
**Maestro Carmelo Pace (1906 - 1993):
a prolific twentieth-century composer, musician and
music educator**

Lydia Buttigieg

author's contact: Lydia Buttigieg - harp71@go.net.mt

Background

Born on 17 August 1906, at 4.15am, in the capital city of Valletta, Chevalier Maestro Carmelo Lorenzo Paolo Pace was the eldest of seven children, of which four died of brucellosis at birth. Pace's birth was registered on 21 August 1906 (the progressive number on Pace's birth certificate is 4690), and was witnessed by the copyist Achille Farrugia and the police officer Alfredo Maria Naudi. He was born to Antonio Pace, a twenty-four year-old cashier in a coffee bar, and Maria Carmela, née Ciappara, a diligent housewife who was two years her husband's senior. During Pace's early childhood the family lived in an apartment in Merchant Street, Valletta. In the same household was his mother's brother, Maestro Vincenzo Ciappara (1890-1979), who was Pace's earliest tutor.

Ciappara was a prominent figure in the early decades of the twentieth century. Bandmaster, arranger and composer by profession, he greatly influenced his nephew's choice of a professional career in music. Through his uncle's encouragement and perseverance, Pace acquired his inclination towards classical music, a passion that continued to evolve throughout his musical career. Pace received his first education at St Augustine College in Valletta, where he became very active in the students' choir. Apart from attending primary school, Pace also attended private lessons.

Relatively little is known about Pace's musical education as a teenager and as a young adult. His earliest experience of hearing performances of classical music led him to listen to military marches played by the British military bands, which were permanently stationed there at that time, as Malta was a British colony. During frequent visits to his father's workplace at the *Commerce* cinema theatre in *Strada Reale* (Kingsway - Republic Street) in Valletta, Pace became captivated by the impromptu style of live musical accompaniment, played by the resident quartet during the screenings of silent films. Through his uncle's tutelage, Pace made good progress in his lessons and was able to join the orchestra at the age of fifteen. Pace eventually joined Carlo Diacono's (1876-1942) *cappella di musica* and the orchestra of the Italian Opera Company at the Royal Opera House between 1921 and 1938, where he was principal viola in the orchestra. Whilst Pace performed at the Royal Opera House in Valletta, he had the opportunity to participate in various performances, and thus could study and thoroughly analyse the playing techniques of each instrument of the orchestra.

After acquiring some fundamental training from his uncle, Pace continued his studies for a further nine years, under the guidance of three foreign musicians

who were resident on the island. Pace studied violin under the tutelage of Antonio Genova, Professor Carlo Fiamingo (for violin and later the viola) and Dr Thomas Maine, acquiring a thorough grounding in harmony, counterpoint, fugue, musical composition, and orchestration.

By 1931 Pace obtained the Licentiate Diploma in teaching from the Royal School of Music, London. His anonymity is due to the fact that Pace never enhanced his studies abroad but progressed in his technical harmonic skills through correspondence. Unfortunately, such correspondence that could provide significant information regarding the intriguing harmonic expression that was employed in Pace's post-tonal works could not be traced. However, according to Ronald Azzopardi Caffari (interviewed in May 2013) a short congratulatory note sent by Dr Maine to Pace was found.

Pace's success in composition resulted in him being the first pioneering collector of Maltese folk music, a professional violinist at the Royal Opera House, teacher and composer. Due to his extensive musical *oeuvre*, Pace managed to comprehend his musical aptitudes by exploring every aspect of stylistic *genres*, ranging from piano sonatas to fully-fledged operas, choral, chamber and large-scale orchestral works. Although Pace produced an extensive range of stylistic *genres*, his music remains almost completely unknown, as most of it has not been published or performed up to this day.

In Malta the amalgamation of religious culture with the deep-rooted Mediterranean predisposition meant that the national school of composition up to the twentieth century focused on two vocal *genres*: sacred music in particular – through the works of composers from Benigno Zerafa (1762-1804) to Paul Nani (1906-1986) – and classical opera. Thus, Joseph Vella Bondin's illustrated books, which exemplify the whole spectrum of creativity and enhancement in Pace's music, explain that the conservative nature of music in Malta from the thirteenth century leading up to Pace's time is focused on conventional music, both in terms of harmony and instrumentation (Vella Bondin, 2000a & 2000b). Therefore, to support the argument of the present article, when contextualising Pace's folk and post-tonal music in relation to the works of his Maltese predecessors it stands in stark contrast. Pace's musical approach in developing a stylistic approach in Malta instigated a new form of medium, and thus this paper argues that Pace served not only as a pioneer of folk music but introduced a modernistic approach that continued to materialise throughout the twentieth century through his fellow contemporaries.

As Pace's compositions were donated to the Mdina archives towards the end of his lifetime, and stored there (except for his four operas, which can be found at the Manoel Theatre library), no relevant documents, letters, correspondence or other evidence seem to exist which exhibit any relevant connections with other foreign mainstreams of his time that could support Pace's contribution towards the development of modernism in the first part of the twentieth century. This has generated substantial speculation connected to the lack of evidence, which does not help to shed any light on Pace's departure from the norm.

Musical language

Pace began to expand the traditional Maltese *repertoire* into a wider, more focused musical spectrum. In the early twenties of the last century, Pace was still in his teens, but his earliest efforts were quite prolific. He composed suites for piano, violin and violoncello, followed by cantatas, orchestral and chamber music, sacred hymns, two ballets, band marches, concertos, and an oratorio. Pace's first musical work was called *Two Pieces*, composed in 1926, and divided into two separate sections: *Reverie* and *Lullaby* (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1991).

