

of death
and maidens



13TH INTERNATIONAL
SPRING ORCHESTRA FESTIVAL
26 APRIL - 4 MAY 2019



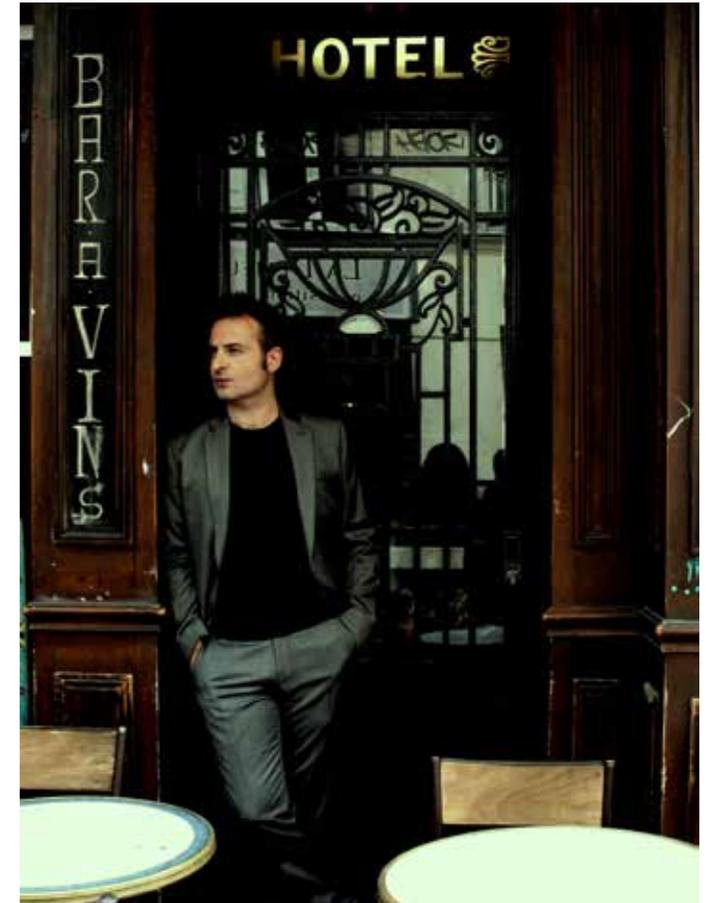
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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR KARL FIORINI

Youth is when one - supposedly - is filled with life, dreams, gets carried away. Aspires. Some content themselves with what the tide brings in. Others search perpetually what the future might have in store for them. Death takes all this away, wiping superfluous hopes and delusions of grandeur to oblivion. But there are those whose endeavours go well beyond the grave, chiselled in the collective memory. This year we explore such antipodes. And we commemorate the centenary of one of the most important artistic movements to shape the 20th century – Bauhaus.

Out of these elements I have woven a programme of ostensibly antithetical choices. The expressionist quasi-erotic yet disturbing *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten*, the tenebraic *Der Tod und das Mädchen* - Schubert's death testament, Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* - a provocation to Providence for which he paid dear, Schubert's E-flat Piano Trio – composed only a year before the composer's passing, Schumann's *Kinderszenen* – gentler, cheerful, Beethoven's last piano sonata - 'black palls, white veils', stand together with the more modern 1920s – Hindemith's *Kammermusik* No 1, Poulenc's *Aubade* - and those forging the music of now.

Karl Fiorini, Paris, 2019



COVER ARTWORK

Egon Schiele (1890-1918), Austrian expressionist protégé of Klimt
Der Tod und das Mädchen, oil on canvas, Hietzing 1914-15, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna

'[Schiele] on the eve of conscription ... [having] just chosen between two women in his life ... One he has married, the other, a model of long standing, he has abandoned'
~ Michael Glover, *The Independent*, London 18 January 2013

*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.*

CONCERT I ~ Friday 26 April

Opening Concert

Grand Salon, National Museum of Archaeology, 8pm

CLARE GHIGO Mezzo-Soprano

HARMONIA CONSORT

EULALIE CHARLAND Leader

'The most beautiful things are those that madness prompts and reason writes' ~ André Gide, 1894

MODEST MUSSORGSKY (1839-1881) arr ATEŞ ORGA *Near the Southern Shore of the Crimea, Capriccio* (1880), for violin and strings (2001). Mussorgsky visited Sevastopol in 1879, appalled by as much its lack of culture ('one hardly dares utter the word "art"') as its reminders of artillery devastation. In this short piece (originally for piano), he left a reductive postcard less to do with the place he found than exotic dance and *Kismet* song. Here among Cossacks and sabres dream girls of the past and sisters of the future, from Black Sea harem flowers to the Slavic ballerinas, the Viktorias and Nastiyas, of 21st century Istanbul.

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG (1874-1951) arr KARL FIORINI *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten, The Book of the Hanging Gardens* (1908-09), for voice and strings (2018-19, *World Premiere*). I *Unterm Schutz von dichten Blättergründen/Under the protection of dense leafy depths*; II *Hain in diesen Paradiesen/Groves in these paradises*; III *Als Neuling trat ich ein in dein Gehege/As a newcomer, I entered your enclosure*; IV *Da meine Lippen reglos sind und brennen/Because my lips are motionless and burning*; V *Saget mir auf welchem Pfade/Tell me on which path*; VI *Jedem Werke bin ich fürder tot/To all labours I am henceforward dead*; VII *Angst und Hoffen wechselnd sich beklemmen/Fear and hope alternately oppress me*; VIII *Wenn ich heut nicht deinen Leib berühre/If I today do not touch your body*; IX *Streng ist uns das Glück und spröde/Strictness to us is happiness, and brittle*; X *Das schöne Beet betracht ich mir im Harren/I looked at the beautiful [flower] bed while waiting*; XI *Als wir hinter dem beblühten Tore/As we behind the flowered gates*; XII *Wenn sich bei heilger Ruh in tiefen Matten/If it with sacred rest in deep mats*; XIII *Du lehnest*

wider eine Silberweide/You lean against a silver willow; XIV *Sprich nicht mehr von dem Laub/Speak not always of the leaves*; XV *Wir bevölkerten die abend-düstern Lauben/We peopled the evening-gloomy arbours*. Contemporary with Klimt's *The Kiss*, and with Schoenberg's wife, Mathilde, leaving him for his friend the painter Richard Gerstl, this landmark cycle was first heard in Vienna, 14 January 1910, eight months before the premiere of Mahler's 'Symphony of a Thousand'. The one breathing the intense symbolism of Stefan George (the translator of Baudelaire, Dante and Shakespeare), brevity in pantonal orbit, beckoning tersely; the other looking back luxuriantly to Goethe, *Faust* and the sunset glory of E-flat major, a long good-bye. In a programme note *Schoenberg maintained* that 'I have [here] succeeded for the first time in approaching an expressive and formal ideal which has haunted me for years. Up until now, I lacked the strength and the self-assurance to realize it. But now that I have started definitely upon this road, I am aware that I have burst the bonds of a bygone aesthetic; and, foresee the opposition which I shall have to overcome; I feel the heat of the animosity which even the least temperaments will generate, and I fear that some who have believe in me up till now will not admit the necessity of this evolution'. Suggestive, without following any exact linear narrative, of 'a love affair against a luxuriant background ("the hanging gardens")' (Roy Howat), the fifteen songs are grouped loosely into six allusory, ultimately tragic, life stations. (a) I, II: Paradise; (b) III-V: the Paths the Lover takes to reach the Beloved; (c) VI-IX: Passion; (d) X-XIII: Union, Climax; (e) XIV: Premonition; (f) XV: Love dies, the ruins of Eden. Tensioning Schoenberg's entwinements of voice and commentary (for piano originally), Karl Fiorini's rarefied transcription calls for seven violins, three violas, two cellos and doublebass – thirteen instruments in all, fashioning textures as soloistic and independent as they are orchestral and combined, delicacy and dynamics, accent and articulation, at a premium.

Interval

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828) arr GUSTAV MAHLER *String Quartet No 14, in D minor, Der Tod und das Mädchen/Death and the Maiden, D 810* (1824), for strings (1896, edited Donald Mitchell & David Matthews, 1984). I *Allegro*; II *Andante con moto*; III *Scherzo: Allegro molto*; IV *Presto* [see Concerts III, VI].



Like his symphonies, piano sonatas and songs, Schubert's string quartets span virtually an entire career. Spiritually and musically, the heart of the D minor, published posthumously, lies in the G minor slow movement – a set of variations and coda on the song *Der Tod und das Mädchen* to lines by Matthias Claudius (1817). 'The Maiden: Pass me by, ah, pass me by, fearsome spectre. I am still young. Go away, loved one, and touch me not. Death: Give me your hand, you fair and tender creature. I am your friend, and do not come to chastise. Be of good cheer. I am not to be feared. You will sleep softly in my arms.' Alfred Einstein's 'march of "inevitability"' central to the song's originally D minor melody (driven by Beethovenian long-short-short rhythms) is the conscious, cyclic obsession of the quartet as a whole – transformed into 'a savage threat' in the symphonised first movement ... 'a dance' in the 3/4 scherzo ... and 'a new variant' within the 6/8 'Tarantella of Death' comprising the *Kreutzer*-ish finale (music of circling, dervish-like feverishness). During his lifetime Mahler only ever performed the second movement, the first, third and fourth remaining as incomplete, albeit detailed, annotations in a copy of the quartet score discovered years after his death by his youngest daughter, Anna (1904-88) – a sculptress with a proclivity for lovers greater even than that of Alma Schindler, her charmed mother ...

Meet the Artists

Brain-child of Eulalie Charland – see Concert IV – and her partners Gabriella Swallow, Jill Valentine and Rosie Moon, the **Harmonia Consort** [Synchrony] emerged from a *zeitgeist* coloured by the 2018 UK centenary of universal suffrage and the #MeToo campaign. The awareness of the lingering gender divide in the profession (more acute amongst composers and conductors) led to a desire to be part of a movement that empowers creative women and provides a distinctive platform for their creativity. <http://www.harmoniaconsort.com>.

