

15TH INTERNATIONAL SPRING ORCHESTRA FESTIVAL

15-19 JUNE 2021

DEGENERATES



OPENING CONCERT

Tuesday 15th June / Metanoia Theatre, 20:00

Brikkuni team up with Karl Fiorini

Often credited with the revival of Maltese sung pop music, Brikkuni have been doing the rounds since their seminal 2008 debut Kuntrabanda album - a genre bending pop / rock / punk hybrid that transformed the band into a local cult phenomenon ushering in a new wave of Maltese alternative music in its wake.

"Adorned with intense musical talent ... [something] you listen to on cold wintry days as you pour the first of many wine glasses." - Mark Debono

BRIKKUNI

Mario Vella - vocals
Kym - vocals
Alan Vella - keyboards
Jimmy Bartolo - guitars
Andrew Schembri - guitars
John Bartolo - drums
Oliver Degariele - bass

STRINGS

Arrangements - Karl Fiorini
Violins - Maria Conrad,
Roberta Attard, Stefan Calleja,
Sonya Larson
Violas - Ester Garcia Salas,
Joseph Mallia
Cello - Desirée Quintano
Double Bass - Marco Agnietti



CONCERT II

Wednesday 16th June / Malta Society of Arts, Valletta, 20:00

Somogyi String Quartet, Budapest

Péter Somogyi - violin

György Lendvai - violin

Balázs Tóth - viola

László Pólus - cello

Meet the Artists : Nearly a quarter of a century together, the Hungarian Somogyi String Quartet, returning to the International Spring Orchestra Festival by popular demand, was formed by former students of the Liszt Ferenc College of Music, Budapest. In 1998 it was invited to the Ravinia Festival, Illinois, working with the Tokyo, La Salle, Cleveland

and Emerson Quartets. Widely recognised for its discerningly informed advocacy of contemporary music, the Quartet appear annually at the Budapest Mini-Festival, founded by Zsolt Durkó in 1987, and won the Hungarian Artisjus Award in 1999, 2004 and 2006. Attila Bozay dedicated his Third Quartet to the members.





ALBERT PACE (born 1958)

String Quartet No 2 Haunted by B (2017)

Microludes I-IV, Fantasy.

Visiting Senior Lecturer in Music at the University of Malta, Albert Pace was born in Hamrun and studied composition with Charles Camilleri. He gained his master's degree from the University of Edinburgh in 1998, and his doctorate from the University of Malta in 2007. His Second String Quartet received the Mullord Award at the 2016/17 Alvarez Chamber Orchestra Composition Competition, 'As you like it'.

The composer: 'I have always been fascinated by Beethoven's string quartets, and particular events from different ones stick in my memory. This quartet was inspired by some of these events and motifs, as well as by the fact that some of these were found to be related to each other. The piece comprises four Microludes and a Fantasy. The term "microlude", borrowed from Kurtág, was preferred to "bagatelle", because the latter term conveys an idea of levity. The "fantasy" is longer than the four microludes put together. Microlude I begins with an obsessive repetition of an anguished motif from the slow movement of Beethoven's Op 18 No 1. Then follows a section based on the dotted rhythm of the scherzo from Op 127, and later by material from Op 130 and other quartets. Microludes II and III take up the same Op 127 motif, together with others, particularly

a lighter version of the opening element of the whole composition. Microlude IV revolves around a continuous repetition of a motif from the last movement of Op 131, the intervals expanding at different rates in the different instruments. The closing Fantasy reverts to the Op 127 dotted rhythm, with a main section that is inspired by the *Grosse Fuge* plus material from further quartets. At three strategic points during the movement, the music turns into a straightforward D flat major, with phrases taken from Opp 74, 130 and 59 No 1 respectively. The last time is followed by a questioning ending, highlighting the prominence of the interval of the minor second.'

SEBASTIAN THEMESSL (born 1975)

String Quartet No 4 The Kraken

(2019, International Spring Orchestra Festival commission, World Premiere)

I Largo; II Quasi Allegro; III Adagio; IV Quasi Allegretto.

