Celebrating intercultural dialogue with classical music

Caroline Calleja

This year is dedicated to intercultural dialogue and the EuroMed Anna Lindh Foundation has earmarked this Thursday as the day when activities are to take place all over Europe and the Mediterranean to celebrate what has been termed as the "Dialogue night event". The University of Malta's Mediterranean Institute, with the support of the Anna Lindh Foundation, is organizing three activities aimed at fostering mutual understanding. The foundation's network in Malta is headed by the institute.

On Wednesday, the University is hosting an afternoon seminar focusing on intercultural dialogue and migration while on Thursday two classical music concerts are being organised, an operatic concert at noon in the music room of St James Cavalier, Valletta, and the second at 7.30 p.m. at the Sacrista Vaults at the Valletta Waterfront. Rapturous to both concerts is free of charge.

The first concert will feature arias sung by mezzo soprano Claire Musa, accompanied by carnatic sarodist Sujit Banerjee and Carnatic violinist K. Bhaskar. The concert will include operatic pieces from Purcell, Mozart, Rossini, Bizet, Beethoven, Gounod, and Menotti others. The second concert will feature works for string ensemble by Telemann, Haydn, Beethoven, Dvorak and Schumann, as well as operatic arias by Claire Musa. Dr. Hans Jürgen Nagel is the artistic co-ordinator of this evening event.

There are many ways to celebrate intercultural dialogue and music is one way which helps to awaken the spirit and symbolises a medium of interaction between cultures. Music is a medium by which diverse cultures come together and communicate. These concerts are thus a perfect symbol of cultural consciousness. Classical music is today not only played by European countries, but in all music conservatories throughout the world. But perhaps few people nowadays realize that what is now considered to be popular music was originally considered contentious and divisive.

In a Europe divided by different religious creeds and political ideals, composers had to struggle against the prejudice until their music was universally appreciated throughout the continent. More often than not, the playing of music was not determined only by the value of the composition but more importantly, by the composer's creed or political ideas. If a composer was not of the same creed, his music risked not being played at all.

The same happened with a number of compositions written in the late 16th and early 17th centuries to commemorate military victories or to express subtle political nuances. Such insinuations have nowadays been lost and this music is rightly termed classical, implying a genre of music embodying universal values. In other words, it ceased to be the music of a restricted group and has become music for the masses.

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The history of the development of the clavichord was demonstrated on four clavichord replicas from different musical periods, many featured by Dr. George Downey, while his students demonstrated their different technical capabilities of the instrument.

The clavichord is a very fragile mechanism, where a particular sound is produced with a metal tangential to the string. The same clavichord dates back to the 15th century and has been used throughout Western and in England until the early 16th century.

The performer controls the dynamics through the varying force with which the key is depressed. This instrument, were clearly projected.

The tone quality of each of these four instruments was faithfully interpreted an outbreak of the different technical possibilities. It was evident that much thorough study is required to be played these instruments with technical justice.

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It was striking to listen to such a soft and delicate sound. It was striking to listen to such a soft and delicate sound. The works provided the listener with an intimate setting to appreciate the sounds of such a genre of instruments. The works were a pleasant surprise, the technical quality as well as its design. The third concert performed the first two works, Samuel Scheidt's The King of Denmark's Canzeit and Aneron Medici's Canzoni.

The concert successfully linked the history of the clavichord with the manufacturing process of the keyboard with the captivating sound of the clavichord on which variations were performed, including some new instruments.

The concerts aim is to make the public appreciate the unique characteristics of such a novel initiative in the series of concerts organised by the Valletta Waterfront. The second concert will feature arias sung by mezzo soprano Claire Musa, accompanied by carnatic sarodist Sujit Banerjee and Carnatic violinist K. Bhaskar. The concert will include operatic pieces from Purcell, Mozart, Rossini, Bizet, Beethoven, Gounod, and Menotti others. The second concert will feature works for string ensemble by Telemann, Haydn, Beethoven, Dvorak and Schumann, as well as operatic arias by Claire Musa. Dr. Hans Jürgen Nagel is the artistic co-ordinator of this evening event.

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The performer controls the dynamics through the varying force with which the key is depressed. This instrument, were clearly projected. The quiet tone of the instrument is very particular, soft and delicate sound. It was striking to listen to such a soft and delicate sound. The works provided the listener with an intimate setting to appreciate the sounds of such a genre of instruments. The works were a pleasant surprise, the technical quality as well as its design. The third concert performed the first two works, Samuel Scheidt's The King of Denmark's Canzeit and Aneron Medici's Canzoni.

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