



L-Università ta' Malta
School of Performing Arts

CALL FOR PAPERS

Wellbeing and the Performing Arts: Theories, Practices and Pedagogies

13th Annual International Conference of the School of Performing Arts, University of Malta

Dates: 16, 17 & 18 March 2027

Venue: University of Malta, Valletta Campus

Submit Proposals by: 2 November 2026

Keynote Speakers:

Dr Sylvan Baker (University of London)

Prof Raymond MacDonald (University of Edinburgh)

Prof Dr Sara Houston (University of Roehampton)

Conference Website: <https://www.um.edu.mt/events/spa2027/>

An extensive body of research and practice has demonstrated the significant role of the performing arts in fostering human wellbeing. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines wellbeing as a positive state experienced by individuals and societies, shaped by a range of social, economic and environmental conditions.* In this regard, theatre, dance and music are widely recognised as key contributors for physical, mental and social wellbeing. Through participation and creative engagement, the performing arts can potentially support meaningful relationships and cultivate inclusive communities, while nurturing physical, emotional and social resilience.

This interdisciplinary conference seeks to explore the dynamic interplay between the performing arts and wellbeing. Researchers, educators, artists and community leaders will convene to discuss related research, address evolving pedagogical frameworks and evaluate practices that promote wellbeing across diverse contexts.

Topics of interest include (but are not limited to):

- Pedagogical approaches and training frameworks that prepare performing artists to engage in community wellbeing initiatives
- Various modes of participation and engagement in the performing arts that promote healthy lifestyles
- Burnout, emotional resilience and mental health in high-performance artistic environments
- Social connection, inclusion and community building through the performing arts
- Performance anxiety, stage fright and mindfulness-based approaches to enhancing artistic performance and wellbeing
- Theoretical perspectives on wellbeing and the performing arts

- Institutional policies and support structures for performing artists working in this field
- Interdisciplinary projects related to the performing arts and wellbeing
- Nutrition, sleep, physical conditioning and other health practices that support the wellbeing of performing artists
- Wellbeing in/between the performing arts and academia
- Historical perspectives on the performing arts and wellbeing
- Digital, virtual and AI-assisted environments in performing arts and wellbeing
- Injury prevention, somatic practices, physical rehabilitation and sustainable performance practices
- Evaluation and measurement of wellbeing outcomes in performing arts research and practices

Building on the success of previous SPA Annual Conferences that have featured both conventional papers and practical sessions, this 2027 **in-person** conference invites a range of presentation formats:

- Paper Presentations (15-20 minutes)
- Pre-organised Panels (90 minutes)
- Workshops or Practice-based Demonstrations (30/60/90 minutes, please specify)
- Poster Presentations
- Short Films/Documentaries/Screendance (10-15 minutes)

We also welcome and encourage proposals from Masters students and Doctoral candidates.

Please submit your presentation proposal (limited to one submission) to the conference e-mail address [spaconference@um.edu.mt] by **Monday 2nd November 2026** in a single .pdf format with the following information:

- Name and Surname
- Institutional Affiliation (if any)
- Contact E-mail Address
- Title of the Submission
- Abstract (300 words maximum)
- Format of Presentation (select from one of the above options)
- Short Bio (100 words maximum)
- Technical & Spatial Requirements (please be specific and note that we cannot guarantee to satisfy all requirements)
- For a film submission, please also submit a link to view

* <https://www.who.int/activities/promoting-well-being>

Conference conveners:
Dr Véronique Vella
Prof Philip Ciantar