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**CREATIVE RESPONSES TO MALTESE CULTURE AND
IDENTITY: CASE STUDY AND PORTFOLIO OF
COMPOSITIONS**

by

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore the relationship between place, identity and musical practice. The study is inspired by Malta's history and culture. This work presents a portfolio of seven musical compositions with a written component that highlights the historical and socio-cultural issues that had a bearing on the works presented. A case study of the Maltese composer Charles Camilleri is also provided. Camilleri is both a great example of a composer for whom the articulation of national identity was a primary concern and a constant source of inspiration for the author of this thesis.

The pieces presented here comprise compositions for chamber ensemble, works for orchestra and two electroacoustic pieces. These works were part of projects translated into performances and artistic installations. All of them have been carried out over the past six years and the majority have been developed through synergetic collaboration with other artists.

The majority of the compositions have direct links with Maltese culture and the important events in its history. All the works presented in the portfolio are bound in separate volumes and reference is made to them in the critical commentary within the body of the thesis. A number of CDs and DVDs accompany this document with recordings and MIDI files of the selected compositions.

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Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

This study, which was self-funded, included a seven-year programme of advanced study in music analysis, musicology and composition.

Relevant musicological seminars and conferences in Malta and abroad were regularly attended at which work was often presented; external institutions were visited for consultation purposes and papers prepared for publication.¹

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¹ See Appendix 3.

Introduction

Aims and Objectives

Music is a means to understand the complexity of man and the simplicity of God (C. Camilleri, personal communication, February 2007)

The aim of this thesis is to explore the relationship between place, identity and musical practice by means of a practice-based enquiry, with specific reference to the music and culture of Malta. My interest in the cultural legacy of Malta has led me to explore the processes that formed the musical cultures in Malta throughout history. The main ingredients of this Maltese cultural legacy include the traditions and the musical discourses concerning anthropological concepts, such as music, continuity and change; music and patronage; the impact of history on music; music and the straitjacket of ideology; the way people speak about and relate to their own music, and the way music translates into meaning. This thesis then reflects my own place within Malta's cultural legacy interpreted in a contemporary framework. With these themes in mind the objectives of this thesis are:

- 1) to investigate historical and socio-cultural issues in Malta with particular reference to interculturalism in the country's music
- 2) to undertake a case study of Charles Camilleri and his music
- 3) to reflect on how all of the above are synthesised in my own practice
- 4) to develop collaborative work with other artists
- 5) to create a body of musical work that develops the above themes through composition practice

Structure

The written component of this thesis is presented in two parts. The first focuses on the cultural richness of the Maltese Islands in light of my musical creations and makes special reference to Charles Camilleri and his music. The second part consists of a commentary on my portfolio of works and constitutes an accompaniment to the scores and recordings included in this submission. The compositions themselves are presented as scores accompanied by recordings, and in the case of *Waiting, January, Ġgantija 2013* and *Daria's Vision* there is also a video recording. Where relevant, references to these media are made within the body of this text.

The first chapter of part one offers insight into Malta's conquest and resistance under a variety of rulers, all of whom influenced Malta's current identity. The span of this study covers the rule of the Knights of St John to the crux of the 'pro-Italian' and 'pro-English' stances in the mid-1920s, when the rise of fascism in Italy was beginning to influence colonial politics. Many of the salient issues and concerns examined here—such as the cultural role of the languages spoken in Malta, and of their respective utilities and affinities—continue to re-emerge and to linger on in different shades and forms to this day. Indeed, my compositions stem from the impact that this history, art and culture have had on me. These ingredients and my inclination towards a contemporary musical language have moulded these compositions into a contemporary Maltese idiom. The relationship between language, nationality and politics is a thread constantly woven in the fabric of history: a thread that impinges directly on artists and their art. The various influences that have been at work, constantly re-casting Malta's artistic and musical culture (extending from folk to opera) are explored, each in their respective historical context in order to garner a better picture of Malta's cultural framework.

The second chapter of the first part of this study focuses on the Maltese composer Charles Camilleri, the composer and professor of music composition who has been an icon for many Maltese musicians. Camilleri is an essential point of reference as a Maltese composer who tackled the subject of national identity in his work and has also been a source of inspiration during my past studies. He was instrumental in generating the creative momentum that inspired me to compose the work presented here, and also in my work as an educator, producer and curator of contemporary music. I felt it was therefore appropriate to explore the music of Charles Camilleri within the context of his own interest in Maltese identity before embarking on my own research, which endeavours to make its own contribution to this area of enquiry. The aim of this chapter is to study this composer who was fascinated by folk music at a time when Malta was establishing a national identity. This study has provided me with the opportunity to re-evaluate the music of Camilleri. My deep interest in Maltese culture and all that was engrained in Maltese society through the ages was reinforced both consciously and unconsciously by Camilleri's mode of thought and artistic integrity.

The second part of the written component of this thesis focuses on my own artistic output and offers a contextualising commentary on my portfolio of compositions, which covers a productive span of six years from 2007 to 2013. The portfolio includes pieces for orchestra, pieces for chamber ensemble and two electroacoustic pieces. All of these works have been performed in various self-organised contexts and other events, including recitals at Sala Isouard at the Teatru Manoel (Manoel Theatre), the music room of St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity in Valletta, the Citadel Centre for the Arts in Victoria, Gozo and as part of conferences and music festivals in the Czech Republic, Italy and the UK. All of these events are listed in Appendix 3.

Methodology

I use four principal methods to explore the aims and objectives established above.

Firstly, I have used my creative practice to investigate notions of identity through the creation of musical work. Secondly, I have undertaken a historical survey of Malta, giving particular emphasis to the forces in the country's history that have had a significant effect on contemporary music and culture. Thirdly, I have presented a biographical overview of Charles Camilleri as a Maltese composer with special interest in Maltese identity and also as someone who provides a direct link to my earlier education. Lastly, through my collaboration with other artists and my curation and production of contemporary music in Malta, I have been able to investigate the means by which composers, musicians and artists can explore notions of place, identity and the self.

Composition

In order to explore the relationship between place, identity and musical practice, I present here a composition portfolio with a number of pieces that incorporate the influences that these themes may have on the work of a composer. The portfolio presents a cross section of my works, ranging from orchestral work to chamber writing, showing my inclination towards string composition, which is borne out of my experience as a string player. The pieces chosen belong to a genre that incorporates a strong Maltese cultural identity and mainly emerge from instances in Malta's historical legacy and the norms of society that have moulded the patterns of daily life. In this way the works presented in the portfolio are mainly inspired by the sounds of Malta and the experience of living there. *Ġgantija 2013*, one of the interdisciplinary collaborative

projects, looks back to a time and space of genesis and ‘primitiveness’ in Malta. Research into these primordial elements became an essential component of the compositional process. Equally, extra-compositional research informed *Daria’s Vision* in that the work explores post-production techniques associated with both recorded music and video art.

These two projects constitute a relatively high level of experimentation. Both compositions develop modes and techniques of electroacoustic improvisation. Particularly in *Ġgantija 2013*, naturally occurring and man-made environmental sounds were recorded and then manipulated live to create a structured musical composition. In *Daria’s Vision* the manipulation of sounds occurred in the post-production process, the primary intention being that of ‘removing the original meaning’ of the sounds. Then by reversing, looping and the use of speed-change editing techniques, the final composition became a surrealist sonic reconfiguration: a sonic collage of sounds, freely collected and organised.

Historical Survey

To contextualise my practical work, I felt it was imperative to highlight the main historical events that shape and inspire me most as an artist. With this in mind, I have included a historical survey of the key moments in Maltese culture, with particular reference to religion, culture, language and tradition. All these components, revolving around the Maltese identity have shaped me as a composer living in Malta. These historical legacies can still be drawn from the artistic activities and socio-cultural peculiarities found in Maltese society. This historical heritage has directed me and other

Maltese artists to undertake specific choices in relation to education and artistic production.

With the close proximity and historical political relations with Italy, the artistic development of Malta has always been very much tied to Italian customs with special reference to opera. This has had a direct impact on contemporary art, which makes it more difficult for Maltese contemporary artists to realise their works for a Maltese public. Notwithstanding this, an up-and-coming group of young Maltese artists is making it possible for the country to embrace a paradigm shift, leading to a more contemporary artistic outlook. Indeed, this wave can be compared with the group of Maltese artists (Camilleri included), who in the 1960s aspired to give Malta a new artistic vision with Malta's national identity at the forefront of their works.

Charles Camilleri

The quest for Maltese identity was an essential element in Camilleri's music. The music of Charles Camilleri has made me reflect on the uniqueness of Malta, not only in terms of its history but also in the way history, culture and tradition have impacted on music. His music (with special reference to his early works) is characterised by a Maltese idiom and reflects a deep insight into the Maltese character. Maltese history and its societal norms are reflected in Camilleri's compositions. However, this music is unique in a variety of ways and reflects the past through a modern musical medium.

The music of the Knights and the romantic music of the Nani and Bugeja families² were followed by a lull in artistic inspiration. There was a lacuna caused partly by WW2, which created a void in the dissemination of culture, and in this thesis I will

² Refer to pp. 18–19 and 23.

investigate why this happened and the way in which artists such as Camilleri broke the impasse ushering in a new period of vibrant Maltese culture. This is exemplified by an exploration of Camilleri's music and lyrics, which often accompany his compositions (an example is his set of songs *Kanti Popolari*³). Camilleri and his artistic peers bridged the traditional artistry in Malta with more contemporary works.

Collaboration, Education, Curation

Another way in which I have explored the principal research aim has been through the work that I have been carrying out not only as a composer but also as a curator, educator and collaborator. Through the organisation of workshops, courses, concerts and artistic installations, I have been able to raise the profile of contemporary music and artistic practices in Malta. This improvement can be seen not only at an educational level but also in the annual events that are currently being organised at artistic venues. Although there is still room for improvement, contemporary artistic events are being featured in some of the programmes with a fairly good number of participants, giving contemporary music in Malta a better status.

The research and collaboration throughout my working process, and the execution of the pieces presented in the portfolio of works give significant weight to the research question. Indeed, one of the most interesting challenges in compiling this thesis was engaging with the wide span of ideas that were encountered while collaborating with musicians and artists of other disciplines.

³ *Kanti Popolari* (n.d.) is a set of five songs written to the lyrics of Maltese Professor Joe Friggieri for piano and soprano and later arranged by Camilleri for a string quartet and soprano.

Context

The title *Creative Responses to Maltese Culture and Identity: Case Study and Portfolio of Compositions* was chosen because it suitably captures the central research question of this study: namely to explore the relationship between place, identity and musical practice in relation to Malta's history and culture.

The dominant influence on the arts from the mid 1970s to the end of the century (postmodernism) was itself largely a product of the new intellectual movements of the 1960s. All this is best seen as part of a general challenge to older authorities and a general upheaval in human relationships affecting both young people and adults, giving rise to movements—namely postcolonialism—which had strong effects on the arts.

The study of composer Charles Camilleri aims at giving a concrete example of an artist for whom the articulation of national identity in the 1960s was a primary concern. The granting of Maltese independence in 1964 was particularly important in that it stimulated artists to represent the language of the people through their creativity, as in the case of Estonian composer Arvo Pärt (born 1935) and Polish composer Henryk Gorecki (1933–2010) whose music stirred nationalist sentiments in their respective countries.⁴ The creative component in this thesis relates to the research question and my observations in relation to the impact a nation's past and traditions can have on a composer. The studies that I undertook induced self-reflection on the relationship between the environment and the artist through a contemporary artistic approach.

From the end of this 'cultural revolution' onwards, the most distinctive medium in art is assemblage, often incorporating technological elements such as computers. Leading figures in the first wave of assemblage are the German, Josef Beuys (1921–

⁴ The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 was particularly important in that it permitted the release, particularly in music, of Russian and East European influences (Marwick, 2003).

1986), a curator for early postmodernist exhibitions and the Italian, Michelangelo Pistoletto (born 1933), one of the first artists to incorporate mirrors in his exhibitions. Concurrently, an ever increasing number of artworks have been created on the basis of preexisting works; more and more artists interpret, reproduce, re-exhibit, or use available cultural products or works created by others. This post-production culture implies a profound transformation of the status of the work of art: going beyond its traditional role as a receptacle of the artist's vision. As in my interdisciplinary projects, what matters is the equality, an assumption of same capacities, the possibility of an equal relationship, between myself as the composer and the other protagonists. In this new form of culture, the artwork functions as the temporary terminal of a network of interconnected elements.

The distinctions between painting and sculpture, between words, images and music, between poetry and solid form, between popular and elite culture in a contemporary society have been broken; this is what up-and-coming Maltese artists are aspiring towards.

Part 1

Maltese Culture and Identity

A Historical Overview: Music in Malta

1.1 Cultural Narratives

The Mediterranean is fascinating because it represents better than others a place in which one encounters countless diversities, and because it enables us to observe the ways in which these diversities manage to coexist, ignore each other, know each other, come into conflict, or blend (Magrini, 1993, pp. 173–182).

The aim of this chapter is to put the creative output of this thesis and the music of Charles Camilleri into a historical and cultural context. It is also designed to illustrate the creativity that permeates Malta's historical intellectual output, while also demonstrating the cross-pollination of disciplines across art, literature and music.

Malta, as other Mediterranean countries, holds strong to its traditions, which are as different from other Mediterranean countries as much as they are similar. Both personal and collective identities are subject to evolution and change; they emerge in specific times and places and they can also evolve. Hence, cultural identities are not inscribed once and for all; they develop and change through language, traditions and art mediums. Conversely these affect each other, resulting in various outcomes through a constant process of transformation. This is what rendered music in Malta so multifaceted. One cannot speak of a single musical culture but of musical cultures with strong identities—a multifaceted nature nurtured out of historical passages. Hence, a diversity of internal and external facets ranging from Maltese customs and cultural traditions—some of them echoing Maltese history—to European cultural influxes. The artist never works in a vacuum; surroundings mould his/her creations. The Maltese cultural legacy, consciously or unconsciously, has a direct bearing on works of art. Malta's insular reality is responsible for the endurance of well-rooted traditions, which might generate the artist's creations within established boundaries.

As a composer I am interested in the Maltese landscape formed by layers of historical narratives, entwined in Maltese traditions and artistic collections. Like Maltese veteran composer Charles Camilleri, my intention here is not to present some kind of nineteenth-century nationalism. On the contrary, this music is characterised by an open texture, an unsaturated identity, a capacity to offer improvised variations, a self-presentation as a set of possibilities, which can be sonified in an almost infinite number of different ways. Over the mangled bits and pieces of historical experiences and nationalistic fervour, smouldering in political divergences, the spirit of past cultural breakthroughs still hovers. This past is still inculcated in the many traditions this island embraces.

An overview of Maltese historical events sheds light on the Maltese artist who works within this established framework. The music presented here is an abstract medium of communication inspired by Malta's natural ambience expressed through mixed forces, which echo the primitive in a contemporary language. By way of example, the aim of *Ġgantija 2013* was to depict the huge megaliths and their enormous and intimate spaces, which narrate rituals and a passage of time.

The music in the portfolio is presented here in the context of a historical and social formation 'mind map' rather than as something immutable. Culture is the totality of symbols and artefacts produced by human beings and these include musical works. Modes of thinking, feeling and behaving are part of culture, as are values, customs, traditions and norms and the composer is part of this whole set of connections.

1.2 Malta

In an island that has been characterised by a coming and going of settlers from across the Mediterranean region, the localisation of knowledge has often been dramatically changed through history, either by constant invasions or by gradual assimilation with other local knowledge, brought in by new settlers (Frendo, 1991). During almost two centuries of British rule, Maltese identity continued to assert itself through its language while also incorporating structures that contributed to societal development.⁵

The Malta that the British colonised in 1800 was a country whose structure as an early modern state had already been set up by three centuries of aristocratic rule under the Knights of St John of Jerusalem (Knights Hospitallers), whose crusading economy and central role in the Mediterranean as described by Braudel, formally established Malta as a nation [see Plate 1].

As a contemporary composer, I find myself working within a nation with a structured artistic background that evolved throughout the centuries governed by different rulers. What the English have transferred to Maltese society is a less Italianate mode of artistic production inculcated for centuries by the aristocratic culture mainly originated by the Knights of St John. As an artist I place myself within a group of contemporary artists with a certain degree of inclination towards a British and Nordic artistic language, distancing myself from the lyrical operatic Italianate idiom.

⁵ The British systematised and introduced new systems amongst which are: the Maltese education system, new schools, assistance to the poor (Victory Kitchen), electricity, transport (lift in Valletta and tram), banking, sports, public gardens and gates and the airport (Busuttill, 1988).



Plate 1 St John's Co-Cathedral, a gem of Baroque art and architecture. It was commissioned in 1572 by Grand Master Jean de la Cassière as the conventual church of the Order of the Knights Hospitaller of St John and designed by the celebrated Maltese military architect Gerolamo Cassar. The Cathedral stands as a unique monument of international importance

Note. Reproduced from *5000 years of Architecture in Malta* by M. Mahoney, 1996, p. 156

1.3 The Development of an Island People to an Island Nation

Over the years, various influences have been at work, constantly moulding Malta's culture into what it is today. From the prehistoric inhabitants to the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Anjuvines, Aragonese, Knights of St. John, French and finally the British, the majority have to a greater or lesser extent, left their mark on Malta's musical development.

The sixteenth century marked the beginning of the renaissance in Malta. This century was especially significant in moulding the new era of Malta's cultural history. The sixteenth century witnessed the granting of the Maltese Islands to the Order of the Knights Hospitaller of St. John by the Spanish Emperor Charles V (Sire, 1996). The Knights of St. John came from powerful aristocratic families in Europe and when they

arrived in Malta in 1530, they brought with them very strong European influences and luxurious ways of life.⁶ This was a period in the history of Malta, when music making called forth a sense of elitist European musical accomplishment. This great political change moulded a change of identity for Maltese society. In Europe, the island gained the title of the ‘Defender of Faith against the Infidel’ and was a constant source of interest and inspiration to musicians throughout its history, especially during the Order’s rule (Sire, 1996, p. 72).

After the Great Siege of 1565, the Knights Hospitallers, now looking at Malta as their permanent abode, soon settled into a way of life that was soon on par with that of the courts of Europe. Musical activity in Malta prospered, with the Church looking mainly towards Sicily and Italy for its music and musicians. The Knights embraced their fashionable trends,⁷ whilst rustics and villagers tended to retain their predominantly Arab influences.⁸

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a cultural schism was created whereby music performed in courts for the elite and the aristocrats was used as entertainment, whereas music performed for and by the lower class was still engrained in Arabic traditions and folk tunes and was used in traditional ceremonies and rituals.⁹ As Alan Lomax (2009, p. 4) argues, “though rich in the expressive and communicative arts,

⁶ The very strong European influences that they brought with them were reflected in their different forms of entertainment, including music and dance. The music of these compositions still survives in the works of Jean d’Estrée (1559), Adrian le Roy (1567) and Thoinot Arbeau (1558) (Grima, 2001).

⁷ The young knights or at least some of them were attracted to the grand style of living so typical of the aristocratic families of Europe. Entertainment was an integral part of their lives; this included carnival, parties, and opera. Magnificent architecture was their trademark, with the new baroque city of Valletta, planned as a strong fortress and an elegant city (De Lucca, 2004).

⁸ In 870, the Arabs had taken control of Malta, adding the islands to their growing geographic sphere, which included most of present day Spain, France, and Italy. Malta remained under this rule until 1090 (Blouet, 2004). See also p. 28.

⁹ A surviving document from 1603 gives a glimpse of the type of musical activity taking place in the Birgu area at the time (Fsadni, 1972, pp. 179–180). According to this document, the instruments played were the cithera, tamburello, liguto e flauta. These four players were performing on Christmas Eve, visiting and entertaining one house after another.

these folk communities seldom have the means to record, evaluate, or transmit their songs and tales except by word of mouth”.

The new aristocratic governors spoke different languages, alien to the local dialect. This was a barrier that resulted in a schism of society and hence affected culture. Since the Knights of St John belonged to the upper classes of society they rarely mixed with the Maltese populace. These barriers split Maltese society, and hence Maltese identity, into two. From the Order’s domination onwards, the affiliation with the Italian school of thought intensified and solidified. Talented young Maltese musicians were encouraged to further their knowledge and studies at the conservatory in Naples.^{10 11}

1.3.1 Church Music in Malta

Significantly dominated by the Roman Catholic Church, the Maltese looked towards the church as a state within a state. This gained impetus during the knights’s domination. Being a Roman Catholic Order, Malta strengthened its ties with the Holy See and diffused catholic traditions in all sectors of society. In the eighteenth century, musical tradition in Maltese churches continued to evolve. This is evident from the vast number of musical compositions found in archives in Maltese churches and other private

¹⁰ Namely Michele Zahra [1570–1646], Giuseppe Balzano [1616–1700], Pietro Gristi [1696–1738], Benigno Zerafa [1726–1804] and Francesco Azopardi [1748–1809] (Vella Bondin, 2000). Amongst composers and theorists who have been of great service and importance to the development of music and musical thought in Malta, the following are certainly the most prominent: Giuseppe Balzano [1616–1700], Niccolo Isourad [1775–1818], the eighteenth-century figures Philippo Pizzuto and Michelangelo Vella, Paolino Vassallo [1856–1923] and Carlo Diacono [1876–1924] (Żammit, 1988).

¹¹ A common characteristic found in both sacred and secular music of this epoch composed by both Maltese and foreign composers (this music can be found at the Mdina Archives, Mdina, Malta) inspired my work commissioned by the Italian Ensemble Fisarchi, *Colpi d’Armonia*, which was part of a project financed by Provincia di Firenze. The composition was based on one of Michelangelo Buonarroti’s sonnets, keeping the language in its original format. In *Colpi d’Armonia* minimalist techniques aim to describe the work of the sculptor with a soprano line which is handled with great ornamented lyricism, embracing a characteristic timbre of Renaissance music. Refer to pp 109–113 for a more detailed reference to this work.

archives around Malta and its sister island Gozo. These archives represent a wide selection of works by Maltese, Gozitan and Italian composers and bear testimony to the fact that ensembles were directed by Maltese conductors (the majority of whom studied in Italian and Sicilian conservatories), and newly established groups, which were considerable in number, were even directed by entire families (Vella Bondin, 2000).¹²

A common characteristic of sacred music in Malta, especially of the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century is the operatic style of compositions.¹³ During the eighteenth century, opera was also flourishing in parallel with liturgical music (Rolandi, 1932, p. 39). In 1732 the Knights of St John built the Teatro Pubblico in Valletta (now Teatru Manoel), named after Manuel De Vilhena, a Grandmaster famous for his numerous initiatives directed towards the amelioration of leisure activities among the popular classes (Heathcote, 2008) [see Plates 3–4]. A hundred years later, the Royal Opera House in Valletta was established, according to designs by Edward Barry, architect of Covent Garden.¹⁴

¹² A milestone in the nineteenth century musical legacy of Malta is the birth of the so-called parties: The Nanisti and Bugejisti. The Bugeja family, a renowned contemporary musical Maltese family, had its admirers who considered themselves rivals to the Nani musicians. The Nani enthusiasts supported both Antonio Nani (1842–1929) and his father Paolo Nani (1814–1904) as composers and Maestri di Cappella in various churches around Malta. As a sign of musical affiliation with the Nani family, male supporters used to grow their side burns along their cheeks, reaching their jawline, whereas the Bugeja male supporters used to wear a goatee (S. Galea, personal communication, September 2012). The parties were the means for the two respective families to showcase their musical capabilities and potential (Vella Bondin, 2000). This shows how cultural politics and nepotism in nineteenth-century Malta were an integral part of Maltese society. Hence, in a place where religion was embedded in the daily way of life, the church had a significant role in the general developments which were occurring under British Rule [see Plate 2].

¹³ I feel this idiom alien to me, especially due to its extensive use of virtuosic writing, embellishments and drama in contrast to simple harmonies and sequential writing with a frequent presence of rhythmic and melodic tics, the use of onomatopoeia and interjections.

¹⁴ The knights of the Italian *Langue*, aristocrats who came from the land where opera was born at the turn of the seventeenth century, were eager to see it performed on the island where many of them spent a good part of their life. Ulderico Rolandi (1951) states that in 1664 the libretto of an opera by the Italian composer Pietro Andrea Ziani, *Annibale* in Capua, was actually printed in Malta but since by that year printing in Malta had been suspended for some years, the *In Malta* imprint for this libretto is almost certainly a false one. It is certain however, that performances of opera did take place in Malta during the seventeenth century at the Inn of Italy in Triq il-Merkanti, Valletta, which had a portable stage in its large hall but there are no extant librettos from this period (Xuerab, 2004).

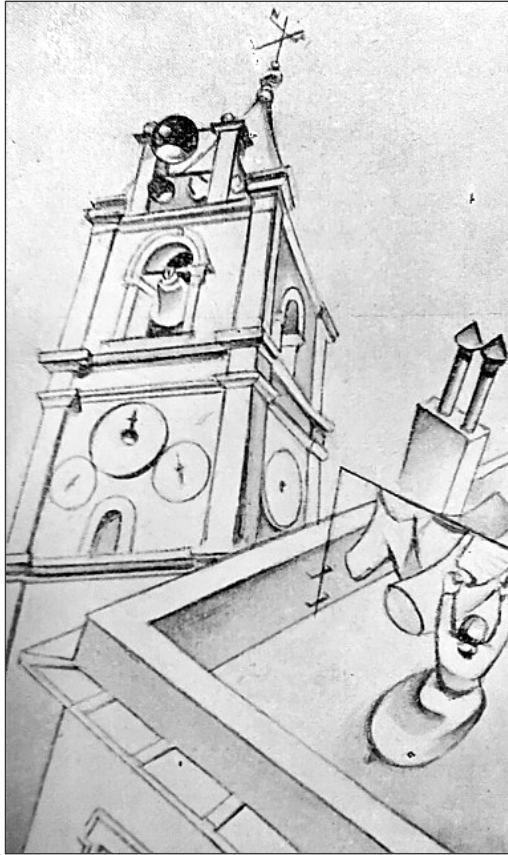


Plate 2 *In alto campene che suonano*
[Church bells ringing high above]

Note: Reproduced from *Colore di Malta* by U. Biscottini (a fascist and author of publications aimed at promoting fascism and irredentism), 1941–XIX, p. 44

This is a rare copy of fascism and irredentism propaganda, courtesy of Giovanni Casarini.

In many ways the *Teatru Manoel*, constructed as *honestam populi oblectationem* [a just obligation to the people] and up to 1866 the only regular theatre in Malta, reinforced Italian—particularly Neapolitan, musical traditions. The operas known to be performed during the first decades of the *Teatru Manoel's* existence were either by the leading Neapolitan composers or composers closely associated with the Neapolitan tradition, including Pergolesi, Leo, Piccinni, Prota, Cimarosa and Paisiello (Mìceli, 1999). The operas were performed by visiting professionals from Italy, introducing a custom that was to dominate all subsequent opera productions in Malta [see Plates 5–7].

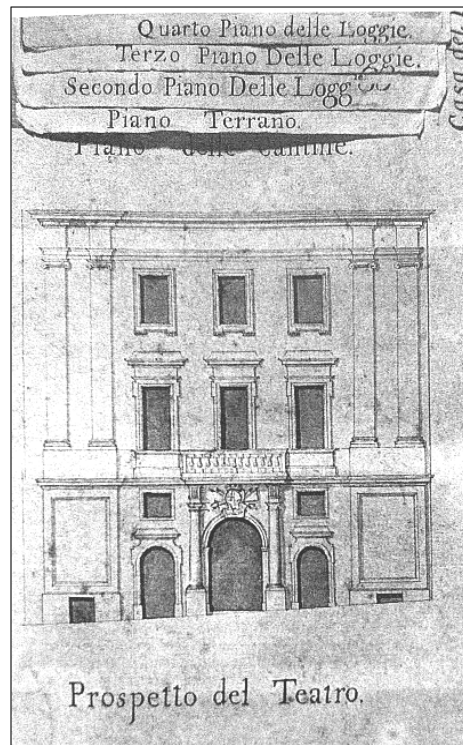


Plate 3 The Manoel's original façade as depicted
in Cabreo Vilhena

Note: Reproduced from the National Library, Malta



Plate 4 Teatru Manoel, Valletta

Note. Reproduced from a Private Collection, Malta



Plate 5 Guglielmi's *Astuzia Contro Astuzia* (first performed in Italy as "Guerra contro Guerra, ossia, Astuzia contro astuzia") was chosen for the reopening of the Manoel in 1812 after the extensive refurbishing and modifications carried out earlier that year. From the text it appears that apart from the opera, the evening included a ballet, *Luigia di Twedal* (i.e. Tweedale) by G. De Rossy.