Violins: Eulalie Charland, Mary Brace, Bethan Allmand, Willemijn Steenbakkens, Anna Cashell, Natalie Klouda, Anna Harpham; Violas: Rebecca Breen, Claire Newton, Francesca Gilbert; Cellos: Gabriella Swallow, Adi Tal; Double Bass: Jonny Gee

The prize-winning Maltese mezzo-soprano **Clare Ghigo** studied with Leah Marian Jones and Laura Sarti, graduating with a master's degree from the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Cardiff. Admired for her roles in operas by Bizet, Humperdinck, Monteverdi, Mozart, Piazzolla, Rachmaninov and Rossini, her engagements during Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture included the world premieres of *Ahna Refujati* and Rueben Pace's *Nunzjata in Belt il-Bniedem*. She also took the part of Anna Rosa in Brian Schembri's centenary revival of Carlo Diacono's 1918 opera L'Alpino. Clare is part of a trio with soprano Gillian Zammit and harpist Britt Arend. Following recitals at the Alte Oper in Frankfurt, Rathaus in Berlin and l'Hotel de Ville in Paris, they were invited in 2017 to perform at the 5th Khachaturian International Festival in Yerevan, Armenia. A versatile recitalist, she has appeared in concert with Richard Bonyngé, Monserrat Caballé, Joseph Calleja, Daniela Dessi, Nelly Miricui, Luciana Serra, Anna Tomova Sintova and Bryn Terfel. She 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.



CONCERT II ~ Saturday 27 April

Grand Salon, National Museum of Archaeology, 8pm

GILLIAN ZAMMIT Soprano

BRITT AREND Harp

'The sonority and stress and rhythm of words inspires music no less, and at times even more, than the emotion they express'
~ Pierre Bernac, 1970

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921) *Danse Macabre* (1872) Words: Henri Cazalis, symbolist. 'Death strikes a tomb with his heel in cadence [rhythm]'. Precursor of the orchestral *Danse macabre*; ***Tristesse, Sadness*** (c 1868) Words: Ferdinand Lemaire, librettist of *Samson et Dalila* (1877). 'Bitter, deep sadness'.

ANDRÉ CAPLET (1878-1925) *Deux sonnets [to 16th century texts] for high voice and harp* (1916, 1924). I *Quand reverrai-je, hélas!* Words: Joachim du Bellay, 'expressing the state of the soul'. 'When shall I see again the smoke rising above the village roofs'. II *Doux fut le trait* Words: Pierre de Ronsard, adapted. 'Sweet was the arrow that Love drew from his quiver'.

HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803-69) *Les nuits d'été, Summer Nights, Op 7* – two songs (from a cycle of six, 1840-41). IV *L'absence*; I *Villanelle* Words: Théophile Gautier, *La comédie de la mort, The Comedy of Death*, 1838. 'Come back, come back, my beloved!'; 'When the new season comes'.

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918) *Nuits d'étoiles, Night of Stars, L 4* (1880) Words: Théodore de Banville. 'Night of stars, beneath your veils'; ***Appartition, L 53*** (1884) Words: Stéphane Mallarmé. 'The moon grew sad'.



Interval

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-81) *Sleep now, Op 10 No 2* (1936) Words: James Joyce; ***Tombeau dans un parc, Tomb in a park, Op 27 No 3*** (1950-51) Words: Rainer Maria Rilke. 'Sleep at the end of the avenue'; ***Now I Have Fed and Eaten Up the Rose, Op 45 No 1*** (1972) Words: Gottfried Keller translated James Joyce. Barber, the American *nostalgique* between two worlds, winner twice of the Pulitzer Prize. 'I'm not a self-conscious composer ... it is said that I have no style at all but that doesn't matter. I just go on doing, as they say, my thing' (1971).

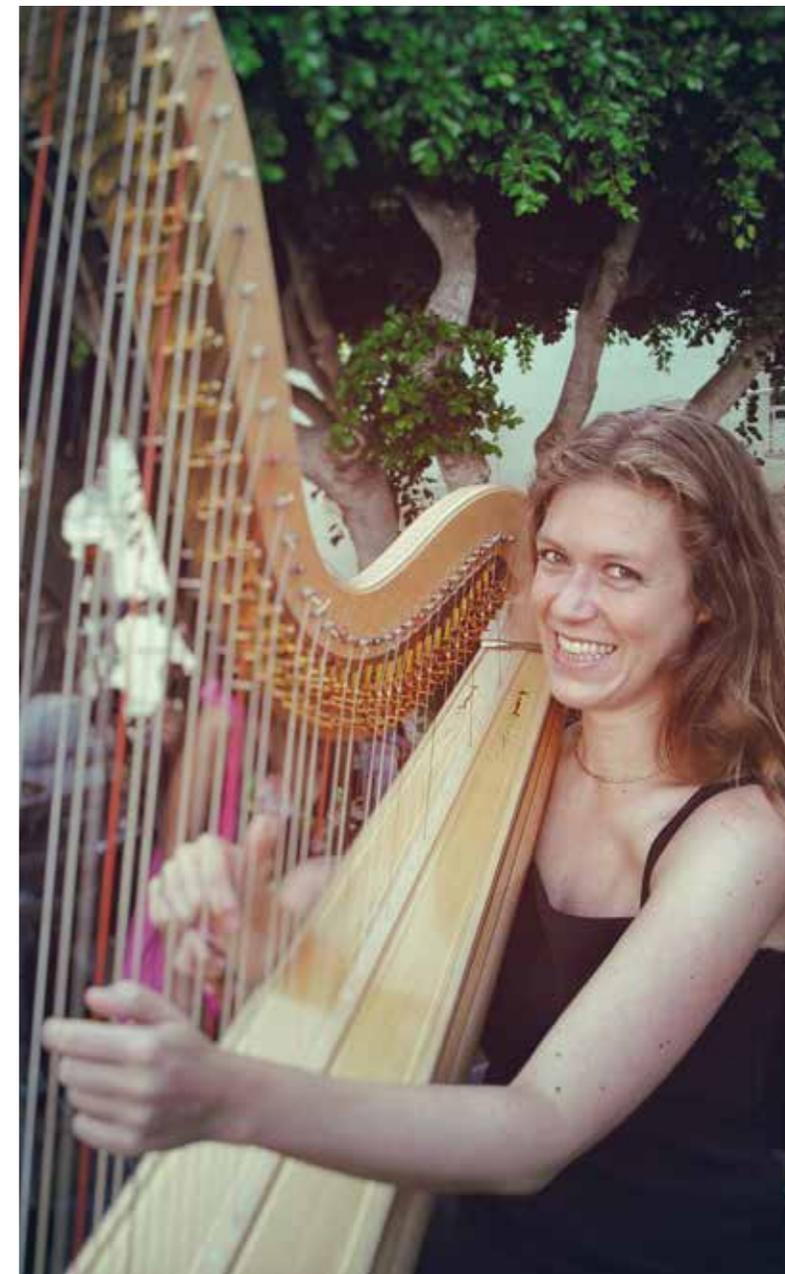
ALEX VELLA GREGORY (born 1984) *Verità* – two songs (from a cycle of ten to words by the composer, 2008-09). V *Post-Mortem*; VII *L-Ghorfa/The Hut*. *The composer writes*: '[This cycle] follows the progress of a failed relationship, and gradually moves from initial optimism to a bitter resignation, ending on an ironic note with *Verità [Truth]* where the lover mockingly tells his loved one not to utter a word about what has happened, "lest someone write it down and it becomes true". The first part of the cycle closes with *Post-Mortem* ["There you will be mine"], where the singer is resigned to the fact that perhaps only after death will the two lovers be reunited. In *L-Ghorfa* ["There's a corner in the hut"] there is a feeling of decay where the hut, dark and humid, becomes an allegory for the heart.' The first complete performance was given by Rosabelle Bianchi and the composer (piano) at the Casino Maltese, Valletta, 8 February 2014. Widely performed, Alex Vella Gregory studied with Paul Borg and Joanne Camilleri, subsequently graduating from Napier University, Edinburgh in 2006. He was awarded a London College of Music Fellowship in 2013. 'Though I'm a classical musician by training, I'm more intrigued by popular music. I love the way jazz works, and I love the pure raw emotion of traditional music' (2016). The present arrangements for soprano and harp are the composer's, undertaken for tonight's artists.



Meet the Artists

Gillian Zammit, soprano, began her vocal training in Malta with Antoinette Miggiani and Paul Asciak, before going to Italy to work with Carlo Bergonzi and Victoria de los Angeles. A versatile, highly regarded artist – appearing with Andrea Bocelli, Joseph Calleja and Emma Kirkby among others – her operatic productions include the role of Euridice in Gluck’s *Orfeo* (Manoel Theatre, under Philip Walsh), *Rigoletto*, *Semele*, *The Turn of The Screw* and *Die Zauberflöte*. Her repertory of German, Spanish and French material is varied, with Strauss’s *Four Last Songs* (Brian Schembri) and Berlioz’s *Les nuits d’été* (Raoul Lay) featuring in recent concerts, both with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra. A respected early music exponent, she performs regularly with the Valletta International Baroque Ensemble. Signed to the UK label Claudio Records, she tours widely in Germany, America, Britain, France, Armenia and Romania, forthcoming engagements including concerts in Italy and a collaboration in the USA with the Athens Guitar Duo.

Britt Arend, harp, studied with Susanna Mildonian at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels, gaining her master’s degree in 2001. She continued her musical studies at the Hochschule Hanns Eisler in Berlin, the Accademia del Teatro alla Scala in Milan; and the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome where in 2006 she obtained her Diploma di Perfezionamento. A much admired soloist and orchestral player, appearing with many of Europe’s finest orchestras and conductors, she was appointed Principal Harpist of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in April 2008. She and Gillian Zammit perform regularly as a duo and also collaborate with the mezzo-soprano Clare Ghigo with whom, in 2015 under the auspices of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, they recorded a CD of songs for voice and harp – *Aprile*.



CONCERT III ~ Sunday 28 April

Grand Salon, National Museum of Archaeology, 8pm

SOMOGYI STRING QUARTET

PÉTER SOMOGYI Violin

GYÖRGY LENDVAI Violin

BALÁZS TÓTH Viola

LÁSZLO PÓLUS Cello

D minor

'The sad, dejected side of the feminine, spawning humours moody and vaporous' – Christian Schubart c 1784-85

SCHOENBERG *String Quartet No 1, in D minor, Op 7* (1904-05).

