

# 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 2025  
TIME: 20:00HRS

VENUE: ST JOSEPH RETREAT,  
BUSKETT ROAD, RABAT



# 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

# 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

# Biographies

## Jes Gixti



Jes Gixti is a prize-winning composer and academic.

Jes' music has been performed internationally, including at Carnegie Hall, New York, and released on various labels including the MPS (UK) label. He is also being awarded the Billy Joel award for distinguished talent in composition by New York University, (Steinhart).

He represented Malta twice in CHOGM and collaborated with local and international musicians including pianist Kevin Tamanini, Cellist Rosy Hunt, Baroque Flutist Horacio Franco, the Plexus Ensemble, the Song Company, and the Endymion Ensemble.

His former composition teachers included Carmelo Pace (Malta), Michael Regan (UK), Franco Donatoni (Italy), and Brenton Broadstock (Australia), and conducting Emilio Pomarico (Italy).

As an academic Dr Jes' research area includes music education and community music practice. He has presented at international conferences and been published by the Australian Journal for Music Education.

Jes Gixti earned his PhD in composition from the Conservatorium of Music, The University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Jes is a visiting lecturer at the Faculty of Education, The University of Malta. He is the current head of the MAVC, Malta School of Music.

## **The Red Baron**

Music for violin, viola and violoncello

I WELTSCHMERZ Andante

II AMOR FATI

Vivace

This work is inspired by two philosophies. The first movement is inspired by Weltschmerz. Welt, meaning world; schmerz, meaning pain; world pain. It was a term coined by German writer Jean Paul, who used it to describe Lord Byron's discontent in the novel Selina, and it signifies a sadness about life. Weltschmerz is also a symptom of a period of conflict and transition. These attributes characterise the Andante first movement.

The Vivace second movement encapsulates Stoicism, and Fredrick Nietzsche's formula for human greatness as amor fati—a love of fate. “That one wants nothing to be different—not forward, not backwards, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it, but love it.” When we accept what happens to us, after understanding that certain things — particularly bad things — are outside our control, we are left with this: loving whatever happens to us and facing it with unfailing cheerfulness and strength. As bestselling author Robert Greene (48 Laws of Power, Mastery) has put it, we need 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 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 (1977 - )**



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, and he later studied with Mro Manuel Pirotta. More recently, he trained 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.

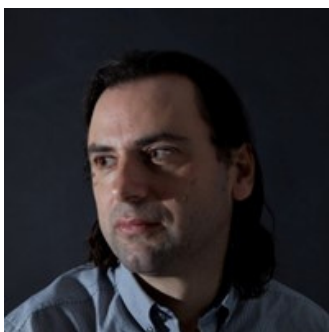
He is the winner of, among others, the third prize in the Third International Composition Competition “Patri Patriae 2018” in Katowice, the second prize in the 16th Tadeusz Ochlewski Composition Competition in Kraków (2019), and the third prize in the National Composition Competition for Instrumental 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 first opera in the cycle, 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 in 2025. Currently, the platform is being managed by Mikiel Anton Vassalli College, Malta’s National College for the Visual and Performing Arts, where Pace started working in 2020.

### **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 Maciej Szymanowski was a Polish composer and pianist. He was a member of the modernist Young Poland movement that flourished in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Szymanowski's early works show the influence of the late Romantic German school as well as the early works of Alexander Scriabin, as exemplified by his Étude Op. 4 No. 3 and his first two symphonies.

Later, he developed an impressionistic and partially atonal style, represented by such works as the Third Symphony and his Violin Concerto No. 1.

His third period was influenced by the folk music of the Polish Górale people, including the ballet *Harnasie*, the Fourth Symphony, and his sets of Mazurkas for piano. *King Roger*, composed between 1918 and 1924, remains Szymanowski's most popular opera. His other significant works include *Hagith*, Symphony No. 2, *The Love Songs of Hafiz*, and *Stabat Mater*.

Szymanowski was awarded the highest national honours, including the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland and other distinctions, both Polish and foreign.

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

Karol Szymanowski's Études, Op. 4, composed between 1900 and 1902, showcase his early development, influenced by Chopin, Liszt, and Scriabin. The third piece, Étude in B minor, Op. 4 No. 3, transcends typical technical exercises with its expressive, song-like character, moving through emotional highs and quiet introspection.

In his orchestration, Andrzej Mandryka aims to enhance the expressive essence while utilizing a chamber orchestra's timbral possibilities. By omitting the piano, he recreates its effects through orchestral techniques, with divided strings providing a nuanced harmonic foundation. Dark sonorities from instruments like the bass clarinet and English horn evoke the work's melancholy.

Mandryka incorporates contemporary techniques, such as irregular accelerandi, as tools that reflect the emotional depth of Szymanowski's original. Additionally, he acknowledges the influence of Grzegorz Fitelberg, a close collaborator of Szymanowski, connecting to his Silesian conducting roots.

Overall, Mandryka's orchestration offers a reimagined interpretation of the Étude in B minor, preserving its emotional gravity while presenting it in a new sonic context.