Note. Reproduced from *The Maltese Opera Libretto* by P. Xuereb, 2004, p. xii



Plate 6 Old wind machine used formerly for sound effects

Note: Reproduced by courtesy of the Theatre Museum



Plate 7 Thunder roller used formerly for sound effects

Note: Reproduced by courtesy of the Theatre Museum

Under British rule, an overwhelming majority of Maltese turned towards the Roman Catholic Church as the ‘identity’ that they sought during this period characterised by constitutional demands and the language question.¹⁵ In turn, the church had the power to control cultural and social developments (Koster, 1988, p. 79). Having no say in administrative decisions related to economy, politics and issues related to strategic planning, the Maltese turned their attention to religious activities, such as local feasts and religious manifestations (Żammit, 1988, p. 173). As the Maltese economy improved, people from different strata of society offered financial contributions to the church towards the yearly expenditure religious feasts incurred (Boissevain, 1998, p. 223; Camilleri, 1994, pp. 121–136). As a result of this collaboration and contribution, a yearning for an improvement in music performed during feasts (both inside and outside church) developed, paving the way for local musicians to show off their aptitude for musical composition and conducting, all vying with each other to occupy the role of maestri di cappella in prestigious churches (Castagna, 1888, pp. 247–249).

Benefiting from first-rate reputations both as composers as well as conductors of church music, the Nani and Bugeja musicians were the main focus of the intra-politics that featured prominently in the cultural sphere of nineteenth-century Maltese society. This keen competitive spirit was evident in the considerable number of members of the orchestra as well as in the choice of music performed during sacred functions (*Il Portafolio Maltese*, 2nd December 1865, p. 3; *Il Portafolio Maltese*, 21st July 1871, p. 3; *Il Portafolio Maltese*, 7th February 1873, p. 3; *Il Portafolio Maltese*, 11th February 1873,

¹⁵ See Section 1.4 for further discussion of this.

p. 3).^{16 17} This competitive spirit is still evident today in Maltese religious feasts. Music played during religious functions is one of the most important aspects of the festivities.

1.3.2 Traditions in Malta

The popularity of Italian opera continued unabated during the nineteenth century. The production emphasis at the Royal Theatre remained basically the same as that of the *Teatru Manoel*: the presentation of Italian opera, with the work of Verdi, Rossini, Donizzetti, Bellini, Petrella, Pacini, and Puccini often dominating the entire programme (Miceli, 1999). The few non-Italian operas produced¹⁸ were performed in Italian versions that had been performed in Italy; others composed by some Maltese composers were in Italian [see Plate 8]. First-rate operas continued to be staged by renowned Italian and Sicilian performers. Meanwhile, people from the lower classes were still

¹⁶ The Nani and Buġeja composers composed a considerable number of sacred works, including antiphons, hymns, psalms and masses for full orchestra (Cassar, 2005).

¹⁷ Paul [Paolo] Nani (1906–1986), the composer from the last generation of the Nani family, was the first to cultivate orchestral output, both secular and sacred, on a wide scale. A skilled performer on violin and viola (First Viola in the orchestra of the Royal Opera House in Valletta), conductor (founder of the orchestra and choir of the Maltese Institute of Culture), organiser (of over 400 concerts), esteemed teacher of harmony and prolific composer of numerous large-scale works, including symphonies, ballets and piano concertos, he was one of the most versatile home-grown talents in the history of Maltese music (Cassar, 2005).

Another composer of special significance to liturgical and secular music of the first half of the 1900s in Malta was Maltese composer Carmelo Pace (1906–1993), ex-composition tutor of Charles Camillieri and a contemporary of Paolo Nani. Pace's legacy also contains operas (whose subject-matter was drawn from the history of Malta), oratorios, a *Stabat Mater*, a *Te Deum*, choral music and chamber music, including string quartets. He wrote over 500 compositions, characterised by his own, individual style of 'twentieth-century Romanticism' (Vella Bondin, 2000). He was the first Maltese musician to study and collect traditional Maltese music, which he referred to in his compositions, such as the highly popular choral work, in the Maltese language, *L-Imnarja*.

¹⁸ e.g. Gounod's *Faust*, Massenet's *Manon*, *Thaïs* and *Werther*, Bizet's *Carmen* and *I pescatori di perle*, Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunow*, Saint-Saëns's *Sansone e Dalila*, Wagner's *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser*, *La Walkira* and *Tristan e Isolde* (Rolandi, 1932, pp. 25–39).

engaged in folk singing and were completely absent from the elitist operatic scene (Żammit, 1988) [see Plate 9].¹⁹

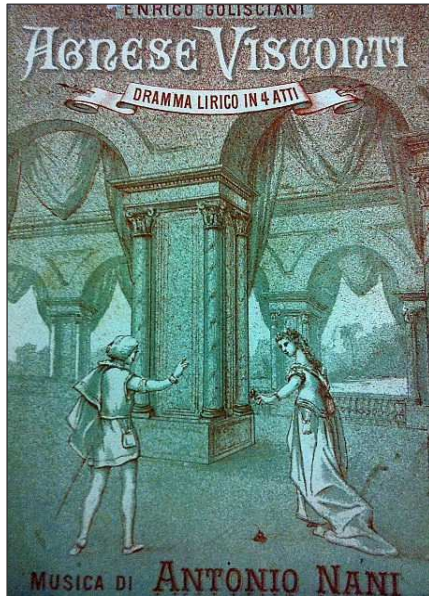


Plate 8 Opera libretto
by Enrico Golisciani
and music by
Antonio Nani, 1889,
performed at the Royal Theatre, Valletta.

Note: Reproduced from a Private Collection, Malta



Plate 9 Maltese country man playing a folk fiddle
(not a mandolin)
Copper engraving by G. Muir (c. 1840)

Note: Reproduced from a Private Collection, Malta

¹⁹ One of the works in the portfolio *Gaudos* was inspired by the nineteenth-century dance *il-Kumittiva*. *Gaudos* aims to depict the tranquil Gozitan atmosphere and rural life. This composition aims to depict my experiences as part of Gozitan society. The word “*Kumittiva*” actually refers to a collective of musicians commissioned by the local wine bar to play the accompaniment for the dancers. Like the steps of the dance, the musical score is passed on from one generation to the next. It is learnt by ear, and performed on folkloristic instruments (Borġ Cardona, 2002). Refer to p. 97–105 for a more detailed reference to the work.

The performance held on the 3rd February 1923 at the *Teatru Manoel* marked an important step in the history of culture in Malta. It consisted of scenes from the Maltese verse drama *Il-Fidwa tal-Bdiewa* (The Ransom of the Peasants) by Ninu Cremona, an important Maltese linguist and author. Although it has been performed in its entirety only once, this play occupies a special place in the history of Maltese drama and is generally ranked as a classic (Xuereb, 2011, p. 101). It also inspired Charles Camilleri to write an opera based upon it. The 3-Act Opera's libretto is by Maltese lyricist Joe Friggieri. The Opera was composed in 1985 and premiered during the Maltafest Festival²⁰ in 1986 [see Plates 10–11]. One of the works presented in the portfolio of works *Ġgantija 2013* links Maltese literature and music composition. Although expressed in a modish language this composition evokes the primordial desires of the Maltese ancestors to bridge material needs to a more spiritual dimension.

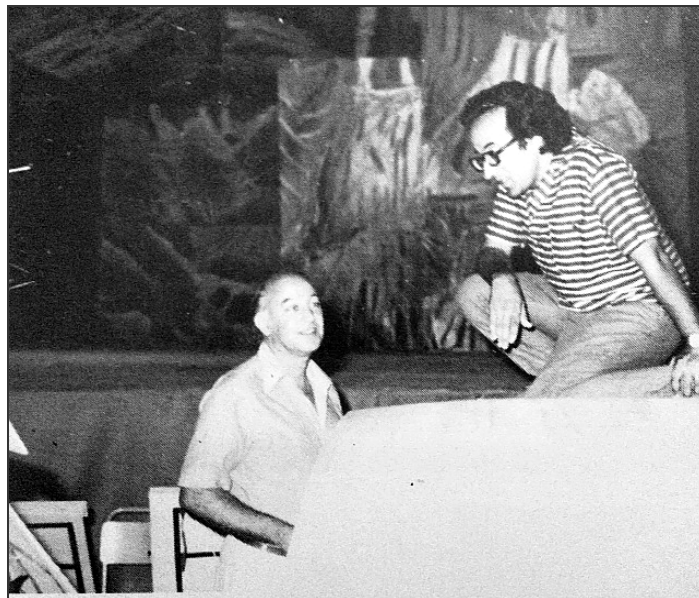


Plate 10 Charles Camilleri (on the left) discussing various points with Joe Friggieri, during a rehearsal of the three-act Opera *Il-Fidwa tal-Bdiewa*

Note: Reproduced from Charles Camilleri: *Portrait of a Composer* by E Sapienza and J. Attard, 1988, p. 72

²⁰ *Maltafest* was originally set up to make Malta more attractive to up-market tourists. It was a cultural festival popular in the 1980s. It featured drama presentations, art exhibitions and concerts.



Plate 11 Michael Stroud's costume designs for *Il-Fidwa tal-Bdiewa*

Note: Reproduced from Charles Camilleri: *Portrait of a Composer*
by J. Attard and E Sapienza, 1988, p. 73

1.3.3 Maltese Music in Contemporary Society

The aristocratic South Italianate 'Baroque syndrome' that dominated Malta for decades can still be sensed in contemporary art in Malta. This is evident in Maltese architecture, in religious feasts and in the majority of concerts performed during Maltese festivals and events organised throughout the year. Programmes featuring a contemporary classical musical repertoire are in the minority and are often poorly attended. However, contemporary art in Malta is penetrating through a small but yet active group of up-and-coming composers. The artistic idiom of this group has an affinity with my own artistic mode of expression.²¹

²¹ Refer to Chapter 2 of Part 1.

Nevertheless, the concerts put on by the Teatru Manoel committee generally consist of programmes that in the Committee's opinion will attract a good-sized audience, basically the same group of people who attend concerts on a regular basis. The committee is aware that this group is made up of middle-aged to older people who appreciate particular genres of music, mainly Baroque to Romantic. This situation has a direct impact on contemporary music; few contemporary concerts are put on at the theatre. From experience, one can also affirm that appreciation and understanding of a contemporary programme needs preparation and some kind of experience in the field.

Apart from concerts of classical music, the Ghanafest Festival gives space to local talent to perform Maltese songs and traditional music [see Plates 12–13]. This festival is held at the Argotti Gardens, Floriana and includes concerts of *għana* (pronounced aana)²² singing and other concert series based on Mediterranean folk roots. Music is generally performed by local groups who have no other opportunity to perform in public except for some small-scale performances in village clubs during events that are generally linked to religious feasts.

Over the years, both *għana* (as a genre) and the role of *għannejja* (*għana* singers) in Maltese culture and society have frequently been presented by both Maltese and foreign scholars as representative of old-time Maltese peasant life, as the charm of the folkspeople and of a way of life that was rapidly disappearing with post-war economic development (Fsadni, 1992). *Għana* refers to a genre of Maltese traditional folk singing

²² Maltese traditional folk music. The word can have two literal meanings. The first is richness, wealth and prosperity; the second is associated with singing, verse, rhyme and even kantaliena, a type of singing with a slow rhythm (Ciantar, 2000).

and incorporates three main sub-genres: *il-bormliża*,²³ *tal-fatt*²⁴ and the *spirtu pront*.²⁵ In this framework, *għana* becomes one of the elements that has often been used to characterise the simple (if not also romantic) life of the working class. Aquilina (1931, pp. 8–9) for instance, provides the following description:

How lovely it is to hear from a remote and abandoned village amidst our island's hills during a moonlit evening, while the cricket is hidden among the tomato plants breaking the evening's silence, a handsome and healthy young man, swarthy as our country makes him, ceaselessly singing his *għana*. His soul seems to burst with his singing! [Author's translation]



Plate 12 Għana Festival at Argotti Gardens, Floriana

²³ *Il-bormliża* (after the city of Bormla) is sometimes referred to as both *għana fil-gholi* (*għana* in high register) and as *għana bil-ksur* (*għana* with inflexions). The last two names shed light on the outstanding features of this singing: mainly that it is highly-melismatic, making it both very difficult to sing and to understand, and that it requires a high-pitched voice capable of singing in a female vocal register. The latter feature shows a strong possibility that this kind of *għana* was generally sung by women and that throughout the years it was picked up by men while at the same time, women were disappearing from the world of *għana*. *Il-bormliża* can either be sung by two singers or as a solo (Mifsud-Chircop, 1999).

²⁴ The *għana tal-fatt* is Malta's basic stanzaic ballad form; a story narrated by one singer. The subject of a *fatt* can be either tragic or comic, although *fattijiet* (plural of *fatt*) recounting the deeds of passed away well-known *għannejja* are also becoming very popular. A recent development in the *għana tal-fatt* is the inclusion of the refrain sung by the accompanying guitarists (Ciantar, 2000).

²⁵ The *spirtu pront* is performed by urban working class men mainly in village bars and clubs; very few women sing it. *Spirtu pront* sessions are also organised on popular feasts such as *Imnarja* (a Maltese feast held annually on the 29th June) and during Maltese 'traditional evenings' (Ciantar, 2000).



Plate 13 Ġukulari Ensemble performing at Ghana Festival, Argotti Gardens (2004)

Note. Photo courtesy of A. Borg Cardona

To date, music performed at religious functions as part of village feast ceremonies, consists either of compositions from the nineteenth century or contemporary compositions with a romantic Italianate style.²⁶ Local traditional music festivals are still very much attended by working class groups, whilst operas (the majority of them by Italian romantic composers) and symphonic concerts are very well attended by people from the middle and elite classes of society. So far it seems that there is still a distinct line between the working and the professional classes of Maltese society. Artistic productions that require some degree of artistic and cultural preparation limit the attending audience. A case in point was my recent interdisciplinary production *Ġgantija* 2013. The cultural office in Gozo promoted this project as a primary medium linking cultural, social and historical concepts. However, its aim to attract new-comers to the

²⁶ These musical works consist of highly embellished, virtuosic melodic lines and dense orchestration.

field of contemporary arts left much to be desired. Although the event was well-attended and supported by cultural entities, the majority of the audience was made up of foreigners, most of whom were residents in Gozo and Malta.

1.4 Language, Politics and Culture

Given the degree to which the transmission of a language affects a society with a direct impact on culture, I would like to use the following section to outline the degree to which language has been central to the formation of contemporary Maltese identity and culture. This sometimes happens intentionally when a dominant group attempts to limit or discontinue the use of the language of another group. In the emerging world order, when the rise of ethnonationalism²⁷ poses a major challenge to the nation state, political assertion of language or religious identity assumes importance.

The fight for a national language, which characterised the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century in Malta, left its mark on the artistic development of that time. Indeed, among various cultural symbols of religion, ethnicity and the traditions and customs that differentiate one society from another, language is one of the most potent cultural markers in defining a group identity. Language and culture are interrelated in Malta because the limited spread over a fixed territory makes language even more important than religion as a basis of group identity formation.

According to Charles Camilleri, in the 1960s no artist would have considered giving a Maltese title to a piece. He recalled that when he once composed a piece with a

²⁷ The term ethnonationalism refers to a particular strain of nationalism that is marked by the desire of an ethnic community to have absolute authority over its own political, economic, and social affairs. (<http://imej.wfu.edu/articles/1999/1/02/demo/Glossary/glossaryhtml/ethnonationalism.html>)

Maltese name to be performed abroad, some locals told him that this composition would be a failure. Contrary to this belief, this piece, as with others that followed, was well received by the public abroad (C. Camilleri, personal communication, February 2007). The historical links with Italy and the United Kingdom exerted a powerful influence on music and the other arts.

To date, many musicians opt to further their studies in Italian or English-speaking countries. Many Italians as well as British musicians are invited yearly to join promising Maltese musicians to take part in music and art festivals in Malta and Gozo.²⁸ The majority of operas performed in the main theatres in the Maltese Islands, particularly in Gozo are by Romantic and early modern Italian composers. Maltese musical culture is indeed rooted in Italian and British influences. Unconsciously this presence of three main languages coexisting in Malta had a bearing on the choice of titles given to my works here presented.

Only after WW2 did the Maltese language gain roots in the cultural sphere of Malta. Before the recognition of Maltese as the national language of Malta, the struggle between the *italianità* and anglophile sentiments was one of the main agendas of Maltese politics during the British colonial period. As was manifest during the nineteenth century, an Italianate Romantic style still dominated the majority of the repertoires performed in churches and public venues. To a certain extent this situation still prevails today.

In the 1880s Malta had undergone a revolution. In the last decades of the nineteenth century facing a forced assimilation, the Italian language and literary traditions of Malta assumed an exaggerated importance, serving to buttress constitutional demands. Anglicisation awakened the theory of nationality, converting

²⁸ A case in point is the *Victoria Arts Festival* in Victoria, Gozo.

dormant rights into aspirations, sentiments into political claims, giving *italianità* a purpose similar to that which this concept enjoyed in *Risorgimento* Italy when it served to rally a common feeling of nationality, to arouse the urge for national self-determination (Coleiro, 1997) [see Plate 14].²⁹



Plate 14 *L'attesa: Malta attende la liberazione* [The Waiting: Malta waiting to be conjoined with mother country Italy]

Note. Reproduced from *Per il sogno della sua vita* by L. Mizzi, 1980, internal pages

²⁹ In the eighteenth century, the way Maltese people thought of themselves was influenced by the Order of St John and after two centuries of ruling, they succeeded in considerably latinising the culture of a section of Maltese society (Luttrell, 1975). By the nineteenth century, Malta had in appearance a thoroughly Italianate culture among the elite and professional classes. Notwithstanding this, the people whether educated or not, spoke Maltese in daily life and there were also a few prints and publications in Maltese (House, 1959). Maltese, however, had not been made an official language, and had neither a standard orthography nor a literature. For a Maltese person to be educated and for him to know Italian was one and the same thing: for countless generations Italian had been the language of the elite (Frendo, 1991).

During the first years of British rule in Malta there was hardly anybody who knew English. By the mid-1800s, Italian continued to be a prerequisite for an education in Malta and a basic knowledge of English became a useful additional acquirement; those who needed or could afford to learn English privately did so. Eventually however, English began to be taught in schools (Laferla, 1947, pp. 95–96). Matters took a different turn in 1880; from then on, Anglicisation became a government policy, whether the representatives or the majority of the electorate liked it or not; studying Italian was to be actively discouraged, its use possibly prohibited in education and public affairs. The 1880s were indeed a parting of the ways marking the beginning of a new era in Maltese history. Malta looked towards the British Empire mainly for economic growth and due to political reasons; but Malta's spirit was still entrenched in Italianate values and tradition. The central issue—the language question—became the most distinct single factor labelling the supporters of either party as 'pro' or 'anti' English or Italian. The language question was not so much a question of language as of right. The 'politics of language' were essentially a demand for self-determination. The nationalist ardour echoed the flowing style of Dante Alighieri's *Divina Commedia* no less than it reverberated with the strains of Giuseppe Verdi's *Nabucco*, and *Va Pensiero* would have invited many an encore in the opera house those days (Hull, 1993).

The slow acceptance of Maltese as a language worthy of cultivation was a process of growing self-awareness as well as a direct consequence of the wish to impart knowledge through the vernacular. Prominent local progressives were literates, they wrote novels and articles in the Maltese language, and even came to identify the use of Italian (and Italian nationalism) as “a mainstay of class domination in Malta” (Chircop, 1991, p. 32).³⁰

Besides all its political implications, this meant that the struggle for the Maltese language, which was especially significant to the oppressed people who only spoke Maltese, was the quest for the writing of history for a ‘people’ and so, the liberation of the people. If language shapes group identities, including some and excluding others, while forming a central plank of a given culture, then it follows that language is capable of providing a key building block of political units, such as nations. Fynes Moryson, writing during the seventeenth century stated that, “in general all nations have thought nothing more powerful to unite minds than the Community of language” (Burke, Crowley & Girvin, 2000, p. 1).

After the mayhem of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in 1934 Maltese was recognised as an official language.³¹ After the islands’ independence in 1964 both English and Maltese were given official legal status; however, it was Maltese that became the national language of Malta (Constitution of Malta, 1964). Following independence, a new generation of writers and intellectuals led a cultural renewal with significant effects in the fields of literature, theatre, the visual arts and music.³²

³⁰ Chircop here quotes the Labour intellectual, John F. Marks’s article *Class Domination and the Language Question* (1931).

³¹ In the nineteenth century, philologists and academics such as Mikiel Anton Vassalli made a concerted effort to transcribe spoken Maltese in a comprehensible written form (Attard, 2002).

³² See Chapter 2 of Part 1 for further discussion of this.

Malta's traditional hierarchical models were challenged, and classical and romantic approaches were gradually dwindling. Cultural objectives were being articulated by young intellectuals and taken up for debate in the media. There was also a significant shift towards local production on television and radio. As there was still no official cultural policy at the beginning of the 1960s, responsibility for culture formed part of the portfolios of various Ministers, including those responsible for Education, Foreign Affairs and Justice (*Council of Europe*, 2012).

1.5 Conclusion

The Maltese Archipelago can be envisaged as a space for dialogue, in which diverse identities mingled into complete musical hybridization. Over the years, various influences have been at work, constantly moulding Malta's culture into what it is today. Be it language, religion or politics, the stimulation one gets and the inspiration one gathers throughout the years are consciously or unconsciously reflected in the artistic process. One can understand the culture of a people by immersing in the people's traditions and history. In this way past fuses with present. Empathy with the past influences me as a composer and resonates in my artistic work. The inspiration stemming from the architectural sophistication of old buildings and ancient sites has over the years developed a creative process of interdisciplinary discourse, the culmination of which are the artistic projects themselves that exist in our experience of idiom, time and place through referencing the limits of our own existence. Indeed, music (or any other art) cannot be considered an autonomous domain divorced from the historical forces that shape it (Samuels, 2003).

As a composer I am not only interested in my roots but also in their ongoing transformations. *Gaudos*, *Ġgantija 2013* and *Daria's Vision*³³ are directly linked with my interest in the historical, social and cultural framework of the Maltese Islands. These compositions explore the resonance of matter as a fundamental language in a search for a universal meaning. *Ġgantija 2013* aims at cutting across the boundaries of a place on a spatial level, responding to a site through the expansive set-up of its performers and also on a temporal level through its coeval and inclusive locution which spans millennia. *Gaudos* has then a contemplative character: it aims to portray the characteristics of the Island of Gozo. *Daria's Vision* demonstrates a complex relationship between the self and contemporary history and society. This composition is emblematic of a memory of a society that is demanding recognition of its human rights. More importantly, such projects contribute to a greater understanding of our identity and mark our relationship to tradition, making us reflect on who our ancestors were in order to understand who we are. These musical responses to the history of Malta are far from a marginal activity within the aim of understanding the marks that historical events left upon Maltese society, marks that are still visible today.

The symbiosis of sound and matter conveyed through interdisciplinary projects redefines the current meaning of collective ritual through a combined process of production. Inspiration is here associated with a search for an individual voice in an attempt to conjure up feelings of (for example) empathy, spirituality or an intense identification with the subject matter. In a contemporary medium I base my compositions on the question of territory and crossing borders. My interdisciplinary approach makes use of digital technology and video installation—the bases of two of my projects. Research remains an ongoing journey, developing as a trajectory from

³³ Refer to Part 2.

earlier research concerned with issues of territory and space. My composition interest brings together various aspects of questioning and processes combining new media practices. Concepts stem from the politicisation and geography of Malta characterised by the insularity that comes from being a small island nation. Yet at the same time, my works are contextually fluid and nomadic—open-ended, questioning journeys rather than closures. The works resist fixture and examine ‘territory’ through temporality and ‘viatorisation’³⁴ in terms of themes, materiality, personal experiences and artistic navigation.

The collapse of British Imperial domination led to the emergence of new nations. These were keen to promote their national culture and history and thus contribute to make cultural nationalism flourish. However, independence is not obtained in one day. A nation needs time to cut all the ties from the ex-ruling country and recognise its cultural traits, which are some of the ingredients that make it a nation, and form its society. It is a gradual process that takes shape over a period of time (Frendo, 1989).

Artists are all committed, to a greater or lesser extent, to their role at the centre of society, which enables them to affect social change. It then becomes a duty to respond to the most pressing issues of the time, including political issues (Bloom, 1973). The early 1960s, witnessing the new quest for Maltese independence, imparted a thirst for an ‘independent’ mentality, leaving space for artists to execute their artistic works, collaborate and compete at par with other artists hailing from different European countries. The twenty-first century has seen the rise of a group of Maltese artists who worked and are still working towards the intensification of this ‘new’ mentality in a

³⁴ ‘Viatorisation’ refers to travelling (from Latin, viator means traveller). This term actually offers an interesting starting point for discussing dynamic working processes where it is no longer possible to state where the work begins or ends. Forms manifest themselves during, as well as before and after the production (<http://youngarthistorians.blogspot.com/2009/05/altermodern.html>).

global perspective. The arts do not have the power to stop massacres, or prevent mankind backtracking from progress. However, they can be the voice of conscience.

Charles Camilleri (1931–2009):
A case study

2.1 Charles Camilleri



Plate 15 Charles Camilleri and his dog

Note. Reproduced from *Charles Camilleri: Portrait of a Composer* by J. Attard and E. Sapienza, 1998, p. 50

Both as a composer and educator, Charles Camilleri used to collaborate with various musicians and artists, including up-and-coming composers, the majority of whom were his students. As a university lecturer, he always tried to make students aware of the richness of our folklore and other traditions of non-western countries. As one of his students, I collaborated with him on a number of projects, all of which were highly inspirational and educational.

Many students, including myself, had all at some point or another, interacted with Camilleri either at university or during the various projects that he organised. In the late nineties and early 21st century, Camilleri was a key figure in the musical scene in Malta. His influence can still be seen in the works of a number of his students and the collaborative spirit that he left among young composers.

The fact that Charles Camilleri's adolescence and young adulthood coincide with the post-war cultural reconstruction of Malta is significant. The 1950s saw a wave of de-colonisation throughout the British Empire, and were witness to a shift to anti-colonialist feelings in the Mediterranean, with a chain of revolutions in North Africa (Mattick, 1959, pp. 16–19),³⁵ and a post-Fascist era starting in southern Europe. It is perhaps no coincidence then that these issues reached a Mediterranean island like Malta and would later culminate in sensitive political issues in the 1960s and 1970s, which have lasted to the present day.³⁶ Charles Camilleri was fascinated by Maltese folk music at a time when Malta was striving to attain a national identity and to assert a tradition of its own. Camilleri aligned his musical direction and image with that of the contemporary.³⁷ This interest in Maltese national heritage and folklore is essentially responsible for my output as an educator and composer. A number of my works and current practices are direct quotations from heritage landmarks and historical monuments. The workshops³⁸ at the newly inaugurated Ġgantija Temples Heritage Park for young students are an example of the inspiration that I find in Maltese culture.

In the Malta of the latter half of the twentieth century,³⁹ it was difficult to escape association with politics, religious issues and their consequences, yet Camilleri managed to maintain a stable position of prominence.⁴⁰ Naturally, he had to compete and collaborate with other artists both in Malta and in the various other countries in

³⁵ In Africa and Asia in the twentieth century, nationalist movements often arose in opposition to colonialism (Shafer, 1972).

³⁶ See Chapter 1 of Part 1 for further discussion of this.

³⁷ See Appendix 1.

³⁸ The workshops, held during the first week of November 2013, were targeted towards participants, aged between 9–12 years. Students built musical instruments inspired by Malta's prehistoric heritage and created and decorated their own terracotta sculptures and paintings using natural pigments. Another activity included music improvisation using various non-pitched and pitched percussion instruments.

³⁹ See Chapter 1 of Part 1 for further discussion of this.

⁴⁰ This will be further discussed in the subsequent sections.

which he worked. He also transcribed, arranged, and performed different genres of music, including jazz, and composed and conducted for the film industry.⁴¹

Talk to any musician thirty years ago, and it wouldn't be long before 'Charlie boy' came into the conversation. The archetypal networker, he had the greatest address book in town. Getting together wasn't easy, however. You needed a reason, and you had to book well in advance, particularly after he moved back to Malta in 1983. Visits to London were bustling, tightly scheduled affairs. A rapid hour at a fish restaurant, a Soho steak-house, a coffee shop, the Swiss Centre, pursuing a quick-fire agenda, was his style. Cursory courtesies, facts on the table, proposition, deal?... that's how he worked (Orga, 2010).

2.2 Early Influences

Charles Camilleri [see Plate 15–16] was born in Hamrun, Malta on September 7, 1931. His father was a semi-professional musician⁴² and his mother, of French origin, played the guitar. Charles Quinton, his grandfather, a Scotsman from Fife, was also a musician. Camilleri showed promise at an early age; when he was fourteen some of his marches for band were played at the local *festas*, and at sixteen a concert of his works was given.

Schoolboy Charles Camilleri, with the help of his friends, put up a very pleasant variety concert at the hall of the Lyceum, Hamrun, on Thursday night. The hall was packed with friends, well-wishers, school companions and his own teachers, and in the concluding words of one of the latter, "the school is very proud of young Charles" (Uncle P, 1948, p. 8)

⁴¹ See Section 2.2.

⁴² During WW2, his father travelled with Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) entertaining British Forces (C. Camilleri, personal communication, December 10, 2006).