Reverie (Fig. 1), which commences in the key of E^b major and modulates to the dominant key, is based on a classical Ternary Form, ending on a short Coda. The formal organisation of *Lullaby* (Fig. 2) is structured like *Reverie*; however the development section is constantly repeated in its thematic material and ends on a short Coda. This work was composed in conventional harmony for pianoforte, violin and violoncello,¹ with its first part *Reverie* transcribed in the same year for chamber orchestra² and later for violin and piano. The piano trio, organised by Paul Carabott (v'cello) (1906-1976), was premiered on 15 October 1932 at the *Juventus Domus* in Sliema.

Pace's earliest works were recorded on the Maltese recoding label *Odeon Dischi Maltin*, and distributed by Paul Carabott, situated in Merchants' Street, Valletta. These works included *Ngħannu lil Kwiekeb* (We sing to the stars – Foxtrot),³ *Stedina għaż-Żfin* (An invitation to dance – Tango),⁴ *Lucia* (Lucia – Tango),⁵ *Għid lil Mama* (Tell your mum – One Step)⁶ and *Għodwa ta' Imħabba* (A day of love – Sentimental Waltz).⁷ These works were put to text by Pace and the recordings featured three well-known singers: C. Aquilina (Soprano), A. Theuma Castelletti (Tenor) and Watty Cachia (Baritone). According to Azzopardi Caffari (interviewed in May 2013) these recordings have disappeared without a trace; it is possible that as Pace's first residence in Valletta was heavily bombarded during the Second World War, these discs may have been destroyed at that time.

Reverie (1926)

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

Larghetto $\text{♩} = 60$

Violin *p*

Violoncello *pp*

mp con eleganza *rit...* *a tempo*

Larghetto $\text{♩} = 60$

pp

rit... *a tempo* *poco rit...*

rit... *a tempo* *poco rit...*

a tempo *rit...* *a tempo* *rit...* *a tempo*

a tempo *rit...* *a tempo* *rit...* *a tempo*

Fig. 1: Reverie, Piano Trio, bars 1-17

Lullaby

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

$\text{♩} = 60$

Violin *con molta tenerezza*

Violoncello *mp*

$\text{♩} = 60$

ppp

cresc. ed affrett... *rall.. molto...* *a tempo*

cresc. ed affrett... *cresc. ed affrett...* *rall.. molto...*

Fig. 2: Lullaby, Piano Trio, bars 1-12

Following his earliest attempts at string quartets, which were also written in a conventional late Romantic tonal language resembling that of the early to middle Verdian-operatic style, Pace composed his first orchestral work in 1929, which was the Symphonic Overture in C minor *Simoisius* (Fig. 3). Unfortunately, this work was never performed. This nine-minute composition is presented in two principal subjects, recapitulation and a sharply defined Coda. The first subject, after a slow short introduction, opens with a fugato and from that point the music proceeds in a direct and straightforward manner. The work opens with a short contrapuntal introduction using the woodwinds, strings and horns, in the key of E^b major and in simple quadruple time *Adagio* pace. As the work progresses, the second section enters in an *Allegro* tempo, with the first subject appearing in the part of the first violin. Contrapuntally developing in the string section, the work progresses into uncomplicated harmonic language, generally employing a chorale style throughout the sections of the orchestra. In the middle section the work changes to *Moderato molto in 4 movimenti*, generally keeping the same rhythmic structure as had been employed in the first half. In this section the melodic material is doubled by the first and second violins with the upper sections of the woodwinds. The work continues to be enhanced as the piccolo and the first violin are doubled together, supported by diatonic chordal progressions. Another section appears using sustained progressions on the bassoon, while the horns are melodically approached in a two- and three-part counterpoint. With a recapitulation and motivic melodic treatments taken from previous materials, the work concludes in a long Coda, ending in a climax in the last few bars, in *Vivo* tempo.

Concert Overture in C minor
(1929)



Fig. 3: *Simoisius* – Concert Overture in C minor (1929), bars 9-15

Towards the forties of the twentieth century, Pace became intrigued with composing Maltese folk music. He decided to write in the Maltese language, differently from the customary Italianate style so common among most of his predecessors. It may be that as Malta was experiencing political tension between the supporters of the British colonisers and the followers of Italian culture, Pace

deviated from the habitual practices dominant in the island and embarked on the new venture of composing traditional Maltese folk music. Apart from the fact that this made him the first collector of folk music, Pace served as an educator to his fellow contemporaries, who continued on his path in cultivating the national identity of Malta. One of his successors was Professor Charles Camilleri (1931-2009), considered by many as a national composer, who scored a number of works based on folk music and legends. *The Malta Suite* (1946) and *Songs from Malta* are fine examples of folk music.

The kinds of Maltese subjects that Pace employed were mainly based on variations of Maltese traditional tunes, variations on the *Maltese National Anthem* and a choral work featuring a typical Maltese feast. This represents the fact that Pace integrated the Maltese language with traditional folk music so as to promote the island's true identity through his compositions. For:

"at the end of the 19th century few Maltese could speak English and the colonial power had not penetrated the everyday life of locals. The elite working with the British military could interact with the colonial authorities and some famous British Lords (such as Lord Strickland) became major figures in the political debate for independence. However, the influence of British culture was competing with a previous cultural order. The islands' neighbouring Sicily and the broader Italian region had been the former purveyors of culture. Through the powerful Roman Catholic Church and through commercial exchanges, the Italian peninsula had influenced Maltese culture for centuries before the British occupation. The main language of the Knights of Malta was Italian and the juridical system was written in Italian until the 20th century" (Billiard, n.d., n.p.).

