

IT MUST BE!



21ST MALTA SPRING FESTIVAL
MUSIC · MASTERCLASSES · CONCERTS

**29 MARCH -
03 APRIL 2027**

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR : KARL FIORINI

BOOKINGS :
WWW.TEATRUMANGELMT
WWW.MALTASPRINGFESTIVAL.COM



21st MALTA SPRING FESTIVAL 2027

THIRD INTERNATIONAL STRINGS ACADEMY

28th March - 4th April **2027**

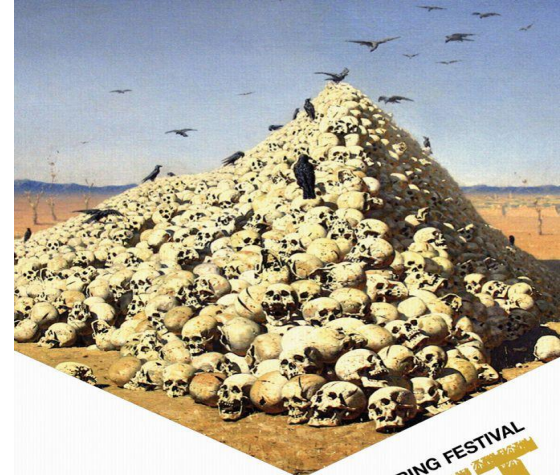
www.maltaspringfestival.com



About

The Malta Spring Festival is held in Valletta, with each edition built around a theme: 2017 From Zappa to Beethoven; 2018 Revolution and its Composers; 2019 Of Death and Maidens; 2020 Must it be? It must be!; 2021 Degenerates; 2022 About Hope; 2023 The Island of Nowhere; and 2024 Fighting for Hope. Exploring repertoire from the Classical period to the present day, including works rarely performed or previously unheard in Malta, the programming takes audiences on a journey of cultural, psychological and personal discovery.

The Malta Spring Festival takes pride in carefully selecting an ambitious roster of artists and placing a premium on challenge, innovation and artistic excellence, bringing new and established works together in unexpected combinations. Alongside the evening concerts and recitals, the festival's educational strand, the Rising Stars Concert Series, welcomes emerging local artists to develop their skills on a larger stage. It encourages them to broaden their musical horizons and provides a springboard for pursuing their musical education beyond Malta.



22-26
APRIL
2025

19TH MALTA SPRING FESTIVAL

A RADIANT FUTURE

MUSIC · DANCE · PERFORMANCES

Artistic Director: Karl Fiorini

22nd April - SHOSTAKOVICH STRING QUARTETS | QUIRON QUARTET
24th April - CONTEMPORARY DANCE & LIVE MUSIC
25th April - JAZZ NIGHT | SANDRO ZERAFÀ QUARTET
26th April - MALTA SPRING FESTIVAL ACADEMY ORCHESTRA
Dmitry Sitkovetsky, violin solo | Brian Schembel, conductor

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20TH MALTA
SPRING FESTIVAL
MUSIC · DANCE · PERFORMANCES

07-11
APRIL
2026

THE PROSPECTS OF THE FUTURE

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: KARL FIORINI

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International Strings Academy

The Malta Spring Festival International Strings Academy returns for its third edition from Sunday 28 March to Sunday 4 April 2027, bringing together talented string players for an intensive week of study, collaboration and performance in Valletta. With tuition and accommodation* provided free of charge, the programme places solo repertoire and chamber music at its heart, combining individual lessons and ensemble coaching with lunchtime concerts and orchestral training. Participants will work closely with internationally renowned musicians and pedagogues, refining their technique, deepening their interpretative understanding and developing the musical independence essential to a performing career. Open to string players currently studying at a music institution or university, the Academy offers a stimulating environment in which to exchange ideas, build artistic partnerships and gain valuable experience on the concert stage.

* Twin-room accommodation at the four-star Preluna Hotel in Sliema, on a bed-and-breakfast basis.



Masterclasses

The Academy will focus primarily on solo repertoire and chamber music. Each student will receive individual lessons and faculty-led chamber music coaching in ensembles formed by the Academy. Lunchtime concerts will offer participants the opportunity to perform the solo and chamber repertoire prepared during the course.

Masterclasses will take place in Valletta's historic cultural venues, including the Malta Society of Arts, the Casino Maltese, the Nicolò Isouard Music Room at the Manoel Theatre and the National Library.

Three mornings will be devoted to orchestral rehearsals in preparation for the final concert on 3 April. Under the direction of Brian Schembri, the programme will feature Franciszek Lessel's Overture in G minor, Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61, with soloist Dmitry Sitkovetsky, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92.

Participants will also enjoy free admission to the festival's evening concerts, offering further opportunities to explore repertoire and interpretation through performances by international artists.



Guest of Honour | Dmitry Sitkovetsky

A Renaissance man and a magnetic creative force, Dmitry Sitkovetsky is recognised throughout the world for the considerable impact he makes on every aspect of musical life. A prolific recording artist, with a career spanning more than four decades, he is celebrated globally as a violinist, conductor, creator, transcriber and facilitator – holding an undisputed and venerable position in musical society as a giant personality and educator.