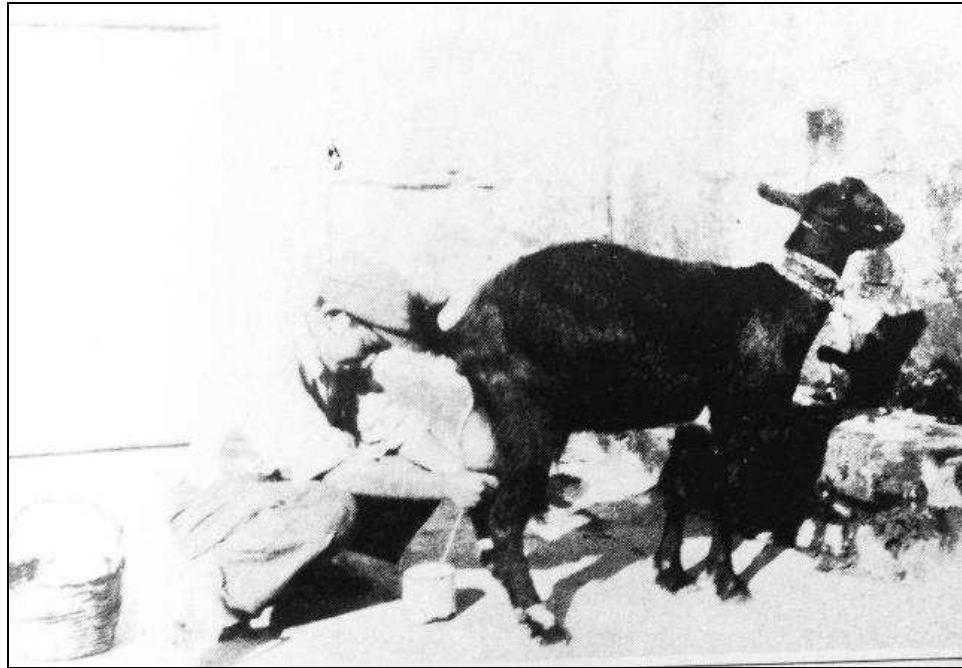


Plate 16 Charles Camilleri as a young man
As stated by Charles Camilleri: “My mother used to send me every morning to a nearby farm to collect goat’s milk—I remember listening to the peasants singing.”

Note. Reproduced from *Charles Camilleri: Portrait of a Composer*
by J. Attard and E. Sapienza, 1988, p.3

In the same year, Camilleri had the opportunity to visit London and managed to attend a Promenade Concert at the Royal Albert Hall. The programme included the first performance of Alan Rawsthorne’s Violin Concerto performed by Theo Olof with Sir Malcolm Sargent conducting (Fussell, 2004, p. 25). These early experiences must have boosted Camilleri’s artistic imagination so much that he decided to devote his life to music. Nevertheless, his parents objected to a musical career since they wanted him to read law. In 1949 at the age of 18, Charles together with his parents Carl and Josephine and sister Yvonne migrated to Australia. They settled in Sydney in the early 1950’s (Howard, 2009). It was only in Australia, at the age of nineteen, that Camilleri found himself in a position to devote his entire time to music, first as a student and then as a

teacher.⁴³ Teaching however, proved to have limitations and Camilleri chose instead to dedicate his energies to gaining experience as an accordionist, pianist, conductor and as a prolific composer of light classical and incidental music (England, 1974, p. 92).

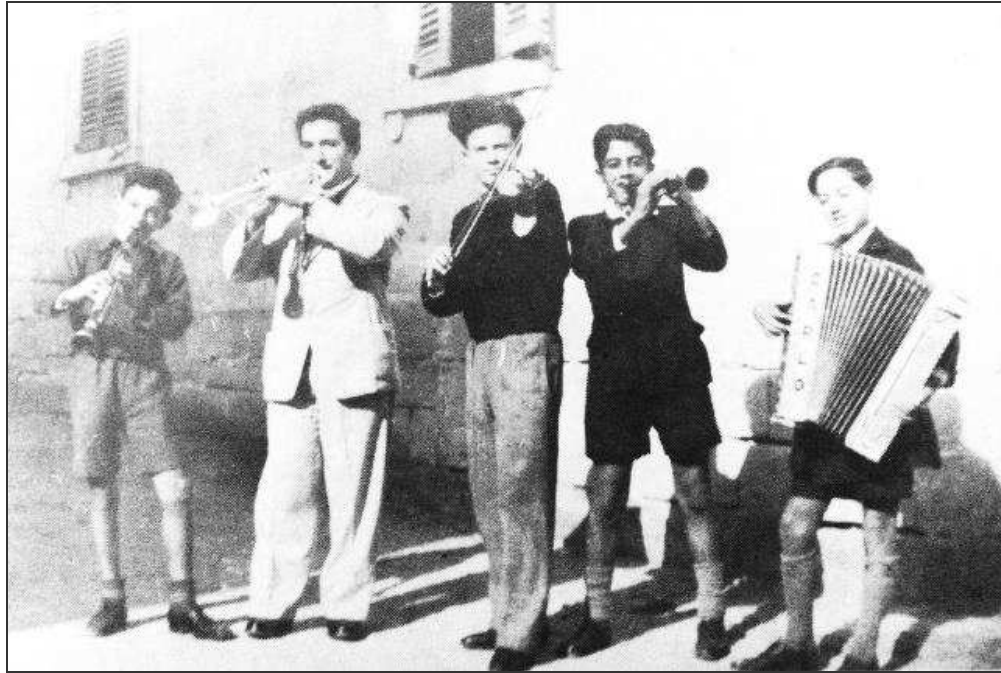


Plate 17 Charles Camilleri playing accordion at a young age (about 12 years old)
Photo taken during World War 2, circa 1943–1944

Note: Reproduced from *Charles Camilleri: Portrait of a Composer*
by J. Attard and E. Sapienza, 1988, p. 5

⁴³ His travels took him to Korea and Japan, and on his way to San Francisco, where he had been offered employment to write music for television, he passed through London, and rather than continuing on, he stayed there for five years (1954-9) before moving to Canada to join the CBC in Toronto. There he composed, arranged, and conducted a wide variety of light, incidental, and film music (C. Camilleri, personal communication, April 18, 2006).



Plate 18 Charles Camilleri with a group of accordionists

Note. Reproduced from the *Accordion Times and Modern Musician Magazine*,
February, 1955, front cover

The caption underneath the published photo reads:

Whilst appearing in Pantomime at Worthing, Charles Camilleri, the popular young Maltese accordionist, took time off to visit the West Worthing Accordion Group. Another visitor to the Group was Miss Gwenda Wilkin, who was appearing in a New Year Show at Brighton. Our photograph shows Camilleri with members of the Group in the well-known Music Shop of Mr Harold Walker (fourth from right) at Worthing.

Camilleri's virtuosity on the accordion attracted much attention [see Plates 17–19]. At a young age, he became the first accordionist to appear in concert at the Opera House in Malta, playing selections from *La Traviata* accompanied by a 40-piece orchestra (Howard, 2009). In 1958 he wrote *The Camilleri Complete Accordion Method*,

published by Francis, Day & Hunter Ltd. In 1960 he recorded an LP entitled *Spectacular Accordions*. Camilleri was present when Malcolm Gee organised his very first Autumn Accordion Festival, held at Pontins Sands Bay Holiday Camp in Somerset in November 1982.⁴⁴ He was the composer of the 1964 Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA) Coupe Mondiale⁴⁵ Test Piece *Danza Latina* and a year later, Camilleri was himself the organiser of the CIA Coupe Mondiale held in the Maltese capital city of Valletta. In 1972 Camilleri's contribution to the worldwide accordion movement was recognised with the CIA Merit Award (Howard, 2009).

Although Camilleri had a lifelong interest in films and film music, these did not form a major part of his artistic life. In 1957 Camilleri played the accordion in *Seven Thunders*, a war film starring Stephen Boyd, James Robertson Justice and Kathleen Harrison, and in 1987 he had an acting role as a musician in the film *High Tide*, starring Judy Davis (Howard, 2009) and also composed music for two films, including *The Castle of Fu Manchu*, produced by Harry Alan Towers, for which he was also the conductor, and *La casa de las mil muñecas* [House of a Thousand Dolls], produced by Louis M. Heyward (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0131802>).

Charles Camilleri was largely a self-taught composer, although he did briefly study with his father as well as Maltese composers Joseph Abela Scolaro, Paul Nani and Carmelo Pace. From 1977–78, whilst he was reading for his Bachelor of Music degree

⁴⁴ Malcolm Nicholas Gee, a pharmacist by profession, first developed his interest in the accordion whilst touring Australia and New Zealand in the mid 1970's. On his return to England he founded Club Accord, the first of many clubs of its kind, and became its chairman and later president. Gee's interest in the accordion was reflected by his many innovative enterprises. The club became affiliated to the National Accordion Organisation and hence focused him on the work of the CIA (Kemp, 1997).

⁴⁵ The Confederation Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA) aims to promote international excellence in the accordion world, amongst others by organising the yearly Coupe Mondiale competition.

in composition at the University of Toronto under the tuition of John Weinzweig⁴⁶, he taught composition to the undergraduates at the same university (C. Camilleri, personal communication, December 10, 2006).



Plate 19 Charles Camilleri on the Front Cover of *Accordion Times*

Note. Reproduced from the *Accordion Times and Modern Musician*, February, 1958, front cover

2.3 Camilleri and ‘Maltese’ music

The significance of Charles Camilleri’s music is its sensitivity to the aesthetic aspects of Maltese traditions. As in the case of all the other works of art in Malta, Charles

⁴⁶ John (Jacob) Weinzweig (b. March 11, 1913, Toronto, Ontario—d. August 24, 2006, Toronto, Ontario) was considered a pioneer in introducing contemporary techniques to classical music, and getting audiences to accept them. He is the composer of mostly stage, orchestral, chamber, choral, vocal, and piano works that have been performed throughout the world (Beckwith & Cherney, 2011).

Camilleri's music reflects the peculiarities of a country that was still struggling to evolve into a modern society and in which old cultural hegemonies still lingered and exerted their influence on Maltese cultural values. The past becomes submerged within what is an ever-evolving culture and in itself a multi-faceted kaleidoscope. This vision recalls what French historian Fernand Braudel (1923–1949) saw as identity: “the living result of what the interminable past has patiently deposited, layer by layer, just as the imperceptible sedimentation of the seabed in the end created the firm foundations of the earth's crust” (Braudel, 1986/1989, p. 23). According to Braudel, science, technology, political institutions, conceptual changes and civilisations all have their own rhythms of life and growth and these layers join into an integrated harmonious totality, similar to the perfectly symmetrical threads that make up a web.

Camilleri was sensitive to his Maltese surroundings and this was evident in his initial works. These works show stories of the past that have been part of Maltese history and of the Maltese people yet they have been presented in his own way. These stories are regenerated along the years and they recreate history. Camilleri was an integral part of this historical narrative that created a Maltese identity. He amended this narrative through his writing process whilst working within new contexts, always careful not to break the ties with the history of Malta and the everyday life of Maltese people.⁴⁷

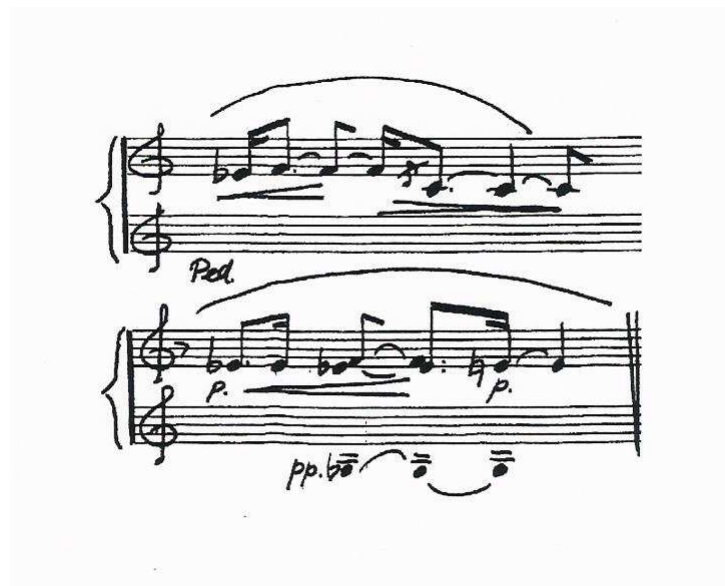
Camilleri approached the process of representation by re-inventing *his* idea of ‘a people’. Language⁴⁸ and history are two of the pillars that mark the Maltese people's identity. This identity is an integral element in Camilleri's music (with special reference to his initial works). This identity owes its existence to the people, because it is part of

⁴⁷ My work *Gaudos* can be an example of this historical narrative. The work aims to give a personal depiction of the Gozitan society via a contemporary idiom.

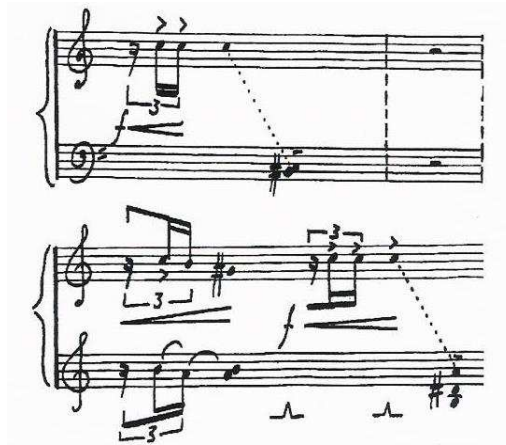
⁴⁸ See Chapter 1 of Part 1 for further discussion of this.

history while also looking beyond its own conscripted representation. This element of cultural identity, although still visible in the work of emerging composers, has somewhat diminished perhaps due to the effects of globalisation.

Works like *Kwadri Mużikali* [Musical Pictures] (c.1960) for piano solo, express Camilleri's characteristic beginning. Though it is not one of his first works but comes after Camilleri's initial explorations, *Kwadri Mużikali* evokes the street-calls of an early period in Malta. In this work Camilleri delves into earlier stages of society to convey the feelings of a people's way of life at the time, and is inspired by those street-calls used by street vendors in the years after WW2. This piece is characterised by rhythmic features and sound factors which suggest street cries, namely a) the call; b) fluid rhythmicity; c) fluidity on stability; and d) improvisation.



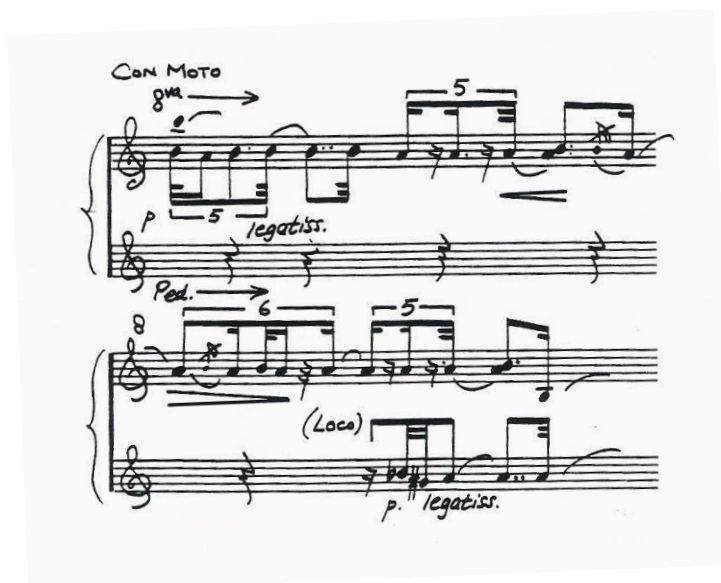
Example 1: *Kwadri mużikali* a) the call



Example 2: *Kwadri muzikali* b) fluid rhythmicity



Example 3: *Kwadri muzikali* c) fluidity on stability



Example 4: *Kwadri muzikali* d) improvisation

Camilleri's composition gives the impression that he was in the company of those invented narratives and sounds of the hawkers, singing in a 'question-command' declamation. In fact the element of the call is here characterised by modulations of intonation or pitch with glissando-like features (a feature much found in my repertoire—(a result of my frequent tutorials with the composer), changing the curvature of the melodic line as used by the street-sellers Camilleri used to hear. What is interesting in these examples is the mode used, reminiscent of non-Western styles. Indeed, the way Camilleri re-used the same notes is intriguing.

In Example 3, the right and left hands are quite regular rhythmically whilst the upper line contrasts with the two below for its irregularity and improvisation-like character, further depicted in Example 4. These examples induce a strong sense of rhythm in the frames of sounds and colours depicted in this street scene, which the work captures with its freshness and spontaneity. Camilleri aims to represent the daily ways of human life in Malta, conveying a particular meaning within those aesthetic nuances that form an identity.

Another notable example of Camilleri's early work is the *Malta Suite*, which uses original material written at the age of 15 (1947) on the island of Gozo. Its abundance of melodic material has roots in the traditional *ghana*, the indigenous native songs of the Maltese Islands and in the traditional local band marches.⁴⁹ The four movements attempt to capture the character and life-style of the Maltese people. The *Malta Suite* has an amount of 'verist' truth, which is organically conceived and strays away from the Italian matrices of *verism* much found in Puccini and Mascagni's

⁴⁹ See to Chapter 1 of Part 1 for further discussion of this.

music.⁵⁰ In this work, Camilleri's episodic '*verism*' is festive. Even in its representation of processions and other events, the celebration of the community is strongly felt within the atmospheric effect of the music. For instance, the opening of one of the movements, *Village Festa* resembles the opening of a Maltese *fešta* march, with different sections of the orchestra playing the melody or accompaniment in turn, the latter very similar to the accompaniment rhythms in many traditional marches, including those in Malta.

Malta Suite conforms to Camilleri's use of episodic pieces as the basic building block during this period of his output. The episode is meant to illustrate and ascribe an idyllic narrative to village life. The movements represent the episodes: the *Country Dance*, the *Waltz*, the *Nocturne*, and the *Village Festa*. Camilleri tries to capture an idealised representation of everyday life; a representation that is exempted from social contradictions. In its romantic idiom, the mood brings to mind Jean-François Millet's art representing village life and peasant scenes, yet these lack the strong comments of Gustave Courbet's realism. In the third movement, Camilleri aims to depict a tranquil atmosphere, which can be in some ways associated with Maltese summer afternoons; the quietness echoing through the scorching narrow streets or with the dramatic, yet peaceful atmosphere felt in Maltese religious funeral celebrations. It is a nineteenth-century romantic idiom, which is also vividly present in the writings of Camilleri's contemporaries. The inspiration of this music has led me to compose a number of works, including *Gaudos*, which aims to depict the Gozitan ways of life through a manifestation of their daily work and relaxation periods, which in turn are shaped by the Mediterranean climate.

⁵⁰ In music, *verismo* refers to a post-Romantic operatic tradition associated with Italian composers such as Pietro Mascagni, Ruggero Leoncavallo, Umberto Giordano and Giacomo Puccini. They sought to bring the naturalism of influential late nineteenth-century writers such as Emile Zola and Henrik Ibsen into opera (Stanley, 1980).

Marcelle Bartolo-Abela is a Maltese violin player born later in the same town as Camilleri. She affirms that people in Hamrun considered Camilleri's work the epitome of Maltese music. Contemporary Maltese authors Anton Buttigieg, Alfred Sant and George Zammit—Camilleri's peers—were all striving to represent the language of the Unjoni Haddiema Magħqudin (UHM, United Workers' Union) and Hamrun was the centre of this movement: the place where the UHM was founded along with a national trade union centre.⁵¹ Bartolo-Abela emphasised that Buttigieg, Sant, and Zammit together with artists from different spheres—art, poetry, literature and music, were trying to illustrate the Maltese way of life—all with political liberation in mind (M. Bartolo-Abela, personal communication, April 20, 2010) [see Plate 20].



Plate 20 Charles Camilleri with his architect friend Richard England, with whom he collaborated from the 1970s onwards. Camilleri composed England's Cantata *Stone Island Within...* and the song-cycle *This Holy Earth*.

Inspired by England's buildings, Camilleri also composed *Mimar* [the master builder] for piano and percussion.

Note. Reproduced from *Charles Camilleri: Portrait of a Composer* by J. Attard and E. Sapienza, 1988, p.78

⁵¹ The Unjoni Haddiema Magħqudin (UHM) was founded on the 29 September 1966. For further information refer to http://www.eurofedop.org/IMG/pdf/UHM_MT__en.pdf

For many, the *Malta Suite* and other traditional songs in the Maltese language were a representation and expression of the underlying dynamics of a nationalist movement (somehow felt again today through the irregular migration issues that Malta is currently facing and exhibited through my work *Daria's Vision*), the aim of which was to bring out the Maltese cultural identity and traditions that were always oral and hidden.⁵² These artistic works aimed to present a celebration of the life and struggles of working men and women, and at their best they moved way beyond simple hagiography. They may have not left any particular effect on the political propaganda of the time, but they had a hidden soul that celebrated life and the working class. This was in line with the philosophical ideas of the politics of the left and was reassuring to the usually enthusiastic audiences who listened to them. A case in point is former Prime Minister Dom Mintoff's request to Camilleri to contest the Maltese local elections stating that, with his esteemed position in society, his contesting the general election would be a boost for the party (C. Camilleri, personal communication, August 29, 2008). However, the relationship of the left with the arts in general is more complex.⁵³ Hence, folk song has not always been the possession of the political left. By and large, especially in mainland Europe, it has grown out of political nationalism, as was also the case in Malta.⁵⁴

From quite early in his career, Charles Camilleri's interest in the folk music of Malta led him to undertake a detailed ethnomusicological survey of Maltese music in its original and earliest forms, collecting and notating songs and dances from the most remote regions that were less affected by the infiltration of influences from Europe, or

⁵² See Chapter 1 of Part 1.

⁵³ For a brief but useful discussion of terms refer to Gammon, 2008, pp. 2–6.

⁵⁴ See Chapter 1 of Part 1 for further discussion of this.

by the invasion of tourists and popular urban music.⁵⁵ The transcription and collection of folk-dances and folk-songs is common among composers who see a valuable idiom in the traditional sounds of their country. This was a period when Camilleri fervently wanted to define a ‘Maltese sound’.

As a young admirer of Bartók, Camilleri looked for this ‘Maltese sound’ in folk song and dance. It is not surprising that commentators have described the initial phase of Camilleri’s work as being ‘nationalistic’. It is evident that within the conquered evolution of Maltese civil society, apart from being politically dubious, the tag ‘national identity’ is much of a misnomer, because the actual political context was not that of national identity, but of a quest for national autonomy, which sought to use ‘national identity’ as an idiom for its anti-colonial struggle.⁵⁶

Any genre needs to be anchored in a context, and the beginnings of Camilleri’s personal style began with an aesthetic appraisal of the musical context in which he was working. Camilleri’s early creative process initiated with an aesthetic appreciation of his country of origin. Soon these initial perceptions would develop and be part of an identity, presented here through a unique, yet universal language. Composers like Bartók, Aram Khachaturian and Camilleri have seen in folk music the strength of tradition. This tradition embodies a conceptual heritage, whose organic ties to everyday life become a focal point of musical vitality. In their appraisal of folk music these composers valorise the folk traditions as that music that has a direct influence on the nation’s cultural identity and whose significance belies any quest for narrowly defined nationalism. In their re-evaluation of folk music’s special importance they put music as a whole on a wider spectrum.

⁵⁵ See Appendix 1.

⁵⁶ See Chapter 1 of Part 1 for further discussion of this.

This period of research (from 1955 onwards) was to have a marked effect on Camilleri's subsequent development as a composer. It not only dictated some of the characteristic features of his music, but also the contours and nuances of compositions like the collections of *Maltese Dances* (1957)⁵⁷ and the symphonic poem *Malta* (first performed in June 1971) where Camilleri's own stylisation of the folk element replaced direct quotations of themes—his recreation of the sound-world of Maltese folk. This creates a type of nationalist statement that is underivative. These and other such works (for example the *Maltese Rhapsody* composed in 1963 for violin and orchestra) aim to capture what Camilleri describes as the “Maltese Soundscape”—his attempt to create the ‘Maltese Sound’.⁵⁸

Camilleri's early music is in fact light-hearted and highly optimistic. It is a reflection of the joyous and optimistic way of life associated generally with youths. It aims to enhance the colourful patterns of the people in an approachable and comprehensible way. In the Maltese context—strongly marked by a lack of education and insular conservative culture⁵⁹—Camilleri made way for a kind of conceptual realism, a realism that is not specifically tied to a political observation of civil society, or history, but an ‘academic’ form of grasping reality within concepts of forms.

An example of another work from this period is the *Sonatina Folkloristika* (1961) for solo clarinet. The first movement, *Children's Playground*, tries to represent the essence of children at play. This movement is simplistic in nature and has more or less a joking quality. It is reminiscent of the simplicity found in Maltese children's songs [see Example 5].

⁵⁷ Reworked for a large orchestra in 1969.

⁵⁸ See Appendix 1.

⁵⁹ See Chapter 1 of Part 1 for further discussion of this.

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Piz-zi Piz-zi kan-na Do - lo-res ta' Sant' An-na Sant' An-na tal-mo - ri-na Qat-ghet bic-ca Pel-leg
ri - na Mghar-fa tal - fid - da ban - die-ra tal-ha - rir No - li kan - no - li, In -
sa - ra qad - di - sin. Ep - pej - pi - ja Ep - pej - pa Be-lgha kax - xa gig - gi - fa`

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The musical score consists of three systems of three staves each. The first system (measures 74-76) includes lyrics. The second system (measures 76-78) includes lyrics and some notes marked with 'x'. The third system (measures 78-80) includes notes marked with 'x'.

Example 5: *Pizzi Pizzi Kanna*⁶⁰

The second movement, *Cantilena*, is a lyrical movement with a few ornamented sections. The Harvard Dictionary of Music (2003) defines cantilena as “a vocal (or instrumental) melody of a lyrical rather than a dramatic or virtuosic nature”, and this movement easily fits this definition. It displays what Camilleri refers to as “implied mysticism”.⁶¹ The slow, almost mystical introduction is especially reminiscent of this practice. With a slow lyrical melody above a subtle accompaniment typical of sixteenth-century *musica da camera*, my work *Colpi d’Armonia* also falls under this reference. Camilleri’s final movement is a *Tarantella*. There is a legend that the tarantella was a dance that was believed to cure the poisonous bite of the tarantula spider. This tarantella however, is more likely named for Taranto, a city in southern Italy, all the more likely given Malta’s close proximity to that country.

⁶⁰ This example of Maltese folk music makes use of quartertones, notated at measure 97.

⁶¹ A simple melody and rhythm, which evokes a sense of mystic drama (Steiner, 1930).

In an interview with Ms. Angela Fussell (2004) for the magazine *Clarinet and Saxophone*, Fussell commented that Camilleri's attraction to the clarinet was related to the world of jazz, a musical genre that always fascinated him and in which he saw countless possibilities for his compositions. Camilleri's attraction to jazz most likely began during his years of travel as a jazz pianist before moving to London. The rhythmic pulse of jazz and its freedom of improvisation offered Camilleri some of the stimulus he needed to develop his own theories. Due to the improvisatory quality of Maltese *ghana* and other non-Western folk music, Camilleri created a way to capture this improvisatory feel of the countries' folk music through the 'atomisation of the beat'. Camilleri himself defines this concept as a term indicating that the unit or beat is to be divided into small units of rational/irrational subdivisions, which result in a feeling of improvisation (Camilleri, 1980, p. 9). In the atomisation of the beat, what he in fact achieves is a broad sense of medieval *tactus*⁶² in which metric structure can vary independently of the subsequently imposed bar lines of European Western music.

Atomisation of the beat gave Camilleri freedom of expression within a planned order. It allowed his music to imply a feeling of timelessness and freedom, as well as a sense of the mysticism introduced to him while studying French philosopher and Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

Order exists in chaos—everything is presented to us in chaos.
The artist does not impose order on chaos but rather
discovers the order already present in that chaos.⁶³

The micro-detail is at liberty, the macro-structure is not.⁶⁴

⁶² Term used in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to designate a specified 'beat', either a unit of time, or the conductor's beat. For a considerable period, the *tactus* was the equivalent of the whole note (Bourne and Kennedy 1996).

⁶³ Camilleri, 1999, p.10.

⁶⁴ Orga, 1987, p.33.

Such statements on freedom of musical expression and structure confirm that several of Camilleri's compositional procedures were based on improvisation. The composer was intrigued by the idea that an improvisation's apparent irrationality could uncover underlying order in nature. As in my work *Ġgantija 2013*, this often takes the form of a picture of sound interactions between different timbres and sound-components.

As Camilleri states, the beat in jazz, whether in a regular time signature or not, tonal or atonal, is a beat that is at once silent but present, compelling but stable, sophisticated but primitive, yet one that generates a drive that is unlike that found in any other type of music. He stresses the fact that, in quite a different way, we may compare jazz music to the music of Africa and the Far East, making reference to the fact that it is not unusual in the music of these areas to find a drummer beating time while a voice or instrument improvises to it. Similarly, a jazz player may improvise freely while the beat is maintained by a rhythm section (Camilleri, 1974, p. 33).

