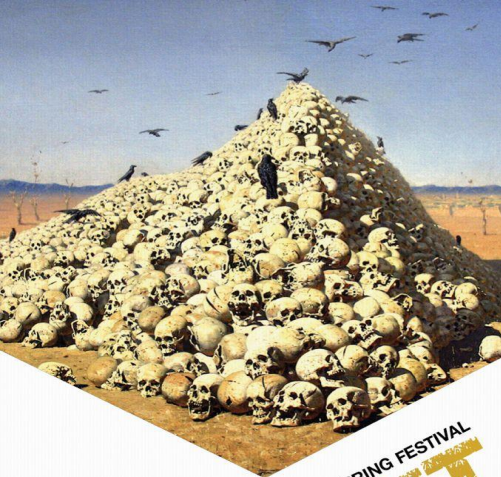




MALTA SPRING FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL STRINGS ACADEMY

6 - 11 April 2026

www.maltaspringfestival.com



22-26
APRIL
2025

**A RADIANT
FUTURE**

MUSIC • DANCE • PERFORMANCES

Artistic Director: Karl Fiorini

22nd April - SHOSTAKOVICH STRING QUARTETS | QUIRON QUARTET
24th April - CONTEMPORARY DANCE & LIVE MUSIC
25th April - JAZZ NIGHT | SANDRO ZERFA QUARTET
26th April - MALTA SPRING FESTIVAL ACADEMY ORCHESTRA
Dmitry Shostakovich, violin solo | Brian Schenkel, conductor

About

Conceived and founded in 2005 [as International Spring Orchestra Festival VO no. 1474] by composer Karl Fiorini, The Malta Spring Festival is an annual classical and contemporary music festival known for its innovative programming and commitment to new orchestral and chamber works.

The Malta Spring Festival is held in Valletta, presenting each year its listeners with a theme [2017 From Zappa to Beethoven, 2018 Revolution and its Composers, 2019 Of Death and Maidens, 2020 Must it be? It must be!, 2021 Degenerates, 2022 About Hope, 2023 the Island of Nowhere, 2024 Fighting for Hope]. Exploring the repertoire from the classicists to the current day, to rarely performed or hitherto unheard in Malta, the programming takes the audience on a journey of cultural, psychological and personal discovery.

The Malta Spring Festival takes pride in carefully selecting an ambitious roster of artists and on placing a premium on challenge, innovation and class, showcasing the new with the not-so-old in unexpected juxtapositions of programming. Running parallel to the evening concerts and recitals, an education strand of the Malta Spring Festival - The Rising Stars Concert Series - welcomes up-and-coming local artists to hone their skills on the larger stage, encouraging them to think and compare less regionally, with the aim of providing these young artists in-the-making the necessary springboard to pursue their musical education beyond the shores of Malta.



18th MALTA SPRING FESTIVAL

**FIGHTING
FOR HOPE**

MUSIC • DANCE • PERFORMANCES

2-13 APRIL 2024

Artistic Director: Karl Fiorini

BOOKINGS :
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The "Malta Spring Festival International Strings Academy" is a one-week intensive course held during the **Malta Spring Festival**, from the 6th to the 11th April , 2026. This free program - including tuition and accommodation* - offers Masterclasses focused on solo and chamber repertoire, and orchestral training sessions. Open to string players currently studying in a Music Institution / University, the Academy provides the opportunity to learn from a host of highly experienced and renowned European musicians and pedagogues.

* Twin-room accommodation at the Preluna Hotel, Sliema, [4 star hotel] on bed & breakfast basis.



Masterclasses

Each student will receive individual lessons and will have the unique opportunity to collaborate directly with world-class faculty in chamber music settings. Chamber ensembles will be carefully curated by the Academy, with at least one faculty member joining each group.

The Masterclasses will take place in some of Malta's most prestigious venues, including the Malta Society of Arts, the Casino Maltese, the Nicolò Isouard Music Room at the Manoel Theatre, and the National Library—each located in the breathtaking fortified capital city of Valletta. Afternoons will be dedicated to rehearsals for the string orchestra, preparing for an exciting final concert on April 11th. The repertoire includes Britten's *Simple Symphony*, op. 4, Charles Camilleri's *Kosmos Suite*, Ginastera's *Concerto for strings*, op. 33, and *Weinende Frau* by Karl Fiorini.

As part of the program, students will attend evening concerts programmed during the festival at no additional cost. These performances, featuring international artists, which provides a chance to witness exceptional musicianship and reflect on the artistry presented.



Guest of Honour | Dmitry Sitkovetsky

A renaissance man and a magnetic creative force, Dmitry Sitkovetsky is recognized throughout the world for the considerable impact he makes on every aspect of musical life. A prolific recording artist, with a career spanning more than four decades, he is celebrated globally as a violinist, conductor, creator, transcriber and facilitator – holding an undisputed and venerable position in musical society as a giant personality and educator.

