

MPO CHAMBER SERIES #1

Malta Philharmonic Orchestra

Sunday, 01 October 2023, 11am

Robert Samut Hall, Floriana



PROGRAMME

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Quintet in E Flat Major for Piano

and Winds, K. 452

- I. Largo – Allegro Moderato
- II. Larghetto
- III. Allegretto

Robert Schumann

Piano Quintet in E Flat Major, Op. 44

- I. Allegro brillante
- II. In mod d'una marcia. Un poco largamente
- III. Scherzo: Molto vivace
- IV. Allegro ma non troppo



PROGRAMME NOTES

by Dr Joseph Camilleri

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(Austria 1756 – Austria 1791)

Quintet in E Flat Major for Piano

and Winds, K.452 (1784)

- I. Largo – Allegro Moderato
- II. Larghetto
- III. Allegretto

Mozart completed his *Quintet K.452* on March 30, 1784 and it was first performed two days later at the Burgtheater in Vienna, with Mozart himself at the piano. He wrote enthusiastically to his father: I consider it the best thing I have written in my life. I wish you could have heard it, and how beautifully it was performed.

The quintet is scored for piano, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon. This unlikely formation gives rise to technical challenges in the blending of the idiosyncratic sound of each instrument. Mozart addresses this by assigning short phrases to continuously changing instrumental combinations, and by alternating piano passages with the winds as a group.

The quintet is in three movements. The first has a slow opening that introduces each instrument, leading to a cheerful main section in which the instruments are brought together in shifting permutations. The ensuing Larghetto is an elegant affair, focussing on the lyrical capabilities of individual instruments before ending in a darker minor key. The final movement is a joyful rondo in which a recurring refrain alternates with contrasting passages, including a cadenza a tempo in which the five instruments appear to be improvising together.

Robert Schumann

(Germany 1810 – Germany 1856)

Piano Quintet in E Flat Major,

Op. 44 (1842)

- I. Allegro brillante
- II. In mod d'una marcia. Un poco largamente
- III. Scherzo: Molto vivace
- IV. Allegro ma non troppo

Schumann wrote his *Piano Quintet in 1842*, his so-called “year of chamber music”, in which he also composed his string quartets Op. 41, the piano quartet Op. 47 and the *Phantasiestücke* for piano trio. The quintet was novel in that, barring Luigi Boccherini, Robert Schumann was the first major composer to combine the pianoforte with a string quartet (two violins, viola and cello). Schumann’s direct inspiration may have been Mozart’s arrangements of three of his piano concertos for a similar ensemble. On a more personal level, having just finished composing three string quartets, Robert might have wanted to add a role for his wife Clara Wieck, one of the best pianists of her day, to whom this monumental work is dedicated.

The Quintet is in four movements. The opening theme of the Allegro brillante provides all of the movement’s thematic material, including the lyrical second subject. The second movement is a funeral march, interrupted by two contrasting episodes. The third is a scherzo cheekily based on the simplest of musical materials – ascending and descending scales. The final movement contains several original elements in its structure. Worth noting is its dramatic ending, in which the opening theme of the finale is developed into a fugue on the strings, while the piano sounds out the principal theme of the very first movement.



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JOHN MCDONOUGH

Oboe

John McDonough graduated with Honours from the London College of Music, winning the Woodwind Prize and the Henry Bromley-Derry Prize for All-round Musicianship. John has played as guest Principal Oboe with the European Union and the Urals State Chamber Orchestras. Performing on Baroque oboe, he has played with The English Concert and VIBE.

Touring with Cosmos Wind Ensemble he performed throughout Europe, Canada, Australia and Russia. John has recorded concerti and chamber works by Maltese composers including Francesco Azzopardi, Charles Camilleri, Joseph Vella, and British composers Robin Milford and Walter Gaze Copper (Nimbus Records). His transcriptions for Wind Quintet are published by Cramer Music, London. John is Principal Oboist with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra.



GIUSEPPE RECCHIA

Clarinet

Giuseppe Recchia studied at La Scala Academy and IJOA Academy (Germany), with leading clarinet teachers (R.Crocilla, F.Meloni, W.Fuchs, Y.Gilad, C.Palermo). He was awarded in many prestigious international and national clarinet competitions (Agimus Padova, Mensi International Clarinet Competition, amongst others). He has been invited to perform with several orchestras like the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, Maggio Fiorentino, Teatro alla Scala, Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, International Mahler Orchestra Berlin, and Euro-Asian Chamber Orchestra.

Highlights as soloist include Debussy's Premiere Rhapsodie with La Scala Academy at Teatro La Scala, Weber's 2nd Concerto with Orchestra del Veneto, and Mozart Concerto with MPO. Giuseppe is Principal Clarinet with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra.



GIACOMO CELLA

Bassoon

Giacomo was a student of the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi, in Milan Italy, during which time he was invited to Kyoto to perform in the International Student Musical Festival. To further his studies, Giacomo participated in Accademia Del Teatro Alla Scala for contemporary chamber music. As a freelance musician, Giacomo has enjoyed playing with ensembles including Algoritmo Ensemble and Risognanze Ensemble with whom he had the opportunity to perform at Tiroler Festspiele in Erl, Austria and in the world-renowned hall Witold Lutoslawski Concert Studio for the Warsaw Autumn. Giacomo has collaborated with Orchestra LaVerdi and Orchestra Internazionale d'Italia.