After the war, Camilleri listened to many jazz clarinet players such as Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw and a small band led by Sid Philips. He also states that he was very much encouraged and influenced by Jack Brymer, for whom he wrote his *Divertimento no. 2* for clarinet and piano [written in 1957 and published in 1973] (G. Mifsud, personal communication, July 2012). It was Brymer who, with funds made available from the British Arts Council, later commissioned Camilleri to write a *Concertino for clarinet and string orchestra* [1961–1962] (Fussell, 2004, p. 25). These works are not the first of his clarinet pieces written in the jazz idiom. His *American Portraits* (1968, revised in 1998) for clarinet and bass clarinet also uses elements of jazz with a movement entitled *Miles of Silence*, a tribute to Miles Davis. In this work, Camilleri makes use of repeated pitch and at other times, uses as many as eighteen subsequent pitches put together in a chromatic arrangement. The movement is

symmetrical with a truncated version of the motive repeated as a driving force to the end. In his paper entitled *Jazz & Serious Music* (1974), the composer states that during a conversation with Stockhausen in Japan, the latter declared that he usually played jazz on the piano but found this genre rather limiting.

As with many nationalistic composers, Charles Camilleri was able to fulfil not just artistic but also social goals that were a focus at the time. Like eighteenth-century philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder (1784–1791), Camilleri claimed that every people has their own unique musical style, including folk music, that stems innately from that people's national character (the spirit of the people). However, the incorporation of folk material into art music by no means summarises the phenomenon of nationalistic music. Also, Camilleri wanted to demonstrate that there are so many more themes beyond just folk tunes that define the interaction of nationalism with this art form: the need to educate the populace, the goal of establishing cultural boundaries and the aspiration to international prestige.

In *ghana*⁶⁵ a particular melody is associated with a mood (for example a 'lament'). This serves only as a musical structure upon which the extemporised lyrics (varying from contemporary events in everyday life to epic and historical legends) contextualise the song depending on the occasion. Hence, in Camilleri's folk-inspired initial works, there is an entrenchment of traditional folk music in its formal dimensions, which offers the composer a strong point for cultural identification in his music.

Camilleri's method of composition is best shown in his five-volume manuals on *Piano Improvisation* (1983–1989). In these student textbooks Camilleri shows how he uses a frame of notes to develop an improvised structure of rhythm and sound. Like street calls within musical frames, these notes are organised in patterns of sound that

⁶⁵ See Chapter 1 of Part 1 for further discussion of this.

interact with the rhythms of language. The composer states that as speech comes before the written word, so improvisation comes before getting to grips with the skills of music (Camilleri, 1989, Vol. 5, p. 3). The composition process through which *Ġgantija 2013* was developed, follows this praxis. It even allows musicians to improvise at certain points throughout the piece. This makes a fluid work that gives ample space for originality where the visual and the auditory become one unified progression.

In *Piano Improvisation* Vol. 5, Camilleri develops a structural progression of methodical improvisation where an initial group of sounds suggest a picture, which is enhanced by colour and volume. In the chapter on *[T]he transformation of a Melody*' (Camilleri, 1989, p. 10), he explains how improvisation evolves in a melody, and as it becomes more chromatic, it begins to explore the various aspects of atonality [see Example 6].



Example 6: From *Piano Improvisation* (Vol. 5), p. 3

One way in which our imagination may be stimulated is by the transformation of a melody into another melody, yet retaining some of its original shape. This is generally achieved by altering the intervals between the notes at the same time retaining the original value of the notes. (...) As the melody becomes more chromatic it will start to sound atonal—‘the more chromatic the more atonal’ (Camilleri, 1989, Vol. 5, p. 10).

2.4 Widening the Outlook

Charles Camilleri's decision to move to Canada (1960–63) led to a broadening of his outlook. While in Canada, he had contacts with Stravinsky, Stockhausen and others. This inspired him to experiment with other styles and move away from the more overt nationalism of his early works (C. Camilleri, personal communication, April 18, 2006).⁶⁶ In the 1960s, Camilleri's interest in folk music expanded to Asiatic and African regions. Camilleri explored what makes modal music more expansive and spacious than Western 'scallic tonality'—the use of quarter notes and improvisation in an 'organised' system. His search for the modal possibilities that represent—in our scallic language—a range of intermediary possibilities that break the rational tone-semitone grid, gave him insight into quarter and micro-tones, and a strong appreciation for their presence in non-European music.

His *Little African Suite* (1971) for piano and the *Three African Sketches* (1974) are pioneering works of this important phase of the composer's life. Both works utilised direct quotation and parody of non-Western music from the African continent (Congo, Chad and Ethiopia). In these pieces, Camilleri's exploration of modal patterns and rhythm reaches new dimensions. The results are, predictably, more purely linear in concept and less dependent on traditional harmonic schemes. Rhythms often employ unusual and irregular metres, the combination of tempi within a pulse, polyrhythms, and alternating rhythmic ideas: ostinati abound.

His *African Suite* marks roughly the dividing line between his early and later styles. Each of these five short pieces is based on or inspired by fragments of African

⁶⁶ One should point out that Camilleri's earlier works were not all nationalistic in style. He wrote several works in other contemporary styles, e.g. some of the piano works are influenced by Bartók and Prokofiev.

folk music: the writing is more linear in design, the harmony sparer and more purely functional, and the rhythms more lissom and supple. In the fifth piece, *African Wedding Dance*, the left-hand rhythms are derived from drum-sequences and the right-hand melody from Tanganyikan (United Republic of Tanzania) and Ugandan folk-sources (Palmer, 1972, p. 664).⁶⁷

Though not himself a pianist, Charles Camilleri's compositions for piano are vast and of importance as these show the stylistic and musical language of the composer throughout his creative life. Camilleri's musical output can be divided into three main periods, each of which coincidentally, contains a piano concerto. The titles illustrate his progression: the first, written in his teens in 1948, is the *Mediterranean* (revised in 1978); the second, premiered at the Expo in Japan in 1970, is called *Maqam* (1967)⁶⁸—an Arabic form of improvisation; and the third concerto *Leningrad* (1986) is abstract in concept.

In the framework of Camilleri's influence from Arabic modal consciousness, *Mediterranean Concerto*'s theme is intensely melismatic. Its narrative carries the concept of a call peculiar to the *muezzin*'s call for prayer in the Islamic world. In the Adagio section, the pattern of a call on the horn is induced in an orchestral motif whose characteristic recalls a Christian *graduale*. In *Brass Quintet* (1982), a similar melismatic motif is assigned to the horn, amidst an aggressive and notably asymmetrical '*come improvisazione*'. A similar technique is characteristic of the *Concerto for Violin* (1961, revised in 1991) and is also found in other works like the *Six Arabesques for solo Cello* (2000), with a *Lamentoso* in *Arabesque no. 2* and a *Lento* in *Arabesque no. 3*.

⁶⁷ Camilleri's own *Orpheus Contemporaneus* for jazz band and symphony orchestra is an attempt to fuse the two disciplines in the manner of similar ventures by Dankworth and Laurie Johnson.

⁶⁸ See page p. 77 for further discussion of this.

Camilleri's instrumentation of the first Piano Concerto is as follows⁶⁹:

Flute I/Piccolo
Flute II
Oboe I and II
Clarinet I and II (in Bb)
Bassoon I and II
Horn I and II (in F)
Trumpet I and II (in Bb)
Trombone
Timpani
Snare Drum
Tambourine
Triangle
Tenor Drum
Cymbals
Tubular Bells
Castanets
Tam-tam
Bass Drum
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass
Pianoforte

The first movement is set in the traditional but modified sonata form divided into three clearly defined sections:

- First Theme and Second Theme
- Development and Recapitulation
- Coda

⁶⁹ Score is in concert pitch

Part 1: measures 1–204 Exposition

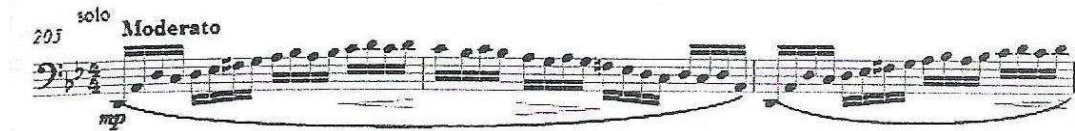
I Charles Camilleri

Allegro Moderato

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. The woodwinds (Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons) and strings (Violins, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass) have melodic lines starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment with a *mp* dynamic. The percussion and timpani parts are mostly silent in the first five measures. The tempo is marked **Allegro Moderato**. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 2/4. The score includes performance instructions such as *p*, *mp*, and *div.* (divisi).

Example 7: The Opening bars
Start of exposition (Part 1)

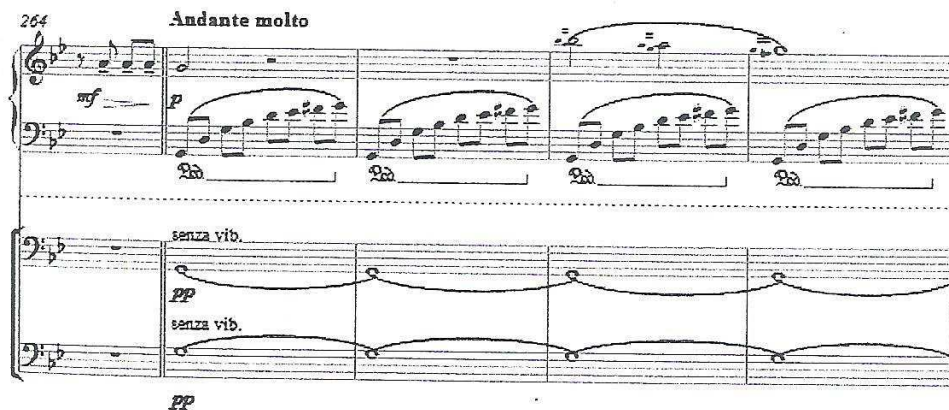
Part 2: measures 205–290 development including cadenza from measures 251–264, and a recapitulation in slower tempo from measures 265–290.



Example 8: Piano solo part
Opening Part 2



Example 9: Start of cadenza



Example 10: Start of recapitulation (Andante molto)

Part 3: measures 291–end Coda

291 **Allegro**

mp

mp

a2

a2

I

p

(tr)

loco

Allegro

Example 11: The opening bars of the coda

The first part contains the basis of the whole movement and is built on a series of small phrases consisting of scalar and modal step-wise figures in G minor. Though the movement may seem to be divided into five sections the form is basically tripartite. Rhythmically it is also very regular, possessing none of the complex figures prevalent in some of Camilleri's later compositions such as the second and third piano concertos.

There is no hint of an orchestral exposition such as in classical styled concertos but the piano opens the work directly with the main theme, answered a few bars later by the orchestra. The first part, measures 1–204 is the exposition of the movement, but Camilleri does not treat it exactly as a classic type of exposition because it ends on the tonic and not on the customary dominant. The main theme recurs eight times throughout the whole of the exposition. The second theme appears in measure 55 after the 3rd entry of the main theme followed by another subordinate theme in measure 73. These themes are repeated in the recapitulation of the exposition, which starts at measure 170.

Even though Camilleri revised the work thirty years later, he left much of the original piano part intact; this contains many passages where right and left hands play in octaves based on simple motivic passages, a concept often seen in Camilleri's music. As in his *Three Visions for an Imaginary Dancer* (1968) for solo clarinet, each movement has a distinct motive, each longer than the one preceding it, which is developed through deviation rather than variations, in that the individual pitches of the motive are frequently changed, creating a continuously progressing musical work. The improvisatory tradition in Maltese folk performance aided Camilleri in stretching his creativity and drawing out endless ideas for motivic development. Appendix 3 shows how Camilleri can develop a number of different variations using only three notes. This

example displays Camilleri's concept of 'atomisation of the beat'⁷⁰ as well. One reason for Camilleri's use of motifs is the inspiration he found in the rubble walls of Malta.⁷¹

Camilleri's thematic material is essentially different from traditional folk in that:

1. it is conceived by a composer who had a background in twentieth-century compositional techniques, and
2. it is intended to be performed for an audience who are western-classical oriented.

Camilleri clearly understood that for a piece of music to carry the essence and richness of pure folk music, it is the preservation of the thematic material, and the social qualities of performance expression, rather than the actual quoting of a 'peasant tune', which qualify the music to be called folk-inspired. While the social qualities of a performance cannot be successfully replicated, the composer attempts to achieve the impression of improvisation by adopting the 'atomisation of the beat' technique, and re-interpreting the same thematic material himself.

The brisk character of the *Mediterranean* Piano Concerto is asserted from the very first instances in the piano passages. It portrays a young composer who is trying to create different structural blocks and a different piano sonority from the one he was accustomed to. The whole of the first movement is constructed on small phrases that are at times repeated at the octave or embellished.

The opening gesture is built on a 2+2+3 phrase structure in the key of G minor, played by the piano and answered in the same fashion by an orchestral tutti. The piano plays two transitional phrases; the second of which is a repetition of the first at an octave lower, and is again replied by the same orchestral tutti affirming the main mood

⁷⁰ Refer to p. 58.

⁷¹ See Appendix 1.

of the movement. At measure 26 an embellished descending G minor melodic scale is accompanied by the woodwind unisons with a repetition an octave lower by the soloist, this time with a small melodic fragment on the horn, part of which will be later used in the opening of the second movement again by the horn.

The second part, marked *Moderato*, introduces the listener to the *Cantilena* theme, with its undulating figures in the left hand of the piano, reminiscent of the nineteenth-century romantic piano music. However, this *Cantilena* theme is strictly used in context with the harmonic palette of the concerto, without any transitions and modulations in different keys or modes. Here the composer might have chosen to portray the simple *Cantilena*, which is based on two chords (tonic and dominant), without adding any unnecessary flourishes. This part moves on to the *Cadenza*, which is a blend of the materials found in the first two parts.

In the part that follows, the composer restates the slow sound of the *Cantilena*. Here Camilleri briefly shifts to other tonal points, which are still closely related to the original tonality. In this instance, tension escalates, moving to the last part of the movement, which is a recapitulation. This tension is created by the prolongation on a dominant pedal point from measures 284 to 289, which climaxes with the last entry of the main theme in the tonic, bringing the movement to an end.

The second movement possesses the tonal quality and structural layout of music of Camilleri's later oeuvre. This is the first example of a pattern that can be traced in several of the composer's later works—where a solo instrument uses the call or lament motif as an introduction to a movement. In the same way the second movement of the *Mediterranean Concerto* commences with this typical instrumental solo on the horn based on figures coming from the two *Cantilena* passages of the previous movement. It

is based on the tetra-chord: G, A, Bb, C derived from the original scale employed. This movement is based on the following layout:

Introduction

Musical score for Horn in F (I) Introduction. The score is in 3/4 time and F major. It begins with the tempo marking *Solo ad lib. (Molto Andante)*. The first measure starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a *lontano* marking. The melody consists of eighth notes, with a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure. The notes are G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4.

Example 12: Introduction horn solo

Part 1 measures 1–12

Musical score for Part 1 measures 1–12. The score is in 3/4 time and F major. It begins with the tempo marking *Adagio*. The score includes staves for Piano, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The Piano part starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a *Solo ad lib.* marking. The Violin I part starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *div.* marking. The Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass parts all start with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 13: Start of Part 1 (measures 1–3)

Part 2 measures 13–40

Musical score for Part 2 measures 13–40. The score is in 3/4 time and F major. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score includes staves for Piano and Violoncello. The Piano part features complex rhythmic patterns with slurs and accents. The Violoncello part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 14: Start of Part 2

Part 3 measures 41–end

Example 15: Start of Part 3 (measures 41–33)

The first part introduces the responsorial⁷² concept. The first instance of this idea occurs in measures 1–3 on the strings; this is followed by a quasi-improvisatory passage on the piano. This statement-answer alteration happens three times, and within every entry on the strings an expansion of a bar occurs. The improvisatory embellishment of the soloist provides the basis of the following section.

This movement in fact has a dual function:

1. To act as the slow movement as in the Classical repertoire.

⁷² Responsorial singing refers to a chanted or read verse of scripture, usually a psalm, read or sung by a cantor with the choir or congregation singing in response.

2. To act, together with the 3rd movement, as the introductory movement of a two movement work found in the *Taqsim-Maqam*⁷³ tradition.⁷⁴

An important feature found in this concerto with special reference to this movement is the rhythmic figurations of the soloist. This was further developed in the composer's later output and in his theory of 'atomisation of the beat'.⁷⁵ The writing in this movement follows the principle of the *Taqsim* because of the quasi-improvisatory gestures of the soloist and the fact that there is no bar-line setting the demarcation of a beat, giving a sense of timelessness and stillness. This is made even more evident by the fact that there are no modulations, not even when the string section accompanies the soloist. The chords employed always form part of the melodic minor mode G. At first the piano plays octave unisons but, as the strings enter, the texture of the piano changes to quasi-Ravelian ostinatos in the left-hand with fluid gestures in the right.

The third movement is characterised by the alteration of compound and simple duple metre and, though it does not differ substantially in its harmonic language from the previous movements, it is built on the melodic minor key B flat. The rise in the tonic and the interchange of simple and compound duple metres gives a new dimension to the work. The last part of the concerto takes the listener through a journey influenced yet again by traditional folk music such as the Southern Italian Tarantella. The movement is divided into 3 consistent segments:

⁷³ The Arabic word *Taqsim* means divisions, but in the musical language of the Afro-Arabic world it means structure or form parallel to the western 'prelude' and it usually anticipated the *Maqam*. The music is usually rhapsodic in form and improvisatory in nature based on a few notes or modes which would recur in the following movement or *Maqam*.

⁷⁴ Refer to p. 77.

⁷⁵ Refer to pp. 58 and 69.

Part 1 measures 1–171

III

The image displays a page of a musical score for Part 1, measures 1-5. The score is for a full orchestra and includes the following instruments and parts:

- Flute I [Piccolo]
- Flute II
- Oboe
- Clarinet in Bb
- Bassoon
- Horn in F
- Trumpet in Bb
- Trombone
- Timpani
- Percussion (S.D., Tamb.)
- Piano
- Violin 1 (div. *f*)
- Violin 2 (div. *f*)
- Viola (div. *f*)
- Violoncello (pizz. *f*)
- Contrabass (pizz. *f*)

The score is written in a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 6/8 time signature. The music begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The woodwinds and strings play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the piano provides a harmonic accompaniment. The percussion includes snare drum (S.D.) and tambourine (Tamb.). The score is marked with a Roman numeral 'III' at the top center.

Example 16: Start of Part 1 (measures 1–5)

Part 2 measures 172–196

The image displays a page of a musical score for Part 2, measures 172–196. The tempo is marked "Andante con moto". The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with the following parts from top to bottom:

- Fl. I / Picc. (Flute I / Piccolo)
- Fl. II (Flute II)
- Ob. (Oboe)
- Cl. (Clarinet)
- Bsn. (Bassoon)
- Hn. (Horn)
- Tpt. (Trumpet)
- Tbn. (Tuba)
- Timp. (Timpani)
- Perc. (Percussion)
- Pno. (Piano)
- Vln. 1 (Violin I)
- Vln. 2 (Violin II)
- Vla. (Viola)
- Vc. (Violoncello)
- Cb. (Contrabass)

Measure 172 is the starting point of the excerpt. The score includes various dynamics such as *mf* (mezzo-forte), *f* (forte), and *ff* (fortissimo). The piano part features a prominent eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more active bass line. The woodwinds and brass parts provide harmonic support and rhythmic texture. The string section plays a steady accompaniment, with the cellos and double basses marked *sfz* (sforzando).

Example 17: Part 2 (measures 172–174)

Part 3 measures 197–end

The image displays a page of a musical score for Part 3, measures 197 through the end. The score is for a full orchestra and piano. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 6/8. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Flutes (Fl. I and II) and Piccolo:** Fl. I and II play a melodic line with eighth notes. Piccolo has rests.
- Oboe (Ob.):** Plays a melodic line with eighth notes and some slurs.
- Clarinet (Cl.):** Plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked *mf*. Includes a first ending bracket labeled 'I'.
- Bassoon (Bsn.):** Plays a melodic line with eighth notes, marked *sub.p*.
- Horn (Hn.):** Plays a melodic line with eighth notes, marked *p*. Includes a first ending bracket labeled 'I'.
- Trumpet (Tpt.):** Plays a melodic line with eighth notes, marked *p*.
- Trombone (Tbn.):** Plays a melodic line with eighth notes, marked *p*.
- Percussion (Perc.):** Shows a drum set icon and rests.
- Piano (Pno.):** Plays a complex accompaniment with chords and eighth notes, marked *mf*.
- Violin I (Vln. I):** Plays a melodic line with eighth notes, marked *sub.p*.
- Violin II (Vln. II):** Plays a melodic line with eighth notes, marked *sub.p*. Includes a 'div.' (divisi) marking.
- Viola (Vla.):** Plays a melodic line with eighth notes, marked *sub.p*.
- Violoncello (Vc.):** Plays a melodic line with eighth notes, marked *sub.p*.
- Double Bass (Cb.):** Plays a melodic line with eighth notes, marked *sub.p*.

Example 18: Start of Part 3 (measures 197–202)

The very first few measures of the movement are constructed on 2+2+2 sequential phrases in compound duple metre answered sequentially by another 2+2+2 containing 16th notes in simple duple metre. This simple structural pattern lays the foundations for the whole movement, in which small rhythmic and melodic cells are assembled, similar to the composer's associations with the rubble wall structure.⁷⁶

Though written in the key of Bb minor melodic the movement gives the impression of being modal rather than tonal. This is due to the fact that the composer employs the note F as the tonal centre rather than Bb. The second section, labelled *Andante con moto*, is in a way, a return to the static cantilena mood prevailing in the middle section of the first movement and the whole of the second movement. This kind of writing emerges in nearly all of the composer's first nationalistic period—arpeggiated progression of modal chords accompanying a small motive repeated sequentially or transposed. The last segment of the movement is a return to the opening interplay of metres. A short cadential embellishment followed by a brief episode reminiscent of the middle *Andante* part and a short coda brings the concerto to an end.

Camilleri's interest in non-Western philosophies inspired him to compose a second Piano Concerto, entitled *Maqam* (1967–1968), which is derived from the Arabic term '*maqamat*' (short melodic motifs serving as bases for improvisation). *Maqam* is an interesting example of a pseudo-improvisatory musical work. This Piano Concerto represents Camilleri's definite break from his early artistic inclinations. *Maqam* falls into a number of sections (including three semi-accompanied cadenzas), though the argument is continuous; new material is constantly being introduced, but each section is also concerned with not losing sight of the old.

⁷⁶ Refer to p. 69 and Appendix 1.

As found in *maqams*, the motif is introduced and recurs seemingly at random, not for a long time after its initial appearance, but in a barely recognisable permutation or variation. This direct simplicity and clarity of intention, which appears even through what seems to be the most complex of musical structures, is one of the most impressive characteristics of the composer. This is apparent in both his other piano works—*Mantra* (1969) and *Taqsim* (1967)—and his major organ work *Missa Mundi* (1972). The cycle of *Four Ragamats* for solo piano belongs very clearly to this phase. Written between 1967 and 1970 they bear dedications respectively to the French musicologist of North Indian music Alain Daniélou, the Maltese philosopher and Camilleri's friend Peter Serracino Inglott, the Danish composer Vagn Holmboe, and the Canadian composer John Weizweig (Camilleri's tutor). Richard Deering premiered *Four Ragamats* on the 5th November 1976 at the Wigmore Hall, London (Camilleri premiere, 1976/77, pp. 22–26).

In a prefatory note, Camilleri points out that none of the *Ragamats* is in a specific tonality in the diatonic sense of the term, but that they do nonetheless have a basic orientation around D minor, F, B flat and E flat respectively. The connotations of these keys are, however, far from explicitly realised in the music, and it is only really at the end of the fourth piece that E flat major becomes at all firmly established as a definite key centre. Camilleri has also pointed out that the four movements (*Tempo Libero*, *No tempo indication*, *Space Time and Libero*) may be related to various times of the day. Moreover, there can be no doubt that for all their attempts to fuse within themselves the philosophy of various different cultures, they do owe a very tangible debt to aspects of both Indian and non-Western music.

The title itself is an obvious indication of this: *ragamat* is compound of Indian *raga* and eastern *màqamàt* (Camilleri premiere, 1976/77, pp. 22–26). What this means

in musical terms is a fusion of melodic types (*ragas*) with the ancient primary modes (*màqamàts*) of Arabic theory. Key to all this is Camilleri's concept of rhythm as something fluid and flexible, drawing on models such as ancient Greek poetic metre and medieval Indian rhythms, while disregarding rigid, repetitive structures. In such an inherently fragmentary style, unity and points of reference are principally achieved through the deployment of rhythmic metre and rhythmic cells, manipulating them by augmentation and diminution. In fact, rhythmic metre might well be seen as the driving force of Camilleri's art, and certainly it is one of the major elements distinguishing his works.

The orchestra develops this material, at times interrupted by the piano. All this leads to a piano cadenza that develops the previous ideas. Other exchanges between the piano and tutti lead to a dialogue between unison strings and piano in octaves, in a 3+3+2 metre. This is characteristic of several scherzo sections, usually forming part of larger movements within Camilleri's later works. The beat is atomised, and the material highly chromatic, largely within a restricted range. Later on woodwinds also enter, creating a three-part texture.

Slow chords and reminiscences of the first part lead to a second piano cadenza, making use of a wider range of virtuosic techniques than the previous cadenza. A tutti passage, the main climax of the concerto, with woodwinds, strings and piano goes around the material derived from the previous scherzo section, bringing about a tumult of polyrhythmic heterophony. Suddenly, percussion interrupts all this, and a few sharp chords lead to the contemplative core of the work, a *lento* passage. The opening clarinet melisma returns, followed by a series of soft dissonances on the piano solo. The third idea of this section is an oboe motif, answered by flute, and accompanied by another softly dissonant chord on strings. These ideas alternate, until a solo string quartet enters.

Above this the piano enters with *lontano* xylophone-like sounds. All this portrays a feeling of serenity. A short cadenza follows the soloist, with a brief interruption on the strings. This leads to the last part of the concerto: a rhythmic *Allegro moderato* based mainly on the drum-like piano idea from the beginning of the work, ending on an abrupt final cadence. In summary, *Maqam* is a three-movement work: a first movement that exhibits the characteristics of an introduction, exposition and developed restatements, together with a scherzo-like section; a slow movement; and a final movement.

Maqam has great significance in Camilleri's entire repertoire. In *Maqam*, rhythm is the real protagonist, the invention of atonal pictures complement the rhythm in a totality of non-symmetry, where essentialistic moods exert a considerable influence. This work denotes a break with the episodic and with the figurative. It internalises realism behind the early phases of his repertoire and groups together popular and folk music in a modal archetype which in turn, evolved into the universalisation of that local knowledge that initially drove Camilleri through the paths of contemporaneity.

As a composer he collaborated with various musicians from different countries, presenting his music to various audiences in a number of artistic events. One of the musicians with whom Camilleri collaborated was flautist Laura Falzon. This long-time collaboration and friendship resulted in a number of compositions for flute.⁷⁷ Amongst these is *Fractals*, composed in 1993, for flute solo. In the early 1990's, Camilleri was intrigued by the mathematical concept of Fractals coupled with the theory of Chaos. He often discussed these mathematical and philosophical concepts with philosopher and artist John Baldacchino vis-à-vis James Gleick's book on Chaos theory that had just been published. The title *Fractals* is not coincidental but it was the starting point of the

⁷⁷ Charles Camilleri, together with the flautist worked on this work in 1992 and in 1993 it was recorded in Reading for the CD—*Charles Camilleri: Music for Clarinet, flute and piano* (DIAL 103). Flautist Laura Falzon also premiered the work in the same year in a recital 'In London' at St. Martin in the Field's concert series in London (L. Falzon, personal communication, March 18, 2012).

piece. Camilleri wanted to create a work inspired by the concept of “order out of chaos”, and the element of music with which he emphatically set out to experiment within this concept in *Fractals* was rhythm.

2.5 Conclusion

Camilleri’s works depict a portrait of a composer whose interests are disparate and varied. However, it also shows how new inspirations were constantly assimilated into a more holistic approach towards composition. When this did not occur, previous interests could be expected to resurface sporadically in directly related new musical compositions. Camilleri’s three piano concertos broadly represent his three main interests as emerging in consecutive periods (‘Mediterranean-Nationalistic’, ‘Afro-Arabic-Hindu’, and ‘Noogenesis’). His interest in jazz music led him to perform in various localities, comparing this passion for jazz to non-Western rhythms, with reference to the ‘atomisation of the beat’. Ateş Orga describes Camilleri’s successful amalgamation of influences as follows:

At once folkloristic and orientalist, abstract thinker and mystic philosopher, progressive modernist, and provocative educationalist, he is a creator of intense conviction... His favourite hunting grounds are many: the music of Africa, the Mediterranean, the Orient, the experimental jazz, improvisation, the thoughts of Teilhard de Chardin, the all-consuming, all-embracing teachings of the East (Orga, 1987, p. 33).

