



2026 PROGRAMME



Palace Concerts



CORINTHIA

PALACE
MALTA



Home to beautiful music



A Message from

Alfred Pisani

Chairman, Corinthia Group

Since the Villa Palace first opened its doors in 1962, it has always been a place of conviviality and enjoyment — a setting for gatherings, celebrations, and many memorable moments shared in good company. Over the years, countless special nights have unfolded within these walls, each shaped by the warmth and spirit of those who pass through them.

It feels only natural, therefore, to welcome this musical series into the life of Corinthia Palace, which, for sure, will bring a new dimension of pleasure to the experience we offer our guests and clientele.

My sincere thanks go to Alfred Camilleri, whose vision first conceived this programme, and to my daughter, Alexandra Pisani, our General Manager at Corinthia Palace, for her care and commitment in bringing it to life. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the talented musicians taking part, whose artistry will no doubt create many more memorable evenings.

I hope you enjoy the music and the atmosphere it brings, and that it becomes part of the many special memories made here at Corinthia Palace.

A Message from

Alexandra Pisani

General Manager,
Corinthia Palace

At Corinthia Palace, there has always been a quiet affinity with art, music, and culture. It has lived in the atmosphere of the house – in its rhythms, its conversations, and its sense of place.

What we are doing now is simply giving form to something that has long existed.

We passionately believe that art is not merely an addition to hospitality; it is an integral part of life itself. Not programmed or imposed, but ever-present, evolving and reflective of who we are. A place, like a person, is shaped by what it hears, what it holds, and what it allows to unfold.

Through this year-long musical programme, Corinthia Palace becomes a vessel for that expression. Sound and creativity gently inhabit the spaces, subtly shaping how they are experienced rather than interrupting them.

Hospitality goes beyond offering a room, a table, or a spa treatment. At its most meaningful, it touches something internal. This programme is both a continuation of our nature and a tribute to the remarkable Maltese artists who give life to it.

We hope that, in being here, you encounter this magical experience, and we are so excited to share it with you!



Concert Programme

SUNDAY 29 MARCH, 5PM

From Darkness to Light

A musical journey from Lent and Passion through reflection and Easter joy.

Villa Corinthia

SATURDAY 9 MAY, 7.30PM

Cello 6

An extravaganza of beautiful music dedicated to all mothers with love.

Villa Corinthia

SUNDAY 14 JUNE, 8PM

Guitar Classics

Karol Aquilina in a solo performance of timeless guitar repertoire.

Secret Garden

SUNDAY 5 JULY, 8PM

Piano Classics

A lyrical and uplifting recital by Francis Camilleri.

Secret Garden

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 8PM

Summertime Classics Alfresco

12-piece Chamber concert orchestra beneath the stars.

Secret Garden

SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER, 7.30PM

Just Beethoven and Mozart

Acclaimed pianist Joanne Camilleri performs masterpieces by two musical giants.

Villa Corinthia

SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER, 6PM

Memorable Piano Quintets

Joanne Camilleri leads an ensemble of Malta's finest string players.

Villa Corinthia

SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER, 5.30PM

Celebrating the Clarinet

Michael Cutajar performs Weber and Brahms' celebrated clarinet quintets.

Villa Corinthia

SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER, 5PM

Piano Recital by Gabor Cassar

Villa Corinthia

SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER, 5PM

A Christmas Extravaganza

Corinthia Ballroom



SATURDAY 9 MAY 2026

Cello 6

To all mothers, with love

This special Mother's Day concert brings together six exceptional cellists for an evening of warmth, beauty, and heartfelt musical expression.

The cello, with its human like voice and deep emotional range, is the perfect instrument to honour the love, strength, and tenderness that mothers bring into our lives.

Performed by Ákos Kertész, Yaroslav Miklukho, Frank Camilleri, Desirée Calleja, Lucie Kuchařová, and Elia Moffa, this programme showcases the cello in all its colours—from the elegance of the classical repertoire to the charm of beloved melodies, film themes, and iconic songs.

The result is a concert that is both intimate and uplifting, celebrating mothers with music that speaks directly to the heart.

