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## **Malta Philharmonic Orchestra**

*Bio – September 2016*

The Malta Philharmonic Orchestra is recognised as the foremost professional musical institution on the Maltese islands, bringing together the best of Maltese talent and musicians hailing from ten other countries. Founded in 1968, the Orchestra was formerly known as the Manoel Theatre Orchestra and became an independent body in 1997 when it was officially named the National Orchestra of Malta. The orchestra underwent another transformation in 2008 when it was further extended and became known as the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO).

Since its inception, the Orchestra has been under the direction of Malta's most prominent musicians including Joseph Sammut, Joseph Vella and Michael Laus. In September 2014, internationally acclaimed conductor Brian Schembri, one of the most brilliant musicians to emerge from Malta, was appointed Principal Conductor and Artistic Director. Brian Schembri is bringing to the MPO a wealth of experience and musical vision that remains unparalleled in its development to date. Michael Laus continues to be the MPO's resident conductor.

The orchestra's extensive calendar of events, places the MPO as Malta's leading cultural ambassador. Performing in more than 70 concerts a year, including regular symphonic concerts, annual opera productions in Malta and Gozo, community outreach programmes and many concerts of a lighter musical genre in venues around the islands. On an international level, the MPO has collaborated with many foreign orchestras and opera companies, performing in Brussels, Milan and Frankfurt, with further international performances planned in Brussels, Rome and Vienna this season. The orchestra has also produced a number of CDs including a project with international recording label Naxos featuring works by Charles Camilleri, and two CD series entitled Music of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Jewish German Composers (Cameo Classics) and the British



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Composers Premiere Collections (Cameo Classics). We are also currently working on the production of a CD featuring the music of internationally renowned composer Alexandre Tansman with the CPO Label.

Over the years the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra has performed with a number of distinguished artists including Karl Jenkins, Joseph Calleja, Andrea Bocelli and Bryn Terfel, acclaimed conductors such as Jean-Marc Burfin, Peter Stark, Philip Walsh, and personalities from the pop world including Claudio Baglioni, Michael Bolton, Suzanne Vega and pop star Anastacia.

The orchestra is a predominant exponent of Maltese composers and performers and is actively involved in delivering education programmes for children, involving them in workshops and bespoke performances. The MPO is also responsible for the orchestral training and professional development of young musicians, through the formation of the MPO Academy and the Malta Youth Orchestra.

Under its new leadership, the MPO continues to pride itself on developing its vision of delivering music of the highest calibre on the Maltese islands while also promoting our musical heritage abroad.

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