Sebastian Themessl was born in Innsbruck to a Viennese family of musicians. At the University for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, he studied composition with Erich Urbanner (a disciple of Fortner, Stockhausen and Maderna), graduating with distinction in 2003. Currently on the professorial faculty of the Tyrolean State Conservatory, Innsbruck, founded in 1818, he also teaches at the University for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna.

His Fourth Quartet, dedicated to Karl Fiorini, draws its title from Tennyson's 1830 Nordic sonnet, *The Kraken*.

*Below the thunders of the upper deep;
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee
About his shadowy sides: above him swell
Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;
And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
Unnumbered and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.
There hath he lain for ages and will lie
Battening upon huge sea-worms in his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;
Then once by man and angels to be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.*

The composer: 'The first movement is a short calm introduction to the second, which presents a development of contradictory material before stopping abruptly. At the centre of the work is a wide spreading *adagio*, a *Passacaglia funèbre*. The fourth movement develops a single idea, reaching a "chaotic" climax and ending in a reprise of the second movement's close.'

LEÓ WEINER (1885-1960)

String Quartet No 3 in G major Op 26 (1938)

I Pastorale: Allegro amabile; II Phantaisie: Poco adagio quasi andante; III Fugue: Vivo e giocoso.

Weiner, *Wunderkind* of Budapest, studied with Hans von Koessler, a Brahmsian whose pupils at the time included Kodály and Bartók. Essentially a Jewish Romantic Classicist, with a colourful orchestral ear, Weiner wasn't averse to Hungarian ethnic sources, preferring, however, to quote rather than collect or develop. He was appointed to the Royal National Hungarian Academy of Music in 1908 (from 1925 the Liszt Ferenc College of Music), retiring in 1957. He endured cataclysmic changes of 20th century government and politics, surviving both the anti-semitic Horthy years and Second World War and living through the 1956 Hungarian Uprising. His roll-call of students was formidable, among the many Antal Doráti, Georg Solti, Béla Síki, György Sebök, Tibor Varga and János Starker. The pre-War Third Quartet suggests origins and textures closer to Brahms, Dvořák and Reger than Bartók. The Pastorale is lyrically expansive, together with the central Phantaisie curiously 'English' in some of its first violin turns and harmonic underlay. The closing Fugue, drawing on an old Hungarian tune, is lithe, busy and elegantly crafted, a 'Mendelssohnian' masterpiece of contrapuntal art.



CONCERT III

Thursday 17th June / Malta Society of Arts, Valletta, 12:30

Annabelle Berthomé-Reynolds & Luka Okros

**Annabelle
Berthomé-Reynolds**
violin

Luka Okros
piano

Meet the Artists : Versatile French violinist **Annabelle Berthomé-Reynolds** completed her studies at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and the University of Cambridge. A moving force in contemporary circles, she has collaborated with a number of leading composers, including Nicolas Bacri, Nimrod Borenstein, David Chaillou, Karl Fiorini and John Hopkins. A champion of forgotten music by exceptional women, her recordings include the complete Bacewicz sonatas released in 2019 (Musica, Brussels). An esoteric album featuring the Ives sonatas appeared in 2016 (White Label, Brussels). In addition to her playing career, she is a pedagogy consultant for the Belgian Council for Education (CECP).

She is also Professor of Violin and Chamber Music at the Conservatoire de Roubaix, northern France.

Born in Tbilisi, Georgia, the pianist, composer and social media influencer **Luka Okros** studied with Sergei Dorensky at the Moscow Tchaikovsky State Conservatory, completing his training under Norma Fisher at the Royal College of Music, London, winning the Chappel Medal. Recent highlights have included first prizes at the 2016 Hong Kong International and 2017 Hannover Chopin International competitions, and third prize at the 2018 Scottish International.





GRAŻYNA BACEWICZ (1909-69)

Partita (1955)

I Preludium: Grave; II Toccata: Vivace;

Intermezzo: Andantino melancolio; Rondo: Presto.