Exceeding forty minutes, this single-movement 'symphony', the density, graining and notation of which once bewildered, is divided into four chapters, alluding variously, if not actually, to structural schemes reaching back a century from Strauss, Reubke and Liszt and to Schumann, Schubert and Beethoven.

a) 'Allegro' *Nicht zu rasch, not too fast* (exposition [two thematic groups], development, ?recapitulation); b) 'Scherzo' *Kräftig, vigorous* (development, scherzo/trio/scherzo, development, 1st group varied reprise); c) 'Adagio' *Mässig, moderately* (ABA, 2nd group reprise, transition); d) 'Rondo Finale' *Mässig-heiter, moderately-brightly* (ABACA' development and synthesis', epilogue/coda, D major). 'I abandoned programme music,' *Schoenberg tells us*, 'and turned in the direction that was much more my own than all the preceding. It was the First String Quartet [descriptive/emotive verbal references among the sketches notwithstanding] in which I combined all the achievements of my time (including my own) such as: the construction of extremely large forms; greatly emancipated melodies based on a richly moving harmony and new chord progressions; and a contrapuntal technique that solved problems offered by superimposed, individual parts which moved freely in more remote regions of tonality and met frequently in vagrant harmonies. In accommodation to the faith of the time, this large form was to include all the four characters of the sonata type in one single, uninterrupted movement. *Durchführungen* (development) should not be missing and there should be a certain degree of thematic unity within the contrasting sections. The great expansion of this work required careful organization. It might perhaps

interest an analyst to learn that I received and took advantage of the tremendous amount of advice suggested to me by a model I had chosen for this task: the first movement of the *Eroica* Symphony ... Of course the model was not copied mechanically, but its mental essence was applied accordingly' (1949). Attended by Mahler, the first performance, given by the Rosé Quartet in Vienna's Bösendorfer Saal, 5 February 1907 - Arnold Rosé was concert master of the Philharmoniker - ended in tumult, hissing and walk-out. Six years later Stravinsky's *Sacre du printemps* savaged Paris.

Interval

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828) *String Quartet No 14, in D minor, Der Tod und das Mädchen/Death and the Maiden, D 810* (1824). I *Allegro*; II *Andante con moto*; III *Scherzo: Allegro molto*; IV *Presto* [see Concert I, VI]. Seekers after extra-musical programme, pursuers of autobiographical/autopsychological possibility - taking a cue from the omnipresent song of the variation *Andante, Der Tod und das Mädchen*, the uniqueness of all the movements being in the minor, and the composer's heightened *angst* at the time of their genesis - have found Death images throughout the theatre, façade and tissue of this work (emphasised the more in the added richness and intensity of the orchestral arrangement, Concert I). More than one commentator has pointed to the first movement's apparent wrestling with black forces, to the (exactly notated) 'declining heartbeat' of the second. 'Death the demon fiddler' has been observed lurking within the scherzo. And (voiced through the second violin part) the Erl King, death omen of the North peoples, has been overheard in the finale. Suffering from irritability, giddiness and depression, without particular prospect of recognition, complaining of pains in his bones, unable to play the piano, Schubert was in a dark mood. 'Think of a man whose brightest hopes have come to nothing, to whom love and friendship are but torture, and whose enthusiasm for the beautiful is fast vanishing, and ask yourself if such a man is not truly unhappy.' The work left contemporaries divided. Ignaz Schuppanzigh, first leader of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Franz Lachner recalled in 1881, 'declared to the composer, after playing it through, "My dear fellow, this is no good, leave it alone; you stick to your songs!"; whereupon Schubert silently packed up the sheets of music and shut them away in his desk for ever'.



Meet the Artists

Twenty-two years together, the Hungarian **Somogyi String Quartet**, making a welcome return visit to the International Spring Orchestra Festival, was formed by former students of the Liszt Ferenc Academy 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.

CONCERT IV ~ Monday 29 April

Palazzo de la Salle, Malta Society of Arts, 8pm

AQUILON TRIO

EULALIE CHARLAND Violin

MAX MAUSEN Clarinet

MAIKO MORI Piano

'The plain, prosaic truth is that the artist's function is to create works of art, and that this is a whole-time job, and one that demands everything a man has to give, and more.'

~ Cecil Gray, 1943



CHARLES CAMILLERI (1931-2009) *Trio New York* (1971, completed c 1998) for violin, clarinet and piano. I *Allegro vivace*; II *Con moto/Lento-Calmo: Andante-Lento*; III *Allegro vivace-Come improvviata-Tempo primo*. 'In our time the spirit of contemporary sound is made up of a collision of a multitude of sounds created by many people of different cultures ... like fireworks it could be very dangerous or very beautiful'. Charles Camilleri died ten years ago. The most internationalised, published and recorded of 20th century Maltese composers, his legacy since has become dissipated, the archives vague and gapped if not blank, his compositions at best indifferently catalogued and barely performed. An irrepressible adventurer, music for him was about affirmations, excitations and contradictions of silence and heartbeat, about mono-homo-polyphonic soundscapes circling distant points, free-wheeling through time, coming home to rest. More than once his imagination took us to Saganesque 'worlds that never were'. No post-war voice bridged so many styles and disciplines nor engaged such a wide cross-section of society. The *Trio New York*, published in Belgium in 2000, effectively *A Maltese in Manhattan* to Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, was one of a series of

chamber projects from the early seventies, laid aside at the time but re-visited at the end of the nineties, sparked by a return to the Big Apple, Liberty City, dazzling in 'energy and hustle and bustle'. Tightly crafted, idiomatic but instrumentally exacting, the first movement, *moto perpetuo*-like, raises a ticker-tape storm of crowds, klaxons, song and dance, climaxing in a brilliant shared cadenza for clarinet and violin. 'Rhythm is motion and motion is life'. The middle movement, with its *libero* and *agitato* elements, clarinet blues, bent violin klezmer allusions, harmonics and muted *ponticello*, and throbbing piano homing in on low C#s, borders on a filmic tableau of complex DNA. Pulse-driven figures and rhythmic unisons contrast in the finale with a central section of trickier organisation, a less abrasive species of those freer trademark cellular patterns Camilleri pioneered in the fifties and sixties.

THEA MUSGRAVE (born 1928) *Pierrot* (1985) for violin, clarinet and piano. I *Pierrot: Andante espressivo*; II *Columbine: Con frivolezza*; III *Pierrot's Serenade: Spettrale*; IV *Harlequin: Con energia*; V *Harlequin attacks Pierrot: Furioso*; VI *Columbine rejects Pierrot: Molto meno mosso*; VII *Harlequin's Serenade: Sensuale*; VIII *Pierrot: Andante espressivo*. The eminent Scottish-American composer Thea Musgrave, a trail-blazing voice in British music since the 1950s, studied at the University of Edinburgh, and subsequently with Nadia Boulanger in Paris and Aaron Copland at the Tanglewood Festival. Last year she was honoured with the Ivor Classical Music Award and The Queen's Medal for Music. *Pierrot* was commissioned by the Verdehr Trio with funds from Michigan State University. *The composer writes*: 'A chance rediscovery of Debussy's *La sérénade interrompue* [piano *Préludes*, Book I] was the starting point for this work ... and an obvious association of ideas led easily to thoughts of *Pierrot*. A fortuitous coincidence, since the characters in the story are three and this work was to be a trio! The form of the work follows the story quite closely [leading to] eight short sections. I *Pierrot*, alone on stage, is sad and introspective. II *Columbine*, frivolous and superficial, enters. *Pierrot* starts to make a passionate declaration of love to her, she consents to listen. III In the moonlight, *Pierrot* serenades *Columbine*. The piano imitates the strumming of *Pierrot's* guitar. IV *Harlequin* enters with his usual overwhelming energy and self-absorption. *Pierrot* and *Columbine* conceal themselves and at first *Harlequin* does not notice them. V *Harlequin*

furiously attacks *Pierrot*, who confronts *Harlequin* with all his strength. But *Pierrot* is no match for him.) VI *Pierrot* turns to *Columbine*, she now cruelly rejects him and gives her attention to *Harlequin*. VII *Harlequin* successfully courts *Columbine* despite *Pierrot's* protestations. VIII As at the beginning *Pierrot* is alone, but now in even greater despair. There are several musical links with the Debussy prelude. As in the Debussy the two serenades [III, VII] are in keys a major third apart [A minor and D-flat major to Debussy's B-flat minor and D major]. However in *Pierrot* both serenades are interrupted [*Harlequin* succeeding over *Pierrot's*, *Pierrot* failing over *Harlequin's*]. Two other short motifs from the Debussy can easily be discovered! Throughout, the *violin* represents *Pierrot*, the *clarinet* *Columbine*, and the *piano* *Harlequin*, though the instruments do also have some accompanimental function.'

Interval

DOMINIQUE LIÈVRE (born 1961) *In girum imus nocte ecce et consumimur igni* (2018, International Spring Orchestra Festival commission, *World Premiere*) for clarinet, violin, and piano. In one movement. Dominique Lièvre studied with Antoine Duhamel and Dominique Lecerf, benefitting further from engagement with Messiaen. 'Perception of musical time is probably the door I most love to open,' he says. 'Beyond that door my ear sees huge virgin spaces which comfort my idea that tomorrow is already here! Reckless and above all free!' Of his new work – sharing a title with Guy Debord's autobiographical film documenting the state of French society in the seventies, as well a recent orchestral work by Karl Fiorini – *he writes*: 'Like moths whose *danse nocturne* around the candle causes death, "we swirl about the night and are consumed by fire". A cautionary tale for ambitious or curious people wanting to get too close to the lights of power, wealth or glory! Today, at the dawning of our millennium, the poetic-palindromic nature of Virgil's attributed words, resonates within me like a bottle in "the earth" [*une bouteille à la terre*], the essential part of which is as much the content as the container. *In girum imus nocte ecce et consumimur igni* stands on the edge of silence, seeking to animate the incessant ballet of shadows and lights that haunt our becoming' (paraphrased).

