

# MARCHING TO THE TUNE OF THE POLICE BAND



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This year marks the 99th anniversary since the establishment of the Malta Police Band. Reaching this incredible milestone has been a vibrant and satisfying journey, with 99 years of service, adding to the musical landscape of Malta and making the Force proud. While we are heading towards our first century of existence, we strive to continue on this exciting journey for many years to come. Established in 1920 by then Commissioner of Police, Lieutenant Colonel Henry William Bamford, the Force's first bandsmen were selected from the Kings Own Regiment, and the Royal Malta Artillery Maestro E. Magro, was appointed as its first bandmaster.

As service exigencies meant that the Band had to be disbanded several times throughout the years, this year marks the 25th anniversary since the Malta Police Band was last re-activated.

Over the years, the Malta Police Band has played an important part in the Force's public and community relations programme

through its participation in numerous performances, including those in aid of charitable organisations, all of which are extraordinarily well received by both spectators and audiences alike.

The Band consists of 45 musicians and 5 pipers, all of whom perform daily policing duties in the various districts and branches of the Force. The Band's aim is to support the Malta Police Force during ceremonial and other occasions, besides performing regularly during other festivities.

Several milestones have been reached during the past decade. In December 1999, the Police Band featured in a bands' display with the Armed Forces of Malta Band in Valletta during the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the proclamation of Malta as a republic. The Band also performs regularly in the annual Malta Military Tattoo and was further invited to play in Sicily, where it was very well received. →







The Malta Police Band plays quite a wide variety of music, ranging from military marches, light classical selections, and modern songs, to local pop tunes, making it one of the finest ceremonial and functional bands in Malta. Pride of place in our history was felt when recording three compact discs, which included some of the best numbers from our music repertoire. Over the years, we have performed with great artists, including the internationally acclaimed Maltese tenor Joseph Calleja.

#### **PAST CONDUCTORS**

The first conductor of the Malta Police Band, Maestro E. Magro, was appointed following a call issued by Commissioner Bamford, founder of the Band. Maestro Magro started rehearsing with a small group of musicians from the King's Own Regiment which had just disbanded. Gradually, the number of musicians increased, being joined by members of the Royal Malta Artillery. Maestro Magro retired in 1939 at the age of 60. Sergeant Major Carmelo Brincat succeeded Maestro Magro and continued building on the work of his predecessor. The Band continued increasing in size and capabilities, until in 1956, Maestro Brincat also retired. At this point, the Band had to be suspended for a time due to the exigencies of service. Senior Inspector Vincent Bonnici took over in 1957, after the Band was reconstituted, and immediately started taking part in a variety of parades and functions. However, even under his direction, there was a time when the Band had to be suspended again due to service exigencies. Maestro Bonnici retired in October 1965. Sergeant Vincent Cremona commanded the Band until 1973, but was

replaced once again by Maestro Bonnici. At this stage, many bandmen retired without being replaced. This meant that the Band had to suspend operations until 1980. In 1986, I took over the Band with the specific brief of making sure that the Band would start operating once again. New instruments were also purchased.

#### **LATE 1980s TO DATE**

The newly-reconstituted Malta Police Band debuted in Valletta's Great Siege Square on 21st December 1986, and later, to a packed hall at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, where it was very well complimented for an outstanding Police Christmas Show programme with Demis Rousous, the Greek singer of international fame.

Following a short suspension, in 1994, the Band performed together with the Banda dell'Arma dei Carabinieri and the Moscow Military Ensemble in Valletta. It was on this occasion that the Band first performed the Force's official anthem. Other memorable occasions included the 200th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Malta Police Force in 2014. As the Band continues to grow in strength, reputation and success, we are very keen to feature in our next main appointment, that is, the Band's 100th anniversary celebrations to be held next year. Meanwhile, you are all invited to join us for this year's Police Week celebrations, culminating on Police Day, which is celebrated on 12th July, and during our vast array of activities, as part of the celebrations, we are planning to commemorate our 100 years of existence.\*