His celebrated career is documented in an extensive discography of more than 40 recordings, reflecting the impressive breadth of his repertoire. His recording collaborators to date include such orchestras as the London Symphony, Philharmonia, and Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, under the batons of such legendary maestros as Sir Colin Davis, Mariss Jansons, Sir Neville Marriner and Lord Yehudi Menuhin. As a soloist, Sitkovetsky has performed with the world's leading orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, LA Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, New York Philharmonic, NHK Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra, among others.

He is also in high demand as a jury member, having served at such competitions as Queen Elisabeth in Brussels, Tchaikovsky in Moscow, Montreal in Canada, Indianapolis in the United States, and the George Enescu in Bucharest, where Sitkovetsky returns as the President of the Jury for the fifth time in September 2026.

Sitkovetsky's name has also become synonymous with the art of transcription. His iconic orchestral and string trio versions of J.S. Bach's Goldberg Variations have taken on a life of their own – enjoying regular performances and acclaimed recordings by many of today's leading performers.



Violin



Charles Sewart

Educated at Westminster School and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, Charles studied violin with David Takeno and was influenced by musicologist Hans Keller, shaping a career rooted in chamber music, solo performance, and orchestral leadership. After serving as resident artist at the University of York with the Mistry String Quartet, he joined the renowned Chilingirian Quartet in 1992, performing across more than 50 countries, recording for Chandos, Hyperion, Decca, and EMI/Virgin, and premiering works by composers such as John Tavener, Robert Saxton, and Hugh Wood. A principal member of the London Chamber Orchestra since 2000, he has performed throughout Europe and Asia, including at major royal occasions, and contributed to educational outreach through the orchestra's Music Junction programme. Since 2008, Charles has been Head of Strings at The Purcell School, where he nurtures young international talent through ensemble-based learning, and he was recently appointed Professor of Violin at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Junior Department.



Emanuel Salvador

Described by *The Strad* magazine as “one of the finest Portuguese violinists of his generation,” Emanuel Salvador has performed as soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral leader across four continents, appearing in major venues such as Tokyo Opera City, the Jiangxi Arts Centre, the Lutosławski Concert Studio in Warsaw, Mexico’s Nezahualcóyotl Hall, and Madrid’s National Auditorium. A laureate of numerous awards, including prizes at the Isolde Menges (RCM), Jovens Músicos, and Beckenham competitions, he has also received support from the Barbirolli Memorial, Wolfson Foundation, and Gulbenkian Foundation. Emanuel studied in London at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with John Glickman and at the Royal College of Music with Felix Andrievsky. As concerto soloist, he has performed with over thirty orchestras worldwide and appeared at leading international festivals. A passionate chamber musician, he has collaborated with distinguished artists and ensembles including members of the Borodin, Takács, and Beaux Arts groups, and was a founding member of the Vianna da Motta Piano Trio and Guimarães String Quartet. Currently artistic director of the Guimarães Clássico and Szczecin Classic Festivals, Emanuel appears regularly as guest concertmaster with major European ensembles. He performs on a 1802 J. B. Ceruti violin.

Viola



Alexandre Razera

Alexandre Razera, began viola studies at age eight earning a Vitae Foundation scholarship to train with Wilfried Strehle at the Berlin Philharmonic's Karajan Academy. He later studied at Berlin University of the Arts with Ulrich Knörzer, performing with the orchestra under conductors like Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, and Lorin Maazel. Razera played for several years with the Berlin Philharmonic, Lucerne Festival Orchestra, and Mahler Chamber Orchestra, and served as principal violist with ensembles including La Monnaie Opera, Camerata Bern, Barcelona Symphony, OSEP, and OSB. Razera thrives as a soloist and chamber musician across Europe.

Violoncello



Adam Kloczek

Adam is a Grammy Award winning conductor and cellist. He is professor of cello at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw. He has held significant roles in several prestigious Polish music institutions, including serving as the Director of the Kalisz Philharmonic from 2006 to 2020 and the Director of the Częstochowa Philharmonic since 2020. Adam's career spans classical and jazz music, and he performs on a rare 1717 Stradivarius cello. He has been honored with the Silver Gloria Artis Medal for Merit to Culture. His contributions to the music world continue to leave a lasting impact on Polish and international audiences.

Double Bass



Gjorgji Cincievski

Gjorgji was the Principal Double bass player of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra and first Junior Fellow in Double bass at the Royal Northern College of Music, he has performed with some of the most prestigious and world leading orchestras such as the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, WDR Funkhaus Orchestra, Aachen Symphony Orchestra, Neue Philharmonie Westfalen, Halle Orchestra, Malmo Symphony Orchestra, London Mozart Players, Liepaja Symphony Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, Opera North, Northern Sinfonia, Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, as well as collaborating with some of the leading conductors and artists of today.