The composer: 'My compositional workshop ... is for me something personal and intimate ... the matter of the way by which one arrived at something is, for listeners, unimportant. What matters is the final result, that is the work itself.' Music of 'evolution not revolution', as well as of physical/mental recovery following a car crash in 1954, the movements of the Partita – motivically wrought, emotional plangent, gratifyingly violinistic – look to Baroque, Romantic and Classical periods for structural reference, and, transiently, to the melodic folk fields of Bacewicz's Polish/Lithuanian background. A purely orchestral version was premiered in Warsaw in May 1957.

PAUL HINDEMITH (1895-1963)

Violin Sonata No 3 in E (1935)

I Ruhig bewegt; II Langsam-Sehr lebhaft/Im Zeitmass-Langsam-Wieder lebhaft

During the 1930s Hindemith fell foul of the Nazi regime. With his music banned increasingly from performance and broadcast (though not publication), he found himself villified in the Fascist press, personally attacked by Goebbels, and



– along with the likes of Schoenberg, Kurt Weill, Křenek, the 'minor Bolsheviks' and Stravinsky - hung-drawn-and-quartered in the notorious 1938 Düsseldorf Exhibition of 'Degenerate Music' aimed at denouncing all that was perceived to be Semitic or 'un-German'. Spending time in Turkey, where he was an influential pedagogic presence in Istanbul and Ankara, he and his wife, of Jewish background, emigrated to Switzerland in 1938, moving on to America and Yale two years later. Distinctively, the E major Violin Sonata, broadly lyrical, often cathartic, stands, the late Malcolm MacDonald reminds us, 'very far from any sort of "degeneracy": rather it seems a work of Apollonian clarity and balance of form'.

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971) /

SAMUEL DUSHKIN (1891-1976)

Suite Italienne (c 1933)

I Introduzione: Allegro moderato; II Serenata: Larghetto;

III Tarantella: Vivace; IV Gavotta con due Variazioni;

V Scherzino; VI Minuetto e Finale.

This verdant casket of delights draws on music by Giovanni Pergolesi (1710-36) used by Stravinsky in his one-act ballet (*action dansante*) *Pulcinella*, premiered by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in Paris in 1920, with libretto and choreography by Massine (dancing the *commedia dell'arte* title role), and sets and costumes by Picasso.

CONCERT IV

Thursday 17th June / Malta Society of Arts, Valletta, 20:00

Dinara Klinton

Dinara Klinton
piano

Meet the Artists : **Dinara Klinton**, from Kharkiv, Ukraine, studied early on with the late Svetlana Zakharova. Mentored by Vladimir Krainev, she graduated with highest honours from the Moscow Central Music School, where she studied with Valery Piasetski, and the Moscow Tchaikovsky State Conservatory, where she worked with Eliso Virsaladze. In London she completed her Master's degree at the Royal College of Music under the tutelage of Dina Parakhina, and was inaugural recipient of the prestigious RCM Benjamin Britten Fellowship during her Artist Diploma course. Subsequently she attended masterclasses at the Lake Como Piano Academy and worked with Boris Petrushansky in Imola. Joint winner

of the 2007 International Busoni Piano Competition, Bolzano, Dinara pursues a busy international concert schedule, including appearances at the Progetto Martha Argerich, Lugano, the Cheltenham Music Festival, the Aldeburgh Proms, and La Roque d'Anthéron. She's currently Assistant Piano Professor at the Royal College of Music. As a recording artist she has received widespread critical acclaim, notably for her integral Liszt Transcendental Studies (Genuin, Leipzig) and a Chopin album including the Second Sonata (Fryderyk Chopin Institute, Warsaw). A new three-CD set featuring Prokofiev's complete Sonatas has just been released on the Piano Classics label (Leeuwarden).



SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)

'5 March 1953.

Sergei Prokofiev, Russian composer whose music, capable of a great variety of expression – mercurial, martial, jovial, saturnine – has brought new vigour to 20th century composition, whose musical language is marked by elastic tonality, plastic rhythmology, tensile polyphony and ductile harmony, within the ambience of euphonious dissonance, without losing its profound Russian quality, dies of a cerebral haemorrhage at 9 o'clock in the evening, in his home in Moscow, at the age of sixty-one, [fifty minutes] before Stalin, whose reactionary views on music contributed to Prokofiev's harassment' ~ Nicolas Slonimsky.