ROLAND CONIL (born 1950) *Hadès et les Nymphes* (2018-19, *World Premiere*) for clarinet, violin, and piano. Roland Conil studied in Avignon and the Geneva Conservatoire, coming to public composition late, in 2000, the influence of Maurice Ohana and Les Percussions de Strasbourg being critical to his development. Previous performances at the International Spring Orchestra Festival have included his orchestral tone-poem *Ariane et Dionysos* (2016) and *Moïrai* for two pianos and percussion (2018). Of his new work (again Grecian inspiration), *he writes*: 'Captured among the nymphs by Hades, Lord of the Underworld, Sovereign of Spirits Persephone [daughter of Zeus and Demeter] remains torn between the opposite domains of the Infernal River, between sun and night, youth and adulthood, pleasure and death' (paraphrased). Queen of the Underworld, maiden of death and rebirth, Persephone it was who brought the curses of men upon the shades of the dead. Conspicuously, Conil thinks of the 'Infernal River' in the singular – Styx, the boundary between Gaia (ancestral mother of all life, personification of the Earth) and Hades crossed for eternity by the ferryman celebrated in one of Gustave Doré's Dante etchings. There were, though, four converging others: Lethe/forgetfulness bordering Elysium, resting place of the virtuous; Acheron/sorrow; Cocytus/lamentation; and Phlegethon/fire. In one continuous movement, viscerally virtuosic, the work is subdivided into eight temporally-contrasted episodes. Motivic/thematic/harmonic repetition, metric dependence, and complex degrees of elaboration and ensemble add up to a characterfully proportioned, distinctively tinted, quasi cyclic canvas during which energy, stasis and *conversazione* is generated through a fantastical panorama of iridescently varied note values, registral plains and dynamic zones, at their deceptively plainest in the unisonal writing of the final section. Harmonically, melodically, three visages of fifth – diminished, perfect, augmented – prove a rallying signaure from the onset. Along with a suggestion of tonal/modal anchorage. The opening *pianissimo* clarinet trills on D (Camilleri's *New York* D's stripped of life). The two closing *fortissimo* chords are emphatically D major/minor, added #7/b2 spicing the attack, the right-hand clusters interpretable further as perfect/diminished/augmented fifth conglomerates.

Meet the Artists

The **Aquilon Trio**, formed in 2002 by Eulalie Charland and Maiko Mori specialises in predominantly 20th century repertory. It derives its name from the Gallicised Roman god of the high Arctic: 'interea magnum sol circumvolvitur annum, et glacialis hiemps aquilonibus asperat undas' – 'Meanwhile the sun moves round the great year, and icy winter roughens the waters with north-east winds' (Virgil).

Passionate and curious about exploring the diverse and individual soundscapes of the artists she works with – leading to projects headlining events from film festivals to dance and music collaborations - **Eulalie Charland** is professor of violin at the Junior Guildhall School of Music and Drama and University of Chichester. Following an exotic childhood and adolescence spent in part in Canada and Finland, her musical education took her initially to Paris and Catherine Courtois, then later across the Atlantic to work in Indiana with the renowned Uruguayan pedagogue Mauricio Fuks, of Fuchs-Galamian-Heifetz pedigree. She completed her postgraduate studies with Stefan Gheorghiu in Bucharest and Yossi Zivoni at the Royal College of Music.

Max Mausen, clarinet, trained at the Luxembourg Conservatoire before continuing his studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. Formerly principal clarinet of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra (2014-16), he joined the Southbank Sinfonia in London in 2016. A much sought-after orchestral and chamber musician, appearing with the leading British orchestras, his interests include jazz, crossover and working with contemporary composers. His debut album, *New Waves*, including music by Debussy, Stravinsky, Boumans and a joint composition with Jason Anderson, was released in December 2014 (Mediafins Luxembourg).

Born in Okayama, Japan, **Maiko Mori** gave her first recital at the age of six, playing some of her own piano compositions. She studied with Chikako Shibata and Benjamin Kaplan, and with Dmitri Alexeev and Andrew Ball at the Royal College of Music. Whilst at the RCM she received the Myra Hess Award and Hopkinson Gold Medal, having earlier already won the 2002 Robert William and Florence Amy Brant International Pianoforte Competition in Birmingham. She is currently professor of piano at the University of Chichester, as well as an official accompanist at Goldsmiths, University of London.



CONCERT V ~ Tuesday 30 April

Palazzo de la Salle, Malta Society of Arts, 8pm

SAIDA ZULFUGAROVA Piano

'Beethoven established a new dignity for the art of music, [lifting] it to a pedestal it had never before occupied. Henceforth musical culture turned in a new direction' ~ Hugo Leichtentritt, 1938 ~

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) Sonata No 17, in D minor, Tempest, Op 31 No 2 (1801-01). I *Largo/Allegro*; II *Adagio*; III *Allegretto*. Published in 1803/04 - in an unproofed edition infamous for its errors, spurious passages, 'poorly indicated expression marks' and 'false notes' - the Op 31 Sonatas 'pour le Piano Forte' blazed the self-declared 'new way' period of the Heiligenstadt Testament, the Second Symphony, the Op 30 Violin Sonatas, and the piano variation sets Opp 34 and 35. Music at once looking backwards, forward-seeking, dicing old concepts in new contexts, journeying new dreams in old dress. The outer movements of the D minor are sonata designs, with repeats, 'nature's demons, wind and water' having had a hand in the first, and a 'light mist' shrouding the last (Edwin Fischer). The improvisatory quasi-operatic *largo* recitatives of the first, presaging Beethoven's final period, are an arresting device, at the start suggesting but not affirming the home key until the 21st bar - 'moments,' as Lewis Lockwood says (2003), that 'bring a poetic quality to the piano sonata [genre] beyond all past imaginings, by Beethoven or anyone else'. The incessant semiquaver motion of the finale lends a quality of *perpetuum mobile* to the action - a murmuring succession of cadential figures and harmonies with an incessantly *held* pedal-point in the left-hand tenor register easier to miss than sustain. The central B-flat Adagio is a richly-veined, many-voiced *scena*, the funereal drum beats of which, via Schubert's last sonata, oddly harbinger the B-flat rooted second movement of Brahms's *German Requiem*, 'Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie Gras'.

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-56) Kinderszenen/Scenes from Childhood, Op 15 (1838) I *Von fremden Ländern und Menschen/Of Foreign Lands and Peoples* II *Kuriose Geschichte/A Curious Story*; III *Hasche-Mann/Blind Man's Bluff*; IV *Bittendes Kind/Pleading Child*; V *Glückes genug/Happy Enough*; VI *Wichtige Begebenheit/An Important Event*; VII *Träumerei/Dreaming*; VIII *Am Kamin/At the Fireside*; IX *Ritter vom Steckenpferd/Knight of the Hobbyhorse*; X *Fast zu ernst/Almost Too Serious*; XI *Fürchtenmachen/Frightening*; XII *Kind im Einschlummern/Child Falling Asleep*; XIII *Der Dichter spricht/The Poet Speaks*. 'Whether or not it was an echo of what you once said to me, "that sometimes I seemed to you like a child", the composer confided to his beloved, Clara, 'anyhow, I suddenly got an inspiration, and knocked off about thirty quaint little things, from which I have selected twelve [thirteen] and called them *Kinderszenen*. They will amuse you ... they all explain themselves, and what's more are as easy as possible'. A grown-up remembering childhood and the make-believe of children.

Interval

BEETHOVEN Sonata No 32, in C minor, Op 111 (1821-22) I *Maestoso-Allegro con brio ed appassionato*; II *Arietta: Adagio molto semplice e cantabile*. Dedicated to his patron and pupil the Archduke Rudolph of Austria, Beethoven's final sonata travels a Romantically-charged journey from dissonance to concord, black *forte* G minor diminished-seventh homelessness to white *pianissimo* C major repose, primeval darkness to celestial light, earthly passion to heavenly transfiguration. A *magnum opus*, decreed Thomas Mann in *Doktor Faustus*, that 'brought' the (classical) sonata as a form to an 'end' - 'it had fulfilled its destiny, reached its goal, beyond which there was no going'. Prefaced by a key-delaying introduction opposing elements of operatic 'fear' and baroque 'French overture' double-dotting, the main *allegro*, with exposition repeat, grows out of an unharmonised *fortissimo* subject sketched twenty years earlier (in F-sharp minor). Based on a profound neo-baroque theme or 'ground' in 9/16, the second movement is a synthesis of 'closed' contained division (with repeats) and 'open' continuous variation (without), the illusion of varying *tempi* achieved through quicker/slower note-values rather than changing pulse. One of the great swansongs of civilisation. Black palls, white veils.

Meet the Artist

An artist of generous, enterprising personality, **Saida Zulfugarova** was born in Caspian Baku. Studying with a string of emblematic Azerbaijani musicians, she trained at the Hajibeyov Baku Academy of Music - an institution famously including Gara Garayev and Fikret Amirov among its alumni..

She left for Paris in 2002, graduating with a postgraduate degree in musicology from the Sorbonne. Her passion for teaching and inspiring young people led subsequently to obtaining the French State Diploma in piano performance.

She is currently professor of piano at the Conservatoire Municipal de Garches. Combining solo and chamber playing, appearing at international festivals, 'revisiting the classics', and championing contemporary Azerbaijani music, she continues her scholastic interests.

One notable venture, in 2012 at the DSCH Centre in Paris, was a series of concerts and lectures examining the history of Azerbaijani classical music and Azerbaijani links with Shostakovich, given in the presence of the composer's widow, Irina, and Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, chair of the Composers' Union of Azerbaijan.



CONCERT VI ~ Wednesday 1 May

Of Death and Maidens

Palazzo de la Salle, Malta Society of Arts, 8pm

JOSEPH LIA Baritone

NATALIA RAKHMATULINA Piano

'He who does not love music does not deserve to be called a human being; he who merely loves it is only half a human being; but he who makes music is a whole human being.'

~ Goethe, 1822

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828) *Der Tod und das Mädchen/Death and the Maiden, D 531* (1817) Words: Matthias Claudius [see Concerts I, III].

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-97) *O Tod, wie bitter bist du/O death, how bitter you are, Op 121 No 2* (1896) Words: Old Testament, Sirach of Jerusalem, Chapter 41.

FRYDERYK CHOPIN (1810-49) *Largo in E-flat major, B 109, KK IVb/5, CT 49* (1847, edited Ludwig Broñarski, 1938) Current scholarship disputes former opinion that this might have been a discarded *prélude* from the Op 28 collection.

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-93) *Ni slova o drug moj/Not a word, o my friend, Op 6 No 2* (*Romance*, 1869) Words: Moritz Hartmann, translated Aleksei Pleshcheyev.

SERGEI RACHMANINOV (1873-1943) *O, ne grusti/Oh do not grieve for me, Op 14 No 8* (1896) Words: Alexei Apukhtin.