As Billiard highlights, although English and Maltese are the two official languages in Malta under EU regulations, one can still find elderly Maltese people who can speak Italian better than English. In addition, as the cultural supremacy between Britain and Italy can be clearly understood from political debates that took place at the end of the 19th century, their political issues still influence their structural policies.

Enhancing Billiard's claims about the establishment of an identity in Malta, Henry Frendo argues that in "1899 a language substitution decree was announced, whereby a deadline of fifteen years was set for the final replacement of Italian by

English in the law courts – as ‘a first bombshell’, wrote Chamberlain.” Therefore, when “anglicisation accompanied de-italianisation in Malta as a policy, replacing such informal cultural influences as had less conspicuously accompanied the British presence since 1800. At the same time, Maltese was promoted as a means for learning English; and in its own right, Italian was increasingly pressured out on the ground that English was the Empire’s language, and that children could not be expected to learn as many as three languages” (1992, p.733).

In a Maltese context Pace emerges as the counterpart of Vaughan Williams in England, or Bartók in Hungary: one of a generation of European composers working in the earlier twentieth century who continued the traditions of Romantic nationalism. In mainland Europe, nationalism came to be regarded with great suspicion after the Second World War and nationalist schools of composition enjoyed no critical credibility once the post-war musical *avant-garde* emerged. However, Pace’s interest in Maltese folk music and Maltese subjects was life-long and lasted up to his death. This reinforces the sense of his isolation from the *avant-garde*. In some respects, therefore, his position once again shows similarities with Irish composers such as Potter and Fleischmann, who similarly continued to have recourse to Irish subject matter and to folk music even after 1945, or with composers in Eastern Europe such as Kodaly.

Pace’s nationalistic identity features in his work *Maltesina* (1931), a musical fantasy based largely on traditional Maltese folk tunes (Fig. 4). The Scottish Highland Fusiliers’ Light Infantry Band premiered this work on the Palace Square in the same year. In 1936 Pace re-arranged it for chamber orchestra:

“This fantasy contains nine different original folk-tunes and each tune is given a number at the opening bar. A few bars of episodic material are introduced to connect the principal themes. Although there are hundreds of lyrics for Maltese folk-songs, there are however very few real Maltese traditional melodies. This is due to the unfortunate local habit of setting numerous different songs to the same tune. For this reason one cannot identify a melody with its proper title” (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1991, p. 184).

At the beginning of his career as a composer Pace constantly sought to divert the traditional idiom that was constantly pursued by his predecessors to an *avant-garde*, contemporary style of musical language. This definitive approach to creating an innovative stylistic idiom dates back to as early as the 1930s, where it was achieved through a cycle of string quartets. Pace’s interest in post-tonal

Maltesina

(1936)

No. 1

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

Slow March

(Oboe/Clar in Bb)

p

Slow March

pp pizz

pizz

6

Fig. 4: *Maltesina* (1931), 1st Maltese tune, bars 1-11

harmonic language is an important development in Maltese musical heritage, and thus Pace became the first composer to develop this kind of medium. As Pace's predecessors were reluctant to exploit a modern spectrum of musical ideas, unlike those of the late-Romantic European composers of their time, Pace's approach in composing a modernist style may be considered as constituting one of the pillars of music composition in the twentieth century.

Prior to composing his cycle of post-tonal string quartets, Pace had already worked on three other string quartets, which were completely different in texture and structure. These four-movement string quartets in C major (Fig. 5), F major (Fig. 6) and B^b major (Fig. 7) were composed between 1927 and 1929. The first two string quartets (C major and F major) were premiered at the local Relay System on 16 November 1936 and at the Malta Cultural Institute Concert on 3 June 1954. The formal organisation of these three quartets consists of four movements: *Allegro*, *Adagio/Andante*, *Scherzo* and *Fugue*. The structural form of each movement is based on the first subject, the second subject, the development section, the recapitulation of the first subject and the recapitulation of the second subject; the fourth movement contains *stretto* episodes throughout the fugue section, followed by a coda. Therefore, the overall formal organisation of the first three

string quartets is based on a ternary form, including a coda for the first three movements, and the fourth movement consists of *stretto* episodes with a coda.

String Quartet in C major
(1927)

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

Allegro Moderato ♩ = 100

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello

11

20

1

Grazioso e Poco Meno ♩ = 94

Fig. 5: String Quartet in C major (1927), bars 1-27

After the first three string quartets Pace commenced with his cycle of string quartets, which he did not compose in close succession. His first nine string quartets were scored from 1930 to 1938, and the last two were composed in 1970 and 1972. Regrettably, only one of the string quartets has been performed so far – the 2nd string quartet (1931) was premiered on 5 February 1965 in Waltham, UK – with the remaining works still waiting to be performed. To present an overview of Pace's post-tonal string quartets, the illustrated example, the 7th string quartet, composed in 1936 (Fig. 8), exemplifies the kind of language pertained in his works.

String Quartet in F major

(1928)

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

Allegro $\text{♩} = 80$

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello

7
14
22

f
f
f
f

tr
tr
tr
tr

marcato ef
p
marcato
p

sf a tempo
ff arco
pizz
ff arco

Fig. 6: String Quartet in F major (1928), bars 1-28

The formal organisation of Pace's 7th string quartet constitutes three movements, constructed from fragmentary gestures and based on recurrences of structured progressions. The work allows the composer to incorporate some of his concepts concerning fundamental parameters and asymmetrical features and textures

String Quartet in Bb major

(1929)

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

Allegro ♩ = 100

Violin I
f staccato e leggero

Violin II
f staccato e leggero

Viola
f

Violoncello
f

Fig. 7: String Quartet in Bb major (1929), bars 1- 15

within each movement. These concepts create a contrast between diametrically opposing movements, which in turn incorporates short fragmented features that develop between the first and third movement with a complexity in structure and tempo. While the first and third movement develop a consistency of innovative thematic traits, it is evident that the second movement stands alone in nearly all factors, thereby offering a complete departure from the outer two movements. This departure reveals that the second movement is highly chromatic and conveys very short fragmented passages, distinguished from each other by means of individual motifs. When assimilating the overall harmonic language, the string quartet is based on lines where the first and third movements exploit traits of superimposed diatonic chords, supported by primary notes in the cello part.

