



MALTA
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

ALL ABOUT THE BRASS

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Malta Philharmonic Orchestra

Friday 28st July 2023, 7.30pm
Spazju Kreattiv - Studio B, Valletta

PROGRAMME

Tylman Susato (arr. by John Iveson)

Renaissance Dances for Brass Quintet

- I. La Mourisque
- II. Bransle Quatre Bransles
- III. Ronde
- IV. Ronde - Mon Amy
- V. Basse Danse Bergeret

Joseph Vella

Pezzo per Quintetto d'Ottoni

Gabriel Fauré (arr. by Stephen Roberts)

Pavane, Op. 50

Georges Bizet (arr. by Peter Franks)

Suite from Carmen

- I. Prelude to Act 1
- II. La Grande montane
- III. Habañera
- IV. Intermezzo – Aragonaise
- V. Seguedille
- VI. Intermezzo -Les Dragons d'Alcala
- VII. Chanson du Toreador
- VIII. Opening to Act 4
- IX. Danse Bohème

PROGRAMME NOTES

Tylman Susato (Belgium, c. 1510/15 – Belgium, 1570)

Renaissance Dances for Brass Quintet [arr. by John Iveson]

Little is known of Tylman (or Tielman) Susato's early life. The first references to this Renaissance composer appear in Antwerp archives in around 1530, when we find him working as a calligrapher, as well as an instrumentalist. He eventually set up a music publishing house in the same city. As a composer, he wrote and published much sacred music, and also secular chansons (songs) for two or three voices. Susato also wrote instrumental music, publishing a volume of dance music in 1551, pieces from which are still often performed today. This suite compiled by John Iveson consists of a selection of dances arranged for two trumpets, horn, trombone and tuba.

Joseph Vella (Gozo, 1942 – Gozo, 2018)

Pezzo per Quintetto d'Ottoni

Joseph Vella was one of Malta's major musical figures, a leading composer, conductor and musicologist. Vella's musical language is ingrained in a personal idiom influenced mainly by the 20th Century neo-classical movement, with a lyrical brand of atonality which tends to precipitate to a fundamental note. Nonetheless, there is an adventurous eclecticism to his oeuvre, evident in the diversity of styles he employed throughout his career.

Pezzo per Quintetto d'Ottoni (Piece for Brass Quintet) was written for the Sofia Brass Quartet in February 1992 and first performed by them at a concert in Stuttgart, Germany in April of the same year. At just over six minutes, it is a relatively brief but challenging work which showcases the technical virtuosity of the individual members of the quintet.

Gabriel Fauré (France, 1845 – France, 1924)

Pavane, Op.50

Gabriel Fauré was a highly influential musical in his native France and beyond. He was an accomplished pianist and organist, and as a composer, his style served as a bridge between the music of the Romantics and the more adventurous approaches which held sway in the early twentieth century. As a teacher, and particularly when he was appointed head of the renowned Paris Conservatoire, he was seen as a moderniser, broadening the Conservatoire's curriculum to include both study of early music and (then) contemporary composers such as Wagner and Debussy.

The Pavane in F-sharp minor was written in 1887 as a piano piece but become much more popular in the composer's own version for orchestra and optional chorus. It has remained one of Fauré's best known works, and listeners of a certain age may also recognise it as the BBC TV's choice of "anthem" for the 1998 soccer World Cup.

The work is titled after (and follows the style of) a pavane or pavana –a type of slow, elegant courtly dance common in Europe during the Renaissance.

Georges Bizet (France, 1838 – France, 1875)

Suite from Carmen [arr. by Peter Franks]

Georges Bizet's opera Carmen was first performed in March 1875. Its tale of a soldier seduced by the spirited gypsy Carmen proved unpalatable to conservative audiences and initial reactions were negative. Bizet died three months later, unaware of the huge success which the opera would eventually garner. Whilst the moral reservations of the original audiences might be understandable, it is puzzling to note that the opera was also criticised for being "lacking in melody" and "dull and obscure". Ironically, Carmen's rich melodic seam has since been tapped by several composers who have adapted the opera's best-known tunes into medleys, fantasies and suites. Sarasate's violin showpiece Carmen Fantasy, published just seven years after the opera's premiere, is one example. Another is the Carmen Suite, by Russian pianist-composer Rodion Shchedrin.

Tonight's "Suite from Carmen" is an arrangement for brass of some of the highlights of the opera, including the sultry, sensual Habañera and the toe-tapping "Song of the Toreador".

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ETIENNE CUTAJAR

Horn

Etienne Cutajar, hailing from Malta, started learning horn at age ten under the tuition of Raymond Cremona, Emanuel Spagnol and Paul Borg. He became third Horn of the then National Orchestra of Malta aged eighteen, later graduating from the Royal Academy of Music, London.

Etienne became associate principal horn of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in 2006, which position he kept for ten years. In 2007, Etienne has had “Fantasie Sonata for Horn and Piano” by the late Charles Camilleri dedicated to him, and released his solo album named after the same piece soon after. He also recorded Brandenburg Concerto No. 1 for Avia Records, and recently released his second solo album “Mdina”.

Etienne is currently principal horn of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra.



BERNARDETTE VELLA

Horn

Bernardette Vella was born in 1981 and started studying music and French horn at the age of seven, at the Beland Band Club, Żejtun. She continued her studies with E. Spagnol. She furthered her studies under the guidance of José Garcia Gutierrez, specialising in low horn.

In 2002 Bernardette joined the Orchestra as a full-time musician playing fourth horn. To date, she has performed in both the roles of second and fourth horn with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra.