Interval

MIKHAIL GLINKA (1804-57) *Mio ben, ricordati* (1827/28) Words: Pietro Metastasio, 1729.

GUGLIELMO COTTRAU (1797-1847) misattributed **VINCENZO BELLINI (1801-35)** *Fenesta che lucive* (*Canzone Napoletana*,

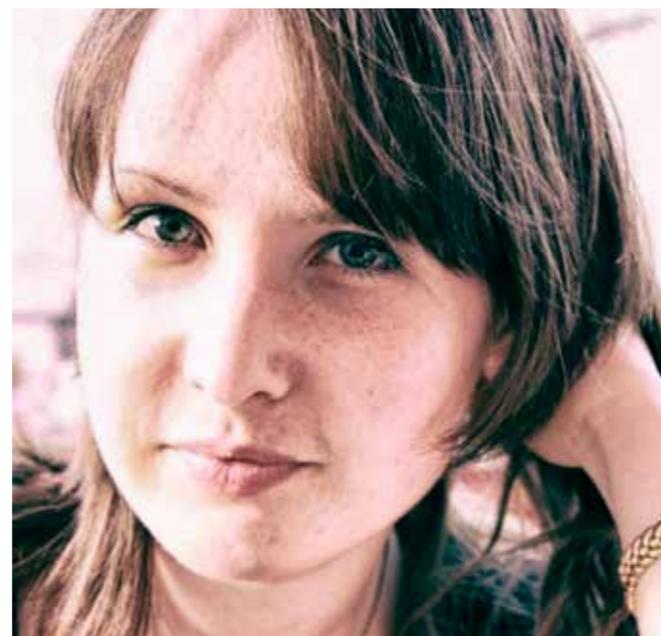
1842) Words: Mariano Paoletta, 1854. Based on a 17th century Sicilian tune, *Baronessa di Carini*, popularised by Caruso and Lanza, a passage from this source was borrowed for Amina's *andante* in the final scene of *La sonnambula* (Milan 1831), hence the Bellini confusion.

GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813-1901) *Non t'accostar all'Urna* (*Romanze*, 1838) Words: Jacopo Vittorelli.

CHOPIN *Andantino in G minor, B 117* [1838[-48], edited Ateş Orga, 1968) Chopin's own little-known 'blueprint' arrangement of one of his Polish songs, *Wiosna, Spring*, Op 74 No 2 (1838), to a poem by Stefan Witwicki. He wrote it down in several autograph albums during the 1840s. 'The dew glistens, the stream gushes through the fields'.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH *Komm, süsßer Tod, komm selge Ruh/Come, sweet death, come, blessed rest, BWV 478* (*Schemelli Musicalisches Gesang-Buch*, published 1736) Words: anonymous.

SCHUBERT *Der Jüngling und der Tod/The Youth and Death, D 545* [2nd version, 1817) Words: Joseph von Spaun.



Meet the Artists

Joseph Lia graduated in music from the University of Malta. Supported by the Janatha Stubbs Foundation, he furthered his vocal training at the N A Rimsky-Korsakov Saint Petersburg State Conservatory, obtaining a master's degree in performance. Subsequently, with the support of an MGSS-PG Scholarship, he read for a doctorate in voice performance and pedagogy supervised by Anatoly Kisilev and Sergei Riazantsev. He has taken roles in operas by Donizetti, Giordano, Gounod, Mozart, Pergolesi, Puccini, Rossini and Tchaikovsky. In recital he is an accomplished in lied and oratorio. Festival appearances have included the Tallinn BachFest, Universe of Music in Moscow, Italian Opera Taormina, Ragusa Ibla Organ Festival, Alion Baltic International Music Festival, Tallinn Organ Festival, Peter de Grote Chamber Music Festival in Holland, Gaultitana Festival, and, in Malta, the Victoria International Arts Festival and International Spring Orchestra Festival. He has also concertised with Joseph Calleja (BOV Joseph Calleja Foundation). Besides his work for Arts Council Malta, Joseph Lia is founder and Artistic Director of the Malta International Organ Festival, an adviser for Europa Cantat,

and a visiting lecturer at the University of Malta within the Centre for Liberal Arts and Sciences. He has recently been appointed to the founding committee of the newly established KorMalta - Malta's National Choir.

Natalia Rakhmatulina graduated in musicology from the N A Rimsky-Korsakov Saint Petersburg State Conservatory. Her academic interests lie principally in Messiaen's pedagogical activity: with a number of published papers and conference presentations to her credit, she is currently researching this topic under the supervision of Elena Titova. Having taught in St Petersburg at the Rimsky-Korsakov State Music College of St Petersburg, and at the Georgy Sviridov Children's Arts School - two years ago she won the St Petersburg Best Solfeggio Teacher Award (Pedagogicheskije Nadezhdy 2017) - she is currently a visiting lecturer in the Music Studies Department at the University of Malta. Active as a choral singer and *répétiteur*, she is resident organist at the Church of St. Paul's, Birkirkara, entrusted with the celebration of the Traditional Latin Mass in Malta.

CONCERT VII ~ Thursday 2 May

Teatru Manoel, 8pm

DAHPNE DELICATA ~ ISOF Rising Star Piano

TRIO AMERALDI

RACHEL KISACANIN Violin

DIANE LAMBERT Cello

ALEX STUKALENKO Piano

'Baroque cupolas were the soft green of antique copper, and Gothic steeples stood ready to impale fallen angels. The wind carried the memory of magic, revolution, violins, and the cobbled lanes meandered like creeks.' ~ Laini Taylor, 2011

BEETHOVEN *Sonata No 8, in C minor (Pathétique), Op 13*

(1798-99). I *Grave-Allegro molto e con brio*; II *Adagio cantabile*; III *Rondo: Allegro*. Of all the works composed, planned or printed during Beethoven's early Viennese period, the *Pathétique* (his title), dedicated to Prince Karl Lichnowsky, remains the most popular. Its first movement – related to the second of the early *Electoral* Sonatas (1783) and the dialectic of Dussek's C minor Sonata Op 35 No 3 (published in 1797) – is prefaced by an important germinal introduction which, unusually, recurs at two strategic later architectural divisions: the start of the development section, and the beginning of the coda. No clearer burial of the old century can be imagined, no finer herald of the new, than the acid diminished-seventh harmonies tensioning the dramatic underlay, presaging Op 111 [Concert V]. The *Adagio*, searchingly expressive, explores dark sonorities, it's A-flat realm inhabiting what the late classicists took to be 'the key of death, the tomb, putrefaction, the Last Judgement, eternity' (Christian Schubart). From sketches in the British Library, the finale may originally have been conceived for violin and piano. Whether or not its refrain was a borrowing from someone else we cannot be sure: Beethoven's contemporaries, without being specific, thought that it was.

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-75) *Piano Trio No 1, in C minor (Poème), Op 8* (1923). *Andante – Molto più mosso – Andante – Allegro – Più mosso – Adagio – Andante – Meno mosso – Moderato – Allegro – Prestissimo fantastico – Andante – Allegro – [Poco più mosso] – Allegro moderato – Allegro*. Shostakovich, a student of Steinberg at the Conservatoire in Petrograd (as St Petersburg was then known), a rigid institution, was sixteen and tubercular when he wrote this early Trio in a Black Sea sanatorium in Crimea. He dedicated it to Tatyana Glivenko, a girl with whom he'd fallen in love while convalescing – 'the only true love of my brother,' his sister liked to think. He and two friends, violinist Veniamin Sher and cellist Grigori Pekker, purportedly rehearsed it in Petrograd, 25 October 1923, at the Harlequinade Cinema – his nightly haunt as a 'picture palace' pianist improvising 'human passion' music for silent films. The following spring, trying his luck, he went to Moscow to audition for a place at the Conservatoire, the panel including Myaskovsky. 'The result was completely unexpected,' he wrote to his mother, 'I could never have imagined it. They decided to regard the Trio as my sonata-form piece, and immediately I was accepted on the free composition course' (an offer, however, he was to turn down for practical reasons). In one chromatically underlined movement, incorporating material from other works and unified through motivic links and thematic metamorphosis, the work follows an exposition-development-reprise design, with the order of subjects reversed in the closing section, creating a symmetrical arch scheme: A-B-C-B-A. Published posthumously, the first edition was reconstructed from incomplete autograph sources, with the missing final 22 bars of the piano part added by Shostakovich's pupil, Boris Tishchenko (1981).

SHOSTAKOVICH arr LEVON ATOVMIAN, DIANE LAMBERT

Five Pieces for Piano Trio. I *Präludium* [B minor]; II *Gavotte* [A major]; III *Elegie* [A major]; IV *Walzer* [G minor]; V *Polka* [D major]. These charmingly Romantic cameos – taken from Atovmian's arrangement from two violins and piano – survive in all manner of guises, from orchestra to piano solo, the soul-baring composer of the symphonies and string quartets wearing an altogether different kind of hat, appealing and diatonically approachable. The first number is from the film score to *The Gadfly* (1955); the second and third are from the Third Ballet Suite (1952); the last comes from the First Ballet Suite (1949).

Interval

SCHUBERT *Piano Trio No 2, in E flat major, D 929* (1827, rev version). I *Allegro*; II *Andante con moto*; III *Scherzo: Allegro moderato*; IV *Rondo: Allegro moderato*. 'One glance' at Schubert's piano trios – the bright-voiced, sad-eyed Biedermeier children of Beethoven's Op 70/*Archduke* legacy – 'and the troubles of our human existence disappear' Schumann worshipped. 'All the world is fresh and bright again.' Comparing them, he wrote: 'The two works are essentially and fundamentally different. The first movement [of the B flat], which in the E flat Trio is eloquent of extreme anger and passionate longing, is ... a thing of grace, intimate and virginal; the *adagio*, in the E flat Trio a sigh, rising to spiritual anguish, is ... a blissful dream-state, a pulsating flow of exquisitely human emotion. The scherzos are very similar to each other; yet to my mind, that of the B flat Trio is superior. To sum up, the Trio in E flat is active, masculine, dramatic, while the B flat is passive, feminine, lyrical'. Published during Schubert's lifetime, the E flat, dated November 1827 in the manuscript, was first performed by Schuppanzigh, Joseph Linke and the Bohemian pianist Carl Maria von Bocklet – either under the umbrella of Vienna's Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, 26 December 1827 ('new trio'); or as the centre-piece of a concert of the composer's works marking the first anniversary of Beethoven's death, 26 March 1828. The splendours of the music are richly varied and spun. From *Eroica* triple-time and imposing unisons to Haydnesque *scherzando*, Mozartean 6/8 'innocence', and Scandinavian song: the (recurrent) Swedish air of the C minor slow movement, *Se solen sjunker*, 'Look, the sun is setting' – which, Alfred Einstein notes (1951), Schubert develops into 'a grandiose ballad' of 'ominous colouring' and 'moving' emotional outburst.