According to Azzopardi Caffari (interview May 2013), Pace composed two additional string quartets. Although these compositions are untraceable and are therefore not noted in the catalogue, these works were transmitted by Rediffusion (Malta) in a series of concerts from Nani's Piano Studio in South Street, Valletta. The *String Quartet in C minor* was transmitted on 14 November 1936, whilst *The Spring Bow*, composed for string orchestra, was transmitted in August 1937.

String Quartet No. 7 (1936)

1st Movement

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

Largamente $\text{♩} = 56$

(1st Theme) (A1) Consequent

Extension A Tempo Antecedent (A1)

Extension (A3) (2nd Theme) - (B)

Allegro ma non Troppo ($\text{♩} = 112$)

Fig. 8: First movement, *Largamente* section, antecedent and consequent phrases, bars 1-18

Vella Bondin (2000, p. 181) expounds that Pace was musically adventurous when it came to *musica da camera*. Pace wanted to demonstrate that his chamber works were of a high calibre Vella Bondin also noted that, apart from being "harmonically

advanced for his era",⁸ Pace's *musica da camera* is generally exquisitely refined; the harmonic language portrays melodious progressions while at times, complex dissonant chromaticism is employed.

This kind of complex harmonic language is illustrated in a number of examples. *Intermezzo for Flute Solo* (1971) is a five minute through-composed work which contains short improvisory themes, incorporating contrasting tempi and moods (Fig. 9). This short work distinctively portrays complex melodic chromaticism, with major, minor, augmented and diminished intervallic patterns presented throughout the score. Although the work employs fragmented melodic contours which are constantly connected from one phrase to another using different articulated techniques, Pace still presents large intervallic patterns that at times function as a melodic dissonance in its overall complexity.

Intermezzo (1971)

For solo flute

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)



Fig. 9: Intermezzo (1971) for solo flute, bars 1-17

Written in three movements, Pace's 7th String Quartet (1936) bears an important place in the Maltese musical heritage as the overall harmonic language reveals the transition from the norm (Fig. 10). The work constitutes three movements where it is constructed from fragmentary gestures and based on recurrences of structured progressions. The work allows Pace to incorporate some of his concepts concerning fundamental parameters and asymmetrical features and textures within each movement. These concepts create a contrast between diametrically opposing movements, which in turn incorporates short fragmented features that develop between the first and third movement with a structural complexity in structure and tempo. As the first and third movement develop a consistency of

Largamente ♩ = 56

(1st Theme) (A1)

Consequent

V9 vi of G minor
vii - G minor
iv i of G minor
V7 i of G minor F# min
Dmaj7

A Tempo

Antecedent (A1)

Bb aug A major IV Corda
E♭ major D7
i7 of G minor v7 of C minor
i of C minor

Allegro ma non Troppo (♩=112) (2nd Theme)

Extension (A3)

Fig. 10: 7th String Quartet (1936), 1st Movement, diatonic harmonic progressions, bars 1-18

innovative thematic traits, it is evident that the second movement stands alone in nearly all factors, thereby offering a complete departure from the outer two

movements. This departure has led to reveal that the second movement is highly chromatic and conveys very short fragmented passages, distinguishing them from each other by means of individual motifs.

The first implications of diatonic tonal harmony are exemplified in the first musical idea of the introduction section. The overall system is based on superimposed diatonic chords where in the cello part, in the antecedent and consequent phrases (bars 1-8), the bass notes are implying in the key of G minor – ii – iv – i, iii – ii – V⁷ – i – vii. As illustrated in Fig. 10, the upper diatonic chords are structured on V⁹ at bar 3, resolving onto vi of G minor. In the second phrase, the F[#] leading note is projected prominently, mainly in the first violin part, and is later heard in the second violin part, resolving on the first beat of bar 8, which serves as the leading diatonic chord of G minor.

The second period opens at bar 12 with two superimposed chords where in the cello part, the V⁷ serves as a support to the E^b major chord, demonstrated in the second violin and viola parts. The V⁷ chord resolves onto the tonic of G minor at bar 15, where the same chord functions as a pivot chord to the key of C minor. In the upper register, the two diatonic chords are based on an augmented chord of B^b major (bar 14), followed by Amaj⁷ (bar 15) between the first and second violin parts. At bar 16 the tonic of C minor functions as a long pedal note till bar 18.

Although it was not his intention to elicit the concept of 'atonality' in his chamber works, Pace's objectives for his chamber works were to infuse his own expressiveness, thoughts and emotions into his own compositions.⁹ Pace's music, although diversified from the classical conventional harmony that one would expect to hear, still remained lyrical and expressive as well as melancholic, both in texture and quality: "The style of Carmelo Pace's orchestral and chamber music is more modern in outlook; however, according to the composer himself, he does not follow any particular school of composition and he is not inclined to follow exaggerated experiments" (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1991, p. xvi).

With the onset of the Second World War Pace was conscripted with the British Forces, but was found medically unfit for active military duties. He was appointed shelter supervisor in Valletta, in charge of about six hundred homeless refugees. Later, he continued to work as a civilian clerk with the Royal Air Force; his job involved the deciphering of allied aeroplane movement codes, which was a highly secret exercise during the war. Pace was permanently stationed in Valletta where attacks were constant. On one occasion, during an air raid on Valletta, Pace refused to leave the building from where he was working and continued on his

job. When he finally decided to leave his office and took shelter from the attacks, Pace was fortunate to escape harm when a bomb directly hit the office in which he had been working (Farrugia, 2003).