Brian Schembri | Conductor

One of the most brilliant musicians to emerge from Malta, Brian Schembri started his music studies with his father Carmelo Schembri. He later graduated in piano and conducting at the Kiev and Moscow "Tchaikovsky" Conservatories studying with A. Snegiriov, S. Dorensky, R. Kofman and G. Rozhdestvensky. Actively performing as a concert pianist, he started working as assistant conductor with Michel Plasson and Emmanuel Krivine, closely collaborating with prestigious conductors Edoardo Muller, Serge Baudo, Yuri Temirkanov, Garcia Navarro, Armin Jordan. Eventually dedicating most of his time to conducting, he became Chief Conductor of the OPF Orchestra and the Orquestra Metropolitana de Lisboa, Music Director at Malta National Theatre "Teatru Manoel" and Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra. Guest conductor engagements have included the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, l'Orquestra Ciutat Barcelona, l'Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, l'Orchestre Nationale de Radio France, the Lithuanian State Symphony, the Moscow Soloists, the Novosibirsk Philharmonic, London Mozart Players, l'Orchestre National de Lyon, London Philharmonic, Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, the Svetlanov State Symphony, opera productions at the Hong Kong, Lubeck, Nancy and Rennes opera theatres. Soloist have included Lucia Aliberti, Jacquelyn Wagner, Jose Cura, Joseph Calleja, Gianluca Terranova, Alexandre Da Costa, Carmine Lauri, Alexander Kniazev, Sergey Antonov, Ludmila Berlinskaia, Oleg Poliansky, Balazs Szokolay, Anne Queffelec, Emma Johnson, Sergei Nakariakov with performances at the "Festival Massenet", "Octobre en Normandie", "Les Rencontres Musicales d'Evian", "Festa da Musica", "Lisboa em Festa", "Festival Music Atlantico", "Fêtes de Genève", Henley Festival, "Kings Lynn Festival", "Colmar International Festival". He has also composed scores for theatre productions at the Manoel Theatre, Teatru Strada Stretta in Malta, the Comédie Française in Paris and the Malta Pavilion at the Biennale di Venezia 2022. Since 2009 Brian Schembri has been a strong supporter of the International Spring Festival. CD recordings include piano sonatas by Beethoven, Schubert and Rachmaninov, works by Charles Camilleri with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Bach concertos with the European Union Chamber Orchestra and Lucia Micallef and Tansman concertos with Diego Dini Ciacci and Fabrizio Meloni and the Malta Philharmonic. Receiving critical acclaim as an artist of high caliber for his strongly passionate and lyrical performances, he has forged a strong reputation for a moving profound musicality.



Piano Accompanists



Sofia Narmania | Chamber musician and Accompanist

International prize-winning Abkhazian pianist Sofia Sciberras Narmania, gave her first concerts at the age of seven, continuing her advanced studies at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory with Irina Plotnikova. Sofia appeared on the concert stage as a soloist with many orchestras, and gave several recitals in the main halls of Moscow and other cities of Russian Federation. As a soloist she performed the major concertos from Bach to Shostakovich and participated in numerous festivals and master-classes. Sofia continues her career as an accompanist with different instrumentalists and opera singers.



Julia Miller | Chamber musician and Accompanist

Julia graduated from the Music Academy of Lodz in piano performance and chamber music. Since then, she has carved for herself an international career both as a soloist and as a musical collaborator. She moved to Malta in 2012 and built herself a reputation as both an accompanist to vocalists as well as an accomplished pianist in her own right. She collaborated with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, Kor Malta, the Manoel Theatre Youth Opera and been present in several festivals, including the Malta Baroque Festival, the Malta Spring Festival and has been piano accompanist to most celebrated musicians in Malta.



Christine Zerafa | Chamber musician and Accompanist

Pianist Christine Zerafa, praised by *The Evening Standard* for her “sensual, silky tone and virtuoso command” has performed at leading venues including the Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall, and the Oxford Lieder Festival. Honored as an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music for her contributions to the profession, she is a laureate of the Bice Mizzi National Competition, the Clifton Helliwell Prize, and the RAM Scott Huxley Prize, among others. A graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music, where she also completed her PhD, Christine maintains a vibrant career as a concert pianist, researcher, and educator.

What the Malta Spring Festival International String Academy offers:

A Comprehensive Support Package for all participants selected for the 2026 cohort comprising:

Tuition: Full support covers all musical training, Masterclasses, and free access to all concerts during the Malta Spring Festival.

Accommodation: All selected students of the Malta Spring Festival International Strings Academy will receive accommodation provided by the festival.

Meals: Daily lunches are provided by the Malta Spring Festival. All other meals will be at the participants' own expense.

Travel: Travel expenses to and from Malta are the responsibility of the participants.

Application Process:

Please send the following materials to info@maltaspringfestival.com:

Two recent, high-quality video recordings (as links) of two contrasting pieces.

A high-resolution portrait photo (at least 1 MB).

A curriculum vitae, including the names of your past and current schools, as well as your professors.

A brief motivation letter outlining your personal musical achievements.

Deadline 31st December 2025