Meet the Artists

Twelve-year old **Daphne Delicata** from Gozo was one of the success stories of last year's International Spring Orchestra Festival. She began her studies at the age of four under the guidance of her father, Marco Delicata, and is currently taught by Irina Fedcenko-Carbonaro in Malta, Cecilia Grillo in Rome, and Elena Nesterenko in Germany. In 2014 she won her age category, *premio assoluto*, in the Mozart International Piano



Competition in Rome. Two years later she won her group in the first Maltese Islands Festival, and her participation in the Ibla Grand Prize led to gaining 'Most Distinguished Musician' recognition, a Copland Special Mention, and a scholarship to Denver University, Colorado. In 2017 she gained her ABRSM Diploma, a further American scholarship, to Kent State University, Ohio, and won her category in the Valletta International Piano Competition, repeated in 2018. During the second half of 2018, following her first solo recital at the Palace of the President of Malta in San Anton, her performances included Mozart's A major Piano Concerto K 414 at the International Music Festival, Kostroma, Russia, under Pavel Gerstein, as well as an appearance at the International EPTA Conference. Competition highlights included age category wins in Danubia Talents, Stage4Kids Hamburg, and the Debut International Piano Competition, this last leading to an engagement later this month at the Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, New York. In Switzerland last October she gained distinction in the Concours International Jeune Chopin chaired by Martha Argerich. This coming September she commences advanced studies in England at the Yehudi Menuhin School, the first musician from the Maltese Islands to be accepted by this world-leading establishment. 'Music seems to be an extension of herself, she breathes with it ... a star in ascendancy' – www.classicalsource.com.

The **Trio Ameraldi** was formed by Rachel Kisacanin and Diane Lambert in 2015.

Rachel Kisacanin, violin, born in Marseille, studied at the Conservatoire Regional de Musique in Lyon, completing her studies with Yuri Zhislin at the Royal College of Music, London, and Raphaël Oleg, at the Musikhochschule in Basel in 2012. Parallel with her studies, she gained experience with the National Youth Orchestra of the Netherlands, Lorin Maazel's Castleton Festival in Washington, the Lucerne Festival Academy, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and London Symphony Orchestra, playing under such conductors as Bernard Haitink and Esa-Pekka Salonen. In June 2013 she was the soloist in Bartók's First Concerto with the Basel Symphony Orchestra directed by Adrian Prubava. In addition to her chamber work – she is leader of the Esprit Quartet – she guests with the Zürich Chamber Orchestra, Argovia Philharmonic, Lucerne Festival Strings, and St-Gallen Symphony Orchestra.

Paris-born, **Diane Lambert**, cello, comes from a family of musicians. Aged seven, she started lessons at the Conservatoire de musique de Massy, before transferring to the Conservatoire Regional de Musique in Lille, receiving the Médaille d'or de prix supérieur. She completed her studies with Raphael Wallfisch at the Hochschule der Künste, Zürich, and Rafael Rosenfeld at the Musikhochschule, Basel. Winner of the 2015 Bellan International Competition in Paris, her solo engagements have included André Caplet's *Epiphanie* with the Basel Symphony Orchestra. An experienced orchestral player, since 2012, she appears regularly with the Basel Symphony Orchestra, Lucerne Symphony Orchestra, and the orchestra of Zürich Opera, working with an international line-up of conductors and soloists.

Based in Switzerland, **Alex Stukalenko**, piano, born in Kiev, studied at the National Music Academy of Ukraine and with Konstantin Scherbakov at the Zürich University of Arts. A competition laureate, he has participated in masterclasses with leading masters of the Russian piano tradition, including Vladimir Krainev, Dmitri Bashkirov, and the Serbian Aleksandar Madžar. A sought-after artist of strong romantic temperament, he divides his time between solo concerts and chamber music. He teaches at the Musikschule Küsnacht.



CONCERT VIII ~ Friday 3 May

Danse Macabre

Teatru Manoel, 8pm

DAPHNE DELICATA ~ ISOF Rising Star Piano

MARIA NESTERENKO Viola

ESTONIAN SINFONIETTA SOLOISTS

JOHANNES PÖLDA Concertmaster

'Fear not death for the hour of your doom is set and none may escape it.' ~ *Völsunga Saga*, late 13th century

SERGEI RACHMANINOV (1873-1943) *Moments musicaux, Op 16 – No 3 in B minor, Andante cantabile; No 4 in E minor, Presto* (1896). Rachmaninov's *Moments musicaux* draw their inspiration from Romantic character types and their title from Schubert's 'private' set of six published in Vienna in 1828. In their 'public' virtuosity and scaling, however, their intrinsically Russian palette, they occupy radically different territory. An 'introspective reverie' (Robert Matthew-Walker), No 3, dark and moody, echoes to distant orthodox funerals. No 4, a 'Revolutionary' étude of demanding left-hand fury, is brilliant and impulsive, not for the weak of spirit.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-47) *Introduction and Rondo capriccioso in E, Op 14* (1824). Preceding the precocious String Octet and *Midsummer Night's Dream* Overture, this dynamically enriched early showpiece, composed in Berlin, contrasts chest-voiced *gran espressione* melody (the E major slow introduction) with elfin refrain (the minor-key 6/8 rondo), along the way addressing a compendium of exacting piano issues ranging from double-notes, thirds, left-hand melody, arpeggios and scales to teasing 4+2 semiquaver figurations and *bravura* broken-octaves. Delicacy of touch and crispness of articulation are a prerequisite. Expectations not unfamiliar from Hummel, Field or Kalkbrenner maybe, but consider that in 1824 Mendelssohn's three great keyboard peers – Chopin, Schumann, Liszt – had yet to attain such dizzying heights.



ALFRED SCHNITTKE (1934-98) arr MAXIM EMELYANYCHEV *Polka from Dead Souls* (1983). A mystic converted to Christianity, Schnittke was born in Engels to a Volga-German mother and an atheist Russian father from a Jewish family in Frankfurt. He began his musical studies as a child in *Third Man* Vienna, before returning to Moscow in 1948 during the cultural purges that saw the denouncement of Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Khachaturian. 'In a society where art really mattered, where it had even been known to amount to a matter of life and death, Schnittke's was the music that mattered most to Russians of the post-Stalin, post-Shostakovich generation', remembers his friend Laurel E Fay. 'His was [...] a magic name. In the absence of press or promotion (withheld by the Soviet musical establishment), invoking it was enough to fill any Moscow concert hall to overflowing with people ravenous for aesthetic nourishment and intellectual stimulation.' Schnittke's copious catalogue included a number of film scores and soundtracks, spanning a thirty-year period from the mid-60s to the mid-90s. Released in 1984, *Dead Souls* was five-part mini-series for television directed by Mikhail Shveytser, a former protégé of Eisenstein, based on the 1842 novel by Gogol satirising political corruption in Tsarist times – a picaresque story previously adapted for stage by Bulgakov (1932) and set as an opera by Shchedrin (1976). Pavel Chichikov, pretentious and shady, whose 'psychological leitmotiv is complacency', arrives

in a provincial backwater with a devious scheme, proposing to enter high society through acquiring dead souls - those recently deceased serfs still 'alive' on paper. This ridiculous, faintly Hebraic Polka – Emelyanychev's arrangement including a part for solo viola - glimpses the pungency of Schnittke's imagination.

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949) arr RUDOLF LEOPOLD *Metamorphosen, TrV 290, AV 142* (1944-45), for string septet (1994).

Violins: Johannes Põlda, Valeria Rjumina; Violas: Maria Nesterenko, Helena Altmanis;
Cellos: Jarkko Ensio Launonen, Siluan Hirvoja; Double Bass Janel Altroff

June 1935, Strauss to Stefan Zweig, intercepted by the Gestapo, sent to Hitler: 'Do you believe I am ever, in any of my actions, guided by the thought that I am "German"? Do you suppose Mozart was consciously "Aryan" when he composed? I recognise only two types of people: those who have talent and those who have none'. March 1945: 'The Goethehaus, the world's greatest sanctuary destroyed! My beautiful Dresden – Weimar – Munich, all gone!' Diary, 1945: 'On 1 May ended the most terrible period of mankind: twelve years during which the fruits of Germany's 2,000-year-long cultural development were condemned to extinction and irreplaceable buildings and works of art were destroyed by a criminal rabble of soldiers'. Dedicated to the Collegium Musicum Zürich and Paul Sacher, whose commission, for a 'suite for strings', was sent via a letter from the conductor Karl Böhm, the definitive score of *Metamorphosen* - begun on 13 March 1945, the day after the Americans bombed and gutted the Vienna Staatsoper – was completed in a month, in Garmisch. Sacher directed the Tonhalle premiere, 25 January 1946, the aged, failing composer having undertaken the final rehearsal. If *Metamorphosen* ever had a descriptive programme, Strauss never revealed it beyond the melodic subtext and, nine bars from the end, beneath the doublebass stave, the words 'In Memoriam'. It's profound valedictory nature, though, the sadness and tears of Zweig's 'world of yesterday', is inescapable. Like a long sunset, Goethe, too, coppers its pages. 1944: 'I am reading him as he developed and as he finally became ... I will be young again with Goethe

and then again old with him - with his eyes. For he was a man of eyes - he saw what I heard'. Resisting Lisztian thematic metamorphosis in favour of ongoing symphonic development, less repetitive than *durchkomponiert* in aesthetic, the most haunting of its many themes and reminiscences (at flanking ends) quotes Beethoven, the funeral march from the *Eroica*, a work Strauss never recorded but held in admiration at a time when it was relatively neglected (he programmed it in Vienna's Golden Hall in 1906, conducting the Philharmonic). Rudolph Leopold's realisation follows the septet 'short score' (completed 31 March 1945, and discovered in Switzerland in 1990) while incorporating elements from the final twenty-three-string version, in the process retaining the original closing modulation of the earlier draft.

