tortues d'or

II Le petit âne blanc

VII Bajo la mesa

VIII La cage de cristal

**Pièce Brève (1951)**

**RENÉ DUCLOS (1899-1964)**

**Sicilienne et Tarentelle (1984)**

**FRANCIS-PAUL DEMILLAC [Enyss Djemil] (1917-2014)**

**Cinq Danses Exotiques (1961)**

**JEAN FRANÇAIX (1912-97)**

I Pambiche

III Mambo

IV Samba Lenta

**Meet the Artists:** **Rachel Napoli** began her piano studies at a youthful age. Following a break to focus on academic studies and commence working in software development, she resumed lessons at the former Johann Strauss School of Music in 2017. She is currently a second year Performance Diploma student at the Malta School of Music. Since 2012, Rachel has served as an accompanist in the Notre Dame Choir, Żabbar, assisting in rehearsals and taking part in services and concerts.

**Nikolai Matvei Mifsud** studies with Joseph Vella at the Malta School of Music. His musical activities include appearances with Tikka Banda – their contemporary and interactive spectacles offering year-round sound bites of a traditional Maltese Festa - as well as concerts with the Musical Society St. Pio X at Lija.

**Yvette Grixti**, staff accompanist at the Malta School of Music, holds licentiates from the Royal Schools of Music and performing fellowships from Trinity College of Music and London College of Music.



# LUNCHTIME CONCERT

FRIDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> APRIL | MALTA SOCIETY OF ARTS, 12:30

## RISING STARS III

*'Best to take the moment present  
As a present for the moment'*

- STEPHEN SONDHEIM

**GABRIELLE PORTELLI**

soprano

**MARIAH COSTA**

soprano

**MARIA-ELENA FARRUGIA**

piano

*presented by Miriam Cauchi*

**'La pastorella dell'Alpi ~ Tirolese', Les soirées musicales (by 1835)**  
**GIOACHINO ROSSINI (1792-1868)**

**Quando verrà quel dì (?1820s)**  
**VINCENZO BELLINI (1801-35)**

**Chanson d'amour, Op 27 No 1 (1882)**  
**GABRIEL FAURÉ (1845-1924)**

**'Saper vorreste', Un ballo in maschera (1857-58)**  
**GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813-1901)**

**'Qual gurado il cavaliere', Don Pasquale (1842)**  
**GAETANO DONIZETTI (1797-1848)**

**'L' invito', Les soirées musicales**  
**GIOACHINO ROSSINI**

**Wahdi, Op 13 (1970)**  
**JOSEPH VELLA (1942-2018)**

**Wiegenlied, Op 41 No 1 (1899)**  
**RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)**

**Zueignung, Op 10 No 1 (1885)**  
**RICHARD STRAUSS**

**'E Susanna non vien!' - 'Dove sono i bei momenti', Le nozze di Figaro (1786)**  
**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-91)**

**Duet 'Cosa mi narri... Sull'aria ... che soave zefiretto', Le nozze di Figaro**  
**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**

**Duetto buffo di due gatti (?1825 after Otello, 1816)**  
**attributed ROSSINI**

**Meet the Artists:** Award-winning **Gabrielle Portelli** started singing at the age of eight, when she joined the late Marie Thérèse Vassallo's Voice Studio Choir. Between 2010 and 2014 she was a member of the Joseph Calleja Children's Choir. Since 2014 she's become involved progressively in musical theatre, studying at Stagecoach and Centre Stage, in September 2021 taking part in one of the latter's international stage shows at Her Majesty's Theatre, London. Currently she works with Miriam Cauchi at the Malta School of Music Opera Studio, and is in her final year at the University of Malta, reading for a BA in Theatre and Psychology.

**Mariah Costa** began singing as a child with Simone Attard's Mirabitur Youth Choir, beginning her formal training with Karmena Radovska, continuing with

Graziella Debattista. She studies currently with Miriam Cauchi at the Malta School of Music Opera Studio, besides attending masterclasses by distinguished international artists and teachers. During Valletta 2018 she made her debut at the Teatru Manoel in the role of Cranio in *Corto Maltese: The Ballad of the Salty Sea*.

**Maria-Elena Farrugia** studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, and with Michael Laus at the University of Malta. In 2003 she won the EPTA (Malta) Competition, enabling her to go to the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest to work with the pre-eminent Hungarian pianist Balázs Szokolay. Associated with Joseph Calleja, she trained as répétiteur with Juliette Bisazza Zanni and is currently tutor and staff pianist at the Malta School of Music.



# LUNCHTIME CONCERT

SATURDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> APRIL | MALTA SOCIETY OF ARTS, 12:30

## RISING STARS IV

*'What is Music? How do you define it? Music is a calm moonlit night, the rustle of leaves in Summer.*

*Music is the far off peal of bells at dusk!*

*Music comes straight from the heart and talks only to the heart: it is Love!*

*Music is the Sister of Poetry and her Mother is sorrow!*

- SERGEI RACHMANINOV

**MATTHEW ZAMMIT**

violin

**SOFIA NARMANIA**

piano

*presented by Antoine Frendo*

**Sonata in F major, Op 24 (Spring)**

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)**

*I Allegro;*

*II Adagio molto espressivo;*

*Scherzo: Allegro molto;*

*IV Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo*

**Sonata in F major, MWV Q7 (1820)**

**FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-47)**

*I Allegro;*

*II Andante;*

*III Presto*

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**KAROL ZAMMIT**

piano

*presented by Yvette Gixti*

**Prelude & Fugue in E minor, Op 35 No 1**

**FELIX MENDELSSOHN**

**Sonata in D minor, Op 31 No 2 (Tempest)**

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**

*I Largo-Allegro;*

*II Adagio;*

*III Allegretto*

**Preludes, Op 23 (1901, 1903)**

**SERGEI RACHMANINOV (1873-1943)**

*II B flat major Maestoso*

*IV D major Andante cantabile*

*V G minor Alla marcia*

**Meet the Artists:** Aged eight, **Matthew Zammit** began studying at the former Johann Strauss School of Music, two years later transitioning to private lessons with Antoine Frendo. A member of the Malta Youth Orchestra, he was selected to take part in the historic 2018 Side by Side Teatru Manoel concert with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra under Daniele Gatti. At the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra Academy he studies with Sonja Larson, visiting tutor from the United States.

The Abkhazianian pianist **Sofia Narmania**, based in Malta, gave her first concerts at the age of seven, going on to study with Irina Plotnikova at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory.

**Karol Zammit** studied piano and flute at the Johann Strauss School of Music, subsequently specialising in piano with Yvette Grixti. Winning the 2017 Maltese Islands Festival Junior Cup, he has since gone on to gain associate and licentiate diplomas from the London College of Music.





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