Besides being a prolific Maltese composer, Charles Camilleri was also a professor of music at the Faculty of Music within the Mediterranean Institute at the University of Malta teaching composition, improvisation and studies in Mediterranean

music for several years. Being the founder of the Music Department, together with late philosopher Rev. Peter Serracino Inglott, he served for twenty years, besides lecturing, as the Head of the Department. During these years at the University of Malta, Camilleri was the teacher and tutor of many of today's contemporary composers in Malta.

Camilleri's initial works were folk-inspired. *Għana* featured strongly in a number of his works giving his melodies a sense of lament. Camilleri's works are rich in aesthetic sensibility with hints of old cultural dominations. References to the past can be found throughout Camilleri's work. Camilleri bred in his composition students a consciousness about Maltese musical roots and an appreciation for local folklore and traditions. Hence, many of his ex-students have composed compositions either specifically on Maltese themes and traditional music or works that aim to mainly depict a Maltese representation or character.

Due to the limited support that the Faculty of Music at the University of Malta is capable of providing towards post-graduate courses⁷⁸, especially after Camilleri's sudden infirmity, the majority of his ex-students decided to expand their composition education outside of Malta. This gave them new opportunities in the composition field and a new vision that enabled them to make sound judgments based on a wider and varied musical background. Notwithstanding this new movement of ideas amongst the young generation of composers in Malta, there is no doubt that Charles Camilleri's legacy is etched in the heritage of Malta and kept alive by his students.

Camilleri believed that "we find our way out of historical cul-de-sacs onto the open roads of the future by rediscovering our roots. We can contemplate the prospect of music universally accessible all over the planet by probing deeper into local well-

⁷⁸ Despite the number of years from its establishment, the Faculty of Music at the University of Malta, is still a rather small faculty with a limited number of lecturers.

springs” (Orga, ca. 1980, p. 6). Charles Camilleri had a conception of music as a “crosscutting between time and eternity, between language and silence, perhaps the supreme approach to mankind towards the ineffable” (Orga, ca. 1980, p.6). He had a lot to say, so much, he feared that “there isn’t enough silence to say it all” (Camilleri, 1999, p. 42).

Although Camilleri’s initial musical framework was greatly based upon Maltese cultural traditions, his later musical output took a different path—being influenced by non-Western traditions and moving to a more abstract language. Notwithstanding this, in Malta, he still earned the label of the Nationalistic composer who represented ‘Malta’s soundscape’.

Part 2

Portfolio of Works

1

An Overview of my works

My experience in the field of the arts gives me the opportunity to collaborate with various musicians and artists. All the work associated with me as a composer, organiser, educator and curator contributes to contemporary music in Malta and at the same time boosts the works of Maltese artists in the Maltese musical arena and helps it to reach different audiences. This section presents some of the projects I was involved in as a composer. The flexibility to work in different setups with different people is essential for artists. I find that the synergy between my roles as composer/producer and my relationship with the performers help to facilitate the run-through of rehearsals, leading to high-quality performances.

Critical self-appraisal helps artists to identify their potential and facilitate progression to more challenging opportunities. For artists, increasing levels of subscription⁷⁹ will often result in greater endorsement, enabling them to undertake more ambitious and wide-ranging projects. An essential part of my own work has been to promote the works of others. As an ex-student of Charles Camilleri, I am exposed to a network of musicians and artists who all collaborated closely with him in various projects. Camilleri's thinking process was part of a mode of working that helped establish artistic links with musicians in Malta and abroad. I was very much interested in his approach and way of dealing with artistic people working in various music entities and publishing houses around the world.

Notwithstanding Camilleri's connections with high-profile music companies and renowned people in the music industry, he always had ample space for young and up-and-coming Maltese artists. *Kinder Garden* (2006) and *A Musical Tribute to Mozart from Malta* (2006) are two examples of this practice. The two music books comprise a

⁷⁹ 'Subscription' describes the process by which art is filtered and legitimised. Networks of art world professionals including academics, curators, dealers, critics, artists and buyers, provide advocacy and endorsement for an artist's work through exhibitions, critical appraisal and private and public purchases (Hargreaves, 2004, p. 4).

collection of piano pieces written especially for young performers. These books feature compositions by contemporary Maltese composers of various ages. For Camilleri, the involvement of Maltese artists in his projects seemed to be part of a life-long mission—part of his ‘nationalistic’ venture.⁸⁰ Being myself part of Camilleri’s network of artists, following his infirmity, I tried to form my own networks and follow his footsteps in the promotion of my own works and that of others.

A case in point is the Malta Association of Music Educators (MAME), set up on my initiative in 2010.⁸¹ It aims to work towards the celebration and preservation of our cultural heritage, as well as the exploration of the realms of expression, imagination, and creativity, resulting in the strategic development of culture and the arts (in line with the Malta Cultural Policy 2011 published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport). Furthermore, MAME aims to help improve its members’ professional pedagogical training, as well as to ensure that talented students are given the right opportunities to enhance and expand their musical talents both locally and abroad. Masterclasses and concerts are being organised in order to further members’ training, as well as to provide opportunities for musicians and students alike to give public performances.

Over the past six years I have collaborated with numerous artists and this has been of mutual benefit to our careers. My first ever opportunity to organise a concert was L-Ghabex. The concert was organised in collaboration with Albert Garzia, a contemporary Maltese composer and ex-student of Charles Camilleri, Christopher Saliba, a contemporary Maltese artist, and the Rotary Club. Finding a suitable venue for a chamber recital is a challenge that one has to face when organising a concert in Gozo.

⁸⁰ See Chapter 2 of Part 1 for further discussion of this.

⁸¹ Refer to <http://www.independent.com.mt/mobile/2010-11-28/news/music-educators-association-formed-283887/>

With extensive planning and networking, I managed to secure funding for this concert, the main sponsor being the local Maltese bank, Bank of Valletta (BOV). Karl Spiteri, BOV Manager, who was indeed very helpful and cooperative, stated that,

supporting the local music and arts scene has always been an important part of the Bank's contribution to the community. It is very encouraging to observe and appreciate the professionalism and skills of our local artists and it is a continual source of great satisfaction for us who support such an event, as well as the organisers who take great pains to ensure the success of the event (Bank of Valletta, 2008, August 21).

The concert was set up also under the patronage of the Gozo Ministry and the Gozo Cultural Committee. It was held at the Citadel Centre for Culture and the Arts in the Citadel, Victoria, Gozo. All performers were professional players and singers and members of the Maltese Philharmonic Orchestra. Opera singer Miriam Cauchi, a firmly established Maltese soprano and her husband cellist and ex-teacher of mine Simon Abdilla Joslin, performed my composition entitled *L'Għabex*. This work, which was specifically written and dedicated to the couple, was premiered on this occasion. Artistic projections, devised by Christopher Saliba, were shot to complement the mood of the music. These projections were discussed with Garzia and myself beforehand and timed according to each musical score.

The only problem in this artistic initiative was that both during rehearsals and the actual performance, the nature of the works programmed for the concert resulted in a discrepancy between the timing of some of the visual artistic shots and the timing of some of the musical works. Nevertheless, since the concert was of an innovative nature for Gozo and subsequently acclaimed by the general public, I was motivated to delve into similar projects in collaboration with artists working in different fields.

This was my first opportunity to organise a concert on my own. I had organised events on a smaller scale before but I had never stood back to observe what I had put together in a reflective, managerial way. Indeed organising and being involved in artistic events is rarely easy or straightforward. The whole process is not accident-free and digressions and disruptions, errors and mishaps are basically a common trait. Even so, at such moments one has to reconcile him/herself with the situation and carry right on. While these events were often organised single-handedly, collaboration with other artists helped to better compartmentalise the jobs to be done with an open discussion on ideas to achieve a satisfactory final result.

In my next project I was fortunate enough to be commissioned by Teatru Manoel, thereby avoiding the need to secure my own funding. I was commissioned by the theatre to perform a number of my compositions to be included in their 2009 Spotlight Concerts Series. I was left free to form the programme and to choose the performers. This was a significant learning experience for me as I worked closely with the musicians throughout the preparations for the concert. I decided to organise a run-through and recording of the material at St George's Church, Gozo, for which I secured funding from the Rotary Club, Gozo to cover the musicians' expenses. I felt it essential to be present at the majority of the rehearsals, discussing the music with all performers, incorporating their views and criticism and reflecting together on the interpretation and staging.

Emese Tóth is a Hungarian violin player resident in Malta, who forms part of the Lang Quartet, an ensemble that regularly performs my works in various recitals. Their

last performance of one of my compositions was during Notte Bianca.⁸² Works performed by members of the Lang Quartet that will also be presented in my portfolio of works are: *Gaudos*⁸³ (scored for Violin I and II, Violoncello and Accordion and originally commissioned by an Italian ensemble); *Reflections* (originally scored for a woodwind quartet and named *Clarinet Reflections*)⁸⁴ and *Heartstrings I* (scored for a string quartet, commissioned for a concert at Sala Isouard, Teatru Manoel in December 2008 and later re-orchestrated for a string orchestra and renamed *Waiting*). Tóth considers my music technically comfortable and musically very enjoyable and imaginative. In her opinion, the fact that I am an active violinist and violoncellist facilitates my understanding of the limitations and possibilities of writing for string instruments.

By playing Mariella's works I can show both my virtuosic abilities and emotional-lyrical side. I don't need complicated explanations about the "meaning" of her pieces. I do not need to "know" what it is about because I just feel it. Maybe that's why she easily finds the way not only to come across the musically highly educated audience, but also to touch the heart of the simple people, whose applause is the most important critic for a composer. As a foreigner musician who lives in Malta, I have special feelings when I play Mariella's works. I feel the uniqueness of this place and I get closer to the soul of the inhabitants; I understand their sadness. I feel strongly in her works the presence of the unspoiled nature, the innocence of the people, the loneliness of Gozo. If the music of Charles Camilleri is

⁸² Notte Bianca is an annual event that takes place in October in the Maltese capital city Valletta. During this event state palaces and museums open their doors to hold visual art exhibitions and theatre performances, while the open-air streets and piazzas showcase some of the finest local and international musicians and dancers.

⁸³ *Gaudos* is the name given to Gozo by the Greeks in the Greek period.

⁸⁴ *Reflections* was commissioned by the *Cosmos* Wind Quartet as part of the *Europamusicale Musica Mediterranea* Festival. The European Cultural Foundation Europamusicale, which was established on December 30, 2002, is an independent, international institution promoting cultural exchanges in Europe. To do so, it organises the European Music Festival Europamusicale, which supports the mutual growth of Europe by means of culture. The Festival is held regularly in a different European country, making it possible to "get acquainted and learn respect" in Europe and stimulate fruitful cultural discussion. Integrating Central and Eastern European countries expressly forms one of the main areas of the foundation's objectives (European Cultural Foundation EUROPAMUSICALE, 2009).

the “Maltese” then the music of Mariella Cassar is definitely the “Gozitan” (Emese Tóth, 2011, January 6).

Two of my works, *Gaudos* and *Colpi d’Armonia*, were commissioned by the Italian Ensemble Fisarchi, an ensemble made up of 2 violins, violoncello and accordion. *Gaudos* was performed several times in Italy and other places abroad. *Colpi d’Armonia*, together with other works by Italian and international artists, was recorded on an audio CD and performed in the Florence Festival *Genio Fiorentino* and *Cantiere Internazionale d’Arte di Montepulciano*. All works had to be based on Michelangelo’s sonnets.

In *Colpi d’Armonia* Mariella used some minimalist techniques to describe the work of the sculptor, but her harmonical sequence (a characteristic also found in *Gaudos*) picks up her unmistakable style. The soprano line is handled with great lyricism. Mariella’s music combines beautiful melodies with strong rhythmical lines which are handled with high proficiency in instrumental knowledge which are greatly appreciated by the player and pleasing to the listeners. (Daniele del Lungo, first violin player Fisarchi Ensemble, 2011, January 9).

As a composer, I also collaborate with Maltese pianist Alexei Galea. Our collaboration started when he performed my solo piano piece *Oriental Prints* back in March 2009, during a concert as part of the Maltese celebrations for Independence Day. He then performed this solo in an EU Competition in Prague later on that year. Together with this piece, I was also commissioned by the same pianist to compose another solo piece for him, *Opus I*, which he also performed in Prague. Prior to the concert, I had met the pianist several times to discuss the interpretation of all the technicalities. I feel that the open criticism and endless discussions have helped me thoroughly evaluate every single aspect of the composition.

We discussed *Opus I* in detail and Mariella defended her position with intelligence. She was however, on occasion willing to make exception when I had purely pianistic objections to certain elements in her written score. But this is an old story... After all the composer must have a strong inner ear and the pianist must be pragmatic and keep in mind that the sound he produces is a physical entity which depends on physical circumstances not in a composer's mind when writing. I enjoyed working with her because I think her music has interesting modern and even Mediterranean elements and is still emotive and simple and also because she listens to what other people have to say even if she does not agree. As a pianist it was useful to have a ready ear in Mariella's and a continuous constructive critical mind with whom to talk (Alexei Galea, pianist, 2010, December 10).

On the 10th December 2011, I organised a concert of contemporary music entitled Crossing Lines at the Teatru Manoel—most probably the first ever of this kind in Malta⁸⁵—performed by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Mro Brian Schembri. As the title of the concert suggests, the lines crossed were those linking this century with the previous one, presenting music by Stravinsky, Daniele del Lungo, Eurico Carrapatoso, Christopher Best, Valentin Silvestrov, Charles Camilleri, John Cage and myself. The project “proved that this kind of music can be great fun and at the end of the evening, many of those sceptical of being able to enjoy such music declared they had a really great time” (Storace, December 14, 2011, p. 22). The last piece in the programme was *January*, a piece written in memory of Charles Camilleri.⁸⁶

As part of the MACM (Malta Association of Contemporary Music) inauguration of the Contemporary Sounds Concert Series, an exhibition was organised in

⁸⁵ The expenses for this concert were extremely high and although I received some financial aid by the Malta Arts Fund Scheme, I had to rely on other means in order to cover all the expenses. Apart from the costs of the orchestra and soloists, conductor, venue, publicity and the publishing of programmes, I also had to pay the recording company that recorded the concert live on a DVD for television and future reference. The global economic crisis, much felt all over Europe, has affected first and foremost the arts. In the last three years or so, in Malta, there was a negative impact on the arts, with various business companies, banks and private entities refusing to give financial support to artists and arts organisations to be able to navigate such uncertain times and continue to work on new artistic projects.

⁸⁶ There are elegiac moments especially when a passage on solo horn occurs like a running motif but also some very vigorous full, orchestral sections which reminded those who knew Camilleri well of his vivacious and energetic character. This work deserves to be heard again and again, was enthusiastically delivered and very well received (Storace, 2011, p.22).

collaboration with St. James Cavalier. This project connected visual artists with composers within an interdisciplinary process portraying visual art and contemporary music. The installations presented varied from soundtrack to video art, mechanical constructions, instrumental and vocal performance, live diffusion and digital processing. My collaboration with visual artist Ruth Bianco resulted in *Daria's Vision*, a post-production video-art installation, with a live performance by a soprano. The instrumentation for this piece was made up of the cello and violin, merged into the original soundtrack, the latter being manipulated and worked out according to the tempo of the post-production art work.

Ġgantija 2013 is another interdisciplinary site-specific project, born after discussions with artist Victor Aguis. The idea of this artistic project revolved around bridging the primitive heritage of the Ġgantija Temples through contemporary self-expression. The project aimed at bringing together music as an abstract medium of communication inspired by the Temples' ambience and the visual element expressed through mixed media works, echoing the primitive and the sacred. The media used were recordings of live music recorded on site, electronic sounds and mixed media works. Instruments were built specifically for this project. These included a set of shakers, guitar, terracotta spheres and a harp. The work was performed inside the Temples by newly formed group Ars Vitae Ensemble.

Each musician, including myself as the composer, chose to participate in these projects for different reasons and each one of us, both as performers or creators took away different things from the experience. As a composer, I have the satisfaction of seeing my work performed and presented elsewhere, perhaps in less than perfect circumstances, created anew for another environment and by other musicians with different musical milieus. These performers will have availed themselves of the

opportunity to test out ideas about where their practice might take them in the future. Hopefully, all of the participants gain new insights into perspectives on their performance and on the work itself through discussions and evaluations of the interaction with the audience, and perhaps, through published and non-published criticisms. For all of us, these projects are significant milestones in the course of our careers.

As in all artistic disciplines, the appreciation of music is subjective and one needs to have a certain level of understanding, knowledge and experience in order to maximise the enjoyment of participating in, listening to and evaluating music. This can also be applied to the artist, given that the relationship between the listener and the artist is a two-way dynamic. Exclusiveness aside, music—the listening and making of it, is more than the sum of its parts. The two approaches offer a shifting personal dynamic in the appreciation of music and larger critical reflection. Potentially, it could be that no one modality can be fixed. It would be interesting to see whether the seeds of artists sown during these modest artistic daises of opportunity go on to bear substantial fruit on the local and international artistic platforms.

In the following chapter I will present a commentary upon and a selective analysis of my works from 2007 up to my latest work, which was completed and executed this year. Reference to the scores is to be made in a separate volume. The majority of these compositions were performed on different occasions both locally and abroad. As part of my ongoing research, I have evaluated the pieces with reference to performances and recordings. In my commentary I tried to give a rational and conceptual view of the pieces vis-à-vis the relationship between my journey as a composer and my identity as a Maltese artist.

Critical Commentary on the Composition Portfolio

Introduction to Portfolio of Compositions

There are seven pieces included in this thesis: *Gaudos*, *Reflections*, *Colpi D'Armonia*, *Waiting*, *January*, *Daria's Vision* and *Ġgantija 2013*. These were completed over six years and are here accompanied by a written commentary. These pieces contain different instrumentations and range from chamber to orchestral works. In this portfolio there is a set of three chamber pieces, a piece for string orchestra, an orchestral piece and two electroacoustic works. The written component of this portfolio is a critical commentary which examines my compositions with reference to their inspiration, construction and structure in relation to place and identity. Audio CDs and DVDs accompany this document with recordings of the compositions.

2.1 Gaudos

Gaudos is one of the ancient names for Gozo.⁸⁷ The composition⁸⁸ of the same name is scored for accordion, two violins and cello. Written in January 2008, it was originally commissioned by the Italian Ensemble Fisarchi from Florence (Daniele Del Lungo and Andrea Vassalle—1st and 2nd violin, Laura Gorkoff—cello, Daniel Stratznig—accordion) to be premiered in the International Festival Musikwochen Millstatt in Austria. The piece is for me a transition towards a new period of composition in the absence of Charles Camilleri’s guidance.⁸⁹

In 2007, I was asked by Fisarchi Ensemble to compose a piece that had what they referred to as a “Maltese character” (hence the choice of title).⁹⁰ I had to do this either by basing the work on traditional Maltese themes—by presenting them in their original form or re-inventing them completely by pursuing wide-ranging changes in both rhythm and melody; or presenting a work that is entirely based on my own language. My task therefore was to compose a piece which alluded to the Maltese musical tradition: presenting meanings specified and exemplified through sound, in line with what Nicola Dibben terms as ‘meanings’ and ‘contexts’ (Dibben, 2003). According to Dibben, music has particular meanings derived from its history of social context and their associated meanings and functions. Issues of social and historical context and meanings are vital to an understanding of a musical function, genre or cultural category. As discussed in Part 1, the conquest of Malta by a set of rulers was at times violent, having groups of people who wanted to infuse Maltese society with a new set of values,

⁸⁷ Refer to Chapter 1 of Part 1.

⁸⁸ Refer to Score and CD 1 Track 1.

⁸⁹ In the year 2008, Charles Camilleri suffered a stroke, leaving him unable to speak or write.

⁹⁰ See Chapter 2 of Part 2.

including a new language. Notwithstanding this, the Maltese had always treasured their much valued traditions and norms. This piece is a reflection of my views on this social and historical reality.

Our Maltese prehistory and the legacy left to us by the Knights of St John have always stirred my interest. Being a composer from Gozo, *Gaudos* is an expression of my empathy with the ancient past and with the simple Gozitan way of living. I set out to compose a work where there are no deliberate imitations of objects but simply a presentation of my own vision of the Maltese way of life through my experiences as a Maltese person living and experiencing everyday life in Gozo. These connotations are then enhanced and infused by my conceptual perspective of the country's history, traditions and folklore.⁹¹

Inspired by the Gozitan temple Ġgantija, the primitive sacred place for sacrifices and offering prayers for healing, I deliberately chose to start the piece with a desolate, almost crude melody on the cello with a continuous change of time-signature to evoke a sense of unstable meter. The uneven phrases of the melody, divided by short breaks (using rests), give to the music a reflective and spacious quality. This introductory cello line, being written for the low register and played *senza vibrato*, elicits a 'jagged' sound inspired by the rough-edged stones of the prehistoric Maltese temples.

The 'unrefined' quality of the sound of this line is reinforced by the accented *acciaccatura* and the dissonant major 7th interval at measure 3 (an interval which is very difficult to play in exact tune). In addition, when the musicians performed the piece, the minor intervals and melodic contour of the melody from measure 11–29 and measure

⁹¹ This statement will be further broadened and explained later on by providing examples from the musical score.

95–112, reminded them of the Maltese *għana*, in itself a sort of lament.⁹² After re-evaluating the passage, I could see why this was the case. The accompaniment line on the 2nd violin and cello, commencing at measure 11, resembles the rhythmic chordal progressions of the accompaniment of the guitar, quite familiar in Maltese *għana*, whilst the main melody on the 1st violin bears a resemblance to the main melancholic melody of *għana* with rather short intervals and ornaments.

By measure 7, the dynamics, the legato playing, longer phrases and the breaks (silences), which become even shorter, make the music richer in tone and volume. My intention in composing these short melodic motifs (which are at times elongated and played in a very slow tempo, quasi recitativo, giving a sense of tranquility and stillness), was to call upon my roots as a Maltese who is influenced by the mysticism and the silence prevailing in the Maltese temples.

In the subsequent measures the first violin introduces the main melody, which is answered by another melodic line played by the second violin in measure 16—serving as a dialogue as well as an accompaniment to the main melody—and joined together at measure 21, paving the way for the cello, which takes up the main line at measure 25. All three melodies, although distinct in their own right, complement each other and each serves as a countermelody to the others. This creates a richer texture, which is a climax in itself, and a conclusive statement to this section as well as an introductory pronouncement to the next. This is enhanced by the *molto rallentando* strong dominant chord, succeeded by a pause, giving a resting stance to the piece and a sense of a partial ‘closure’, whilst preparing the listener for a completely different new section. As someone who was brought up on the island of Gozo, the combination of the high register in this section, on both violins, the cantabile lyrical style of the passage, the

⁹² See Chapter 1 of Part 1 for further discussion of this.

embellishments and glissandos effects on the cello and the passion that all this creates, tries to elicit the intense emotion of the Gozitan temples. The forte dynamics of the section at measures 26–28 add to the crispness and vitality that was projected to achieve this build-up.

In the vivo section the different rhythmic lines on the accordion and cello are here seen to be distinct from the rhythm and melody played by the 2nd violin. Both of these lines occupy an exclusive space of their own, yet complement each other and combine to form one whole. Rhythm, even when occurring alone without pitch, melody, or harmony, provides this experience. A rhythm is not one process but many (measure, division, stress, and accent), organised and overlaid by grouping. As Scruton (2009, p. 146) states, “to hear a rhythm is already to hear simultaneity of coalescing movements, in a placeless and transparent medium”. According to Scruton, in music all distance between movements is abolished, and we confront a single process in which multiplicity is simultaneously preserved and overridden. No musical event excludes any other, but all coexist in a placeless self-presentation.

In this section I wanted to present parallel rhythmic lines against a melodic line that has different rhythmic stresses and accents. This creates a sense of illusion for the listener, where although the lines are in the same metre, it is as if they are written in two distinct timings. The duplets in measure 47 played by the second violin and cello give the listener a sense of unstable tactus, resulting in what Camilleri referred to as “atomisation of the beat”.⁹³

Camilleri: The beat falls into self-contained units which in themselves form part of overall rhythmical and melodic form of the work involved. Small innumerable, different (and yet

⁹³ See Chapter 2 of Part 1 and Appendix 1 for further discussion of this.

alike=quick slow melodic figures, each with a life of its own) but at the same time part of the ‘oneness’ of the work may flow in a free (by highly structured) improvisatory-like manner, while the metric pulse (beat remains steady—thus shifting the accents beyond the confines of an imaginary bar-line) (Bonello, 1990, p.13).

The dominant-seventh chord in measures 55–56 serves both as a shift and rest from the heavy dialogue which has been going on between all the performers. It also gives a sense of energy and a link to the recapitulation that is immediately to follow. In measure 62 the duplets on the second violin, reminiscent of the same texture used in measure 47, give yet another example of where the beat falls into ‘self contained units’, flowing in a free improvisatory-like manner, within a steady metric pulse. This section intends to draw the listener into an emotional state that can be compared to the emotional state induced by vibrant colours of the Maltese landscape and *joie de vivre* of the local people (in particular the Gozitans). The different syncopated rhythms played briskly alongside the melody played on the 2nd violin attempt to direct the listener to this picturesque view.

As a composer, I was very much influenced by the traditional music played in Xagħra, Gozo, known as *il-kumittiva* (generally performed during carnival) [see Plate 21] and other traditional folk dance music which can still be heard in various feasts in Gozo. This dance-like passage draws upon my experiences with this traditional music [see Example 19]. The use of the accordion as one of the main instruments in the piece gives a southern European feel to the piece, the accordion featuring in a great deal of traditional Maltese, Italian, French and Spanish music.



Example 19: *Il-kumittiva—il -Maltija*



Example 20: *Gaudos—Violin II*

The music of a *kumittiva* session is provided by a band of musicians playing accordion, tambourines, castanets and friction drum. Although there are no specific melodies to these dances, the Maltese melody *Il-Maltija*—a melody incorporated into a substantial number of Camilleri’s pieces—is often associated with such dances. A comparison between the main melody of *Gaudos* (see Example 20) and the transcription of *Il-Maltija* in the above example, shows that movement in both melodies is mostly stepwise, whilst rhythmically they both rely on common rhythmic material. *Gaudos* is beginning-oriented with the material in measure 16 onwards reiterating the initial material at the octave, though with some variation. This is repeated again in the transcribed piece (see the last 12 measures) and to an extent, this presents another

common feature between the two. Giving these parallels between the two subjects, I feel that the intentional associations were achieved and contained in a contemporary idiom.



Plate 21 *Il-kumittiva* in Xaghra, Gozo

This rather fast passage is brought to a standstill in order to create a reflective space based on long-held chords on the strings against a more elaborate line (as a surface decoration) on the accordion. This section takes the journey back to the introductory expressive passage event, this time in parallel with a flowing line for the accordion (the instrument which has been hitherto one of the main protagonists). As in the first movements of Charles Camilleri's *Symphony* and *Il Nostro Tempo*, the section is given the direction of *Lento Spaziale*. Here I wanted to create a reflective, almost ecstatic feeling. The use of a tonal diatonic language around the chords I^7 , I^{7d} , VI^9 , in measures 88–89 with the bass line moving and resolving at the same time in step-wise motion, gives a solemn quality to the music, reminiscent to sixteenth-century Palestrina.

This is accentuated by the repeating sixteenth-rhythmic notes, acting as a *melisma*, played on the accordion and ending in a *molto rallentando tempo* in measures 92–94.

The consciously chosen perfect cadence in measures 94–95 precedes the music to the recapitulation of a more ardent section A, giving a sense of a classical closure.

Since this is the last section of the composition, I wanted to add extra intensity by introducing long chords in measures 105–108 on the accordion, which when heard against the melody lines on the strings, resemble a church organ's accompaniment to a hymn tune. This allusion is intensified by the orchestration that emulates the organ's blending of pipes to modify timbre. The purpose of referring to the opening lament and adding the tremolo on the strings was to give a sense of conclusion to the piece.

Gaudos generates an intimate connection between form and expression: how the piece's structure is intrinsically related to its emotional and psychological journey. By adopting the form of 'lament', 'dance', 'reflection' and again 'lament', this work parallels the Gozitan way of life. Lamentation is ingrained through religious practice; dance (which might encapsulate work and play) forms an essential balance to this, and reflection echoes the process that bridges these contrasting modes of living.

As a string player, I feel that the ranges adopted in this piece were comfortable enough for the performers to be able to present a clear sound with a rich vibrato, which is intended in the long eloquent passages in various sections throughout the piece. In contrast to these flowing passages, the performers have the possibility to show their technical abilities as regards rhythm, tempo and a good use of bowing technique in order to achieve a clear brisk tone in the presented short motifs throughout the dance-like sections. Having been performed four times by four different ensembles in different events, in both Malta and abroad, I can affirm that this rhythmic section (measures 30-77) always raised difficulties of precision. The different accents and rhythms give the

impression that the lines are moving in different timings, making it somewhat difficult for musicians to keep a steady beat. Nevertheless, when played in accurate tempos with a steady vigorous beat and clear tone, it created a different collage that mingled very well with the diverse lyrical sections of the work.