LEPO SUMERA (1950-2000) arr JOHANNES PÖLDA *Fragments from Danse Macabre* (1991, 2019). Short-lived but brilliant, Leo Sumera studied in Tallinn and with Roman Ledenev at the Moscow Conservatoire. His appointments spell out his standing in Estonian cultural life: Estonian Radio (1971-1980, sound director), Estonian Composer's Union (1980-85, senior adviser, chairman from 1993), Minister of Culture during the days of the Singing Revolution leading to the independence of the Baltic States (1988-92: proof of a time and place when cultural appointees were cultured men), Estonian Academy of Music (1995-99, first director of the electronic music studio). His copious output included six symphonies. 'There is a diversity of music and art and fiction that is based on different worldviews and different perceptions of the world, completely different rational ideas or emotions. Icelanders view their country and the world through the prism of their own country, which totally differs from the way I do. This is what inspires. Until now I always try to cross the road with my eyes and ears open. So that I wouldn't go from point A to point B without seeing or hearing anything. I'm trying to take in whatever I can. You never know what the next moment will bring. And very often the next moment ... ah, but isn't that what inspiration is all about!' *Danse Macabre (Surmatants)* was a period-drama film by Tõnu Virve, inspired by the late Gothic painting of the same title by the Lübeck-based painter Bernt Notke (the only preserved medieval *Danse Macabre* painted on canvas, restored in Moscow, 1962-64), speculating on the painting's journey to Tallinn - from where Notke's family originated.

Interval

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865-1957) *Valse triste, Op 44, No 1* (1903).

This famous piece, a week in the writing, was the first of six numbers Sibelius composed for a three-act play, *Kuolema (Death)* by his brother-in-law, the Tolstoyan Arvid Järnefelt. In its self-standing guise, scored for flute, clarinet, two horns, timpani (a single one, in D) and strings, it was premiered in Helsinki, 25 April 1904. Act I: 'It is night. The son [Paavali], who has been watching beside the bedside of his sick mother, has fallen asleep from sheer weariness, Gradually a ruddy light is diffused through the room: there is a sound of distant music: the glow and the music steal nearer until the strains of a valse melody float distantly to our ears. The sleeping mother awakens, rises from her bed and, in her long white garment, which takes the semblance of a ball dress, begins to move silently and slowly to and fro. She waves her hands and beckons in time to the music, as though she were summoning a crowd of invisible guests. And now they appear, these strange visionary couples, turning and gliding to an unearthly valse rhythm. The dying woman mingles with the dancers; she strives to make them look into her eyes, but the shadowy guests one and all avoid her glance. Then she seems to sink exhausted on her bed and the music breaks off. Presently she gathers all her strength and invokes the dance once more, with more energetic gestures than before. Back come the shadowy dancers, gyrating in a wild, mad rhythm. The weird gaiety reaches a climax; there is a knock at the door, which flies wide open; the mother utters a despairing cry; the spectral guests vanish; the music dies away. Death stands on the threshold.'

ARTŪRS MASKATS (born 1957) *Midnight in Riga* (2014).

Maskats studied at the Latvian State Conservatory, graduating in 1982, in which year he was appointed music director of the Rainis Dailes Theatre in Riga, founded in 1920, holding this position until 1997. Commissioned by the Žanis Lipke Foundation and Gidon Kremer's Kremerata Baltica, *Midnight*

in Riga (Pusnakts Rīgā) is touched by the Second World War and the days of Žanis (Jānis) and Hannah Lipke concealing and saving Latvian Jews from Nazi capture and deportation. But, contrasting his opera *Valentīna*, the composer is quick to emphasise that 'it's not a work about the Holocaust. It's rather about remembrance, about nostalgia, even romance, it's about the immense human contribution the Lipkes made in helping other people. It's not about the horrors of war. My work carries no particular semantic implication nor does it retell the events of the time'. From 1926 to 1940 Žanis worked as a stevedore in the port of Riga, joining the leftist underground, hiding the persecuted, and dealing in contraband. With the onset of war and occupation, he completed a course in air defence with the German Commandant's Office in Riga, shortly afterwards getting a job at the Luftwaffe warehouses by the Central Market not far from the Riga ghetto. A street-wise, psychologically canny man of steely nerve, earning the trust of his superiors, he was put in charge of arranging for Jewish inmates of the ghetto to get to and from the 'Red' warehouses where they worked. At increasing risk to himself and his wife and family, he saved around forty people, a fifth of the Jewish minority who survived within Latvia until the Soviets arrived in 1944, harbouring them in his own house or various dug-outs. 'I never counted them,' he claimed. 'I saved who ever I could save, I did not count.' Scored for solo violin, cello and vibraphone with strings, *Midnight in Riga* is a neo-tonal poem of ready accessibility, its elements of dance, rhythm and melody invoking as much Maskats's own Tango for orchestra from 2002 as well as (on his own admission) Woody Allen's 2011 *Midnight in Paris*. In the hands of the Latvian Oskar Strock, popular from Istanbul to Berlin, Baltic casino tango was big in Riga during the thirties, mellow vocalists and melded musicians taking couples on journeys beyond the heat of the night. *Tell me why, Madame?, Dark Eyes, Splashes of Champagne, Maryana ...*



Meet the Artists

Daphne Delicata - see Concert VII

Based in Tallinn, the **Estonian Sinfonietta** connects creatively active musicians who play together regularly. Favouring instrumental configurations responsive to specific requirements, programming is flexible, embracing a range of challenges from baroque to contemporary, operatic to symphonic. Dispensing with an artistic director, the orchestra invites guest conductors on the basis of repertory and individual vision, in the process creating interpretations of distinctive soundscape and personalised expression. www.eestisinfonietta.ee.

First Violins:

Johannes Põlda, Andri Annus, Danae Taamal, Leena Laas;

Second Violins: Valeria Rjumina, Miina Laanesaar, Kaido Kopli;

Violas: Maria Nesterenko, Helena Altmanis;

Cellos: Jarkko Ensio Launonen, Siluan Hirvoja;

Double Bass: Janel Altroff; Flute: Eneli Hiiemaa;

Clarinet: Soo-Young Lee; Horns: Kreete Perandi, Eliise Tani;

Timpani, Percussion: Karl Johann Lattikas

Johannes Põlda, concertmaster, studied at the Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, and at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, specialising in violin and conducting. He leads the Symphony Orchestra of the Sibelius Academy, and since the autumn of 2018 has been joint-concertmaster of the Lapland Chamber Orchestra in Rovaniemi, the EU's most northerly professional orchestra.

Maria Nesterenko, viola, a graduate of the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, completed her postgraduate studies in L'Aquila and Graz. A member of the orchestra of the Estonian National Opera, Tallinn, founded in 1865, she is an active soloist and chamber musician, and also plays and improvises with the electro-acoustic music group, Dart Duo.

Jarkko Ensio Launonen, cello, completed his studies at the Helsinki Conservatory of Music and Metropolia University of Applied Sciences. A committed soloist and chamber player, he leads the cello sections of both the Helsinki and Estonian Sinfoniettas.

Karl Johann Lattikas, percussion, graduated from the Sibelius Academy. He is currently pursuing advanced studies at the Academy of Music and Dance in Cologne. He has appeared as soloist or ensemble player with the major Baltic ensembles as well as the European Union Youth Orchestra.



CONCERT IX ~ Saturday 4 May

Closing Concert

Teatru Manoel, 8pm

This concert is a Valletta Cultural Agency International Spring Orchestra Festival collaboration

DAPHNE DELICATA ~ ISOF Rising Star Piano

LUCIA MICALLEF Piano

BRIGITTE PEYRÉ Mezzo Soprano

ESTONIAN SINFONIETTA

JOHANNES PÖLDA Concertmaster

with

CHARLENE FARRUGIA Piano

FRANKO BOŽAC Accordion

BRIAN SCHEMBRI Conductor

'Music is a liberal science, and ought to be liberally upheld.'

~ *Olivia Dussek Buckley, 1843*

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937) *Sonatine in F-sharp, MM 40* (c 1904-05). I *Modéré-doux et espressif*; II *Mouvement de menuet*; III *Animé*. 'A deliberately sarcastic, argumentative and aloof young man,' Alfred Cortot thought of Ravel, his fellow student at the Paris Conservatoire, 'who used to read Mallarmé and visit Erik Satie.' 'A narcissist,' portrayed Alma Mahler, who 'related all things to his bodily and facial charms.' Unified by the interval or a falling fourth or rising fifth, the Sonatine, more brittle than sensuous in its sound world (notwithstanding one or two unexpected subterranean descents), is short, precise and tricky. Trialed in Lyon, the Paris premiere, 31 March 1906, was given by Gabriel Grovlez, a pianist of Gallic finery noted as much for his critiques as his compositions.

PAUL HINDEMITH (1895-1963) *Kammermusik No 1, Op 24 No 1* (1922 rev 1952) for flute/piccolo, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, harmonium (accordion), piano, string quintet and percussion. I *Sehr schnell und wild/Very fast and wild*; II *Mässig schnell Halbe, Sehr streng im Rhythmus/Moderately fast, very strict in the rhythm*; III Quartet: *Sehr langsam und mit Ausdruck-Ein wenig belebter-Wieder ruhig/Very slow and with expression-A little busier-Calm again*; IV Finale: *1921 Lebhaft/Lively*. 'No other composer of the younger generation,' considered Furtwängler in 1934, 'has done more for the status of German music throughout the world than Paul Hindemith. Furthermore, one cannot foresee today what importance his works may have in the future'. The seven *Kammermusik* essays (1922-27) were largely a reaction - durationally, instrumentally, colouristically, economically - to the canvasses and *fin de siècle* extravaganzas of Mahler, Richard Strauss and the post-Wagnerites. 'Their locale,' the critic Rob Barnett reminds us, 'was Baden-Baden and Frankfurt ... Freewheeling, swerving, swallow-diving [music], bouncing tangentially off circles created by Berg and Weill' - 'very much part of the neo-Baroque and [George] Grosz fusion'. Six of the series are in the form of chamber concertos, taking their cue from the Bach *Brandenburgs*. Inscribed to Prince Max Egon von Fürstenberg, the First Concerto was premiered in Donaueschingen, 31 July 1922, under the direction of Hermann Scherchen. Packing a lithe, athletic punch, its variegated linear and rhythmic counterpoint, melodic shaping and articulation (each slur and *staccato* contributing fundamentally to the attack and dialect of the dialogue), mirror priorities typical of the collection as a whole. The tempo scheme follows a progressively lengthening trajectory, from terse beginnings to a spiralling finale of corporate virtuosity. Noteworthy is the expressively imitative writing of the third movement, sparingly scored for a quartet of flute, clarinet, bassoon and glockenspiel (just ten F#s, *ppp* to *p* for the latter). Hindemith edited the harmonium part for accordion in 1952.

