

CZERWONO
BIALY

RED AND WHITE

A CONCERT OF MALTESE
AND POLISH CHAMBER
MUSIC

*Music by Reuben Pace, Jes Grixti, Edric Micallef,
Matthias Azzopardi, Kinga Wojcik, Wojciech Laskowski and Karol
Szymanowski*

16th April at 20:00 hrs
St Joseph Retreat, Buskett Road
Rabat - Malta

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Foreword

It is with great pride that we present Red and White (Czerwono – Biały in Polish), a concert celebrating the rich and dynamic world of contemporary chamber music from Malta and Poland. This event is a testament to the power of artistic collaboration, bringing together composers from both nations to create a unique musical dialogue that bridges cultures and traditions.

Mikiel Anton Vassalli College (MAVC) which comprises of the Malta School of Music, Malta School of Art, Malta School of Drama & Dance and the Gozo Visual and Performing Arts School; remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering excellence in Visual and Performing Arts education in Malta. Through this initiative, we continue to provide invaluable opportunities for artistic expression, cultural exchange, and educational growth.

A significant part of this journey has been our collaboration with the esteemed Maxime Orchestra from Katowice, Poland. This partnership exemplifies our shared dedication to nurturing and promoting contemporary classical music while strengthening ties between our artistic communities.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the composers, musicians, and all those who have contributed their talent and effort to bring this concert to life. A special thank you goes to our partners, sponsors, and supporters, whose unwavering belief in the arts has made this event possible.

May this evening's music inspire, connect, and resonate beyond this performance.

Victor Galea – Head of College Network (MAVC)

Executive Producer

Introduction

The term 'classical music' is somewhat a bit ambiguous. To the layman the adjective 'classical' usually implies that this is music which has been written in the past centuries ago and has remained static ever since. But this is not the case at all, classical music (sometimes referred to as art-music) has continued to evolve and is still evolving up till the present day. Sadly, a percentage of people might not be aware of this and this is probably one of the reasons why contemporary classical music might have such a small percentage of followers on the market.

In 2015 I set up the platform 'Hearing Orpheus Today' which focuses on the music of living composers. The idea started from a first concert at the Archidiecezja Curia and eventually expanded to an international effort with concerts happening in Malta, Belarus, Poland and Estonia.

Today's concert is a joint collaboration between Polish and Maltese musicians. The Maxime orchestra from Katowice, Poland has come to Malta for the premier of my fourth opera **TRAB: *The Rest is Dust***. Members of this orchestra are today joining together to put up this unique concert. This concert sees the world premier of 3 works - 'Fantasia on a Maltese Ghana Theme' by Edrick Micallef, 'Soaring' by Matthias Azzopardi and 'Gdybym miał skrzypce' (Concertino for Violin and String Orchestra) by myself.

Polish composers, Kinga Wójcik, Wojciech Laskowski and Karol Szymanowski are featured in tonight's concert.

I am sure you will enjoy this concert and follow and like our face book page Hearing Orpheus Today to get more news for upcoming concerts.

Reuben Pace

Artistic Director

Mikiel Anton Vassalli College

Programme

1. The Red Baron
Music for violin, viola and violoncello
I. Weltschmerz Andante
II. Amor Fati
III. Vivace
By Jes Grixti

2. Fantasia on Traditional Maltese Song – Għana
By Edric Micallef

3. Maxime resonance
by Kinga Wójcik

4. A Journey Begins
By Matthias Azzopardi

5. Krakowiak
By Wojciech Laskowski

6. Gdybym miał skrzypce
Concertino for Violin and String Orchestra
By Reuben Pace

7. Orchestration of Karol Szymanowski's Étude in B minor, Op. 4 No. 3
Arrangement by Andrzej Mandryka

Jes Grixti



Jes Grixti is an award-winning composer and academic, whose works have been performed internationally, including at Carnegie Hall, New York, and released by labels such as MPS (UK), Divine Art (Europe), and MCL (Australia).

He was awarded the prestigious Billy Joel Award for Composition by New York University (Steinhardt).

He has represented Malta at CHOGM twice and collaborated with prominent musicians and ensembles, including Kevin Tamanini, Rosy Hunt, Horacio Franco, The Plexus Ensemble, The Song Company, and The Endymion Ensemble.

Grixti composition teachers included Carmelo Pace, Michael Regan, Franco Donatoni, and Brenton Broadstock.

Academically, his research focuses on composition, music education and community music practice, with work published in the Australian Journal for Music Education and presented at international conferences. He holds a PhD in composition from the University of Melbourne and is a visiting lecturer at the University of Malta. He currently serves as the Head of the Malta School of Music (MAVC).