MUSICIANS

AKOS KERTESZ
YAROSLAV MIKLUKHO
FRANK CAMILLERI
DESIREE CALLEJA
ELIA MOFFA
LUCIE KUCHAROVA

Cello 6

PROGRAMME

1. GEORGES BIZET – CARMEN SUITE
2. CAMILLE SAINT SAËNS – THE SWAN
3. GIACOMO PUCCINI – O MIO BABBINO CARO
4. OTTORINO RESPIGHI – ITALIANA
5. JOHANN STRAUSS II & JOSEF STRAUSS
– PIZZICATO POLKA
6. FRANZ SCHUBERT – ERLKÖNIG
7. BOSSA NOVA PHILHARMONICA
8. ROBERT SCHUMANN – TRÄUMEREI
9. HEITOR VILLA LOBOS
– BACHIANAS BRASILEIRAS NO. 5
10. HENRY MANCINI – THE PINK PANTHER
11. MONTY NORMAN – JAMES BOND THEME
12. THE BEATLES – YESTERDAY
13. QUEEN – LOVE OF MY LIFE
14. QUEEN – BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY
15. JAMES HORNER – MY HEART WILL GO ON
16. HANS ZIMMER – TENNESSEE (FROM PEARL HARBOR)
17. HANS ZIMMER & LISA GERRARD – NOW WE ARE FREE
(FROM GLADIATOR)
18. ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER
– THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA



PROGRAMME NOTES

This programme offers a richly varied musical journey, weaving together beloved masterpieces from the classical stage, the concert hall, and the world of film and popular song. It opens with the dramatic flair of Bizet's *Carmen Suite*, followed by the serene, lyrical beauty of Saint Saëns's *The Swan* and the heartfelt simplicity of Puccini's *O mio babbino caro*. Respighi's elegant *Italiana* adds a touch of early music charm, while the delightful *Pizzicato Polka* by Johann and Josef Strauss brings sparkle and lightness.

A darker, more narrative thread emerges with Schubert's *Erlkönig*, a gripping miniature of Romantic storytelling, before the mood softens into the gentle nostalgia of Schumann's *Träumerei*. Brazilian colour and vocal warmth shine through in Villa Lobos's *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5*, a work of haunting beauty.

The programme then turns toward iconic themes from cinema and popular culture: the sly sophistication of Mancini's *Pink Panther*, the unmistakable swagger of the *James Bond Theme*, and the tender lyricism of The Beatles' *Yesterday*. Two songs by Queen—the intimate *Love of My Life* and the operatic sweep of *Bohemian Rhapsody*—bring emotional breadth and theatrical flair.

Film music continues with the soaring romance of James Horner's *My Heart Will Go On* and the noble, expansive writing of Hans Zimmer, represented by Tennessee from *Pearl Harbor* and the evocative *Now We Are Free* from *Gladiator*. The programme closes with a dramatic flourish in *The Phantom of the Opera*, arranged in the style of the Prague Cello Quartet, offering a powerful and atmospheric finale.



Cello 6

Programme

1. GEORGES BIZET – CARMEN SUITE

Georges Bizet (1838–1875) was a French Romantic composer whose final opera, *Carmen*, became “one of the most popular and frequently performed works in the entire opera repertoire.”

The *Carmen Suite*, compiled after Bizet’s death by Ernest Guiraud, draw directly from the opera’s orchestration and present its most iconic musical moments in concert form.

2. CHARLES CAMILLE SAINT SAËNS – THE SWAN

Camille Saint Saëns (1835–1921) was a French composer and child prodigy who made his concert debut at age ten.

The Swan, originally for cello and two pianos, is the most famous movement from *The Carnival of the Animals* and remains one of the most beloved lyrical works in the cello repertoire.

3. GIACOMO PUCCINI – O MIO BABBINO CARO

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) is regarded as “the greatest and most successful proponent of Italian opera after Verdi.”

O mio babbino caro, an aria from *Gianni Schicchi* (1918), is sung by Lauretta as she pleads for permission to marry the man she loves, capturing Puccini’s gift for heartfelt melody.

4. OTTORINO RESPIGHI – ITALIANA

Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936) was a leading Italian composer of the early 20th century, known for his vivid orchestral tone poems.

Italiana, from Ancient Airs and Dances Suite No. 3 (1931), is a graceful re-imagining of Renaissance lute music, arranged for strings with a gentle, nostalgic character.

5. JOHANN STRAUSS II / JOSEF STRAUSS – PIZZICATO POLKA

The Strauss brothers were central figures of the Viennese musical dynasty, with Johann II celebrated as the “Waltz King.”

