

CLASSICAL MUSIC STARS IN MALTA

LIVE FROM THE MALTA INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL



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Classical Music Stars in Malta

Live from the Malta International Music Festival

BABADJANIAN: Andante from Piano Trio ♦ Nocturne

ILYA DIMOV: Tango Forever

HANDEL–HALVORSEN: Passacaglia

KHACHATURIAN: Sabre Dance from Gayaneh

ALEXEY SHOR: Farewell Nocturne ♦ Addio ♦ King Matt the First ♦ Coming of Age

JOSEPH VELLA: Romanza



KHACHATURIAN TRIO:

KAREN SHAHGALDYAN, violin

KAREN KOCHARYAN, cello

ARMINE GRIGORYAN, piano

ALEXANDER BUZLOV, cello

ALISSA MARGULIS, violin

JULIAN MILKIS, clarinet

ALEXANDER RUDIN, cello

DARIA TSCHAIKOWSKAJA, piano

Total Playing Time: 41:00

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1. **JOSEPH VELLA: Romanza** for piano trio (1:50)
2. **ALEXEY SHOR: Farewell Nocturne** for piano trio (3:38)
3. **ARNO BABADJANIAN: Andante from Piano Trio in F-sharp Minor** (7:02)
4. **ALEXEY SHOR: Addio** for piano trio (3:07)
5. **ALEXEY SHOR: King Matt the First** for piano trio (2:14)
6. **GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL—JOHAN HALVORSEN: Passacaglia** for violin and cello (6:43)
7. **ALEXEY SHOR: Coming of Age** for clarinet, cello, and piano (4:06)
8. **ARNO BABADJANIAN: Nocturne** transcribed for piano trio by Ruben Asatryan (5:15)
9. **ILYA DIMOV: Tango Forever** for clarinet, cello, and piano (4:26)
10. **ARAM KHACHATURIAN: Sabre Dance** from the ballet *Gayaneh*, transcribed for piano trio by Avetik Pivazyan (2:06)

Total Playing Time: 41:00

PERFORMERS

Khachaturian Trio:

Karen Shahgaldyan, violin,
Karen Kocharyan, cello,
Armine Grigoryan, piano (2,3,4,8,10)

Daria Tschaikowskaja, piano (1,5,7,9)

Alissa Margulis, violin (1,5,6)

Julian Milkis, clarinet (7,9)

Alexander Buzlov, cello (1,5,6)

Alexander Rudin, cello (7,9)

The Malta International Music Festival has its home on Malta, a Mediterranean island with a uniquely global history. Historically, Malta's strategic location in the Mediterranean made it the intersection of many competing forces, and for centuries Malta was ruled by foreign powers, from the ancient Phoenicians and Greeks through Arabs and Sicilians, to the more recent rulers: Spain, France, and England. (And that's the short list!) Today, however, Malta is an independent republic and a member of the European Union. Maltese, the official language, is related to Arabic with some words borrowed from Italian and Sicilian. Culturally, Malta is most closely associated with southern Europe, and a European atmosphere predominates in Valletta, the capital city.

Founded in 2011, the Malta International Music Festival, featuring musicians from many countries, has become one of Malta's most important cultural events. This recording was made live at the Trio Gala Concert in April 2017. Along with the Khachaturian Trio, the well-known ensemble from Armenia, the recording features five brilliant musicians who assembled, formed trios (and one duo), and performed a varied and dazzling program of highly listenable music.

Joseph Vella, born in 1942, is one of Malta's best-known composers. He has written more than 150 compositions, including solo music for piano, violin, cello, and organ as well as concertos, symphonies, vocal music, chamber music, and music for wind band. The composer's vocal music—song cycles, cantatas, and oratorios—is often based on Maltese texts, and Vella is considered a pioneer for setting

texts in his native language. Vella's melodic and tranquil **Romanza for Piano Trio**, which opens this concert, invites listeners to become acquainted with more of his pieces. For further information about Joseph Vella, visit his website at <http://www.josephvella.com.mt>.

This recording features several pieces by Maltese composer **Alexey Shor**, composer in residence at the Malta International Music Festival. His works have been performed around the world. While his **Farewell Nocturne** and **Addio** may be wistful and reflective, **King Matt the First** combines these feelings with lighthearted sections. About this piece the composer writes, "*King Matt the First* is the title of a book by Janusz Korczak. When I visited Warsaw I recalled that I liked that book a lot as a child, and that what struck me even back then was that the book, while being playful and fun—like most children's books—was at the same time unusually sad and tragic, in a way that no other children's book is. I hoped to capture some of that mood in my music."

Coming of Age is Shore's arrangement of his solo piano piece from the suite called *Childhood Memories*, published by Breitkopf & Härtel in 2016. To learn more about Alexey Shor, visit his website at <http://alexeyshor.com>.

Arno Babadjanian was born in Yerevan, Armenia. He studied in his native country and later at the Moscow Conservatory, where he gained wide recognition as a virtuoso pianist. First performed in 1952, Babadjanian's **Piano Trio in**

F-sharp Minor was immediately recognized as a masterpiece. His music is forward-looking but written in a familiar tonal language. At the beginning of Babadjanian's **Nocturne**, the cello can be heard sounding like a clarinet: The note is called a flageolet or false harmonic. As in the beautiful **Andante** from Babadjanian's Piano Trio, the composer's style can be romantic, intimate, and poetic.