The Red Baron

Music for violin, viola and violoncello

I WELTSCHMERZ Andante

II AMOR FATI Vivace

For this concert the second movement (Vivace) is going to be performed. It encapsulates Stoicism, and Fredrick Nietzsche's formula for human greatness as amor fati—a love of fate. The movement generates an energetic impulse, propels a moving forward positive aura, and creates a balanced voiced dialogue between the three instruments as if agreeing to accept the fact that all events occur for a reason and that it is within your capacity to see this reason as positive. The cross-rhythm fertilisation articulates and brings the Vivace movement to an assertive applaudable finale.

Edric Micallef



Born in 1977, Edric started music lessons at the age of 5 at the Johann Strauss School of Music, and later also with Mrs. Rita Grima Buhagiar, with whom he studied Pianoforte, obtaining an ALCM in 1994.

At the MAVC, Malta School of Music, Edric studied also the Pipe Organ with Fr. Anton Briffa OFM. He has been serving as an organist at the Parish Church of Marsaxlokk since 1991.

In 2024, Edric obtained a Diploma in Musicology from the same school and is currently reading for another Diploma in Composition. Edric is also an Architect and Civil Engineering by profession. He is married and has three young children.

Fantasia on Traditional Maltese Song - Għana

This piece of music is based on the melodies used in traditional (folk) Maltese songs known as Għana. There are different types of Għana: those meant to be sung by a single singer (għannej) which recount a story about a well-known event (this is known as Għana tal-Fatt); and those involving various singers who improvise a duel between them to show their ability to play with words (this is known as Għana Spirtu Pront). In such songs the guitarists play an important part in accompanying the singers as well as playing intermezzi between the stanzas sung by the singers. This gives the singers time to think of what they can sing in the next stanza

In this piece, the duel is being carried out by the four instruments of the String Quartet, each instrument taking different entries of the melodies. The role of the guitars is mimicked by the use of pizzicato. The piece is in free form.

Kinga Wójcik



Kinga Wójcik is currently studying Music Composition at the University of Louisville. She has studied with Dr. Krzysztof Wołek and Dr. Allison Ogden. She graduated in composition from The Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice (Poland) with prof. Aleksander Lasoń.

During her studies, she studied for a year at the University of Music in Trossingen (Germany) with prof. Peter Beyer as part of an exchange program Erasmus. She also holds a Bachelor's degree in Piano Performance from the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice.

Her composition Kolaż (Collage) was awarded a bronze diploma in the Composition category at the Musical Eagles International Competition in 2024. Her piece Video Meliora for SATB choir a cappella earned 2nd prize in the IX Feliks Nowowiejski Composition Competition in 2019. She received 1st prize ex aequo in the II International Improvisation Competition for keyboard instruments in 2019.

Maxime resonance

The piece explores the phenomenon of resonance using a variety of percussion instruments. It was composed for and is dedicated to the Maxime Orchestra in recognition of their support for new music

Matthias Azzopardi



Born in December 1987, Matthias is a composer with a lifelong love of music and storytelling. He began studying piano and violin as a child, developing an early interest in theory and composition.

His musical education started under the guidance of his mother Dr. Moira Azzopardi Barbieri, and he later studied with Mro Manuel Pirotta. More recently, he received further training at the MAVC, Malta School of Music under Dr. Gordon Zammit, where he explored 20th-century composition techniques.

Along the way, Matthias has had the opportunity to learn from internationally renowned composers such as Christopher Young, Pete Anthony, and Garry Schyman – experiences that have profoundly influenced his artistic voice. His work, which spans chamber, orchestral, and media music, is often inspired by literature, mythology, and the human experiences he encounters in his practice

A Journey Begins

Written in 2024, *A Journey Begins* follows a path shaped by shared purpose, resilience, and hope. Blending elements of fantasy and reality, the piece quietly reflects on life's challenges and the strength we find in others. Through sweeping themes and moments of tension and release, it celebrates camaraderie and the belief that we move forward not alone, but together. Originally composed for full orchestra, it was later reimagined for a smaller ensemble, allowing its message to emerge with greater clarity and warmth.

Wojciech Laskowski



Wojciech Laskowski was born in Kraków in 1999. During his early music education, he nurtured his two passions: organ playing and composition.

In 2023, he graduated with a master's degree in composition under Professor Aleksander Nowak at the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice. Since 2023, he has also been a music theory teacher at a music school.

He is the winner of, among others, the third prize in the Third International Composition Competition “Patri Patriae 2018” in Katowice, the second prize in the 16th Tadeusz Ochlewski Composition Competition in Kraków (2019), and the third prize in the National Composition Competition for Instrumental Duet with Harp in Gdańsk (2022).