Sonata No 1 in F minor Op 1 (1907 rev 1909), in one movement [exposition-development-reprise].

Dinara Klinton: 'Writing sonatas and symphonies was a part of the culture, the expectation, in Russian life – and especially for someone like Prokofiev, a large-scale thinker. It's difficult to *compose* one, but it's very easy to express oneself in these forms. They offer a lot of choice and possibilities. Over-pedalling doesn't flatter Prokofiev's style of writing. His "orchestrated" pianism, linearity and layered polyphony require other means of realisation. The First Sonata shows influences – Scriabin, Rachmaninov, some Brahms. But in manner and rhythms, its variegated articulations, you can hear a young rebel at work. He experiments, he's trying to find the right tools to express his intentions.'

Sonata No 3 in A minor Op 28, From Old Notebooks (1907/1917), in one subdivided movement:

Allegro tempestoso [triplets] – Moderato [duplets] - Allegro tempestoso - Moderato - Più lento - Più animato - Allegro I - Poco più mosso.

The shortest of Prokofiev's piano sonatas, a re-working of earlier ideas and sketches, premiered by the composer during a week-long fest of his works in Petrograd, 15 April 1918. À la Schumann, the subsidiary theme of the *Moderato* is based on the name of a girl (one of many) Prokofiev used to 'watch' at the Conservatoire – Eshe (German: Esche ["ash tree"], French: Eche). In German nomenclature the notes



E-Eb-C-B-E – *Piece on the Theme of "Esche" in C minor* (1907, rev 1910). In French a four-note cryptogram, E-C-B-E – followed in the sonata.

Sonata No 6 in A major Op 82 (1931/35[1939]-40) I Allegro moderato; II Allegretto; III Tempo di valzer, lentissimo; IV Vivace [tempo subdivisions throughout]

Dinara Klinton: 'The Sixth is absorbing at many levels – the scale of thought and organisation, the pianistic sonorities, the references (so definite) to ballet music. It's not merely a suite of movements, the whole edifice has to be seen, played and calculated globally. The second movement is a result of the first, the third a result of the second and so on. All correspond in their ideas, each, not necessarily motivically, are linked or set up/resolve expectations in some way ... choices of sound, colour and tempo trace the journey and help confirm oneness of conception.'

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971) transcribed GUIDO AGOSTI (1901-89)

L'Oiseau de feu (1910)

I Danse infernale du roi Kastcheï; II Berceuse; III Finale.

Along with Stravinsky's *Petrushka* 'movements' for Artur Schnabel, Guido Agosti's spectacular 1928 encapsulation of Stravinsky's *Firebird*, dedicated to the memory of his teacher Busoni, is one of the great neckbreakers of the repertory, an epic landmark of the virtuoso transcriber's art in a tradition stretching from before Liszt, Alkan and Stradal to beyond Godowsky, Feinberg and Ronald Stevenson.

CONCERT V

Friday 18th June / Malta Society of Arts, Valletta, 12:30

Emilia Wiśniewska & Julia Miller

Emilia Wiśniewska

violin

Julia Miller

piano

Meet the Artists :

Born in Poland, **Emilia Wiśniewska** started violin lessons young, making her concerto début with the Zielona Góra Philharmonic at the age of sixteen. She studied subsequently in Sweden and Hungary. A noted international competition prize winner, popular with audiences from Europe to Asia, she joined the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in 2014.

Polish-born pianist and competition laureate **Julia Miller** studied at the Music Academy of Lodz. Following time in Dublin, she moved to Malta in 2012, establishing a reputation as soloist, accompanist and chamber partner, collaborating with, among others, Miriam Gauci, the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, Kor Malta, the Teatru Manoel Youth Opera, and the Valletta Baroque Festival. She teaches at the Malta School of Music.