His celebrated career is documented in an extensive discography of more than 40 recordings, reflecting the impressive breadth of his repertoire. His recording collaborators to date include such orchestras as the London Symphony, Philharmonia, and Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, under the batons of such legendary maestros as Sir Colin Davis, Mariss Jansons, Sir Neville Marriner and Lord Yehudi Menuhin. As a soloist, Sitkovetsky has performed with the world's leading orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, LA Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, New York Philharmonic, NHK Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra, among others.

In 1990 he founded the New European Strings Chamber Orchestra (NES), bringing together distinguished string players from top European ensembles. From 2003–2023 he served as Music Director of the Greensboro Symphony, where he attracted soloists including Emmanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman, Branford Marsalis and Pinchas Zukerman. Alongside performance and leadership, Sitkovetsky's name has become synonymous with the art of transcription; his orchestral and string trio versions of J.S. Bach's Goldberg Variations have taken on a life of their own, with regular performances and acclaimed recordings by many of today's leading performers.

His latest project, Dmitry Sitkovetsky: *Keeping the Flame*, is an autobiographical podcast series—a family memoir and portrait of the Russian intelligentsia—tracing his journey from Soviet Russia in the 1970s to the life he forged as an émigré, with music as both witness and guiding thread.



Violin



Charles Sewart

Charles Sewart was educated at Westminster School and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he studied with David Takeno. Influenced by musicologist Hans Keller, he developed a career spanning chamber music, solo performance and orchestral leadership. He joined the Chilingirian Quartet in 1992, performing in over 50 countries and recording for Chandos, Hyperion, Decca and EMI/Virgin. He premiered works by John Tavener, Robert Saxton, Hugh Wood and Michael Berkeley, among others. His recordings of Schubert's piano trios with the London Mozart Trio received high critical acclaim. A principal member of the London Chamber Orchestra from 2000, Charles performed throughout Europe and Asia and contributed to its Music Junction educational programme. As Head of Strings at the Purcell School from 2008, he nurtured young international musicians through ensemble-based learning. He now serves as Professor of Violin at the Purcell School and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama's Junior Department, while pursuing full-time studies in violin-making at the celebrated Newark School.



Emanuel Salvador

Described by *The Strad* magazine as "one of the finest Portuguese violinists of his generation," Emanuel Salvador has performed as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral leader across four continents, appearing in major venues such as Tokyo Opera City, the Jiangxi Arts Centre, the Lutosławski Concert Studio in Warsaw, Mexico's Nezahualcóyotl Hall, and Madrid's National Auditorium. A laureate of numerous awards, including prizes at the Isolde Menges (RCM), Jovens Músicos, and Beckenham competitions, he has also received support from the Barbirolli Memorial, Wolfson Foundation, and Gulbenkian Foundation. Emanuel studied in London at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with John Glickman and at the Royal College of Music with Felix Andrievsky. As a concerto soloist, he has performed with over thirty orchestras worldwide and appeared at leading international festivals. A passionate chamber musician, he has collaborated with distinguished artists and ensembles including members of the Borodin, Takács, and Beaux Arts groups, and was a founding member of the Vianna da Motta Piano Trio and Guimarães String Quartet. Currently artistic director of the Guimarães Clássico and Szczecin Classic Festivals, Emanuel appears regularly as guest concertmaster with major European ensembles. He performs on an 1802 J. B. Ceruti violin.

Viola



Alexandre Razera

Alexandre Razera began studying the viola at the age of eight and later received a Vitae Foundation scholarship to train with Wilfried Strehle at the Berlin Philharmonic's Karajan Academy. He later studied at Berlin University of the Arts with Ulrich Knörzer, performing with the orchestra under conductors like Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, and Lorin Maazel. Razera played for several years with the Berlin Philharmonic, Lucerne Festival Orchestra, and Mahler Chamber Orchestra, and served as principal violist with ensembles including La Monnaie Opera, Camerata Bern, Barcelona Symphony, OSEP, and OSB. Razera thrives as a soloist and chamber musician across Europe.

Violoncello



Adam Kłoczek

Adam is a Grammy Award-winning conductor and cellist. He is professor of cello at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw. He has held significant roles in several prestigious Polish music institutions, including serving as the Director of the Kalisz Philharmonic from 2006 to 2020 and the Director of the Częstochowa Philharmonic since 2020. Adam's career spans classical and jazz music, and he performs on a rare 1717 Stradivarius cello. He has been honoured with the Silver Gloria Artis Medal for Merit to Culture. His contributions to the music world continue to leave a lasting impact on Polish and international audiences.

Double Bass



Gjorgji Cincievski

Gjorgji Cincievski is an internationally recognised double bass soloist and educator, and the first Maltese artist endorsed by Pirastro. After 15 years as Principal Double Bass of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, where he founded the Maltese double bass school, he now serves as Guest Principal Double Bass of the Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana in Palermo. He has performed with orchestras including the BBC Philharmonic, Hallé and Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, and taught internationally. His transcriptions and arrangements, published by Hofmeister Musikverlag, expand the instrument's repertoire, reflecting his commitment to developing its expressive possibilities and nurturing the next generation of musicians.