The portfolio of my works evidences my involvement with string writing. This is not only because I am a string player but also due to my ongoing work with string players both in Malta and other countries. Due to the close proximity of the place, my collaboration with Italian string ensembles has resulted in pieces for string instruments, the majority commissioned by them. *Gaudos* was very well appreciated both in Italy as well as in Malta. According to feedback given by Fisarchi Ensemble, this piece fulfilled the brief and as a follow-up, the Ensemble commissioned me to compose another piece *Colpi D'Armonia*.

2.2 Colpi D'Armonia

Commissioned by the Italian Fisarchi Ensemble in 2009, this work⁹⁴ was premiered at the Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte di Montepulciano Festival at Montecipiliano, Italy. This festival, which is organised annually in July, incorporates cultural projects on an international scale. Apart from the promotion of a classical repertoire, the festival aims to support and encourage experimentation and innovation through studies and workshops on techniques of composition and execution. For the 34th edition of the Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte di Montepulciano, the festival focused on Michelangelo Bonarroti's rhymes. Along with five Italian composers, I was invited to be part of this project.

The choice of Michelangelo's poems was left exclusively to our own discretion; the only given parameter regarded the instrumentation. I was drawn towards the sonnets that set out Michelangelo's thoughts on sculpture, in particular sonnet number 151 (quoted below). In his sonnet, the art of sculpture is envisaged as extracting all the feminine attributes of a divine female from the stone. One can also sense Michelangelo's ardour for sculpture and the artistic mental and manual processes, which go beyond the work of art itself.

<i>Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto c'un marmo solo in sé non circonscriba col suo superchio, e solo a quello arriva la man che ubbidisce all'intelletto. Il mal ch'io fuggo, e 'l ben ch'io mi prometto, in te, donna leggiadra, altera e diva, tal si nasconde; e perch'io più non viva, contraria ho l'arte al disiato effetto.</i>	Not even the best of artists has any conception that a single marble block does not contain within its excess, and that is only attained by the hand that obeys the intellect. The pain I flee from and the joy I hope for are similarly hidden in you, lovely lady, lofty and divine; but, to my mortal harm, my art gives results the reverse of what I wish. Love, therefore, cannot be blamed for my pain,
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⁹⁴ Refer to Score and CD 1 Track 2. In this recording Fisarchi Ensemble were not always consistent to the score (hence, the use of tremolo throughout the whole work).

<i>Amor dunque non ha, né tua beltate o durezza o fortuna o gran disdegno, del mio mal colpa, o mio destino o sorte; se dentro del tuo cor morte e pietate.</i>	nor can your beauty, your hardness, or your scorn, nor fortune, nor my destiny, nor chance, if you hold both death and mercy in your heart at the same time, and my lowly wits, though burning, cannot draw from it anything but death.
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Michelangelo Buonarroti—Sonnet 151
(Saslow, 1991) Retrieved from
http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/arhumanities/pdfs/arthum_michel_reader.PDF

Later on that year, following its presentation at the Tuscan Italian Festival, the piece was recorded together with the other four pieces from the same project and other works from the Ensemble repertoire. In the same year, the piece was performed at Sala Isouard, Teatru Manoel, as part of the programme of the Spotlight Concerts Series.

The theme is provided in a simple and linear textural setting with chromatically enriched harmony. The piece introduces a dual rhythmic coupling of the two violins playing the melodic material and moving as equal partners, with the cello providing the harmonic support background, acting also as a pedal note. The choice of low registers for all string instruments up to measure 16 was made in order to produce a sonorous and intense sound. The rhythmic figuration employed in this section mimics the constant hammering rhythm of the sculpting process. Notwithstanding this, the emotions of this piece of music are more than mere descriptions of emotional states, yet not quite expressions of simple emotion. Hence, it constructs a musical language to complete the emotion of the poetry rather than reflect it. Our experience then ceases to be organised in terms of the information contained in it, and acquires a newer and freer organisation, whose foundation is metaphor.

The series of lines in the introductory section show that the 1st and 2nd violins are treated as equal and unique partners, moving in linear motion till measure 28 when the cello joins in in the subsequent measures, adopting the same rhythmic pattern employed by the 1st and 2nd violins. Hence, the section's entire formal structure is an

accumulation of the elements that in the course of the build-up have slowly been introduced and developed, becoming a natural part of the statement.

The tremolo on the strings at measure 35 sets a sudden change of mood, changing the initial statement to a lighter, ethereal texture that highlights the second section. Measure 37 begins with a soprano entry and as it develops in its tonal compass and emotional intensity, it brings to mind a Renaissance chanson surrounded by the light tremolo on the strings (background). Similar to sixteenth-century French composer Claudin De Sermisy's chansons, the piece is characterised by a simple texture consisting mainly of strict homophony alternating with contrapuntally-enlivened homophony. As the case with Sermisy's melodies, the length of the melodic line corresponds to the length of the poetic line, with cadences appearing at the end of the poetic line. The musical repetition scheme is also similar to Sermisy's common practice, that of ABCA and a conclusion.⁹⁵

Having been dominated by the Knights of St John, the piece is also an interpretation of my views regarding this period in Malta. A limited number of early seventeenth-century music extracts can be found in the Mdina Archives, Mdina. Some of them show a dance-like quality while others contain simple melodies moving in step-wise motion. Also having been commissioned by an Italian group, this piece is influenced by the Italian sixteenth-century camerata, leading to a singing style reminiscent of the *stile recitativo*. In relation to this, this piece relates to the association between place, identity and musical practice, inspired by its history and 'culture', which has always been, to a great or lesser extent, influenced by Italian practices.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Claudin De Sermisy's compositions tend to follow an ABCAA or ABCAA' structure.

⁹⁶ Refer to Chapter 1 of Part 1.

Through the renaissance style, techniques and skills and the linear accompaniment throughout the piece, the desired voice dominates whilst the others set back in their respective roles as supportive, harmonic lines. Throughout the voice line, grace notes give the same musical flourish that adorns similar sixteenth-century rhymes. Indeed, indications on the score direct the singer to improvise ornamentation on the given melodic line. The entry of the accordion (doubling the soprano line) at measure 42, ending at measure 43, gives harmonic support to the voice line, whilst at the same time shedding a decorative effect on that musical instance. The entry of the solo voice at measure 45 creates an atmosphere of unruffled contemplation in the midst of a dark-hued harmonic background derived from the strings which, at the same time, are in a register where a soft dynamic is easily possible.

The entry of the accordion on the eighth beat of measure 47, gives the same textual effect elicited at measure 42 with a crescendo that paves the way to a recitativo. The instruments are here underscoring a dramatic text, which leave the listener free to delve into the meaning of the words and their underlying thoughts. The strings give harmonic support to the voice whilst the accordion applies a virtuosic line that serves both as harmonic support as well as background colour to the whole musical scenario, culminating a smooth transaction into a quasi repetition of the initial introductory statement, thus providing great contrast to the preceding recitativo section.

In this section, the 1st and 2nd violins take up the same melodic and rhythmic line, this time with harmonic support on the accordion, which draws on a syncopatic rhythmic line against a long sustained drone on the cello, which develops into a detached line at measure 69 in order to acclimatise to the rest of the scoring. This process does not only have the character of succession; it is like an argument, an exploration, and concludes as a narrative concludes—at the point beyond which it

cannot go without detracting from its meaning. The crescendo, commencing at measure 70, paves the way to the conclusion of the section and the transition to a calmer one, eliciting a profound sense of melancholy and subdued passion.

This ending section unfolds like a lament and finds the soloist performing another recitativo, supported by the harmonic lines on the strings, reminiscent of measures 45 to 48. As in measures 42 and 47, the accordion's entry at measures 96 till the end of the passage serves both as harmonic support as well as a plea or better still, a reaction, to the soprano pronouncement in the preceding measures, creating an airy, ominous atmosphere, ending on a diminuendo perfect cadence in Bb minor which fades to nothing.

2.3 Reflections

Originally written for woodwind quartet, this piece⁹⁷ was commissioned and performed by Cosmos Wind Quartet at the Musica Mediterranea Festival in Munich, Germany in 2009. During this festival, ensembles from different European countries are invited to perform music from their native country. Each time, a different focus is set for the festival, such as symphony music, chamber music, vocal music and music from different epochs. In 2009, the festival focused on contemporary and modern repertoire. Cosmos Wind Quartet, whose members are all musicians of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, commissioned four composers, including myself, to compose a piece for them. These compositions, together with two other works by two acknowledged 20th century Maltese composers, Charles Camilleri and Carmelo Pace, were performed during the festival.

Later that same year, I re-orchestrated the piece for two violins, cello and accordion to be performed during the Spotlight Concert at Sala Isouard, Teatru Manoel. During this annual concert some of my chamber works, together with works by three contemporary composers, were performed by a group of musicians, performing on two violins, cello, piano and accordion along with a soprano. The concert was highly beneficial to me as a composer in that I learnt to work closer with musicians and improve my organisational skills. For instance, the chamber works in the programme had different sets of instrumentation, causing difficulties in scheduling rehearsals with musicians in a restricted timeframe. Notwithstanding this, quality time spent discussing scores with musicians and carefully following rehearsals, resulted in a sound learning experience.

⁹⁷ Refer to Score and CD 1 Track 3.

Rearranging the piece for string instruments and accordion required a re-evaluation of the voice leading and phrasing. The inclusion of the accordion in the score opened up a vast range of possibilities which had been somewhat restricted with a wind quartet. The sound of the accordion is similar to that of a church organ; hence the introduction to this piece and the *Lento meditativo* section at measures 49–52 are examples of this, completely changing the musical palette of the piece. The later dance-like sections add to the ‘folkloristic’ character of the work, which was not so evident in the previous version. The short, distinct chords in the *Andante* section produce a fuller cohesive sound that was lacking in the original version of the piece, adding to the march-like quality of the section. The use of the accordion in the *Allegro* section at measures 53–57 adds considerable weight to the sound, as this was rather hard for the woodwind instruments to generate.

Re-orchestrating the piece for strings and accordion required the application of a diverse range of musical techniques, giving the work a completely different texture and character. Re-scoring the piece for strings required a thorough re-evaluation of the phrasings and ranges adopted throughout each section. Transposition was necessary to accommodate the differences in range of the new instruments, and the rests originally placed to facilitate breathing could be reconsidered in relation to the needs of bowed instruments.

Whilst the flute is as versatile an instrument as the violin, the quality of sound generated is quite different. In rescoring for a violin, advantage was taken of its colouristic and timbral potential; hence the use of double stops, arpeggiation and pizzicato, each with a direct impact on the texture of the piece. Rescoring the piece for the cello gave a warmer colour than the nasally voiced bassoon in the original version.

Rescoring this composition was a learning experience for me. It provided me with a challenge to re-evaluate the original piece and experiment with different combinations of instruments. Having already composed for strings and accordion (the instrumentation in *Gaudos*), it was easier for me to employ a new spectrum of musical possibilities and adopt them into the score. My experience as a string player facilitated this process and having collaborated with the Fisarchi Ensemble on more than one occasion, it was not difficult to decide on the musical decisions that I had to undertake during the evaluation and rescoring process. Writing again for the accordion was a learning task and as a composer I found it beneficial to collaborate not only with string players but also with the accordionist. During the rescoring process I discussed the music with the accordion player who evaluated with me the different possibilities of rewriting for accordion in relation to fingerings and phrasings.

The arpeggiation (a very common technical feature in string repertoire) on the 1st and 2nd violin at measures 62–76 gives a different texture to the section—a fuller amplified sound that was lacking in the original version. Admittedly when performed, the quintuplets at measures 38–40 were not as clear and distinct on the accordion as they had been on a clarinet, but upon reflection, I decided that this was equally effective.

2.4 Waiting

Originally written for a string quartet in 2009, *Waiting*⁹⁸ was rescored for a string orchestra a year later after a re-evaluation of the piece. I always felt that this piece had some particular qualities that were not well realised or effectively presented. In approaching the rewrite my focus was directed upon: 1. syntax, semantics and style; 2. the melodic line, the division, expansion and creation of new episodes, tension and relaxation of musical sequences; and 3. the relationships between the parts and the whole, specifically, whether some sections should be reworked independently or as part of a larger conceptual unit. I wanted to revise all this while maintaining the original style and character of the composition, complying with its initial tonal organisation. Due to my experience as a string player in a number of orchestras, the re-orchestration of the piece from a string quartet to a string orchestra did not raise any insurmountable difficulties. On the contrary, it was an enjoyable experience that left me with numerous musical choices which I confidently took in order to use the best ranges of the instruments to achieve the required effects and acquire the best texture.

The piece accentuates a quiet, profound, at times almost exasperating atmosphere, hence the title of the piece *Waiting*. The first slow, sustained section is followed by a bridge that leads to the only faster and heavier section of the composition. This is followed by another bridge that leads to a further slow section, almost a recapitulation of the same material of section A. This last section ends on a cadenza, which, despite resolving on a perfect cadence, leaves the listener with a sense of ambiguity, like an opening statement that is left unresolved.

⁹⁸ Refer to Score and DVD entitled *Waiting/January* [0:18:05–0:23:47].

The mezzo piano sustained chords on the strings give a sense of a fluidity and space. The rewrite of this section for a string orchestra made it possible to create a fuller and unified sound than the one achieved by a string quartet, retaining or rather intensifying the character of the piece. A chord of C#7 with suspended 4th introduces the piece, followed by F# suspended 4th chord with an upward step-wise interval on the 1st violin line, preparing the way to a more relaxed F#7 suspended 4th chord with a downward interval on both 1st violin and 2nd violin lines. Here I wanted to create both a sense of onward movement in these chords and of frustrated resolution; expectations are created for the listener and only ever partially fulfilled, creating a continuous interaction between tension and relaxation in a passage that is moving towards the establishment of a language set forth in measure 5 and developed in subsequent measures. The phrase of measures 9–12 answers measures 5–8 which leads to a modulation in measure 13, developing into another episode, creating a context-dependent affinity between the different tones. This episode is prolonged by the quasi recitativo line on the double bass against the sustained chords on the cellos, violas and 2nd violins and a soft tremolo on the 1st violins. The double bass introduces the solo line on a melodic germ, which evokes a variation of the motive already presented in measure 9 on the viola line. This creates a sense of stasis to the whole musical scenario, marked with a crescendo in measure 20 and a rallentando in measure 21, leading to a more stable metrical order yet more variant rhythmic gestures.

Since, in the original version the double bass solo was written for the cello, the whole texture of this section changed. During the re-evaluation of the piece I decided to create a less refined sound than the warmer sound achieved by the cello. Supported harmonically by the rest of the instruments, the double bass line (based on the high register of the instrument) creates a muffled somewhat crude sound. This contrasts

sharply with the bright sound attained by the solo line on the violin at the end of the piece. Conversely, the solo cello line at measures 42–47 played by the 1st desk, supported by all strings, generates a fuller, more expressive sound than the one achieved by the original score (played only by one cello).

However unambiguous the metrical organisation of this section, there are subsidiary groupings, stresses and boundaries, some of which are notated and others which are altered and emphasised at will by the performers. This was noticed during the performance of this piece held on the 10th December 2011 at the Teatru Manoel, Valletta, Malta by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra. During this performance, in particular in measures 33–39, musicians added and eliminated stresses unintentionally due to the constant shifting rhythmic groupings being set against a less explicit metrical background. This is an example of how Maltese musicians who are trained and used to performing in Maltese orchestras tend to read and perform music in their own right, expressing it the way they feel best. This would have not been the case had it been a German or an English orchestra where the notation is more rigorously followed. This is an interesting challenge for me as a composer, living and dealing with different musical traditions.⁹⁹ This difficulty was also experienced by the string quartets in Malta (all of whom are either Maltese musicians or foreigners who are established on the Island) who played the piece in its original version.

Though the new material in the *più mosso* section is a musical shift from the earlier sections, the introduction of a more elaborate rhythmic line on the double bass in measures 16–26 paves the way smoothly towards this new musical idiom. The long sustained notes on the 1st violins and violas in measures 27–32 are reminiscent of the

⁹⁹ Camilleri also commented on this to me on several occasions. He told me of one occasion when he recorded his *Malta Suite* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, they played exactly what he wrote, no more, no less, whereas a Maltese orchestra would have added embellishments and ‘flavours’ of their own (C. Camilleri, personal communication, 2007).

sustained chords established in the preceding sections. From measures 33–39 these are developed and transformed into more elaborate rhythms suggestive of the syncopated pizzicato rhythms played on the cellos and double bass initiated at measure 27 and retained until the end of the section.

The music of this section develops gradually until it reaches a point (measures 33–39) where simultaneous rhythmic groupings sound across each other creating a sense of a cross-rhythm, resolving into a cadence in measures 39–40. The divisi lines on the 1st violins, violas and cellos in this section, create a fuller body of sound than the thinner texture attained from the original version. Additionally, a deeper sound than the original score is achieved by the doubling of the cellos (2nd desk) with double basses throughout the various sections of the piece. The subsequent *meno mosso* section acts both as a transit as well as a preamble to the quasi-recapitulation of section A. This intervening material is both a shift and a driving force towards the texture of the initial section.

The cadenza played by the 1st desk of cellos at the end of this section (measures 44–47) foreshadows the solo violin at the end of the piece. The trill on the violas starting at measure 50 against the sustained chords begins the dissolution that is a feature of the last section of the piece. The trill gradual ending is fused through the glissando on the 1st violins, giving way to a clearer sound in measures 59–61. The sustained chord at measures 62–65 brings the music to a halt. The fuller sustained sound of the strings highlights the vibrant solo on the violin, which is even more striking than in the original version of the work. The solo ends unexpectedly with a slow glissando, recapitulating an earlier idea before decreasing to nothing.

The brilliant sound of this solo resembles the squillo tone of the opera singer, reminiscent of *chiaroscuro*, where the vibrant top line is coupled with the dark timbre—

typically produced in the singer's natural hollows and cavities—which is here embodied by the warm, deep sounds of the strings. This creates a sense of depth and space, producing a unique balance between light and dark.

2.5 January

Composed in 2010, this work¹⁰⁰ is dedicated to the memory of Professor Charles Camilleri, my ex-tutor and mentor. The title marks the first anniversary of the composer's death. From 2007, the year when he was unexpectedly hospitalised, until January 2009, the month of his demise, I kept contact by visiting him regularly both in hospital and later at his home in Naxxar, Malta where he was being cared for. In the days following his death, I began to consider the idea of composing a piece for orchestra, dedicated to him.

In August of 2009, the University of Malta (Gozo Campus) paid a tribute to Charles Camilleri in an evening of music and song chosen from his wide and varied repertoire. The programme included a number of Camilleri's most popular works, featuring some of the songs he wrote for the ballads by Maltese philosopher and lyricist Joe Friggieri. For this occasion I was commissioned to present a piece for any instrumentation. The result of this commission was a piece for chamber orchestra, at the time entitled *Suite 1*. Since the piece originally required a substantial number of instrumentalists, budget restrictions for such events required that I simplify the orchestration and reduce the number of performers. Notwithstanding this, the piece was very well received. Problems encountered during rehearsals all revolved around balancing the volume between the instrumentalists since the sound of the timpani was generally too loud and at times overpowered the rest of the instruments. The conductor had a demanding job in reaching a suitable balance so as to be as faithful as possible to the dynamic synergy the score indicated.

¹⁰⁰ Refer to Score and DVD entitled *Waiting/January* [1:29:24–1:41:43]

Following this performance, my thoughts returned to orchestral work, and after thorough consideration, I felt that though the style and texture were a highlight, both the form and orchestration—with special reference to the development of themes and motifs and the evolvment of new key signatures and melodic and rhythmic material—required a comprehensive revision. Together with all the drastic changes that this composition was subjected to, an important amendment was the change in the title. I decided to entitle the piece ‘January’, the month of the composer’s demise, in order to give a more distinctive personal tribute. Another vital modification was the introduction of the French horn and its significance in the piece. The addition of other brass instruments to the original instrumentation extended the tonal colours of the work.

Although written in memory of Charles Camilleri, it is not the best exemplar of his influence on my writing. The piece is not based on any particular Maltese roots/traditions, with the one exception of the tambourine in the last section, which is an instrument commonly used in traditional Maltese music, though not of course uniquely so. In this composition, my main aim was to present an orchestral piece which distinguished my style and inspirations—both integral parts of my formation as a musician and composer.¹⁰¹

In the new version of this work, melodic and rhythmic thematic material was revised into more coherent passages, leading to a more extended yet organised musical language within a new time sequence. Due to my experience in string playing, the development of the piece in relation to string writing progressed and developed into high technical passages that required musicians to give their full attention in order to obtain the right intonation, tone quality and volume compared to the other instruments. Another substantial development was the introduction of French horn solos in the piece.

¹⁰¹ Refer to Chapter 1 of Part 2.

Given my ongoing collaboration with Maltese French horn player Etienne Cutajar (also a collaborator of Camillieri), I thought of expanding the use of the instrument in this piece to a higher level. In light of all this and knowing how much Camillieri was fond of this instrument and his collaboration with the musician, I thought that this was the right decision to take. Whilst in working progress, I even took the opportunity to discuss the piece with Cutajar who gave me deeper insights regarding the instrument in relation to registers and techniques.

In the introduction, the French horn establishes a melancholic mood, sustained by the long-stretched pianissimo unison on the strings. In measure 9, a dialogue is established between the flute and the horn with chord interjections on the harp adding an ethereal feel to the whole musical scenario. The line on the horn in the subsequent measures remains at the fore, developing into a more elaborate language from measure 21 onwards, recalling a 'space-walk' texture much alluded to by Camillieri in his music.¹⁰² This concentration on one subject, upon which all attention is focused and from which all material is directly derived, helps to account for the unifying effect of this section, which is later developed into a fuller orchestration in the *molto rallentando* at measures 30 to 31 in the *a tempo* sub-section. The D minor 11th chord at the end of the section gives a sense of halt and at the same time a transition to an indefinite course, to a new section with a different texture, harmony and rhythmic structures.

The new vigorous section is introduced by the string section which, in unison, plays the main theme in a rigorous *marcato* yet light sound. This section is mainly based on a single melodic idea with a continuous rhythmic drive with a dance character, requiring thorough articulation and incisive rhythm when played. The texture is monophonic, becoming homophonic and polyphonic later on with abrupt shifts from

¹⁰² A musical solo passage thematically suggesting space.

loud to soft—achieved mainly by the adding or subtracting of instruments. All these features, together with the choice of instruments—strings, winds, harpsichord and some percussion—give a seventeenth-century feel to the music, bringing to mind music by Bach and Vivaldi.

The linear semiquaver lines on the strings are fused through dissonant chord patterns by the horn and trombone and double basses at measure 38, with the double bassoon joining in at measure 43. The rhythmic variation on the strings in measures 46 to 50 creates a sense of break from the equal rhythmic lines prevailing in this section, creating a flowing body of sound. In the sub-section to follow, the theme is set forth directly by the cello, which is then passed on to the viola and the other strings in a fugal form, having the main theme presented polyphonically with an extension serving as a countersubject to itself.

The entry of the cello line, which begins before the other phrase has ended, may be heard both as the end of one phrase and the beginning of another. Here one can hear the concluding note of a loud phrase and simultaneously, the beginning of a soft one, emerging from behind. The introduction of the brass at measure 54 evokes the entry previously enacted at measures 38 to 51 in long sustained chords, this time in accented, short, plangent rhythms, adding a jazzy feel against the established baroque-like lines on the strings. These chords recall Camilleri's 'atomisation of the beat', having self-contained units against established linear lines. Here I wanted to create a sense of free flowing, but structured section in a steady beat, by shifting the accents beyond the limits of a fictional bar-line.

The music comes to a standstill at measure 64, with the main theme, this time, played solely and softly by the 1st violins with the same rhythmic accented interjections by the brass and double basses, commencing at measure 67, as well as by the

woodwinds at measures 71 to 76, developing into a contrasting texture. The introduction of the harpsichord and harp at measures 76 to 89 highlights the baroque timbre prevailing in this section, producing a sense of drama, tension and exuberance against the lyrical line played on the horn. This section is merged through the soft tremolo on the timpani and ends gradually at measure 90 passing on to the *meno mosso* section. The soft suspended cymbal sets the mood of the section to follow.

The solo violin introduces the section, immediately followed in the subsequent measure by a G minor 9th chord on the harp against the soft quintuplets on the woodwinds and horn—resembling the sound of twittering birds—which are subtly answered by the harp and celesta in a smooth, eloquent, unison line, creating a contrasting mood with the preceding section. Here I wanted to create an atmosphere of serenity, an allusion to freedom, suggesting a ‘new beginning’. The tremolos on the harp and strings, commencing at measure 102, add to the fluidity of the musical passage. Due to the soft texture of the section (the soft tremolos, sustained chords and quintuples), the solos on the violins achieve the effect of resonance.

The ending of the phrase (measures 105 to 108) in the horn line evokes the entries on the harp and celesta at measures 95 to 97 (same rhythm and same style of writing), this time in a downward interval. This same idea is repeated at measures 111 to 112 again on the harp as well as the celesta in unison with the woodwinds with an upward interval as presented in its original entries at measures 95 to 97 and 98 to 100. The solo on the 1st violin at measure 109 (played by the 1st desk) against the solo 2nd violin (played by the 2nd desk) suggests the solo entries of the 1st violin and 2nd violin at measures 104 and 105 respectively. At measures 113 to 114, the bird-like squeaks appear again on the woodwinds and celesta, supported by the tremolo of the strings and

harp. The rhythmic germs on the timpani at measures 108 and 114 suggest the quintuple rhythmic patterns played in this section at various instances.

The solo horn at measures 116 to 121 evokes the initial lament, an almost mystic line in the introductory section commencing at measure 3. This comes to end with entries on the other woodwinds at measure 123 in a canon-line structure, paving the way for a solo on the harpsichord with a countermelody on the harp and harmonic support on the strings, calling again to mind eighteenth century chamber music. The horn resumes in another ardent yet melancholic line at measures 135 to 138. The timpani join in at measure 136 in a solo virtuosic line, leading the way back to the fast fugal section in a different tonality. The main theme resumes on the cello, pursued by the viola section at measure 143, 2nd violins at measure 147 and 1st violins at measure 151. The development of this section contains two climaxes. The first commences at the last beat of measure 153–154, where the polyphonic texture is thick, with the strings (1st and 2nd violins, violas and cellos) playing the main theme, the woodwinds, brass, harpsichord, celeste, double bass and timpani supplying harmonic support, and the horn adding a melody of its own.

After the thick texture of this section, with the high 1st violins and 2nd violins alternating in stretto on the main theme, a passage of thinner texture (measures 166–172) follows, leading the way to the second climax, which gradually builds up from measure 182 until the end of the piece. At this point, the quieter disposition, the glissandos on the harp and the downward sixteenth-note rhythmic pattern induce a lighter mood. Following the heavier texture of the preceding section, this building-up passage gives the impression of openness rather than tension, suggesting calmness and openness of space.

The Maltese landscape features the imposing architecture of mostly neo-classical and baroque churches.¹⁰³ The sonic element of their bells is central to the soundscape. The long-held high notes on the flutes and the linear chords, moving in a rigid quasi-parallel motion, give a ritualistic effect to the music. Hence, the titlee gives further insight into my inspirations when composing the passage in question. The suspended chord on the strings against the timpani, in the last bars of this section (meno mosso), gives a sense of expectancy and longing for a higher order level, progressively serving to heighten the expectations for a resolution.

In this piece, two distinct styles emerge and are meticulously wound into one complete composition. The work evokes an affinity with baroque music in combination with a contemporary idiom. In terms of meaning, this composition is a symbol for the work itself. It is not a symbol for the mood or reason for why this composition was composed at the time, nor is it a symbol for a generalized set of emotions and feelings, which were perhaps intended to be communicated to the listener. Even if it were conceived to be so, the further removed the listener is from the time and milieu of when the composition was composed, the more difficult the actual communication becomes. What remains is a concept, or a symbol of that concept, upon which the listener is free to impose whatever conceptions s/he desires.

¹⁰³ Refer to Chapter 1 of Part 1.

2.6 Ġgantija 2013

In August 2009, I met Gozitan artist Victor Agius who proposed that I work with him on an artistic project. His idea was to integrate music and visual art. Having already worked on a similar project, I was keen to work closely with a visual artist again. The idea was to work on a proposal which would give free rein to our artistic freedom, whilst at the same time blending the diverse mediums of visual art and sound into one cohesive language. *Ġgantija 2013*¹⁰⁴ was inspired by the Ġgantija prehistoric temples in Gozo, Malta. The lyrics for this composition were written exclusively by Maltese writer Immanuel Mifsud in the form of free style poetry.