Due to his work during the war, Pace was constrained to suspend his musical composition activity from 1940 to 1944. Notwithstanding this situation, during the war he still managed to conduct a small orchestra for the refugees. Pace also managed to teach music after office hours at the Command School of Education, in South Street, Valletta. During this time Pace’s family, including his wife, moved house from Merchant Street to Old Mint Street in Valletta, as this had been heavily bombarded. Thereafter, they moved to Sliema in Tigné Street, and later to 14, St Dominic Street, where Pace continued to teach for more than fifty years.

After the Second World War one would assume that Pace moved to a new harmonic approach, reflecting the developments being experimented in the rest of Europe. However, to the contrary, the present author’s analytical evaluation of his works have revealed that Pace did not change his artistic style of composition; he remained consistent in his harmonic language throughout his musical career by employing complex dissonant chromaticism, mostly presented in intricate fugal writing.

Although the majority of Pace’s orchestral and vocal works are based on tonality, the harmonic originality of some of his selected works, such as the four operas, piano and chamber works and the *Symphony No. 2* (Fig. 11) characterise elements of post-tonal language. Through thorough archival research, the present author

Symphony No. 2

(1966)

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

Allegro Energico ♩ = 100

Allegro Energico ♩ = 100 **Theme A**

ff Flutes **ff** Trombones **ff** Horns **ff** Bassoons **ff** Strings

ff D. Bass

Fig. 11: *Symphony No. 2* (1966), 1st Movement - Theme A, from bar 1-7

can confirm that Pace appears to have had no contact with the burgeoning post-tonal language of the European mainland; however, he represents the foundations of Maltese post-tonal compositional practice. Pace's music demonstrates itself to be an independent conception of what musical language and syntax might be in the post-common practice era.

It took thirty-five years after his symphony *Symphonie Dramatique* (1931) before Pace composed *Symphony No. 2* (1966), a twenty-seven minute three-movement work, which premiered at the Manoel Theatre, in Valletta, during an orchestral concert presented by the British Council and Rediffusion (Malta) Limited on 20 January 1968, under the baton of Maestro Joseph Sammut. The "structure of this work differs in many ways from that of the classical models. The traditional four movement frame work is reduced to three and the usual division of the movement into an exposition, development and recapitulation is also modified. The music flows as a continuous train of musical ideas, growing and branching out freely" (De Gabriele and Caffari 1991, p. 169).

Structured for a full orchestra, with double woodwinds, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, harp and strings (similarly scored as some symphonies by Hindemith and Bruckner), the three-movement work features characteristics employed in Pace's large-scale orchestral works. The overall formal organisation of the symphony does not conform to the standard classical models, but consists of a trail of new thematic ideas, which in turn are continuously based on improvisory materials that are developed from one section to another. Throughout the symphony, in some sections the statements and developments are in contrast with each other, while the rhythmic complexities of such passages are presented in contrasting superimposed rhythms; the majority are based on crotchets, triplet crotchets and quavers and quaver passages. Organising and structuring such a complex work of this calibre requires a diversity of compositional creativity encompassing a psychological and philosophical evaluation of the whole framework. In turn, each composer creates a whole new individual dimension of ingenuity, where different musical cultures embody different ways of imagining sound as music. As noted by Nicholas Cook the "transformation from the simple to the elaborate occurs when a composer plans out and realizes a complex musical work such as a symphony. One cannot write a symphony all at once; so part of the skill of composition lies in splitting up what has to be done into a number of 'sub-jobs', each of more manageable length or complexity" (Cook, 1992, p. 192).

Although the themes are generally presented at the opening of each section, mainly projected on the woodwinds or on the first violins, the thematic ideas in

turn develop into improvisory treatments. In addition, with the use of new thematic ideas, which constitute unstructured phrases of four or more than eight bars in length, Pace employs short motives which are not directly derived from thematic material, but are independently presented in either two-bar canonic progressions or in short contrapuntal textures. As the basis of the work constitutes an absence of clear traditional tonal idioms, the listener's perspective sense of the musical organisation is largely dependent on thematic and textural contrasts, rather than tonal ones. Unlike other European composers whose tonality declined, in the works of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern, their "thematic processes came to play an ever larger role, both in the creation of unity and in the articulation of form." In the essay *Problems of Harmony* (1934) Schoenberg maintained that "abandoning tonality can be contemplated only if other satisfactory means for coherence and articulation present themselves, and for him these other means were clearly motivic" (Dale, 2000, p. 76).

With reference to the symphony's harmonic language, Pace's approach to this medium stands in comparison with his post-tonal chamber music. The symphony does not employ a clear tonal centre but constitutes dissonant structural harmonies that prevail constantly throughout the work. Such obscure harmonies are presented as: (i) superimposed and higher diatonic chordal progressions, (ii) dissonant intervallic patterns of augmented/diminished 4ths and 5ths, (iii) dissonant clashes between two-part contrapuntal textures, and (iv) chromatic interventions of non-harmonic notes. The harmonic organisation is based on contrapuntal textures, prominently projected in the strings; similar to Hindemith's contrapuntal techniques which are structured on the same textures. Highlighting Hindemith's evaluations on contrapuntal textures, Hans Tischler states that: "There are two basic approaches to counterpoint, one based on consonance, the other on independent melodic-rhythmic progressions. As a conservative, Hindemith employs counterpoint in the first sense only, yet uses dissonant counterpoint, the dissonance being the result of (1) non-traditional chords, (2) an extended application of non-harmonic notes, (3) certain melodic techniques, and (4) polytonality" (Tischler, 1964, p. 53).