With the Orchestra, she has toured in the USA, China, Russia, Austria and Germany, performing in major concert halls such as Musikverein in Vienna and Carnegie Hall, New York.



MANUELE CATALANO

Horn

Born in 1994 in Messina, Italy, Manuele started playing French horn when he was eight. In 2015 he graduated from the Conservatory A. Corelli of Messina, obtaining a Master's degree in French horn with full marks and honours. After that, he took a course of high specialisation in French horn at the National Academy of S. Cecilia of Rome and at the J. Haydn Konservatorium of Eisenstadt, Austria.

He collaborated with the Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, Teatro Lirico of Spoleto where he toured in Japan, Orchestra L. Cherubini founded and directed by Riccardo Muti and with the Sicilian Horn Ensemble.

Manuele has been holding the position of low horn with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra since March 2017.



KEVIN ABELA

Trumpet

Kevin Abela commenced his music studies at the age of five. He is involved in various productions and projects as an arranger and producer both locally and internationally. In 2014 he launched his own band, Brass House Unit.

Kevin was appointed Principal Trumpet of the Orchestra at the age of eighteen and featured as soloist in the world premiere of Charles Camilleri's Concertino for Trumpet in Brussels in 2001 and Haydn's Trumpet Concerto in 2009.

Also, in 2009, he was invited to conduct the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra featuring movie repertoire, and later in 2019 featuring Disney's Beauty and the Beast and The Lion King.



BRENDAN BALL

Trumpet

Brendan Ball began his studies on the trumpet as a government scholar at Chethams School of Music, where he was a finalist in the BBC Young Musician of the Year. He continued his studies as a Foundation Scholar, under David Mason and John Wilbraham, at the Royal College of Music, London.

Brendan has worked with almost all orchestras, ballet companies, opera houses, contemporary music ensembles in the UK and many in Europe. He has performed all the major concertos and is an internationally regarded recitalist. His output in the recording industry is equally prodigious.

Brendan joined the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in March, 2017.



DENNIS CAMILLERI

Trombone

Dennis Camilleri entered the world of music at the age of eleven. In 1994, he graduated for the first time from the London College where he acquired his LLCM in baritone performance. Two years later, Dennis achieved the FLCM from the same college. In 1997, he graduated from the Trinity College, obtaining the FTCL.

He attended various masterclasses under the guidance of international artists. In 2005, he achieved his fourth recognition by graduating from the Royal School of Music and achieving the LRSM, this time in trombone performance.

Over the years, Dennis gained knowledge and experience by trying out hundreds of different mouthpieces, which, together with Gilbert, brought about the creation of a masterpiece, the K&G Mouthpiece.



JESMOND AZZOPARDI

Trombone

Jesmond Azzopardi started playing euphonium at a young age at L'Isle Adam Band Club of Rabat, Malta. He then continued furthering his studies, which won him a scholarship on Euphonium to the London College of Music, winning the Young Musicians' Competition (2001) organised by the Malta Society of Arts.

Apart from being a renowned Euphonium player, Jesmond also established himself as a prominent Trombone player. He later obtained the ATCL (Hons) diploma in Euphonium Performing and LTCL (Hons) diploma in Trombone Recital, both from the Trinity College of Music. He is also an active brass instrument teacher at local band club L'Isle Adam Band Club of Rabat, Malta.

Jesmond joined the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in 2003 as Sub-Principal Trombone/Bass Trombone.



EMMANUEL GIORDIMAINA

Trombone

Emmanuel Giordimaina commenced his musical studies at the age of 14 on the B flat Baritone with Aurelio Belli. Later he was introduced to the Viola as a second instrument with Roderick Bugeja and continued studying for higher grades with Sarah Spiteri and Nadia Debono.

Emmanuel studied theory of music with Roderick Bugeja, where he obtained all grades with a distinction, then continued with the late Ronnie Debattista the A Mus LCM Diploma, which he obtained at first attempt, and later with Raymond Sciberras in harmony and orchestration. He also showed interest in conducting, where he was coached by Roderick Bugeja. Currently Emmanuel is the assistant band conductor of St Anthony Band Club.

In 2018, Emmanuel started studying the Trombone under the tuition of Malta Philharmonic Orchestra Principal Trombone and section leader Roderick Bugeja, and in June 2020 auditioned for the Malta Youth Orchestra (MYO) where he was chosen to be part of the trombone section. This gave the opportunity to Mr Giordimaina to play under distinguished conductors various styles of repertoire.

In December 2021, Emmanuel played his first concert with the MPO and was introduced to the internship programme with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in January 2022. Through this programme, Mr Giordimaina at times studies in Berlin with Mohamed Gamal Aly, trombonist at the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra.

Emmanuel attended various masterclasses with Vincenzo Paratore, Steven Mead, David Thornton, and David Childs amongst others.



CHRIS SPITERI

Tuba

Christopher Spiteri graduated with a Bachelor's and Master's degree from Milan's Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Verdi, after being awarded a full scholarship from the Italian Cultural Institute. He received his orchestral training with the Orchestra Giovanile Italiana, Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra, and the Academy Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala.

Chris performed internationally with Teatro alla Scala, Sinfonica di Milano, Filarmonica del Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Arena di Verona, and Tiroler Festspiele Orchester.

As a soloist, Chris premiered Arutiunian's and Plau's Tuba Concertos in Malta, accompanied by the MPO. He won the 7th International Edition of the Premio Virtuosité, as well as the Concorso Società Umanitaria in 2008, chosen as one of the best students from all the Italian conservatoires.

MPO MUSICIANS

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Suite for Carmen

Trombone

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