Brian Schembri | Conductor

One of the most brilliant musicians to emerge from Malta, Brian Schembri began his musical studies with his father, Carmelo Schembri. He later graduated in piano and conducting from the Tchaikovsky Conservatories in Kyiv and Moscow, studying with A. Snegiriov, S. Dorensky, R. Kofman and G. Rozhdestvensky.

While maintaining an active career as a concert pianist, he began working as an assistant conductor with Michel Plasson and Emmanuel Krivine, also collaborating closely with distinguished conductors including Edoardo Müller, Serge Baudo, Yuri Temirkanov, García Navarro and Armin Jordan. Eventually devoting most of his time to conducting, he became Chief Conductor of the OPF Orchestra and the Orquestra Metropolitana de Lisboa, Music Director at Malta's national theatre, Teatru Manoel, and Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra.

His guest conducting engagements have included the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Orquestra Ciutat de Barcelona, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Orchestre National de France, Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra, Moscow Soloists, Novosibirsk Philharmonic Orchestra, London Mozart Players, Orchestre National de Lyon, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie and Svetlanov State Symphony Orchestra, as well as opera productions in Hong Kong, Lübeck, Nancy and Rennes.

Soloists with whom he has collaborated include Lucia Aliberti, Jacquelyn Wagner, José Cura, Joseph Calleja, Gianluca Terranova, Alexandre Da Costa, Carmine Lauri, Alexander Kniazev, Sergey Antonov, Ludmila Berlinskaia, Oleg Poliansky, Balázs Szokolay, Anne Queffélec, Emma Johnson and Sergei Nakariakov. His festival appearances have included Festival Massenet, Octobre en Normandie, Les Rencontres Musicales d'Évian, Festa da Música, Lisboa em Festa, Festival Music Atlantico, Fêtes de Genève, Henley Festival, King's Lynn Festival and Colmar International Festival.

He has also composed scores for theatre productions at the Manoel Theatre and Teatru Strada Stretta in Malta, the Comédie-Française in Paris, and the Malta Pavilion at the 2022 Venice Biennale. Since 2009, Brian Schembri has been a strong supporter of the Malta Spring Festival.

His discography includes piano sonatas by Beethoven, Schubert and Rachmaninov; works by Charles Camilleri with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra; Bach concertos with the European Union Chamber Orchestra and Lucia Micallef; and Tansman concertos with Diego Dini Ciacci, Fabrizio Meloni and the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra. Critically acclaimed for his passionate and lyrical performances, he has earned a reputation for profound and moving musicality.



Piano Accompanists



Debbie Shah | Chamber musician and Accompanist

Debbie Shah enjoys a varied career as a recital pianist, chamber musician and accompanist, performing in London and internationally. She has collaborated with leading instrumentalists and accompanied masterclasses with artists including Mstislav Rostropovich and Maxim Vengerov. Her experience also includes engagements as a pianist on music courses across England, working with musicians on solo and chamber repertoire. At the Purcell School, she combines accompaniment with teaching piano and chamber music. She also works regularly with the Royal College of Music.



Julia Miller | Chamber musician and Accompanist

Julia Miller graduated from the Music Academy of Łódź in piano performance and chamber music and completed her Doctor of Music degree at the University of Malta in 2026. Her research into late nineteenth-century women composers from Sweden and the United States reflects her commitment to bringing lesser-known repertoire to the concert stage. Based in Malta since 2012, she enjoys an international career as a soloist and collaborator. She has worked with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, Kor Malta and the Manoel Theatre Youth Opera, and performed at the Malta Baroque Festival and Malta Spring Festival.



Christine Zerafa | Chamber musician and Accompanist

Pianist Christine Zerafa, praised by *The Evening Standard* for her “sensual, silky tone and virtuoso command,” has performed at leading venues including the Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall, and the Oxford Lieder Festival. Honoured as an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music for her contributions to the profession, she is a laureate of the Bice Mizzi National Competition, the Clifton Helliwell Prize, and the RAM Scott Huxley Prize, among others. A graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music, where she also completed her PhD, Christine maintains a vibrant career as a concert pianist, researcher, and educator.

What the Malta Spring Festival International Strings Academy offers:

All participants selected for the 2027 Academy will receive the following support:

Tuition: Full support covers all musical training, masterclasses, and free access to all concerts during the Malta Spring Festival.

Accommodation: All selected students of the Malta Spring Festival International Strings Academy will receive accommodation provided by the festival.

Opportunities: Participants will perform in lunchtime concerts, presenting solo and chamber music repertoire prepared during the Academy.

Travel: Travel expenses to and from Malta are the responsibility of the participants.

Application Process:

Please send the following materials to info@maltaspringfestival.com:

Two recent, high-quality video recordings (as links) of two contrasting pieces.

A high-resolution portrait photo (at least 1 MB).

A curriculum vitae, including the names of your past and current schools, as well as your professors.

A short paragraph outlining your reasons for applying to the Academy.

Submission deadline: 31 December 2026

Applicants will be notified of the outcome on Friday 15 January 2027.