Despite personal challenges, Pace still continued to expand his musical *repertoire* in various *genres*, such as ballets, symphonies, choral works, overtures, and various combinations of chamber works. Pace's music was played by freelance Maltese musicians and the first documented concerts, held in Malta not under the auspices of the Church, were organised by the MCI (Malta Cultural Institute). The initial concert took place on 15 February 1949 at the Hotel Phoenicia, under the distinguished patronage of Governor and Lady Douglas and the Minister for

Education and Ms G.G. Ganado. In the Inaugural Concert of the Malta Cultural Institute, as the founder member of the institute, Pace also conducted the orchestra during this concert. For the prestigious event, the Mozart Amateur String Orchestra performed Pace's *Polonaise* (1930), a six-minute work which was originally composed for pianoforte and chamber orchestra, while an arrangement was later set for violoncello and piano. This orchestra was founded by Edward Naudi in 1917.

Although Pace was considered to be a conservative, introvert and self-effacing person, he still sought to extend his musical output beyond the geographical boundaries of Malta. His musical knowledge and expertise in composing such intriguing and highly complex post-tonal works allowed him not only to win prestigious awards, but also enabled him to have his own compositions performed in various European and non-European countries. Such works have been exhibited in several countries, such as in:

England (*Impromptu* – 1950 for piano solo) – winning piece in the International Chamber Music Competition of the Waltham Contemporary Music Society in 1967;

London (*Toccatina* – 1954 for piano solo) – performed on 5 January 1989;

Japan (*Jubilamus* – 1970 Tone Poem);

Germany (*Rondo* – 1979 for flute and pianoforte) and (*Rhapsody* – 1960 for clarinet and pianoforte);

Egypt (*Nel Crepuscolo* – 1934 for soprano and pianoforte);

USA (*Aprilja* – 1956 for soprano/tenor with pianoforte or orchestra);

Argentina, Wales, London and Yugoslavia (*Hunting Song* – 1956 for SATB unaccompanied) – awarded first prize in the Rediffusion Chamber Music Competition, October 1956;

Wales, London, Italy, Norway and Sweden (*L-Imnarja* – 1960 for SATB unaccompanied or with pianoforte);

Argentina – (*T'Accogliam Pane Celeste* – 1960 for SATB unaccompanied);

Italy and Wales (*Description of Spring* – 1960 – madrigal for SATB unaccompanied)

When one considers that the main focus in Malta inclined towards classical conservatism, Pace's operas stand in stark contrast. Although Pace's operas portray advanced post-tonal synthesis, they still characterise "the traditional style of music that suits the general Maltese audience well. He avoids using many modern experiments" (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1991, p.xvi). Pace's operas stood out from other productions simply because the majority of performances, especially in

the 1960s and 1970s (according to the programme index at the Manoel Theatre, dating back to the 1960s), were all focused on Italian productions. For example, during the 1964 season (November), Italian operas such as *Fedora*, *La Traviata*, *Manon*, *I Pescatori di Perle*, *Faust* and *Madame Butterfly* were performed.

As the majority of the concerts consisted of Italian operas, instrumental and vocal recitals, ballets, operettas and fully-fledged theatrical plays, performed both in Maltese and English, the production and performance of Pace's operas was considered highly innovative in the 1960s. For example, *Caterina Desguanez* was the first to be performed at the Manoel Theatre in the mid-1960s. This opera appeared for the first time on 27 October 1965. The plot is based on a historical event during the Great Siege of Malta of 1565 (Miceli, 2001).

Pace's operas were considered to be the first fully-fledged Maltese stage works, and thus were highly praised by critics for their mastery in harmonic language and musicianship. As Pace's operas are mostly directed towards a nationalistic idiom, this aspect of nationalism reflects strong attachments with other European countries. Thus:

"In addition to Italian, French, and German operas, there were operatic developments in those countries where nationalism was strong, especially in Russia and Bohemia. These operas were also based on folklore or upon events of national significance with nationally important personages. Composers such as Mussorgsky in Russia created works that are highly original, with great dramatic power but without using the closed forms of the Italians and without imitating Wagner" (Wold, Martin, Miller, Cyker, 1998, p. 147).

When considering the kind of stage works that Pace composed, his operatic settings consist of a combination of mythological and historical events involving Malta. Hence, his operas shed light on the kind of traditional historical background that has been maintained through the centuries, although some of this is more or less fictitious. Hence the operas: *Caterina Desguanez* (set in 1565), *I Martiri* (set in 1798), *Angelica* (set in 1526) and *Ipogea* (set in 1600 B.C.).

Pace's second opera was *I Martiri* (1967),¹⁰ with a libretto by Vincenzo Maria Pellegrini (1911-1997), is a three-act opera written for soloists, choir and orchestra. The opera is a dramatisation of the rising of the Maltese against the French, who, under Napoleon Bonaparte, took possession of the islands without any serious

opposition in 1798 (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1991, p.9). The two subsequent operas were *Angelica* and *Ipogea*. *Angelica – The Bride of Mosta* (1973),¹¹ with a libretto by Vincenzo Maria Pellegrini, is an opera in three acts, written for soloists, choir and orchestra. The story is inspired by common events during the year 1525: Malta was often invaded, its treasures robbed and its people carried away as slaves (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1991, p.17). *Ipogea* (1976),¹² with libretto by Vincenzo Maria Pellegrini, is a three-act opera written for soloists, choir and orchestra, set in Malta during the period 1600 B.C. The actual libretto of this opera was found at the University of Malta's Melitensia section¹³, and was later published by Giovanni Muscat and Company Limited in Valletta on 30 July 1976.