Besides orchestral work, Giacomo enjoys a teaching position at the Malta School of Music. Giacomo joined the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra as Principal Bassoon in 2016.



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.



MARCELLINE AGIUS

Violin

Marcelline started studying violin under her uncle Joseph Galea, sub-principal of the Manoel Theatre Orchestra. She furthered her studies under Guido Mamo, Mario Bisazza, Joachim Atanassov, and participated in masterclasses with Ursula Gorniak and Richard Deacon (UK).

In 1984, Marcelline joined the Orchestra under Mro J. Sammut, and in 1993 was appointed Concertmaster, a position she still presently holds. In 2006, she performed in Paris, with the World Philharmonic Orchestra. She toured leading the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, performing in Europe, Russia, China, and the United States of America. Marcelline is also a member of the Valletta Baroque Ensemble and attended Baroque masterclasses in Malta and Marnaves (France).

Apart from performing and recording orchestral repertoire, both in Malta and abroad, Marcelline is a very active chamber musician and soloist. Marcelline is also the leader of the MPO.



MATTEO COLOMBO

Violin

Matteo Colombo graduated with distinction from the G. Verdi Conservatory in Como, Italy. He perfected his skills with Maestro O. Semchuk, D. Bogdanovich, and M. Fornaciari. From 2007 until 2014 he has been rank and file violin of Orchestra 1813 at Teatro Sociale di Como, performing in most of the beautiful theatres in Italy. From 2008 until 2014 he has played in the Quartetto Classico di Milano, together with a number of long-standing members of Milano's Teatro alla Scala.

Since 2016, he has been full-time rank and file violinist with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, and as of September 2019 he has been acting leader of the second violins with the MPO.



ALEXANDRE RAZERA

Viola

Brazilian violist Alexandre Razera studied at the Karajan Academy of the Berlin Philharmonic and later at the University of Arts in Berlin. He worked under conductors like Claudio Abbado, Simon Rattle, Daniel Barenboim and Lorin Maazel. Alexandre worked for several years with the Berliner Philharmoniker and Lucerne Festival Orchestra. He has also held the position of Guest/Principal violist with the Ljubljana Slovenian Radio and Television Orchestra, Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, São Paulo Symphony Orchestra, and the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra.

In parallel with his career as soloist, teacher, and chamber musician, he is regularly invited as tutor and judge on several international festival and competition panels. He collaborates regularly with Mahler Chamber Orchestra and holds the position of Acting Principal Viola with MPO.



ÁKOS KERTÉSZ

Cello

Hungarian cellist Ákos Kertész studied at the Liszt Academy of Music (Budapest) and the Royal Conservatory of The Hague (Netherlands), obtaining a Master's degree. He played in several professional orchestras, including the Hungarian State Opera, the Hyogo Performing Arts Center (HPAC) Orchestra in Japan, and the Limburgs Symfonie Orkest in Maastricht.

Ákos joined the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in 2012. Since 2019, he has been the MPO's principal cellist and has appeared as soloist in Haydn's Sinfonia Concertante with Toru Yasunaga and the HPAC Orchestra, and in Haydn's Cello Concerto with the MPO.



MICHAEL LAUS

Piano

Michael Laus graduated in piano, harpsichord & composition at the *Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi* of Milan and participated in master classes in conducting given by George Manahan and Vladimir Delman. Resident Conductor of Malta's national orchestra for twenty-five years, he has conducted symphonic concerts in Malta, Belgium and Italy. He was the founder and first music director of the Malta Youth Orchestra and of the Goldberg Ensemble. In 2016, he conducted the European premiere of Arvo Pärt's *Greater Antiphons*.

He opened the first edition of the Valletta International Baroque Festival with Vivaldi's *Quattro stagioni*. Michael Laus has conducted the Bournemouth Symphony, the Slovak Philharmonic and the Orquesta Sinfonica de Asturias. He has directed several operatic productions in Berne and Oviedo. He has won international critical acclaim for his recording of Cyril Scott's Harpsichord Concerto. He has recorded for *Discover International*, *Unicorn-Khanchana* and *Cameo Classics*. He is Associate Professor in Music Studies at the University of Malta.



MPO MUSICIANS

John McDonough
Giuseppe Recchia
Giacomo Cella
Etienne Cutajar

Oboe
Clarinet
Bassoon
Horn

Marcelline Agius
Matteo Colombo
Alexandre Razera
Ákos Kertész

Violin
Violin
Viola
Cello

Michael Laus

Piano

Do Re Mi



3 November 2023

St. Agatha Auditorium, Rabat | 6.00pm



For more information visit:
maltaorchestra.com

THANK YOU

The MPO is a Public Cultural Organisation within Arts Council Malta under the remit of the Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government.



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MINISTRY FOR NATIONAL HERITAGE,
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