An important area of his interest is the phenomenon of synaesthesia and Henri Bergson's philosophy of *élan vital*, which he incorporates into his works.

Krakowiak

Krakowiak is a stylized Polish national dance from Kraków (Cracow), located in southern Poland—the composer's hometown. The piece incorporates fragments of folk melodies from this region and was composed for The Maxime Orchestra

Reuben Pace



After initial music tuition starting from the age of eight, Pace sat for a Bachelor of Arts in Music at the University of Malta followed by a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education.

In September 2001 he completed a Master of Arts in Creative Music Technology and Music for Film, Media and the Arts at the University of Wales, Bangor (UK). Subsequently, he sat for a Ph.D. in composition at said University of Wales, graduating in 2012.

Pace has composed for different ensembles from solo instruments up to full scale operas. His music is performed regularly, particularly in Europe.

Pace has initiated several projects, one of them being City of Humanity which he started in 2016. City of Humanity is an artistic-educational platform focusing on multidisciplinary productions with a strong connection to Maltese Heritage. The platform is managed by Mikiel Anton Vassalli College, Malta's National College for the Visual and Performing Arts Education. In 2020 he joined the Mikiel Anton Vassalli College developing course programmes in Multidisciplinary Art Studies.

Pace has been working on an opera trilogy. The first opera, *SWAR- Behind the Fortifications*, was premiered to great acclaim in November 2018. The second production, the opera-film *BLAT : The Island Fortress*, was premiered in June 2022. Currently, Pace is working on the third opera in the series, 'TRAB - *the Rest is Dust*', to be premiered on the 25th of April 2025.

Gdybym miał skrzypce

Concertino for Violin and String Orchestra

This concertino is based on a popular Polish tune. The piece is in theme and variation style – the theme is played first followed by 5 variations some are variations in a traditional sense of the word, some use more contemporary techniques. This concertino was commissioned by the Polish orchestra Maxime Orchestra.

Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937)



Karol Szymanowski was a prominent Polish composer and pianist, associated with the Young Poland modernist movement. His early works were influenced by German Romanticism and Scriabin, while his middle period reflected Impressionist and atonal elements, as heard in his Third Symphony and Violin Concerto No. 1. In his later years, he embraced Polish folk music, particularly from the Górale people, which shaped works like *Harnasie* and his Fourth Symphony.

His most famous opera is *King Roger*, and other notable compositions include *Stabat Mater*, *Hagith*, and *The Love Songs of Hafiz*. Szymanowski received numerous prestigious awards, including the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta and international honors.

Karol Szymanowski's *Étude in B minor, Op. 4 No. 3*

Karol Szymanowski's *Étude in B minor, Op. 4 No. 3* is a deeply expressive early work that goes beyond technical display, blending Romantic and Scriabinesque influences. In his orchestration, **Andrzej Mandryka** transforms the solo piano piece into a chamber orchestral setting, preserving its emotional depth while enhancing its color and texture.

Mandryka substitutes the piano's sonority with divided strings and rich woodwind timbres, such as bass clarinet and English horn, to emphasize the piece's melancholy. He employs contemporary techniques, like irregular accelerandi, to mirror the emotional fluidity of the original. The orchestration also pays homage to Grzegorz Fitelberg, a historical figure closely linked to Szymanowski.

Mandryka's version reimagines the *Étude* as an intimate, orchestral narrative, respectful of its origins yet bold in interpretation.

Members of the Maxime Orchestra

Conductor

Andrzej Mandryka

Violin solo

Daria Mandryka

Violins

Agnieszka Kucala

Anna Śliwczyńska

Aleksandra Zientek

Lidia Filipczuk

Natalia Hudy

Kosma Stanek

Solomiia Deriabina

Marta Kosecka

Emilia Pióro

Katarzyna Kołakowska

Amelia Basista

Violas

Marzena Niemczyk

Martyna Kachniarz

Igor Khomenko

Cello

Julia Le Hai

Marcelina Morawiec

Oliwier Wojski

Double bass

Arkady Ptak

Stanisław Pikul

Flute

Vanessa Kania

Oboe

Filip Lenart

Clarinet

Szymon Mikuszewski

Basson

Zuzanna Szuba

Horn

Iwo Sawaszkiewicz-Ziomka

Jakub Adamski

Trumpet

Aleksy Ostrowski

Karol Świerczyna

Trombone

Kacper Dudek

Kacper Julkowski

Percussion

Jakub Skóra

Karolina Łyczba