FRANCIS POULENC (1899-1963) *Aubade, Choreographic Concerto, FP 51a* (1929) for piano and eighteen instruments. I Toccata [ensemble] *Lento et pesante*-[solo cadenza] *Molto animato*; II Récitatif *Larghetto*; III Rondeau *Allegro*; IV Presto; V Récitatif *Larghetto*; VI Andante *Andante con moto-Animer-Tempo I*; VII Allegro *féroce*; VIII Conclusion *Adagio*. The

'wildly eclectic' 'Poulenc-Janus', as Poulenc called himself, 'ragamuffin' and 'monk' to Claude Rostand, told Stéfane Audel in 1953 that the main influences on his music were 'Mozart before all else, then Schubert, Chopin, Debussy and Stravinsky [...]. I'm extremely susceptible visually, everything is an excuse for getting side-tracked, for frittering away my time. So I have to retire within myself and work in solitude ... ' 'I know perfectly well,' he noted in 1942, 'that I'm not one of those composers who have made harmonic innovations like Igor [Stravinsky], Ravel or Debussy, but I think there's room for new music which doesn't mind using other people's chords. Wasn't that the case with Mozart - Schubert?' 'My music is my portrait'. 'Do not analyse [it], love it!' Completed in Fontainebleau between May and June 1929, a dynamic, strongly gestured piece for all its pastiche and sectionalism, *Aubade* was first staged privately as a ballet on 19 June 1929 in the grand salon of Cocteau's former lover, the patroness Marie-Laure, Vicomtesse de Noailles, 11 Place des États-Unis. Poulenc, playboy of a society more regal than republican, took the tough solo part (his pianism was superior). Vladimir Golschmann conducted. Nijinsky's sister, Bronislava, choreographed. The room was young. Marie-Laure, twenty-six. Francis thirty. Vladimir, thirty-five. Bronislava, thirty-eight. A glade at dawn ... the morning of the next dawn. The composer's scenario, a twenty-one minute pastel, addresses the plight of Diana, the virgin 'huntress, chaste and fair' of Roman mythology condemned to eternal chastity - not a state of being anyone in that first 16th *arrondissement* audience would remotely have wanted to identify with.

Interval

KARL FIORINI (born 1979) *Four Miniatures* (2019 to poems by Sophie Charpentier, commissioned by the Valletta Cultural Agency, *World Premiere*) for mezzo-soprano and small orchestra. I *En écho à ce qui fut la couleur des pierres/Echoing what was the colour of the stones*; II *L'incandescence des murs avait troué/The incandescent walls had holes*; III *Ocres, orangés, noirs fendillés s'insinuant dans les fissures/Insinuant ocher, orange, black fissures*; IV *L'image sépia s'efface peu à peu/The sepia image fades little by little*. Based in Paris, Karl Fiorini studied with Charles Camilleri and the late Joseph Vella, and then in London at the Guildhall School of Music &

Drama, taking his doctorate at the Royal College of Music. He identifies his present style as 'marked with a sense of self-mockery and eclecticism, without lapsing into clichés', teasingly inviting us into a Pandora's box of paradoxes and contradictions. He's a composer with bold ideas embracing intense states of being, a wiry man who journeys volcanic storms and wild oceans, who caresses and curses sound and rhythm, who twists and tortures innocent motifs and strands of memory into climaxes and explosions of terrifying confrontation. *The composer writes*: 'These four songs strive to capture Valletta, a city of echoing memories, where the scorching Mediterranean sun lashes out implacably at its building's pigments and the worn-out, cracked ramparts that contain it; where the night hits the churches' domes before devouring the nostalgic fabric of its cobbled and exhausted streets, caressed and trespassed by travellers, dwellers, paddlers, lovers old and newly-found alike. The orchestra acts as a vehicle to re-incarnate the sounds of a living city, unfolding its crude light, evoking words that can neither be inscribed nor remembered. The notes are chiselled on the score, like perforated walls, edifices and abodes, endeavouring to resurrect impressions of calcified stone-colour consumed to the roots by time that the eye thinks it perceives.'

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860-1911) *Kindertotenlieder/Songs of the Deaths of Children* (1901-04, 2019) for voice and chamber orchestra.

'These five songs are intended as one inseparable unit, and in performing them their continuity should not be interfered with' ~ composer's preface to the score please refrain from applauding until the end of the performance

I Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgeh'n, *Now the sun wants to rise as brightly*; II *Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen/Now I see well, why with such dark flames*; III *Wenn dein Mütterlein/When your mother*; IV *Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen/Often I think: they have only just gone out*; V *In diesem Wetter, in diesem Braus/In this weather, in this windy storm*. 'I am three times homeless: a native of Bohemia in Austria; an Austrian among Germans; a Jew throughout the whole world.' '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). The German poet and orientalist, Friedrich Rückert, wrote his *Kindertotenlieder*, 428 of them, in 1833-34. An outpouring of grief on the deaths of two of his children, attempting 'a poetic resuscitation' (Karen Painter), they were first published posthumously in 1871. During the period between his Fourth and Sixth Symphonies, Mahler set five of the texts. He was no stranger to death: eight of his siblings met Charon the ferryman in childhood, and his eldest daughter, Maria, died within three years of the cycle, from scarlet fever, aged not yet five. The songs were premiered in Vienna by the baritone Friedrich Weidemann, 29 January 1905, with a chamber orchestra drawn from the ranks of the Wiener Philharmoniker directed by the composer, six days after he'd conducted a new production of *Das Rheingold*. I, D minor: 'Now the sun wants to rise as brightly as if nothing terrible had happened during the night'. II, C minor: 'Now I see well, why with such dark flames in many glances you flash upon me'. III, C minor: 'When your mother steps in through the door'. IV, E-flat major: 'Often I think: they have only just gone out, and now they will be coming back home'. V, D minor/major [orchestration adapted by Karl Fiorini]: 'In this weather, in this windy storm, I would never have sent the children out'. The *maggiore* postlude of the final verse alludes to the closing movement of the Third Symphony, originally titled 'What love tells me' – a farewell of fading transcendence, 'a haven of eternal sleep,' as Deryck Cooke once put it, 'rather than the paradise of the Fourth Symphony'. Is there a finer, more timeless lament on the road from Schubert to Strauss?

Meet the Artists

Daphne Delicata - see Concert VII

Estonian Sinfonietta – see Concert VIII

Brigitte Peyré, mezzo soprano, gold medallist at the Conservatoire de Bordeaux, completed her studies at the former Centre national d'insertion professionnelle des artistes lyriques (CNIPAL) in Marseille before going for advanced training to Italy and London. Her repertory is especially broad, spanning the history and genres of Western music from Monteverdi and Mozart to Boulez and Aperghis, from art song to popular, opera to symphony. She tours widely,

appearing in major international festivals from across Europe to Russia and Japan. CD recordings include music by Dufay, Boucourechliev and Denisov.

The distinguished Maltese pianist **Lucia Micallef** studied with Giovanna Bascetta before winning an ABRSM scholarship to study with Lois Phillips at the Royal Academy of Music in London. She later worked with Alexander Kelly, Ruth Harte and Hamish Milne besides as well as attending the *Corso di Perfezionamento* with Rudolf Buchbinder at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena. She has played widely in Europe and North America, her festival appearances including Prague, Edinburgh, and, in Valletta, the International Baroque and International Spring Orchestra Festivals. Concerto performances have included engagements with the Virtuosi of London, the Britten Sinfonia (under Nicholas Cleobury), and the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra. A singularly cultured chamber player, she has partnered Stefan Popov, Nicolas Dautricourt, Daniel Hope and Vladimir Ovchinnikov. Recently acclaimed CDs have included *The Love Songs of Paolo Tosti* with Gillian Zammit (Claudio Records), and Bach's keyboard concertos with the European Union Chamber Orchestra under Brian Schembri (Divine Art). Lucia Micallef was formerly Cultural Consultant to the Manoel Theatre and Artistic Director of the Three Palaces Festival under the patronage of the President of Malta; among other long-term ventures, she founded the Malta Baroque Festival and the Music and More concert series.

Brian Schembri studied with his late father, Carmelo Schembri, before completing his training in the USSR, graduating from the Kiev Conservatory (piano with Alexander Snegiriov, conducting with Roman Kofman) and the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory (piano with Sergei Dorensky, conducting with Gennady Rozhdestvensky). While still active as a concert pianist, he worked as assistant conductor to Michel Plasson and Emmanuel Krivine. Later he was appointed Chief Conductor of the OPF Orchestra and Orquestra Metropolitana de Lisboa, followed by critically acclaimed tenures as Music Director of the Teatru Manoel and Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra. He has appeared in concert, opera and festivals with leading orchestras in Europe, Russia and the Far East. His CDs include piano sonatas by Beethoven,



Photo by George Scintilla



Schubert and Rachmaninov, as well as music by Charles Camilleri with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the Bournemouth Symphony. More recently he has recorded Tansman's wind concertos for the CPO label in Germany, with Diego Dini Ciacci and Fabrizio Meloni. During 2018 he gave the Maltese premiere of Shostakovich's Fourteenth Symphony at the International Spring Orchestra Festival; and revived Carlo Diacono's opera *L'Alpino* at a commemorative concert organised by the Beland Music Society. Based in Paris, Brian Schembri is recipient of the Malta Cultural Award and Malta's Medal for Services to the Republic.



Biographical Notes and Player Listings correct at time of going to press.

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Programme Notes, Programme Book Editor

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International Spring Orchestra Festival

14th edition

Valletta 17-25 April 2020

*'Whispering Death came dressed in eyes of yours,
drowned in mist and thus I finally felt death in the twinkling eyes of my one beloved
when sunrise teased me so cruelly, hiding itself behind the simple sunset darkness,
thus begone and thus whispering yet again my very last of breath, I thus did.'*

~ GSB ~

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