Similar projects have been undertaken by Italian composer and paleorganologist Walter Maioli. Maioli, the founder of Il Centro del Suono, has undertaken a lifelong exploration of the relationship between nature, sound and music through the recording of sounds of different environments and their inhabitants as a sensorial experience.¹⁰⁵ As was the case with *Ġgantija 2013*, Maioli's concerts took place in the prehistoric sites of Toirano and Borgio Verezzi, Italy. Another interesting art-inspired music project was the interdisciplinary initiative curated by the McNally Smith Music College (USA) faculty member William Franklin, a Liberal Arts instructor, with the help of the Department Head of Music Composition, Chris Cunningham. Similar to this work, the project features nine compositions based on Minnesota artists' paintings, photography, sculpture and the architecture of The Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St Paul, USA).¹⁰⁶ During my first visit to the temples I took the musical instruments which I deemed would be best to play at the venue—the violin, cello, some un-pitched percussion

¹⁰⁴ Refer to Score and DVD entitled *Ġgantija 2013*.

¹⁰⁵ Refer to <http://www.soundcenter.it/>

¹⁰⁶ Refer to <http://www.mcnallysmith.edu/news-and-events/186>

instruments, a pan flute and a didgeridoo. The choice of these instruments was mainly based on the acoustic and timbral qualities of the instruments. Being a string player I could investigate and work on the unlimited possible techniques that could be a source of development in the piece. The pan flute provided a balance between the treble frequencies of the violin and the deep low sounds of the didgeridoo and cello. The percussion instruments could create boundless rhythmic patterns and sound effects, some based on preconceived patterns and others on improvisation. Agius arranged all the required recording equipment. Apart from these musical instruments, stones and other objects found at the temples were also used for some rhythmic gestures and effects. A pianist joined us to work on the recording, together with another musician who was asked to play the didgeridoo.

As the composer of the piece, I had some rhythmic starting points and techniques that I wanted to exercise and perform on the two string instruments (even though the two instruments were much more elaborately played), but much of the material was planned to evolve or be improvised on site. The drone played on the cello evolved in sequential patterns of double, triple and quadruple stops and glissandos which amalgamated with the didgeridoo, acting as timbral space for a musical control structure. The original raw material intended for the violin evolved into flourishing, at times squeaking, sound. All these emerged in relation to each other in what formed the basis of the piece. With my guidance both as a musician and composer of this piece, this process served to help the musicians indulge in the spontaneous creative decision-making processes involved in improvisation. Whilst playing the cello and later the violin, I encouraged Agius and the other two musicians to interact with the fragments of material I played. They followed my performance and a systematic and organised improvisatory session took shape.

Some Neolithic recipients found on site were also played. One of them was a stone-aged-carved bowl, full of rainwater. The moving of the bowl and the brisk shaking of the water inside the bowl, created a sonic and visual backcloth for the whole performance. The common feeling the four of us experienced in those two hours of playing was astounding. In spite of the almost mystic silence around the temples, it was as if we were performing in front of an ancient audience who were an integral part of the event. Discussion of these thoughts and feelings was integral to the work as it engendered a sharing of experiences between the musicians and myself, making it possible for the music to develop in response to the feedback given, which further informed the development of their improvisations in an organised framework.

This initial phase of the project resulted in a number of free musical sketches and a few drawings by the artist. Listening to the recording, I realised that it could be improved upon in both form and sonic quality. The improvisatory sections needed to be structured and shaped to better develop the composition. Since the music was not recorded by a trained engineer or with the use of high-quality microphones, another setback to the recording was the lack of balance between the dynamics of the instruments. These aspects were later addressed in a recording studio. The producer and I listened to the recording segments and developed the piece into one coherent whole. The balancing of the instruments was targeted towards obtaining a sound quality that was close to a live performance without detracting from the ambience sound.

This musical work attempts to depict primitive sounds and the atmosphere elicited during the recording process. In my piece and in the artist's work, we tried to imagine and feel and then interpret for the audience (through the auditory and visual) the cries and chants echoing within the thick megalithic walls of these sacred temples. Although we worked in separate studios using different media, Agius and I felt that the

common theme linking us helped us empathise with the temple's aura and eventually transmit this spirit into our works.

These are also vividly represented in Agius's paintings and mixed media sculptures [see Plates 22–24]. Agius's painting and sculptures help the audience get involved in a 'fictional world' and offer insights about it. Music and visual art are here seen as an analogy or metaphor in artistic expression. Most of the sculptures can be defined as 'non-representational art', reflecting their relationship with music and the belief that, like music, art is created from the depths of one's inner self and the purest way to express this is without recognisable imagery. As with art, the music composition is abstract in its expressive qualities, with the fusion of electroacoustic effects and acoustic sounds that relate to the different types of material used by Agius (clay, wood, and metal). The raw tones of the violin and cello (with reference to the non-use of vibrato and the frequent music produced on the low register of the instruments), the un-pitched percussion and other effects created by the didgeridoo relate to the crude texture of Agius's sculptures, which portray the unrefined stones of the temples, creating at the end, one unified performance made up of a 'cause and effect'.

The piece responds to qualities tied to the Ġgantija Temples. Hence, the building of percussion instruments made from terracotta material was a decision taken after research by the artist and myself in relation to the archaeological remains found near the Ġgantija Temples. Much of the statues and tools found on site are made of clay as it was customary during the Neolithic period, especially in the Stentinello culture in southeast Sicily where clay abounds (Bonanno, 1987, p. 3). The instruments that were built for this piece aimed at generating sounds emanating from clay, a *materia prima*

commonly used for domestic and agriculture utensils from the Neolithic time up to the early Middle Ages¹⁰⁷. These instruments give a particular identity to the composition.

Whilst working on his pieces, Agius repeatedly listened to my composition, as this helped him to better grasp my musical vision of the physical ambiance of the temples, which is the epitome of the project. The irregular rhythms of the composition are reproduced and re-enacted in the artist's way of working when modelling the crude clay and applying the earthy pigments and dry roots to his art pieces. The result of this joint effort is an artistic display of Victor Agius's works and a live performance of the composition delivered in one multi-media work. At this point of the process, the performance had to be prompted by a thorough consideration of the original musical language in relation to location and site.

The outcome of this project can be understood in terms of 'influence and effect'—the 'influence and effect' that we transmit to each other as two diverse artists and 'the influence and effect' which is conveyed to and from the audience. Agius's sculptures and paintings kept on changing as a result of the music, having operated within a context of ideas and adopted working practices, which were given yet another meaning by the audience, with a direct impact on the work itself.

¹⁰⁷ Among the objects retrieved from Neolithic, Bronze Age, Phoenician and Roman tombs in Malta, artefacts made of pottery prove the widespread use of clay (Evans, 1971).



Plate 22 Clay, sand, natural pigments, branches, roots on board, 2010 by Victor Agius
(120x120x40cm)



Plate 23 Gozo Clay on MDF, 2010 by Victor Agius
(55x55x75cm)



Plate 24 *Ġgantija XV* by Victor Agius
(Area: 3m²)

Note. Intended to be displayed without the wooden platform.

The installation of the project involved considerable preparation and decisions to take as a group and on an individual basis. Choosing the musicians was a highly demanding task. The musicians had to be familiar with contemporary music and have experience in performing at different venues and set-ups. The performers had to play outside in a non-conventional setting as they were placed at different areas inside the north and south temples. String players were stationed next to each other. As the one who had to give cues and direct the music, I was positioned next to the percussionist, as he was the one who needed more direction. Since the music of the synthesiser and the didgeridoo generally move together, they were placed next to each other so that they could interact with and listen to each other. The piano stayed on its own in one of the apses in the temple adjacent to the strings. The singer was wearing in-ear monitors and a headset microphone so that she would be able to move from one temple to another and listen to my instructions and cues and to the other musicians. All the musicians wore headphones to maintain contact with the rest of the group and to listen to my directions.

Prior to the beginning of rehearsals, the music was discussed with all the musicians. Discussions focused around what could be added and what could not be created. Electronic effects were discussed with the performer in charge of the synthesiser and electronic media. As indicated on the score, musicians were only directed up to a certain extent since they also had the possibility to improvise and add material within a pre-set musical framework and without jeopardising or undermining the original musical intentions.

While I was compiling and re-orchestrating the piece I felt that the instrumentation was not complete. I sensed that a human voice would add to the primordial essences of the piece through a contemporary language. A female lyrical soprano voice was the most aesthetically suitable of all choices, portraying the grandeur of the female god of prehistoric times. A powerful soprano voice would have cut across the boundaries of the temples on a spatial level aided through the expansive setup of the performers and their permutation. Given the nature of the lyrics, the singer's style was adapted to the style of Greek actress and singer Irene Papas¹⁰⁸, as discussed and agreed upon with the lyrics writer. A dramatic tension was sensed throughout the performance, intensified by the sharp powerful elongated consonants inherent in Maltese words. Opera singer Miriam Cauchi found the style captivating, yet rather difficult to master. Nevertheless, with sufficient rehearsals and tutoring she was able to produce the right timbre with a versatile, yet stable texture.

Transcribing the music from the original audio CD to a score proved to be an extremely demanding job. However, this task helped me re-evaluate the music and reconsider the possibilities in an attempt to leave the music in its original state, yet at the same time give it an uplift through experimentation and digital processing. Working

¹⁰⁸ Refer to <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0660327/>

side-by-side with the artist helped in no small way to remain focused and to develop a unified creative process of interdisciplinary discourse.

The main issue remained the indications of the entrances and cuts of sections on the score. When I started rehearsals, no matter how many directions I indicated on the score, I noticed that without a conductor musicians would not be able to interact properly and coherently. The more cues I gave the better they performed, creating a much more cohesive sound. My directions also helped them feel much more comfortable to improvise when it was appropriate to do so and to add to the music wherever indicated. However, in such cases there is always the risk of either drifting from the original composition or else stifling the freedom of the musicians. Pre-performance discussions helped identify the right balance for the piece, ensuring continuity and differentiation whenever it is performed.

The format of the score and the information provided, led musicians to follow the music and improvise where indicated. Yet, due to its flowing, almost 'spacey' quality (with long silent stretches of music in a time-free tempo) performances differed each time the piece was played. In such moments of unmetred time, it was necessary for me to indicate entrances, leaving yet again, space for both the singer and the percussionist to improvise accordingly. The balance between the written music and the improvised sections was essential for this piece to obtain the required result without hindering the original character of the music.

Apart from the inspiration that the place had on my composition, the improvisation sessions by the musicians during the composition process, back in 2009, had a bearing on the final output. Notwithstanding this, the score musically translates my ideas, juxtaposing the bits and pieces of the improvisatory musical sketches in one whole piece. This musical composition is directly linked to the main theme of the thesis.

It communicates to the listener my identity moulded layer by layer through my connections with the past and a bearing the environment exerts on me. This gives an authorship to this piece and an identity related to the site and my personal observations. This links to the question of identity and my role as a composer, which in such a piece has had a primary function. Such a role has been taken by making decisions directly related to the music in relation to the performance venue.

The music aided by the echoed lyrics characterised by unmetred time sections (the elongated letters) generate a sense of mystery.¹⁰⁹ The effects of the music are accentuated by the solemnity of the place. The bareness and the silence which capture the visitor every time the temples are visited, stirred in my composition a minimalistic idiom, with repetitive themes accompanied by drones and repetitive rhythms fused in electronic sounds. These themes are mainly played by the cello, at times with variations on the violins. At some points, the complexity of the entries of instruments in various parts of the piece and improvisatory sections played by the percussion give a denser texture to the music.

This piece, up to a certain extent, can be performed in another place that matches the same purpose in past and present time, or has similar architectural attributes. Examples of such places are: other prehistoric temples, roman and paleo-christian sites and early medieval buildings. Common ingredients found in these places which accompany the composition are bareness, sacredness and simplicity. On the other hand, the lyrics are exclusively tied to the site. Changing the lyrics to suit a different site would give a different identity to the piece.

¹⁰⁹ Example of echoed lyrics in *Ġgantija 2013*: “Ġgannnnnnnnnn. Ġgannnnnnnnnn. Ġgan”



Plate 25 Two of the guests admiring one of the artistic sculptures inside the Temple



Plate 26 Guests listening to and appreciating the artistic installations



Plate 27 Soprano Miriam Cauchi performing in the middle of the crowd

In the original version of the work (pre-arrangement recording) the main theme seemed to have a different slant when heard vis-à-vis the other instruments. In the new arrangement of the piece, the theme (which remained the same) was integrated within the heavier texture and with the high-pitched voice of the singer, which at times took over the whole musical scenario. This created an aura around the piece which became progressively longer with fuller orchestration. Notwithstanding this, the theme (e.g. measures 248–250) served to build up the climax of the piece.

The composition responds to the Ġgantija site taking into consideration its meaning for Maltese society as an important landmark in the history of a populace. The piece was performed on the 21st June 2013 in a newly rearranged version for 2 violins, cello, piano, percussion (including self-made instruments), synthesiser and PC, didgeridoo and soprano. It was performed at the Ġgantija Temples by Ars Vitae Ensemble. Formed specifically for this occasion, the group aims at creating collaborative projects that use contemporary art and music composition as a primary medium to interact with cultural, social and historical concepts through creative research and re-invention.

During the performance, due to the nature of the music, the players were not given parts to play from, but a full score, since they needed to follow all instrumentation. I did not feel the need to provide two separate scores for the conductor and the musicians since I felt it was appropriate for both conductor and musicians to read from the same score (following the same identical indications and cues). The score makes it possible for the music to be performed again. The duration of the event allowed the music to be performed four times, but as intended, each performance was different due to its open structure. The particularity about this composition is that it is open for

interpretation every time it is executed. Nonetheless, the version played on this occasion was in line with my intentions: open to improvisations within a structured context.

During the composition process I envisaged different approaches to interpreting the environment, and the manner in which builders invoke a sense of rhythm and flow through their designs. In this project, I also wanted to capture something that represents the way we perceive the ‘temples atmosphere’—something less tangible, but central to our identity. What is stimulating about such projects are the different expectations audiences have for such events. It is important for such projects not to impose on the place, and to let it speak for itself and to keep things clear and simple by producing a piece that has genuine social use and artistic integrity. Such notions are to be pre-conceived and planned so as not to obscure the site itself and the work of the artistic partner. All three components need to complement each other and make the installation complete.

This project survives through a video recording that ensured a documentation of experience as testament of what took place during its performance on site. This documentation will eventually be exhibited in a closed area in the near future. It also presents a different narrative of the event and helps the audience to have something to fall back on other than the producers’ accounts.

2.7 Daria's Vision

*Daria's Vision*¹¹⁰ is an interdisciplinary collaboration between myself and visual artist Ruth Bianco. It was one of the three artistic projects presented at the *Contemporary Sounds* exhibition organised by the MACM in collaboration with St James Cavalier. The event was supported by the Malta Arts Fund.

Daria's Vision is a reflective re-enactment of the rebellious vision of Daria, the protagonist in the film *Zabriskie Point* (1970)¹¹¹, against an unfair and capitalist society. The original film is an epic portrait of America in the late sixties, as seen through the portrayal of two of its offspring: anthropology student Daria and dropout Mark, who is wanted by the authorities for allegedly killing a policeman during a student riot.

Our re-enactment creates a 'conceptual bridge' between past and recent events (student and political uprisings in the 70s and the recent problem of illegal migration, mainly in Mediterranean countries). It focuses upon contemporary international tensions realised through a conceptual post-production of a segment from the original film. It seeks to relate issues that were prevalent in the 60s counterculture setting of *Zabriskie Point*, noted for its eroding landscape located in Death Valley, National Park in the USA as seen through the New Wave cinematography of that era. That period exploded with global protests, partly in response to the Vietnam War, and the subsequent student rebellion against conservative and controlling governments. The video work is brought up to date with similar upheavals that have recently occurred in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya

¹¹⁰ Refer to DVD entitled *Daria's Vision*.

¹¹¹ *Zabriskie Point* is a 1970 American film by Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni. The soundtrack to *Zabriskie Point* includes music from Pink Floyd, The Youngbloods, The Kaleidoscope, Jerry Garcia, Patti Page, the Grateful Dead, the Rolling Stones and John Fahey (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0066601/>).

and Yemen, that have had rippling effects in other places, with repercussions even in Malta.

Whilst watching the explosion scene in *Zabriskie Point*, I was inspired by the ‘visual music’. This occurred the first time Ruth Bianco introduced the film to me—the beautiful mushrooming form, colours, movement and sound of the repeated explosions upon explosions upon explosions, forming a kind of kinesthesia.

The character of Daria represents any revolutionary contemporary youth from any country of the world, including Malta. As with the original Daria, the youth in *Daria's Vision* is facing new quests for national identity and emerging issues of xenophobia, especially in the Western world. Currently, Malta is experiencing an influx of illegal immigrants and refugees. Unfortunately no clear cut distinction is made with regards to illegal immigrants and refugees and the latter face hardships in having their status recognised. A shot in the video specifically depicts this reality. Daria is here interacting with the complexities of political issues with her sarcastic look almost signifying a superficial insight into the problems.

Appropriating the iconic explosion scene featuring Daria Halprin and Pink Floyd's soundtrack, the video bends time by warping the original sequence of the earlier movie. This play re-engages ready footage to rearrange time factors transforming a pre-existing context and narrating new realities and meanings. The production is the work of two artists embracing 1970s pop art (Antonioni and Pink Floyd) and the contemporary intervention of two other artists in this work, resulting in a contemporary video installation that gives rise to both past¹¹² and current political issues¹¹³. Soprano

¹¹² Revolutions and riots associated with the violation of human rights, especially during the 1960s/1970s period. These riots often saw students as the main protagonists.

Marisa Galea is then the 'link person' between myself as the composer and Ruth as the artist who created the stills from Daria's Vision, comprising the conceptual text-video, which she was reciting as part of her live performance.

Daria is represented as transfixed in a visionary state when she turns her head back. At this point her image is dissolved into images of the future: events taking place in post 1960s in the Mediterranean basin which are directly linked to the quest for human rights. Daria's expression shows satisfaction at the huge blast resulting in an annihilation of something that was once solidly built and compact. This is not only a glimpse of 1970s terrorism, which saw youths as protagonists, but is also a manifestation of the internal and external rebellion that often characterises youth itself.

The blast in the film (resulting from a highly powerful weapon) at the opening of the video, which keeps on recurring throughout the whole work, depicts a narrative which is then reinterpreted through the images represented on the other side of the screen. These explosions are a symbol of destruction, symbolising also the earthquake that is currently affecting old traditions and values. Presently in Malta, the dismantling of old traditions and values stems not only from the influx of Western culture (Anglo-Saxon) but also from different cultures brought forward by illegal immigrants from North African countries. The video makes clear reference to the 2011 evacuation from Libya to Malta.

This illegal immigration phenomenon, currently affecting a vast number of Westernized countries, in the long run can result in a shifting of identities; Malta is facing such a reality. Illegal immigrants are slowly infiltrating various sectors of society,

¹¹³ Presently request for freedom in countries which still have a dictatorship ruling or in which minorities or some sectors of society have no rights at all. This gives rise to racism and xenophobia. In western countries boasting a democratic form of government and ways of life, minorities still may suffer violation of their human rights. A case in point is the illegal migration phenomenon affecting Mediterranean countries.

thus contributing to a change in the long and old established traditions. This recent phenomenon will invariably affect culture in Malta and old Maltese ways of life. The forces of change in society have a direct impact on the artist's creations. For example, lately there has been an increase in Maltese groups playing ethnic instruments (some of them man-made) performing a repertoire which hints at Maghrebian music.¹¹⁴

Daria's Vision consists of five protagonists: Michelangelo Antonioni as the producer of the original film, Pink Floyd as the group who produced the music, Ruth Bianco as the visual artist, me as the person who created the musical interventions and Marisa Galea as the singer. For this production, parts of the film have been post produced by Bianco, resulting in a modified tempo of the original timing of the film, affecting the original music of the film by Pink Floyd. Although these video modifications were pre-set by Bianco, we finalised this process together as an experiment in 'filmic or motion collage'. Part of the intended experiment was to extend the ideas and contemporary notions of 'post-producing' (Artist Nicolas Bourriaud, 2002, describes our world of "resampling", reproducing the past via different strategies) also onto the pre-existing "found sound" in terms of the earlier Pink Floyd and explosion sounds—which is where my creative interventions found space and meaning. The music of Pink Floyd emerged during the 1960s, a decade associated with students' rebellions. This renders the group, especially due to the song *Another Brick in the Wall*¹¹⁵ synonymous with ideals aimed at dismantling old hegemonies.

¹¹⁴ Refer to Tribali group on www.tribalimusic.com and *Etnika Project* on filflarecordsmusic.bandcamp.com. This project was created to boost local and international consciousness of Maltese traditional music by gathering and reinterpreting local songs and melodies.

¹¹⁵ *Another Brick in the Wall* is the title of three songs set to variations of the same basic theme, on Pink Floyd's 1979 rock opera, *The Wall*, subtitled Part 1 (working title *Reminiscing*), Part 2 (working title *Education*), and Part 3 (working title *Drugs*) (<http://www.allmusic.com/artist/pink-floyd-mn0000346336>).

During the initial meetings with the artist, I was able to to evaluate her work and the post-productive exercise on the original music, which inspired me to work on a variety of musical sketches for violin and cello. The use of the violin and cello, both played by myself, seemed to be the perfect combination in order to create various glissandos, harmonics, multiple stops and other stringent effects, easily achieved by these instruments, and which would be fused and blended in the pre-existing film sounds. The choice of a young soprano voice, representing Daria's character and her youthful innocent age, helped in the creation of a good balance between the original sounds and the smooth blending of the added instrumentation to the original work.

During this procedure we worked on establishing the best tempo and volume of the post-productive work so that we could get the best visual and auditory effects. This resulted in an extremely modified stretched slow tempo (with a change in pitch), which created a distortion of the original music, forming the base of my musical interventions. The recordings of these interventions, including the vocal part, were multi-layered and fused within the manipulated sound of the original music of the film. This was another stance where the 'cause and effect' featured all through the creative process.

The visual and the auditory influenced each other from the very beginning of the working process leading me and Bianco to discuss the possible compromise between the visual and the auditory in order to obtain the best solution for a collaborative project. This gave the project an identity of its own where the original artistry of Antonioni, as the producer and the music of Pink Floyd were manipulated in a way so as to create an artwork which functions as a network of interconnected elements. This culture of use implies a profound transformation of the status of the original work: going beyond its traditional role as a receptacle of the artists' vision, it now functions as an active agent,

a musical score, an unfolding scenario, a framework that possesses autonomy and materiality to varying degrees.

Playing with tempo (sound and vision), motion and duration is part of the creative exploration through direct engagement with the timeline of video-making. Image-wise, the split-screen of the presented video re-engages with time events by re-ordering previous linearity to create new synchronicities and therefore, new contexts and meanings. This multiplicity occurs further through double projections in the installation site (i.e. the split-screen loop on one wall and the floating text on the other wall, accentuated by the singer during the performance adding to the spatial dimension).

Daria's Vision and the other two projects were launched at St James Cavalier on the 10th July 2011 in Valletta, Malta, each in separate but adjacent rooms. During the launch, people were invited to move from one room to another to attend a live or semi-live performance of all three projects. *Daria's Vision* was presented with a live voice intervention performance as a one-off component forming part of the opening of the exhibition, followed by a regular video/sound projection exhibition running until 23rd July 2011 [see Plate 28].



Plate 28 *Daria's Vision* during the performance [15 minutes] followed by regular projection

PROJECTION INSTALLATION PLAN (as image) + EQUIPMENT

Video 1:

A single channel split-screen projection on this wall

Requirements:

1 HD projector + 1 player

A set of good quality speakers for sound [which incorporates music composition]

Dark ambience

Sound required fairly high for impact

Video 2:

A second projection on adjacent wall with a TEXT video [text rolling on a repeat loop]; No sound

Requirements:

1 DVD projector + 1 player



Stills from *Daria's Vision* - Video 1

Daria's Vision is a conceptual *détournement* that plays upon the regurgitation of history and events, images and media. This manipulation of the iconic explosion scene from *Zabriskie Point* (Michelangelo Antonioni) into a split-screen video disrupts the original sequence in order to add further comment and reposition the spectator's position. The rebellious youthful spirit of the 70s reflected in *Daria* is transported into the present through black/white journalistic insertions of today's protesting youth in recent politics. These appropriated superimpositions of the present into the earlier film therefore become its "future". In the first still, for instance, *Daria* echoes today's young rebel through a dissolving superimposition of a recent protesting Arab female student. The juxtaposed obvious Hiroshima reference [Antonioni's film also builds on documentary of the time] adds to the conceptual regurgitation of the world's condition as a "collage on collage on collage". In the bottom still, the artist juxtaposed the cliché ending [where the hero walks into the sunset] with a superimposition of the recent tsunami in Japan whereby *Daria's* car appears to be slowly sinking into the water [not dissimilar to the way Virginia Woolf slowly drowns herself in the water in the film called *The Hours*].

Note on Video 2

A conceptual text-video accompanies Video 1 described above. Video 2 is a looped rolling text-video extracted from a small section of dialogue between *Daria* and Mark from the original film-script. It echoes a playful though poignant exchange conveying the youthful and futuristic desire for freedom.



Plate 29 During the performance: voice intervention, interspersed by spoken film-script fragments:
'Love, where? Are you really asking? Don't you feel at home here?'

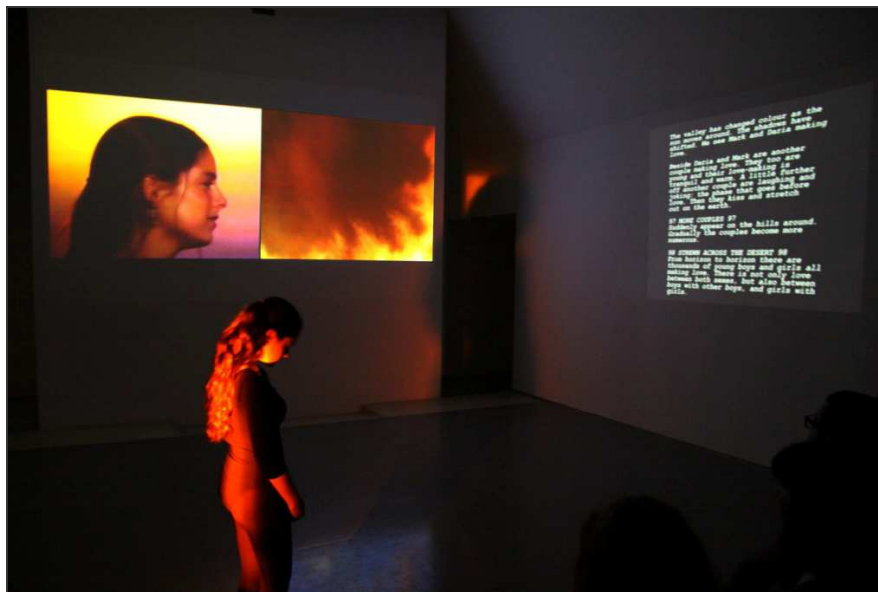


Plate 30 Singer Marisa Galea in the context of the project

These photographs were taken during the evening performance launch on 10th July 2011 at St James Cavalier in Valletta, Malta [see Plates 29–31]. For this evening launch, *Daria's Vision* was presented with an additional live voice intervention [over and above her recorded intervention as a further choir layer]. For additional effect, the singer was spot lit [iris spot with orange jell] and had a microphone attached.



Plate 31 Installation photo at St James Cavalier, Valletta, July 2011

Daria's Vision

Very Slow and flowing

Soprano Solo *mp*

9 humming all throughout

S. Solo

18 enter after drone on cello
repeat this section ad lib
mp
humming all throughout

26 stop gradually

only instruments

Musical score for 'Daria's Vision' in 4/4 time. It features four staves of music. The first staff is for Soprano Solo, starting with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a 'humming all throughout' instruction. The second staff is for S. Solo, starting at measure 9. The third staff is also for S. Solo, starting at measure 18, with instructions to 'enter after drone on cello', 'repeat this section ad lib', and 'humming all throughout'. The fourth staff is for S. Solo, starting at measure 26, with a 'stop gradually' instruction. A 'only instruments' instruction is placed at the end of the second staff.

Example 21: The two main themes which are heard in different sections, either on their own, mixed at different durations or manipulated so as to create multiple lines.

This project was another opportunity for me to work and collaborate with another artist working with different media. Though the project was successful in concept, it raised a number of challenges in implementation and interaction. During the working process we had to recognise that at times we had different viewpoints mainly related to the postproduction of the video itself and to how my music could be best integrated with this. Other issues were related to the presentation of the live performance in relation to the video. The collaboration process was an informal and accidental one where research goals happened to coincide to mutually enriching each other.

The project is inspired on multiple levels and links—that of the re-representation of historic and political events through similar episodes projected in the 70s and 2011 through filmic materials; and creatively reworking pre-existing celluloid and sound. Identity and the loss of identities play a vital role and are part of our present-day issues questioning the notion of signature and the consumption of space; as remapping existing material is similar to remapping land and the shedding of earlier political programmes and identities to reshape new ones. The re-configuration of space is a ubiquitous phenomenon reflected in modern societies through speedy technologies and our meditated spaces. Forces of continuity in culture in Malta are giving way to forces of change brought forward by this re-mapping of space, where Maltese and foreign traditions are being fused, resulting in the birth of multi-culturalism. Hence, my creations absorb these influxes and render my music open to multi-faceted traditions.