DARIUS MILHAUD (1892-1974)***Le Printemps Op 18 (1914)***

‘Don’t be afraid of writing something people can remember and whistle. Don’t ever feel discomfited by a melody.’ Milhaud, the Jew from Marseilles who studied with Widor and d’Indy, taught Brubeck and Bacharach, and seared across the musical firmament from Les Six to Barraqué and Boulez. An early effort, *Le Printemps* is a filigreed Gallic pièce caractéristique, set apart in its irregularly swaying 5/8 (3+2) metre

WITOLD LUTOSŁAWSKI (1913-94)***Subito (1992)***

‘Isn’t it part of the great attraction of music that what it says cannot be expressed in any other way?’ *Subito* was virtually Lutosławski’s last work, sketches for a Violin Concerto in 1994 cut short by his death. Commissioned as a test piece for the 1994 Indianapolis International Violin Competition, its four temporally and emotionally contrasted sections have been defined as ‘a sort of potted history of violin virtuosity, central European-style’ - from Brahms to Bartók via Wieniawski and Szymanowski, vibrant personal seasoning drizzling the journey.

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)***Cinq Mélodies Op 35b (1925)***

I Andante; II Lento, ma non troppo; III Animato, ma non allegro; IV Allegretto leggero e scherzando; V Andante non troppo.

Prokofiev’s transcription of his Songs Without Words Op 35 (1920) – soprano vocalise settings from his Parisian period, dedicated to Nina Koshetz, friend of Rachmaninov, Horowitz and Ravel.

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)***Ballad from Le baiser de la fée (1947)***

Based on music by Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky’s allegorical ballet *The Fairy’s Kiss*, commissioned by the Russian actress and dancer Ida Rubinstein (of contemporaneous Ravel Bolero fame) was written in Nice in 1928. The Ballade, transcribed post-war in collaboration with the violinist Jeanne Gautier, comes from towards the end of the second scene, Fête. A Fairy, disguised as a gypsy, approaches a Young Man and reads his palm, predicting happiness.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-47)***Sonata in F minor Op 4 (1823)***

I Adagio-Allegro moderato; II Poco Adagio; III Allegro agitato-Adagio-Tempo I.

The second of Mendelssohn’s two boyhood violin sonatas, dedicated to his teacher Eduard Rietz, dedicatee two years later of the celebrated Octet. Opening with a ruminative soliloquy, it’s a refined structure predominantly classical in design, emphasising urbane lyricism in the first movement, gracious *romanza* in the A flat major *adagio*, and a 6/8 vigour in the finale presaging greater things to come. “Sonate für Pianoforte und Violine” the score says, but, following Mozart and Beethoven, Mendelssohn gives us in fact a viably engaged duo partnership, both instruments taking their share of melody, accompaniment and dialogue, the voice quietly individual.

CONCERT VI

Friday 18th June / Malta Society of Arts, Valletta, 20:00

Sébastien Hurtaud & Paméla Hurtado

Sébastien Hurtaud
cello

Paméla Hurtado
piano

Meet the Artists : Born into a family of artists, **Sébastien Hurtaud** studied at the Conservatoire de La Rochelle (Gold Medal, 1994) and in Paris at the Schola Cantorum, graduating in 1997, and the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique. Subsequently he furthered his education at the Hochschule für Musik Detmold, the Royal Northern College of Music Manchester (studying with Karine Georgian), the Conservatoire de Boulogne Billancourt, and the Southern Methodist University of Dallas. During his apprenticeship years he benefitted further from contact with Celibidache as well as attending one of Rostropovich's last masterclasses. A laureate of the Naumburg Foundation, he won the Adam International Cello Competition in 2009.

Paméla Hurtado graduated with distinction from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique and the Cortot École Normale de Musique de Paris where she studied with Réna Shereshevskaya. In 2008, as a Fulbright Award winner, she graduated with an artist diploma at the Southern Methodist University of Dallas, from the class of Joaquín Achúcarro. A noted international prize winner, active as soloist in France, the United States and throughout Europe, she has worked with a number of composers including Henri Dutilleux and Philippe Hersant. Her chamber music activities including a special partnership with Sébastien Hurtaud, which began at the Prades Pablo Casals Festival. Their recording of Hindemith's cello works was released by Naxos in December 2013.



FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-47)**Sonata No 2 in D major Op 58 (1842-43)**

*I Allegro assai vivace; II Allegretto scherzando;
III Adagio - IV Molto allegro e vivace.*

Dating from a particularly taxing period of Mendelssohn's life divided between Berlin and Leipzig – he founded the Leipzig Conservatory in May 1843, appointing a stellar faculty from among his friends – the Second Cello Sonata, written for his financier brother Paul but dedicated to Glinka's supporter Count Mateusz Wielhorski, epitomises fecundity and high flying grandeur. Circling a single point d'orgue, D, permeating the music pivotally – 6/8 D major (through-composed, without repeats), B minor 2/4 scherzo-intermezzo, G major choral fantasy (baroque descended, Bach primarily), D major finale – Classically tough structural debate counterpointed by Romantic repose and lyrical melody focussed through tensioned harmonies and aural clarity is the order of the hour.

BÉLA BARTÓK (1881-1945) – LUIGI SILVA (1903-61)**Romanian Dances Sz 56 (1915)**

I Stick Dance; II Sash Dance; III In One Spot; IV Dance from Bucsum; V Romanian Polka - VI Fast Dance.

Bartók at his most invitingly ethnic, this modally exotic collection was written originally for piano. The tunes come from different Transylvanian regions, places especially remote and unsullied during the First World War. 'I consider it my goal in life to continue my study of Romanian folk music, at least in Transylvania, and carry it to its end ...'

PAUL HINDEMITH (1895-1963)**Sonata in E (1948)**

*I Pastorale; II Moderately fast-Slow-Tempo I [sic];
III Passacaglia.*

'Be prepared ... for disregard, boycotting and malicious gossip. But trust in the power of your work.' The last of Hindemith's cello compositions, from his American period, written for Piatigorsky. Writing in the early sixties, the English critic Colin Mason, of the Manchester Guardian, noted that conceptually it was 'much more harmonic in

conception than is customary with Hindemith' while yet in places recalling in its dissonances 'the most daring' of his early endeavours. The linear voicings, imitative passages and registral spacings make for a distinctive sound world, intimately intense.

DARIUS MILHAUD (1892-1974)**Scaramouche Op 165b (1937)**

I Vif; II Modéré; III Brasileira.

Premiered at the 1937 Paris International Exposition, this short three-movement suite, originally for two pianos, was commissioned by Marguerite Long for two of her students, Ida Jankelevitch and Marcelle Meyer. Milhaud recorded it the following year with Meyer. He based it on music written for a production of *Le Médecin Volant* after Molière (1937), drawing further in the middle tableau on a score to a play about Simón Bolívar by the Uruguayan-born French writer and dramatist Jules Supervielle (1935/36). Scaramuccia, 'little skirmisher', commedia dell'arte ... The rumba finale is a famous riot, the second movement is languorously beautiful, the opening racket briefly shakes hands with Stravinsky's *Petrushka*. Milhaud claimed he'd had 'enormous trouble' writing it all, thinking the outcome hardly worth publishing. It brought him a fortune.



CONCERT VII

Saturday 19th June / City Theatre, Valletta, 20:00

The Emperor of Atlantis or The Disobedience of Death Victor Ullmann (1898-1944)

Louis Andrew Cassar

Tod Loudsprecher (bass)

Clare Ghigo

Trommler (mezzo-soprano)

Kimberley Grech

Bubikopf (soprano)

Ken Scicluna

Kaiser Overall (baritone)

Charles Vincenti

Harlequin / Soldier (tenor)

Ensemble Télémaque

Raoul Lay (conductor)

Viktor Ullmann, composer, pianist and conductor, was born in Silesia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to parents of Jewish descent but Catholic conversion. 'Like such other assimilated German-speaking Czech Jews as Kafka and Mahler, [he] lived a life of multiple estrangements, cut off from Czech nationalism, German anti-Semitism and Jewish orthodoxy' (David Schiff, 'A Musical Postcard From the Eye of the Nazi Storm', *New York Times*, 23 March 2003). In Vienna he studied with Schoenberg and, following the First World War, came under the wing of Zemlinsky. Alban Berg (*Wozzeck* especially) was

influential. Subsequently, in Prague during the thirties, he attended Alois Hába's quartertone classes at the Conservatory. On 8 September 1942 he and his third wife arrived in Terezin (Theresienstadt), shipped in one of four cattle-wagon transports. Two years later, 16 October 1944, they were deported east along the tracks to Auschwitz to be met by Josef Mengele, perishing two days later, a Wednesday.