Considering that the majority of works performed at the Manoel Theatre were mostly Italian operas, Antonio Nani and Francesco Schira (1809-1883) endeavoured to compose operas that would reflect Maltese musical culture. Schira's works demonstrated Italianate traits similar to that of many Romantic composers of the nineteenth century. Apart from Nani and Schira, other Maltese composers, who mainly worked abroad, produced operas that were specifically meant to be performed in foreign theatres. Some notable eighteenth and nineteenth century Maltese composers were Giuseppe Arena (1707-1784), Girolamo Abos (1715-1760), and Nicolò Isouard (1773-1818). In addition, Maltese composers such as Giuseppe Giorgio Pisani (1870-1929), Vincenzo Napoleone Mifsud (1807-1870) and Alessandro Curmi (1801-1857) also wrote operas which were performed in other countries, for example at the Zizinia Theatre in Alexandria, in Egypt; the Apollo Theatre in Rome; the Teatro Nuovo in Naples; and also at the La Scala in Milan; all in Italy.

Being a freelance musician enabled Pace to produce more music and experiment more with various styles. However, he never travelled extensively to combine his musical talents with other European mainstreams. According to Azzopardi Caffari (interview May 2013), Pace only went abroad a few times, and thus had almost no opportunity to attend musical performances outside Malta. He could only listen to music being performed overseas over the Rediffusion system (cable radio service). During the war ownership of private radios was prohibited. However, in the post-war years, radio and later on television provided more opportunities.

During his last years Pace continued to teach and compose at his private residence in Sliema, where his very last work was composed in 1993: a miniature piece for solo flute. Five months prior to his death Pace received his appointment as Officer of the National Order of Merit on 13 December 1992 from the then President of Malta, Dr Vincent Tabone. After dedicating his entire life to music and teaching,

Pace suddenly fell ill with pneumonia and died on 20 May 1993 at St Luke's Hospital, at the age of 87. In an article in a local paper announcing Pace's death, the correspondent states that "his extraordinary consistent and prolific output consists of more than 500 works in a remarkable range of style, type and form. He was the first Maltese to write works in a number of classical forms, including the pianoforte concerto, the variation, the symphony and the ballet" (Vella Bondin, 1993).

As one interviewee observed: "Pace always wanted to be original in the music which he produced, and he never wanted to copy other composer's styles and material" (interview with Georgette Caffari – November 2007). This is a reason why Pace barely listened to recorded music and the very few records that he owned were merely the unstudied accumulations of a normal person rather than a conscious effort to build a well-regulated library that would constitute a potential aid for his work. Apart from acquiring a very limited number of musical manuscripts, Pace had two personal possessions consisting in the most basic equipment – a simple black and white single lens box camera, which produced good results through the selection of interesting subjects; and a 78 rpm disc player – it was of the portable horn type with a spring driven motor.

In Pace's illustrated catalogue of works, his achievements and inspirations are described thus:

"His compositions are without unnecessary tinsel for his inclination was for a musical idiom which is sympathetic and honest, ignoring all that was merely bravura and deliberately provocative. His art was direct, with a strong will and a firm patriotism underpinning it. Without doubt, his music is the most versatile and prolific native musical talent Malta has known so far. His 500-odd compositions form a remarkably large, rarely realised oeuvre, whose excellence and worth go much beyond the awe the mere writing of such a large body of works inspired. Even the briefest examination of Pace's achievement cannot avoid a consideration of the four elements on which this achievement is built; his skilful handling of the musical instruments; the diversity of form; style and range of his compositions; the importance given to chamber music; and his knowledge of old rhythms and traditions" (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1993).

Pace as music educator

Throughout the centuries various Maltese composers have emerged as leading composers and music educators, leaving behind a substantial amount of compositions that are frequently performed in local concerts to this day. By the end of the first half of the twentieth century Pace was already a well-established composer, musician and music educator. His life was focused entirely on composing and educating music students in harmony, counterpoint and the history of music.

Carmelo Pace obtained the Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music (London) Teaching Diploma in 1931. He taught privately at the reading room of the *Bibliotheca* (The National Library in Malta), which served as his classroom. His teaching quickly spread and his students rapidly increased in number, and thus his students were considered to be leading musical theorists, with various talented students emerging as well-established composers and conductors and music educators in their own right. Amongst his students were Dr. Albert Pace (b. 1958), Prof. Dion Buhagiar (b. 1944), Prof. Michael Laus (b. 1960), Mro. Ray Sciberras (b.1962), trumpeter Sigmund Mifsud, Mro. Raymond Fenech (b.1958) and the late Maria Ghirlando and Prof. Charles Camilleri (1931-2009). Many of these are music educators in their own right.

Apart from being a music theorist, in 1946 Pace published a collection of radio programmes highlighting aspects on classical music, which were aired on the Rediffusion cable radio. A year later, in 1947, Pace issued a theoretical booklet called *A Handbook of Musical Forms*, a publication which has long been unavailable in both local and foreign book stores, and thus cannot be traced.

In addition to his teaching and composing, Pace was the main musical advisor and organiser of the MCI concerts from the inaugural concert up to the year 1987. Though there is no written proof that Pace was the official organiser of the MCI, yet, the recent MCI organiser, mezzo-soprano Marie Therese Vassallo, holds that Pace was in fact the resident conductor and performer of the MCI. Pace took the initiative to enhance his student's talents by encouraging them to perform at these concerts.