Johan Halvorsen's name is forever linked with **George Frideric Handel's**, at least in the minds of many string players. Halvorsen's arrangement of Handel's **Passacaglia** from the Harpsichord Suite No. 7 is one of the great showpieces for violin and cello. In Alissa Margulis's and Alexander Buzlov's exciting performance on this recording, the two instruments sometimes sound like an entire orchestra.

Tango Forever by **Ilya Dimov** is a good-natured piece that thoroughly exploits the ebullient moods and rhythms of the tango. A native of Uzbekistan, Ilya Dimov earned a master's degree in music theory and composition from Khamza State Music College in Tashkent. He currently lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The world-famous **Sabre Dance** from **Aram Khachaturian's** ballet *Gayaneh* sounds both familiar and novel in this sparkling arrangement for piano trio. The Khachaturian Trio's brilliant performance of this enduring favorite pulsates with propulsive energy.

—David Brin

Performers



The **Khachaturian Trio** was formed in 1999 as Trio Arsika and has toured extensively throughout North, Central, and South America, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Spain, Bulgaria, Malta, the Czech Republic, Moldova, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, Armenia, Australia, Japan, China, and Lebanon. They have performed in famous concert halls including Vi-

enna's Musikverein Sall, Leipzig's Gewandhaus, London's Purcell Room, and Tokyo's Suntory Hall. In addition to the Malta International Music Festival, the trio has appeared at the Festival de las Artes in Costa Rica, the Festival International Cervantino in Mexico, and the Russische Kammermusikfest in Hamburg. Critics have praised the trio's virtuoso performances, warm sound, and deep musicality. The trio's repertoire includes more than 75 compositions by 40 composers.

The Khachaturian Trio is comprised of Armine Grigoryan, piano, Karen Shahgaldyan, violin, and Karen Kocharyan, cello. For more information about the trio, please visit their website, www.khachaturiantrio.com.

"I cannot imagine myself without the violin, without music," says violinist **Karen Shahgaldyan**. Shahgaldyan has performed with the Moscow Virtuosi under Vladimir Spivakov and appeared as soloist playing a Stradivari violin lent to him by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. He is a graduate of the Moscow Conservatory, a laureate of the International Pablo Sarasate Competition, and the recipient of scholarships from the David Oistrakh, Yuri Yankelevich, and Mstislav Rostropovich Foundations.

A founding member of the Khachaturian Trio, cellist **Karen Kocharyan** is a graduate of the Yerevan State Conservatory. He tours and is a featured soloist with the Armenian Chamber Players and the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, where he has performed as soloist with conductor Alexander Ivashkin.

Pianist **Armine Grigoryan** has won prizes in several international competitions, including the Roma-2003 International Piano Competition, where she also received a special prize and Medal of the Chamber of Deputies of Rome. She is the honorary president of the Piano Teachers Association of Armenia, professor at the Yerevan State Conservatory, and since 2004, director of the Aram Khachaturian Museum.

Born in Moscow in 1983, **Alexander Buzlov** is one of the most talented cellists of his generation. He has won numerous awards and prizes, including the Grand Prix and the Audience Award at the Emanuel Feuermann Cello Competition in 2010. His debut recording with Viatcheslav Poprugion on the Delos label (DE 3350) features sonatas by Beethoven and Brahms and Schumann's *Five Pieces in Folk Style*.





Born in Germany into a family of Russian musicians, **Alissa Margulis** studied music in Cologne, Brussels, and Vienna. She has won numerous prizes at international violin competitions and was awarded the Pro Europa Prize of the European Arts Foundation. She has performed as a soloist with numerous orchestras. She is also an enthusiastic chamber music player and has collaborated with artists such as Martha Argerich, Yuri Bashmet, David Geringas, Gidon Kremer, Stephen Kovacevich, and Paul Badura-Skoda. For more information please visit her website, www.alissamargulis.com.

One of today's leading clarinetists, **Julian Milkis** was the only student of clarinet icon Benny Goodman. Milkis was trained at the Manhattan School of Music and the Juilliard School, and has garnered an international reputation as a soloist, chamber musician, recitalist, and jazz clarinetist. A Canadian citizen, he won the Canada Council and Floyd Chalmers Awards for four consecutive years. To read more about Julian Milkis, please see <http://julianmilkis.com>.





Alexander Rudin is an internationally acclaimed cellist, conductor, pianist, harpsichordist, professor at the Moscow Conservatory, People's Artist of Russia, recipient of the State Prize of Russia, and researcher of early scores. His repertoire includes cello music from four centuries: music by contemporary composers, pieces that are well-known, and others that are rarely performed or have never been performed before. For more information, please visit www.mariinsky.ru/en/company/conductors/alexander_rudin.

Born in Moscow, pianist **Daria Tschaikowskaja** is the winner and laureate of numerous competitions, including first prize in the International Steinway Competition in Hamburg in 1996 and first prize in the International Vincenzo Bellini Piano Competition in Caltanissetta, Italy in 2005. She has performed as a soloist and chamber musician throughout Europe and Asia. For more information, please see www.tschaikowskaja.com.



Recorded in Robert Samut Hall, Floriana, Malta, on April 24, 2017
Recording/Editing: Viktor Osadchev
Mastering: Matthew Snyder
Booklet Editing: David Brin, Lindsay Koob, and Anne Maley
Booklet Design: Lonnie Kunkel

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(707) 996-3844 • (800) 364-0645
contactus@delosmusic.com • www.delosmusic.com
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