Appendices

1

Interview

The following is a transcript of an interview with Charles Camilleri, which took place on the 18th April, 2006. This is likely to have been his last interview as he since suffered a severe stroke and died on the 3rd of January 2009.

1. Do you think that the basis of your music is very much influenced by Maltese culture?

Yes, I believe it and I do it because if it wasn't so, I wouldn't have created all those works identified as "nationalistic". Ever since my childhood, I had already compiled a list of all the things (works) that I would eventually do. To be honest, I was not sure if I would have done them in Maltese, but I wanted to do something Maltese. So, I wrote a list, like composing an Opera in Maltese, the *Maltese Suite*, *Maltese Dances*, etc... I used to read about great composers and noticed that all of them did so, like the Greek dances, for instance...

2. So, are you declaring that those great composers, whom you used to read about, also used folkloristic elements in their musical works?

Yes, but some of them, not all obviously... But as I said before, when I was young, I decided I wanted to do something in Maltese and the problem was that I did not have anyone to help me. People did not tell me explicitly "no" but seemed very detached. The Maltese mentality was so evidently closed-minded that even when I got older and one of my pieces was published by Novellos, in London, many Maltese asked me: "why are you giving your pieces Maltese titles?" (such as *It-Talba*, *Żernieq* etc...) They told me that Maltese titles will eventually do me a lot of harm! But I just ignored their affirmations and persevered in working on my ideas. Well you know how stubborn I am!

3. *So are you stating that in your early years as a composer you wanted to use Maltese elements so that you could have been identified as Maltese?*

No, what I actually mean is that I wanted to compose music to give an identity to my country, Malta. When I used to go to music lessons in Malta, teachers used to give me piano pieces by Chopin, Grieg etc... For me these became heroes. However, I noticed also that we did not have much folklore in our country and for me that was a problem.

4. *And as you are now mentioning your folkloristic works, what are your comments about the fact that the “Malta Suite” (a work which you are really famous for here in Malta) was chosen as the Maltese National Composition to be executed in Bulgaria this year?*

This composition has been performed abroad many times and obviously every occasion is always an achievement for me and I think that by now the message has been reached—thus, giving Malta an identity.

5. *Can you say something about the “Malta Suite”?*

I was only 15 years old when the *Malta Suite* was performed for the first time. However, it was not as it is today. Then, in the 1960's it was performed for the first time in Malta, but before that it had been performed a lot of times on the CDC in America and in London.

6. *Your music passed through phases and periods (similar to many other composers). How do you distinguish these periods vis-à-vis Maltese identity? And, can you declare that your recent compositions still show traces of Maltese emblems?*

In the beginning of my career, I needed recognisable motifs like for instance this cadence:



(He played this Maltese motif on the piano)

I took this motif from the Maltese *ghana*. I used these cadences so that people could know that **that** is Maltese. This was during my first years as a composer... As the years went by, these motifs took up a more abstract shape. However, people used to tell me that they could still decipher Maltese traits in my works. Then, I found myself trapped in all this thinking. I didn't want to remain "nationalistic", so there came a new period for me, where I became interested in the 12-tone technique. However, I wrote something purely Maltese using the 12-tone: *Il-Ħemda* (written for piano). So, what I did is that I got hold of the Maltese sounds, like imitating the sound of the guitar on the piano and playing cluster chords which I used to label sun chords (referring to and embracing our Maltese sunshine!).

7. The music of Xenakis is contemporary in nature but it is still based on Greek cultural roots. So, are you claiming that your music is similar, in concept, to the music of Xenakis?

Yes it is. In fact, it is very difficult to attain that. One has an idea of folklore, which transforms itself in abstract thought, but the roots can still be felt and in fact they are still there.

8. In actual fact Mediterranean music is made up of certain melodies that can be twisted in the way you want—a rather different concept from the other European melodies. What are your observations about this?

Yes, you are right and that is because Mediterranean people improvise a lot. Folkloristic tunes are never sung by local people in the same way. So, instead of me trying to systemize and control this improvisation, it gave me a lot of inspiration. As a matter of fact, from a very young age I was obsessed with the idea of things which are “the same but never the same”. For example, if one takes our Maltese typical rubble wall and you look at it, you find that there is no starting or ending points, even though you look at it from different angles.

9. So, does this mean that what you transcribed in your music was not only Maltese folklore, but also Maltese surroundings, atmosphere and feelings?

Yes a lot of that, but not only that. It is also how you look at things, like for example when you look at a tree, you admire its beauty, but if you look at it closely, you can

actually see that it is full of defects and disorganised parts. However, at the same time, there is an organization, which makes it beautiful... Studies carried out in the 1960's concluded that if trees were all the same, one would not be interested in them anymore. This theory is known as "chaotic structure": the same, but at the same time, unique. If one realizes this whole theory, one will start looking at the world in a rather different way. This also applies to the stars. It is like when we are watching the stars during a summer night. Stars look all different and like that you will feel secure.

10. Do you think that the fact that northern Europeans are somehow different in certain aspects from southern Europeans (Mediterranean people) influenced the way you write music?

Yes, like for instance gestures. I see gestures as rhythms! For example, Spanish dancing is very different from other places. Spanish dancers tend to move all of their body when they dance. In Malta, all that I portray as rhythm is made up of a mixture of other rhythms, mainly Arabic, Italian and Sicilian. However, it is not solely one of them—it is still unique in its make-up. As a result, I was very interested in the use of these rhythms and I wanted to turn these rhythms into sound thus, making them the basis of my compositions. Unfortunately, nobody helped me. Actually people in the music field thought I was crazy! Then came my second phase, when I wanted to get out of all this thinking. So, I shifted myself to the extreme—using 12-tone technique, aleatoric music etc... This period was not a long one because at that time I was already starting to take interest in the writings of the Jesuit theologian Teilhard de Chardin and in the theory of chaos. And I concluded that a chaotic situation with some control (which is better than

complete control or no control) is more exciting. This theory is then transferred and applied to all situations.

11. And how do you define yourself now?

Well, what I am sure of is that when I finish a work and hear it I lose interest in it. When I composed “New York Trio” I still included in it the theory of chaos and transmitted all the energy I felt when I was in New York. However, it is not a description piece and if you take off the title you can still decipher that it is American but not composed by an American composer. You can still sense my individuality as a composer. Moreover, it is also a question of simplicity. But one has to be cautious not to turn simplicity into banality. For instance, it took me a lot of courage to end my Symphony no 1 as modal and takes a lot of courage to keep a whole orchestra going without any modulation and yet without losing its significance. It is also time consuming and so your time-span changes with all this. If one takes for example Beethoven or Haydn, one can deduce that they are the composers of great music. As a matter of fact Beethoven is becoming popular again because he sounds secure and as a creative artist one decodes that Beethoven’s music is universal and that when someone goes back to it, it is because one is insecure. This kind of music has already proven itself so you go back to it for safety and stability. And if you are dedicated and truly believe in what you are doing you never go back and you do not compromise—and that is the challenge! If it is genuine music it will also give you the sense of security of 19th century music in time. Bartók for instance, does not seem insecure and actually he already sounds of a different epoch. One should keep in mind that in his times, nobody

wanted to play his music, so you start getting a framework out of all this; thus, thinking and believing that you are still doing something positive in music—it is positive music.

12. If you were to describe Maltese music in one word or sentence, which would you choose?

It is the soul of the place and the people. Like when the *Malta Suite* was performed the first time I said: “This is the music of my people for my people” and I still confirm it today.

13. You usually mention the word soundscape in your articles and reviews. What do you mean by that?

Every place has its soundscape. If for example you look at Norway’s mountains you do not feel the same as you feel in Malta. It gets spiritual when you try to understand the soundscape of a place and go above all the mundane and materialistic matters.

14. Do you think that this soundscape influences the people living in particular areas?

Yes, without being aware of it and I think that there are not enough and proper studies on soundscape. Sound itself is full of energy and it never dies—it only fades away if it is man-made. Once I delivered a lecture on a paper I had written entitled “The creative use of noise”. An example that I gave to explain what I meant, was of when two people start living together, they get acquainted with each other’s car engine sound. One is able to recognize the engine’s sound from all the other cars. This is because one starts

associating the engine's sound of the car with the owner and this means that you can also associate a sound with a particular place. Another example is that of film-making. You can be somewhere away from a TV and hear the music or sounds of a film and without seeing the picture you can roughly decipher the year of when that film was produced; that is, if it was produced in the 60's, 70's, 80's, 90's, etc... Why is this? It is because music, types of recording and sounds belong to different epochs. So, each sound is different; even our voices, laughs etc... are all different; all making up different sounds and noises.

15. So, taking into account all that has been said, how would you describe the concept: "Mediterranean identity"?

The amalgamation of cultures is something that comes out naturally for the Mediterranean territory. In the Mediterranean culture there is a sense of freedom; it does not hold a regimental philosophy. So, if we take for example traditional harmony (the logic of it coming from the Renaissance), for instance a C Major chord, which is made up of C, E and G notes and you play F# instead of a G, it seems that something is "wrong". This means that someone decided for me and you, what is right (acceptable) and what is wrong (not acceptable) in the "normal" and usual standards. And that is because we are conditioned! Thus, if one starts seeing and identifying a C Major chord as *roughly* C, E, G, then one will not feel obliged to play or write C, E, G notes. So, if you play C, E, F#, it is still a triad... This methodical thinking came out mostly from scales and arpeggios. For instance, in our Maltese feasts, there are usually two bands playing marches. One band plays in one part of a street and another band playing different marches on the other side of the street. This does not bother anyone! If all the

people present, including the musicians studied in a conservatoire, they would be against this kind of musical freedom and would surely complain about it. They would see it as something, which is totally wrong and not making any sense to them. These people would not enjoy the evening and this is because someone decided for them what is wrong and what is right... Nowadays people are becoming more aware of not letting anyone decide for them and so they rebel... Mediterranean people have always behaved in such a way... Looking at this theory, one can conclude that this kind of behaviour can either work against us (Mediterranean people) by not being disciplined enough and hindering the formation of great music or on the hand, it can favour us in the creation of improvisatory works. All of Europe is now accepting and promoting improvisation and aleatoric music—music which is not fixed... Moreover, what I believe in is creativity which is based on instinct. Undoubtedly, a piece of music still has to have the intensity of the sound of the country, of the place, the intensity found in Beethoven's works... But, unfortunately, nowadays, we have transformed intensity into tension. One can be intense but not stressed! There is a great difference between being tense/stressed and being intense. And this influences the way you compose... So, is there such a thing as right or wrong? I do not know... What I truly believe in is that when I compose a piece of music I can feel when it is both good and finalized or whether it still needs any revision and modifications; like for instance spacing of notes, which makes all the difference in a work... This is something which I feel strongly inside...

16. Do you think that the Mediterranean culture is then divided into different regions around the Mediterranean?

Yes and this is due to the spoken language of the country, and that is what makes one place different from another. A language has its own sound and rhythm. If one considers for instance huge places such as Canada, which do not have their own language, they also do not have their own musical folklore. How is Canadian music and how is American music? Americans introduced Jazz music but that is only a style. Composers such as Charles Ives had to recur to Indian music and to other countries for folkloristic inspirations because America is too multicultural and they have no folklore of their own. If one takes for example Ireland, one can find Celtic music which is rooted in their native language. This can also be said for Scotland and Wales, which are also rich in culture and folkloristic tunes. When there is no language of your own, it is difficult to find what one may call national music and identity... Moreover, usually, there exists only one particular period producing one particular national composer, like for instance Edvard Grieg in Norway and the British Vaughan Williams. At the moment the world is becoming too globalized and nationalistic music is almost becoming old-fashioned! So, the urge for nationalistic art happens only once. After that, one becomes like a piece in a museum! But, all the nations have to pass from this period and through this process. Then they will melt into the global world. Music is now more associated with vastness of sound—space. Thus, a new kind of thinking has emerged, which can also be traced in my last works. But, what makes a good composer is not intellect but awareness. Someone is aware of something and then others follow him. Like for instance Olivier Messiaen ... nobody understood his works and his thoughts, nonetheless, everybody started copying him! So, what the composer created becomes a

norm... Then another composer brings out something new—a new way of thinking and others follow him... This is a vicious circle, which goes on and on... It is all a question of being aware... When one considers the technical side of a composer, it either exists or it does not, thus either you have it or you do not... Thus, it is only by being aware... ducking into deep thinking is what makes a composer. You cannot find this type of awareness in books, and it becomes part of the literature only later on in life, when it becomes norm... There are a lot of books, information, CD reviews of Berg and Webern's music, but at the beginning of their career, nobody wanted to or was interested in playing their music. Webern's music was only listened to by 10 people in all—now it is the world! And that is how it goes...

17. What constitutes a musical identity of a place? I know that you have already explained this, but can you add some more details?

As I stated before, every place and everything in the world has its own sound. Even the sound of a car engine is not noise but purely sound. And sound has power, which can be used as energy. You can move a glass with sound: so this means that there is power and energy... Every person has his/her own sound, so why cannot a place have its own identifiable sound? That is how I look at it and which I then later termed as the soundscape of a place: the identity... A person expresses himself emotionally and he expresses it through voice and I think that this was the birth of folklore: the expression of people's emotions, which can also be recognized as an extension of sound—emotion from inside. Additionally, that is why a folk song takes some kind of shape through the years and is never solid. You can twist a folk tune in different ways because the subject is the same but emotions differ... At the present, we are living in a collision, where

there are a lot of people who are conscious of their origins, skin colour and even aware of their own sound! Years ago, Africa was thousands of miles away from many countries. Now, with a better form of transport (like the increasing access to flights all over the world), one can reach Africa in a few hours. So, as the saying goes, “something is going to get lost and something else is going to get gained”! Meaning that we are in a time-zone, and this can be either positive or negative and even dangerous. It all depends on us! It has always been the case...

18. So, would you declare that due to a great improvement in transport, internet and other technological devices (making communication much easier), the identity of a place cannot remain the same and intact?

Yes that is correct. It always happens that when a person feels he is losing something, he panics. It is always the same... For instance, right now the media is bombarded by news regarding ozone and the killing of animals and this is also like the European Union thing... Malta is now mentioning our identity and emphasizing the fact that even though we joined the EU we still have our identity and culture. But now one has to let go... Every country has to pass a process to assert itself. Hence, we tend to see Africa as one country. We forget that, for example, the Congo is as big as Europe. So, like all European countries, African countries have to pass through this process of identification, so that as a result of this process, one can identify (for example) the music of Ghana and that of other African countries. European countries already passed this process, so we do not actually need more folklore. So, folklore gets mixed with other folklore and this can be beautiful, however, it can also bring conflict, like racism etc... Now a person has to go beyond all this; which, as a matter of fact, is very difficult to attain.

19. So, we have to use this mixture of cultures and folklore to our advantage—to mature musically and get a richer and more expansive culture. What are your comments about this?

Yes that is right. The folklore that we are accustomed to is not the authentic one. It is not like the real folklore of the peasants, but was set and reset by composers throughout the years. So, if one wants to compose a work based on the identity of the country, one cannot rely solely on these prearranged folkloristic tunes. Thus, one has to go beyond this: by observing people walking, talking, thinking... but obviously this is getting harder to attain, since people are getting more multicultural, resulting in a mixture of genes. So, the identity of a place is also in transit. It is like the language of a place: evolving and changing... As a result, if for instance I use Maltese language in my works as part of my rhythm, that means that in 50 years' time or so, my work will be outdated, because the Maltese language would have passed through a period of drastic changes. That is what I used to tell my students: *You should make me sound old-fashioned!* Hence, that is the reason why I am not giving as much attention to folklore as I used to, because then, it would make me feel and sound old-fashioned and so I always try something completely new. One has to go above—like Shakespeare in his poems... He catches the emotions and the thinking of a person, like jealousy, cruelty, love etc... Thus, he points them out very clearly and so does the Bible...

20. How are all these Mediterranean cultures joined as one whole so as to form the Mediterranean identity?

I believe that the Mediterranean does not exist. There is no such a place called “Mediterranean”. It is an area and not a place. The Mediterranean has been the seedbed from which almost all of our culture and civilization have evolved. Across the waters men have sailed, traded and fought; on its shores and islands they have built cities, colonized, dreamed, conquered, fallen; and always they have discovered and rediscovered. Consequently, the Mediterranean has already passed through the process of the mixing together of genes and cultures. And this happened around 1000 years ago! A good example is also our Maltese language, which is a mixture of languages. One can even state that the Maltese and other Mediterranean cultures are made of a mixture of cultures and identities. So, I see the Mediterranean as the hub of the East, West, Africa and later Europe. This means that what truly separates the Mediterranean countries is the language. However, there is still a bond between them and one can feel this unity, which is what makes the Mediterranean what it is today. Mediterranean people have an emotional spirit, being free and less rigid. This is their make-up. Improvisation is part and parcel of their character. An example of this is the Flamenco in Spain, which is never performed in the same way, applying an open form. During the Renaissance, Europe tried to abolish all this free-thinking. Consequently, Europe developed through a pure sense of reasoning, leading to the birth of musical forms, like Sonata form and all other forms. It was also the era of the formation of symphony orchestras. For instance, it is very difficult to find a good Mediterranean symphony orchestra—one has to go up North to find and listen to a good one. One has to look at these views objectively and

not mathematically because it does not work like that. When one tries to figure them out, it will not lead anywhere.

21. What are your views regarding Scelsi and Xenakis, who are also (like yourself) two composers coming from countries of the Mediterranean region.

Well both of these composers came after 1945; the period of new ideas (like the 12-tone technique in music). In this period, there was a reaction against European musical thinking and these two composers rebelled against this European thinking, its values and beliefs. Both of them looked somewhere else... Scelsi was very much interested in the philosophy of the East, whilst Xenakis went back to pre-structured music—almost prehistoric. His belief was that the imagination of an artist is not the end and that mathematics can push you even further—you leave out emotions almost... So he relied on computers and technological devices [so as] not to depend exclusively on emotions. Consequently, he created something new. Whether his works will be popular or not is another matter. Thus, it is like a painting that does not appeal to you at the start and then you look at it six months later and begin seeing it from a different perspective and start appreciating it more and that is the beginning of communication. I think that people like Xenakis are not there only to be popular but to make you think in a different way. This is the same with Schoenberg. So, from people like Scelsi and Xenakis something new comes out and maybe that was their role in life. For instance Dufaya's role was to become extremely popular. Therefore, not everyone has the same role in life.

22. *Thus, you are stating that the role of Xenakis and Scelsi was to create a new way of thinking. So, what is your role as a composer?*

Well... I do not know exactly what my role is. What I can say is that when I was young I wanted to be a nationalist composer. I used to read lots of books about Grieg (instead of doing my homework) and spend time thinking alone on the roof for long hours. My father used to tell me that my ears do not function well! But, I continued believing in my views and dreams because it was something that was coming out naturally from me. There was enormous opposition against my ideas that when I had my first publications like *Taksim* and *Hemda* (as I already mentioned to you) they told me that the names of the pieces would do me a lot of damage and that would eventually make me unpopular...

23. *Do you think that you can elicit Mediterranean musical traits from Scelsi's and Xenaki's musical works?*

Stravinsky's music is greatly influenced by Russian Ballet. All his works are in ballet form—even his Symphony; it is ballet! So, what I am saying here is that you cannot do what you are not... If one takes for example, Messiaen, he could not be for instance German because he would have never written such works in that particular style. The soundscape of where one lives can be felt in the composer's works. Eventually, this soundscape is becoming global, so in 50 years' time, Stravinsky will sound old-fashioned and he will be seen as a nationalistic composer (sort of), whereas Xenakis and Scelsi did not compromise. After 1954 Scelsi did not compose any more piano works. The piano no longer suited his emotions and what he wanted to express. Messiaen once

stated that he was not a composer but an organist, because the organ gave him that massive sound that he wanted so much to achieve in his many works (example of Messiaen vastness of sound is the *Turangalila-Symphonie*). Scelsi and Xenakis were both fond of the use of computer in their works. I am not!

As soon as we finished the interview he played a beautiful motif on the piano, selected from one of his last works for solo violin and inspired by someone close to his heart.



Examples of Ornamentation/Improvisation

Examples of Ornamentation/Improvisation on the following three notes: ¹¹⁶

The image displays a handwritten musical score on ten staves. The first staff shows three notes: a whole note, a half note, and a quarter note, all on the same pitch. The subsequent nine staves illustrate various ornaments and improvisations on these notes. The ornaments include grace notes, trills, mordents, and various rhythmic patterns such as sixteenth and thirty-second notes. Some staves feature complex rhythmic figures, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs. The notation is in treble clef and includes various accidentals and dynamic markings.

¹¹⁶ Musical extracts from Serracino Inglott, 1988, pp. 50-54.

This image shows a handwritten musical score for guitar, consisting of ten staves of music. The score is numbered from measure 21 to 38. It features a variety of musical ornaments and improvisations, including triplets, sixteenth-note runs, and grace notes. The notation includes stems, beams, and various rhythmic markings. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is written in a clear, legible hand, with some annotations and markings that suggest performance techniques or improvisation. The measures are numbered as follows: 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 38. The score ends with a double bar line at the end of measure 38.

A handwritten musical score consisting of ten staves of music. The notation is dense and includes various ornaments and improvisations. The staves are numbered 10 through 21. The music is written in a single system on a grand staff (treble clef). The notation includes many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together. There are numerous slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. Some notes have small arrows or dots above them, indicating ornaments or specific articulation. The overall style is characteristic of 18th or 19th-century manuscript notation.

This image shows a handwritten musical score for guitar, consisting of nine staves of music. The score is numbered from 52 to 63. It features a variety of musical ornaments and improvisations, including:

- Measure 52:** A sixteenth-note run with a slur and a '6' above it, followed by a trill and a grace note.
- Measure 53:** A trill and a grace note.
- Measure 54:** A sixteenth-note run with a slur and a '3' below it, followed by a trill and a grace note.
- Measure 55:** A sixteenth-note run with a slur and a '3' below it, followed by a trill and a grace note.
- Measure 56:** A sixteenth-note run with a slur and a '3' below it, followed by a trill and a grace note.
- Measure 57:** A sixteenth-note run with a slur and a '5' below it, followed by a trill and a grace note.
- Measure 58:** A sixteenth-note run with a slur and a '5' below it, followed by a trill and a grace note.
- Measure 59:** A sixteenth-note run with a slur and a '5' below it, followed by a trill and a grace note.
- Measure 60:** A sixteenth-note run with a slur and a '3' below it, followed by a trill and a grace note.
- Measure 61:** A sixteenth-note run with a slur and a '3' below it, followed by a trill and a grace note.
- Measure 62:** A sixteenth-note run with a slur and a '3' below it, followed by a trill and a grace note.
- Measure 63:** A sixteenth-note run with a slur and a '5' below it, followed by a trill and a grace note.

Publications and Presentations of other
forms of Creative and Performing Work

Publications:

2006: *Amadeus* (A Maltese Memoir), published in *A Musical Tribute to Mozart from Malta* by the Malta International Airport, pp. 10–11.

2007: Article featuring Belgian Pianist Daan Vandewalle, published on the 28th January in *The Sunday Times*, p. 47. On the 6th February, programme notes on the repertoire performed by the same pianist during his concert in Malta, were published by the Teatru Manoel, pp. 6–7.

2007: Newspaper article entitled *Mediterranean Mosaic*, published on the 12th August in the *Sunday Times*, pp. 40–41.

2009: Article entitled *Musical Rights—Access to Music Education* published in the *Gozo College Journal Of Educational Studies*, Vol. 1, pp. 37–44.

2009: Article called *Malta u l-Bilingwiżmu* [Malta and Bilingualism], presented as part of the National Seminar on Bilingualism in Malta, held on the 5th December, entitled *Il-Bilingwiżmu fl-Edukazzjoni ta' pajjiżna: x'inhu l-aħjar għal uliedna* [Bilingualism in our country's Educational system: what is best for our children?] published by Il-Kunsill tal-Malti [Council for Maltese Studies], pp. 39–40.

2012: *Handbook for the Teaching of Music*, published by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education—Curriculum Management and e-Learning Department.

2012: *Music General Curriculum Units*, published by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education—Curriculum Management and e-Learning Department.

2012: *Music Option Curriculum Units*, published by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education—Curriculum Management and e-Learning Department.

Creative and performing work:

2006: Composed an *Ave Maria* (for harp and voice), which was commissioned by St. John's Co-Cathedral Foundation. It was premiered on the 9th June of the same year as part of the Unum Deum Sacred Music Festival at St. John's Co-Cathedral, Valletta, Malta.

2007: My composition, *Silence of the Soul*, was chosen in a competition and was performed on the 6th January by the Kokoro Ensemble during a workshop held at Bristol University.

2007: In August 20th, I took part in the 7th International Festival of Pianists at Chetham School of Music in Manchester. My work *Oriental*

Prints was performed and recorded live by Dunelm Records during one of the concerts held in one of the School's halls.

2008: On the 29th August, some of my chamber works were performed in a self-organised concert in aid of Dar Gużeppea Debono, held at the Citadel Centre for Culture and the Arts, Victoria, Gozo.

2008: On July 15th, my composition *Gaudos* was performed by the Italian Ensemble Fisarchi at Millstadt, Austria.

2008: On the 21st December, my string quartet piece *Heartstrings I* was performed at Sala Isouard, Teatru Manoel, Valletta, Malta.

2009: On the 31st March, on the occasion of the Maltese Freedom Day celebrations, a concert was organised by the National and Regional Celebrations Committee at the Gozo Ministry Hall, Victoria, Gozo. During this concert, three of my compositions were performed by a string quartet and a pianist.

2009: On May 7th, Cosmos Wind Quartet played one of my pieces entitled *Clarinet Reflections*, as part of the concert held in Munich during the Musica Mediterranea Festival.

2009: During the European Union Piano Competition 2009, organised by the International Dvořák Society, held between the 24th and the 29th June,

Alexei Galea, a Maltese pianist played my piano solo work *Opus I*.

Galea was awarded a diploma for interpretation.

2009: On the 28th July, my work entitled *Colpi D'Armonia* was performed by the Italian Ensemble Fisarchi during the Festival Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte at Montepulciano, Italy.

2009: On December 17th, some of my chamber works were performed at Sala Isouard, Teatru Manoel, Valletta, as part of the Spotlight Concert Series.

2010: On the 29th January, my piano work *Opus I* was performed by Russian pianist Professor Yuri Didenko at Sala Isouard, Teatru Manoel, Valletta, as part of the Piano Festival.

2010: On the 15th February, pianist Alexei Galea performed *Oriental Prints* and *Opus I* in a piano recital at San Anton Palace, Rabat, Malta, under the patronage of the President of Malta and his wife.

2011: On the 25th January, Lang Quartet together with harpist Esmeralda Camilleri performed some of my chamber works at St Paul's Anglican Pro-Cathedral, Valletta, Malta.

2011: On July 10th, the project *Daria's Vision* was launched during a live performance at St James Cavalier, Valletta, Malta.

2011: On the 10th December, my piano piece *One day in November* was performed by young pianist Michaela Mifsud during an event, organised by the Malta Association for Contemporary Music in collaboration with Trinity College London, at St. James Cavalier, Valletta. For this particular event ten Maltese composers were selected to write new piano works for children.

2011: On the 10th December, two of my works were performed in a self-organised concert at the main hall of the Teatru Manoel. The concert, *Crossing Lines*, was performed by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Mro. Brian Schembri. The event was video recorded by Citadel Victoria Communications.

2013: On the 21st June *Ġgantija 2013* was performed at the Ġgantija Temples, Xaghra, Gozo by the Ars Vitae Ensemble combined with a number of artistic installations.

Presentations and Conferences attended:

Presentations:

2010: Paper on *The Future of Music Education in Malta*, presented during the International Music Pedagogy Workshops, entitled *Encounters with Mediterranean Music*, held between the 28th June and 4th July at the University of Malta, Msida, Malta.

2011: Paper entitled *Music Education Reforms* presented on the 18th July as part of the week dedicated to Maltese bands, organised by the Malta Band Club Association, Malta.

2011: Paper entitled *Music Education in Malta*, presented during the Piano Festival, held at Sala Isouard, Teatru Manoel on the 3rd February 2011.

2013: Held composition workshops for young students as part of the ongoing interdisciplinary project *Ġgantija 2013*. These were held on the 1st and 2nd November.

2013: Held a set of composition workshops for young students between the 18th and 22nd November.

Conferences:

2007: Attended The Royal Musical Association Research Students' Conference, held at Bristol University at the Department of Music, University of Bristol from the 3rd to the 6th of January.

2007: Attended the 7th International Festival of Pianists (concert and workshops) held at Chetham School of Music in Manchester, UK between the 18th and 24th August.

2011: Attended piano master classes during the Piano Festival held at Sala Isouard, Teatru Manoel, Malta between the 28th January and 4th February.

2011: Participated in the Malta International Choir Festival (conference and competition), held between the 3rd and 6th November, at the Catholic Institute, Floriana, Malta.

2013: Attended a choral conducting course (part of the Malta International Choir Festival), held between the 4th and 6th November at the Catholic Institute, Floriana, Malta.

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