Rehearsed in Terezín in March 1944 only, inevitably, to be banned, the premiere of *Der Kaiser von Atlantis oder die Tod-Verweigerung* (Op 49b, 1943) was produced by Netherlands



Opera in Amsterdam in December 1975. A decade on, Joža Karas's book *Music in Terezín*, a harrowing read, definitively established Ullmann and his Terezín inmates, an extraordinary assembly of central European creatives, on the world stage, leaving no one in doubt of their gift nor tragedy. 'By no means did we sit weeping on the banks of the waters of Babylon,' recorded Ullmann. 'Our endeavour with respect to the arts was commensurate with our will to live.'

Atlantis sets a one-act libretto by the young Jewish artist and poet Petr Kien, among the first to be interned in Terezín in December 1941. For Andrew Porter, writing in *The New Yorker* (6 June 1977), 'an elusive death-welcoming parable about a mad, murderous ruler, possibly redeemed at last, who says farewell

to the world in a mock-Faustian vision of a natural paradise no longer spoiled by men; had his dream come true all men would be dead'. 'The Emperor, living in total isolation, represents Hitler' proposes Schiff, paraphrasing the conductor James Conlon. 'His ally, the Drummer Girl, who sings a menacing minor-key version of *Deutschland Über Alles*, is Eva Braun. The plaintively romantic Harlekin and a pair of Romeo and Juliet-style lovers represent the lost world of normal human emotion'. A string of cipher-like melodic quotations sub-text the work, from (closing) the Lutheran chorale *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* (A Mighty Fortress is Our God) and a late 18th century tune by Reichardt to (opening) the Death motif from Suk's *Asrael* Symphony.





Meet the Artists :

‘Born humanist’, **Raoul Lay** – composer, conductor, pianist, champion of the bold and liberated, honour and the moral high ground, ‘a conveyor of sounds, a committed artist at the service of music, composers and audiences’ - is a man and thinker of many parts. In his youth he studied science, literature and philosophy; then, at the Marseille Conservatoire, singing, harmony, and choral conducting, unanimously being awarded first prize for composition in 1994. That year he also won the SACEM Prize. He furthered his studies with Peter Eötvös in Hungary, in 1998 winning the Paul-Louis Weiller Prize awarded by the Académie Française (Fine Arts Section). Currently president of Futurs Composés, the national network for musical creation in France, he was transiently artistic director of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra from 2019 to 2020. He founded **Ensemble Télémaque** in 1994, touring the world across hemispheres, and from Europe and the Mediterranean to Japan and China. ‘I love it when music touches somebody and it can be felt in your body and soul.’

Louis Andrew Cassar started his vocal studies, aged thirteen, with Brian Cefai, working subsequently with Patrizia Morandini in Italy. Currently under the artistic direction of Juliette Bizazza Zanni, he pursues an active

operatic, oratorio and concert career, his repertory taking in key principle and secondary rôles. Among sacred works by Maltese composers, he was involved in the 2016 APS project reviving Antonio Nani’s Requiem Mass with the Bulgarian Philharmonic Orchestra under Joseph Vella. The following year he took the part of St Paul in the world premiere of Marco Firisina’s oratorio *Fino ai confine della terra* with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by the composer. During the European Capital of Culture year, Valletta 2018, he appeared in the premieres of *Aħna Refuġjati* and the children’s opera *Il-Qtates ta’ max-Xatt*, an adaptation of the award-winning children’s book by Claire Azzopardi. In 2019, he was one of the soloists in the Victoria International Arts Festival’s opening concert when Orff’s *Carmina Burana* and Mendelssohn’s *Die Walpurgisnacht* were programmed.