Composed during a trip to Russia in 1869, Pizzicato Polka is a charming miniature built entirely from plucked string effects.

6. FRANZ SCHUBERT – ERLKÖNIG

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) wrote over 600 songs and is a cornerstone of early Romantic music.

His setting of Goethe’s poem Erlkönig depicts a desperate midnight ride and the supernatural terror pursuing a child—one of the most dramatic songs ever written.

7. BOSSA NOVA PHILHARMONICA

Bossa nova emerged in late 1950s Rio de Janeiro as “a relaxed style of samba... characterized by a calm syncopated rhythm” and jazz inflected harmonies.

This orchestral arrangement brings the elegance and understated swing of the genre into a symphonic setting.

8. ROBERT SCHUMANN – TRÄUMEREI

Robert Schumann (1810–1856) was a central figure of German Romanticism.

Träumerei, from Kinderszenen (1838), is a brief but deeply expressive piano piece often considered “the epitome of the Romantic piano piece.”

9. HEITOR VILLA LOBOS – BACHIANAS BRASILEIRAS NO. 5

Heitor Villa Lobos (1887–1959) is described as “the single most significant creative figure in 20th century Brazilian art music.”

Bachianas Brasileiras is a haunting work for soprano and eight cellos that blends Brazilian folk colour with Baroque inspired counterpoint, creating one of the composer’s most iconic pieces.

10. HENRY MANCINI – THE PINK PANTHER THEME

Henry Mancini (1924–1994) was one of film music’s great melodists, winning four Academy Awards and twenty Grammys.

His fitting and jazz infused Pink Panther Theme became an instant classic after the 1963 film and remains one of the most recognisable motifs in cinema.

11. MONTY NORMAN – JAMES BOND THEME

Monty Norman (1928–2022) composed the signature theme for Dr. No (1962), launching one of the most famous musical identities in film history.

Its driving rhythm and surf rock guitar have appeared in every Bond film since.

12. THE BEATLES – YESTERDAY

The Beatles are widely regarded as “the most influential band in popular music.”

Paul McCartney’s Yesterday (1965) is one of the most recorded songs of all time, known for its simplicity and emotional clarity.

13. QUEEN – LOVE OF MY LIFE / BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY

Queen, formed in 1970, blended rock, opera, and theatricality with striking originality.

Love of My Life is a tender ballad from A Night at the Opera (1975), while Bohemian Rhapsody—a six minute suite with no chorus—became one of the most iconic songs in rock history.

14. JAMES HORNER – MY HEART WILL GO ON (TITANIC)

James Horner (1953–2015) composed the Oscar winning score for Titanic, “the best selling orchestral film soundtrack of all time.”

My Heart Will Go On, sung by Céline Dion, became a global hit and a defining musical moment of the 1990s.

15. HANS ZIMMER – TENNESSEE (PEARL HARBOR)

Hans Zimmer (b.1957) is one of today’s most influential film composers, known for blending electronic and orchestral textures.

Tennessee is the lyrical main theme from Pearl Harbor (2001), capturing the film’s emotional core.

16. HANS ZIMMER / LISA GERRARD – NOW WE ARE FREE (GLADIATOR)

Lisa Gerrard’s distinctive vocal style and Zimmer’s sweeping orchestration combine in this moving finale from Gladiator (2000).

Now We Are Free features Gerrard’s “haunting vocals, sung in an invented language,” giving it an ethereal, timeless quality.

17. PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

This arrangement reimagines Andrew Lloyd Webber’s iconic musical themes for a cello ensemble, highlighting the drama and lyricism that made The Phantom of the Opera a global phenomenon.



Cello 6

Artists



ÁKOS KERTÉSZ

Ákos Kertész is Principal Cellist of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, having joined the MPO in 2012 and been appointed Principal in 2019.

A graduate of the Liszt Academy in Budapest and the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, he previously performed with leading ensembles including the Hungarian State Opera, the Hyogo Performing Arts Center Orchestra in Japan, and the Residentie Orchestra. An active chamber musician, he performs regularly in ensembles ranging from duos to chamber orchestras.



YAROSLAV MIKLUKHO

Yaroslav Miklukho began his cello studies in Ukraine and earned his Master's degree from the Kiev State Conservatory before joining the National Ballet of Ukraine and the Kiev State Symphony Orchestra.