Conclusion

Thorough investigation and research into Pace's life and career as a musician, composer and educator reveals that the circumstances of Maltese musical life

hindered Pace's creative development to a considerable extent, due to a variety of practical reasons. Owing to the comparative lack of an audience for instrumental music and new music, and the lack of professional performing groups capable of performing complex modern works, some of Pace's most stylistically interesting and enterprising compositions were never performed in his lifetime, and moreover he never had an opportunity to hear a great deal of what he wrote. It is extremely difficult for a composer to develop his artistic aptitudes if he does not have a chance to hear his own music performed in a good live performance. Therefore, most of Pace's musical output has remained virtually unknown and unperformed up to this date. In addition, Pace never published any kind of academic analytical essays or contributed to periodical literature.

Notwithstanding these limitations, Pace still emerges as the first collector of folk music in Malta. Besides, as much of the composed music on the island was entirely scored for liturgical/ecclesiastical functions, Pace endeavoured to revolutionise this perception by composing some of his most well-known folk music. Up to Pace's time, his predecessors had not attempted to compose such music, and thus Pace undertook a new concept that continued to be developed by his fellow contemporary Professor Charles Camilleri. This sense of national identity that brought forward the true nature of the Maltese people made Pace an important figure in Maltese music history during the twentieth century.

Apart from composing folk music, Pace enhanced his artistic attributes by developing a new concept of harmonic language in Malta. As Pace's music remains in manuscript and only a small proportion of it was ever performed, some of his works such as *7th String Quartet* (1936) and *Piano Sonata No. 2* (1972) are still thought to constitute the first modernist musical idiom in the twentieth century, and were highly influential among his fellow contemporaries. Besides, as Pace was highly acclaimed as being the foremost music educator on the island, his advanced musical abilities served as fundamental guidance to his talented students.

In a twentieth century Maltese context Pace is consequently a very prominent figure and a pioneer. After dedicating his entire life to music and teaching, Pace suddenly fell ill with pneumonia and died on 20 May 1993, leaving an array of unperformed works that require attention.

References

Billiard, E., n.d. Negotiating Maltese Identity between Italy and Britain (paper presented on 23 June). [online] Available at: <http://www.academia.edu/248319/Negotiating_Maltese_Identity_Between_Italy_and_Britain>

Cook, N., 1992. *Music, Imagination, and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dale, C., 2000. *Schoenberg's Chamber Symphonies: the crystallization and rediscovery of a style*. Cornwall, UK: MPG Books Ltd., Ashgate

De Gabriele, M. and Caffari, G., 1991. *Carmelo Pace, A Maltese Composer, Thematic, Annotated and Illustrated Catalogue of Works*. USA / Malta: Minnesota, Hill Monastic Manuscript Library St. John's University / Foundation for the Promotion of the Music of Carmelo Pace Cathedral Museum, Mdina.

Farrugia, J.J. 2003. *Ulied is-Seklu l-Ieħor, It-Torċa*, 24 Aug.

Frendo, H., 1992. Italy and Britain in Maltese Colonial Nationalism. *History of European Idea*, 15 (4-6). pp.733-739.

Miceli, A.G., 2001. *L-Istorja ta' l-Opra f'Malta (1866-2000)*. Malta: PIN.

Tischler, H., 1964. Remarks on Hindemith's Contrapuntal Technique. *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, vol. 16.

Vella Bondin, J., 1993. Leading music composer dies. *The Times*, 21 May. p.48

Vella Bondin, J., 2000a. *Il-Mużika ta' Malta sa l-Aħħar tas-Seklu Tmintax*. Malta: PIN.

Vella Bondin, J., 2000b. *Il-Mużika ta' Malta fis-Seklu Dsatax u Għoxrin*. Malta: PIN.

Wold, M., Martin, G., Miller, J., and Cykler, E., 1998. *An Outline History of Western Music*. 9th ed. Boston, Massachusetts: WCB McGraw-Hill.

Interviews

With Georgette Caffari, November 2007, at her residence, Sliema, Malta.

With Joseph Vella Bondin, 19 August 2010, at his private residence, St. Venera, Malta.

With Ronalda Azzopardi Caffari, May 2010, telephone conversation.

Endnotes

¹ Music Manuscript Number 2640, Microfilmed Project Number 8098.

- ² Music Manuscript Number 2750, transcription for Chamber Orchestra.
- ³ Disc code number – A247509, '*Ngħannu lil Cuiecheb*'.
- ⁴ Code number of the disc A247510 , '*Stediena għas-sfin*'.
- ⁵ Disc code number – A247511.
- ⁶ Disc code number – A247512, '*Għajd lil mama*'.
- ⁷ Disc code number – AA212902 , '*Għodua ta' imħabba*'.
- ⁸ From an interview with J. Vella Bondin at his private residence in St Venera (19 August 2010).
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Original manuscripts donated to the Manoel Theatre, Malta, on 13 October 1988 – Deed No. 369. Microfilm project No. 3411 at the Cathedral Museum of Mdina, Malta. A libretto was found at the University of Malta's Melitenisa Section on bookshelf MZX.GC. DPB.174 a
- ¹¹ Original manuscripts donated to the Manoel Theatre, Malta on 13 October, 1988 – Deed No. 369. Microfilm project No. 3410 at the Cathedral Museum of Mdina, Malta. A booklet was found at the University of Malta's Melitensia Section on bookshelf MZX.GP.B.173 P, with a short biographical account of Vincenzo Maria Pellegrini (librettist) written by Gaetano Ravizza, and including all Pellegrini's works in English, Italian and Maltese. It also comprises quotations taken from newspapers and statements made by well-known artists.
- ¹² Microfilm project No. 3409 at the Cathedral Museum of Mdina, Malta.
- ¹³ University of Malta's Melitensia Section bookshelf MZX.GC.