Clare Ghigo, winner of the Malta International Singing Competition, studied with Leah Marian Jones and Laura Sarti, completing her postgraduate training at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Cardiff. Admired for her rôles in operas by Bizet, Humperdinck, Monteverdi, Mozart, Piazzolla, Rachmaninov and Rossini, her Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture engagements included the world premieres of *Aħna Refuġjati* and Reuben Pace’s *Belt il-Bniedem (City of Humanity)*. She also took the part of Anna Rosa in Brian Schembri’s landmark centenary revival of Carlo Diacono’s 1918 opera *L’Alpino*. A versatile recitalist, she has appeared in concert with Richard Bonynghe, Monserrat Caballé, Joseph Calleja, Daniela Dessi, Nelly Miriciu, Luciana Serra, Anna Tomova Sintova and Bryn Terfel; and has toured China with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra. Clare forms part of the Monteverdi Project (Malta) and the Orfeo Foundation(Amsterdam), and is an ENOA (Aix-en-Provence) and Georg Solti Accademia di Bel Canto scholar. She wishes to thank the BOV Joseph Calleja Foundation for their support.

Kimberley Grech has always had a passion for music and art, at the age of twelve winning a UK cholarship in Musical Theatre at the Margaret Howard Theatre Schools leading subsequently to the discovery of her classical voice and her study of *bel canto*. An Associate of Trinity College London,

Louis Andrew Cassar



Claire Ghigo



Kimberly Grech



Ken Scicluna



Charles Vincenti



she is widely in demand, highlights of her career including arias by Nicolo Isouard with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra and Brian Schembri, and the Mass inaugurating the Maltese Crib in Bethlehem in 2017. Extending her repertoire to suit her *lirico-spinto* voice, she continues her studies under the artistic guidance of Juliette Bisazza Zanni. She especially values the coaching she has received from Arleen J Barlow and Andriana Yordanova, as well as the opportunity to have taken part in masterclasses with Laura Sarti, Patricia MacMahon, Matteo Dalle Fratte and Peter Ford. A medical doctor by profession, she is a Member of the Royal College of Physicians in London, one of the youngest to achieve such distinction.

Ken Scicluna, busy in the visual, performing and broadcasting arts scene from an early age, was the first ever Maltese singer to study at the Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory in St Petersburg, in the class of the legendary Kirov/Mariinsky tenor Yuri Marusin. He also attended masterclasses with Cheryl Studer, Sergei Leiferkus and Fabio Mastrangelo, and worked with Helmut Rilling in Germany. His operatic and oratorio appearances, in theatres from Malta to Russia, Italy, France, Germany, Israel and Spain, have featured standard repertoire works by Mozart, Puccini, Verdi and Bizet as well as Salieri's *Prima la musica e poi le parole*, Gilbert and Sullivan's *Cox and Box*, *Patience*, Menotti's *Ahmal and*

the Night Visitors, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. A seasoned traveller, fluent in six languages, his engagements during the Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture year included Andrea in Diacono's *L'Alpino*, Corto Maltese in Monique Krüs's *Corto Maltese, the Ballad of the Salty Sea* (a Teatru Manoel Youth Opera initiative), the Monk in Reuben Pace's *Belt il-Bniedem*, and a Bernstein centenary concert with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra under Wayne Marshall.

Charles Vincenti read music at the University of Malta. He began his vocal training with Claire Massa, subsequently attending Éva Andor's masterclasses at the British Kodály Academy. He studies currently with Juliette Bisazza Zanni. Operatic appearances have included rôles in *Gianni Schicchi*, *Tosca*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Turandot*, *Otello*, *Romeo et Juliette*, *Candide*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *La cambiale di matrimonio*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and *L'elisir d'amore*. Non-operatic performances have ranged from Bach oratorios and passions through Mozart and Haydn masses, Rossini, Gounod, Saint-Saëns and Puccini, to Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*. His interest in Maltese music focusses on a repertoire from Isouard, Vassallo and Nani to Carmelo Pace and Joseph Sammut, Charles Camilleri's opera *Il-Wegħda* to the premiere of Albert Pace's *Songs of a Solitary Man*.

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*The taking of photographs or flash photography is not permitted.
Private audio-visual recording is forbidden unless by arrangement with the Festival management.
Please refrain from applauding until the end of a work or performance.
No smoking, including e-cigarettes.*