He has toured widely across Europe, North Africa, and the United States—including performances at Carnegie Hall and Severance Hall—and has appeared as both soloist and chamber musician. Since 2011 he has served as sub leader of the MPO cello section and teaches cello at the University of Malta.



FRANK CAMILLERI

Frank Camilleri studied under Valeriu Popovici and Simon Abdilla Joslin, attending masterclasses in Malta and abroad, including with Enrico Dindo.

He joined the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in 2006 and has performed with ensembles such as the Brno Philharmonic, the European Union Chamber Orchestra, and the Mediterranean Orchestra.

A member of the Cordia String Quartet, he has performed internationally—including at Marlborough House for Her Majesty the Queen—and appears regularly with VIBE. His recent recording of *Kantilena* (Parma Recordings) features harpist Britt Arend and soprano Gillian Zammit.



DESIRÉE CALLEJA

Desirée Calleja, a graduate of Trinity Laban Conservatoire, is a full time cellist with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra.

Former section leader of the Malta Youth Orchestra, she has appeared with ensembles including the Commonwealth Youth Orchestra, EU Baroque Orchestra, London City Philharmonic, and the Trinity Laban Symphony Orchestra, and has participated in side by side projects with the Royal Concertgebouw, Bournemouth Symphony, and Philharmonia orchestras. A prize winning chamber musician and Bibby Award recipient, she has taught at the Malta School of Music and directed the Sally Strings Ensemble at Teatru Salesjan.



LUCIE KUČAŘOVÁ

Lucie Kuchařová studied cello in Brno, Bratislava, Copenhagen, and Trieste before performing with major European ensembles including the Radio Symphony Orchestra Bratislava, the National Opera Theatre Bratislava, the Prague Royal Philharmonic, and the Orchestra Sinfonica Giuseppe Verdi in Milan. She later joined Orquestra do Norte in Portugal and became a member of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in 2009.

Her international performances include appearances at the Warsaw Autumn Festival, Tonhalle Zurich, Teatro La Fenice, Musikverein, the Berlin Philharmonic Hall, the Mariinsky Theatre, and Carnegie Hall.



LIA MOFFA

Elia Moffa is a cellist with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra.

He began his studies at age four, later training at the Mozarteum University Salzburg and graduating with honours from the Bologna Conservatory under Antonio Mostacci. He has participated in masterclasses with leading cellists and won numerous orchestral auditions, including the Verbier Festival Junior Orchestra, the EUYO, the Italian Youth Orchestra, the Vratsa Symphony Orchestra (as co principal), the MPO, and Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino. He performs regularly with the Tiroler Festspiele Erl Orchestra and the Orchestra Fondazione “Luciano Pavarotti,” where he serves as co principal cellist.



Villa Corinthia

A Historical Note

Villa Corinthia, originally known as Villa Refalo, was built just over a century ago as the residence of Sir Michelangelo Refalo (1876–1923), Malta’s youngest-ever Chief Justice. Refalo moved here with his family in 1920, choosing Attard for its proximity to San Anton Palace, but he enjoyed the villa only briefly before his sudden death three years later.

The next notable resident was Colonel Percy Worrall (1880–1940), who arrived in 1929 to command the King’s Own Malta Regiment. During his time in Malta, he was also recognised for greatly expanding the island’s Scout movement.

During the Second World War, the villa served the British forces, hosting visiting officers and housing administrative offices. Attard suffered heavy bombardment due to its closeness to Ta’ Qali airfield, and Villa Refalo—like many large residences—also sheltered refugees fleeing the harbour area.

In the post war years, the villa briefly hosted wedding receptions, and part of its interior was even converted into a squash court for service members. In 1959, it was purchased by Paul Pisani, whose family soon transformed it into a fine dining destination. Mrs Josephine Pisani chose the name Corinthia, marking the beginning of what would become one of Malta’s most distinguished hospitality groups.

The villa’s grounds once bordered the route of the Malta Railway, affectionately known as Il Vapur tal Art. Operating between Valletta and Mdina from 1883 until 1931, the railway passed directly behind the property, adding another layer to the villa’s rich historical tapestry.

Today, Villa Corinthia stands as a graceful reminder of Malta’s architectural, social, and cultural heritage—an elegant setting where history and hospitality continue to meet.



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