Prospectus 2025

GEORGE VELLA
school of music

Kummisjoni Banda – October 2024

GĦAQDA MUŻIKALI MARIJA BAMBINA, BANDA VITTORJA | NAXXAR

A REGISTERED VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION – VO 0749

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Foreword

For over 160 years wind band clubs in Malta and Gozo have been a key element in the development of music education. They were instrumental in bringing masterpieces of great composers to several villages and town squares to be enjoyed by people who, otherwise, would not have been able to enjoy in the more expensive theatres. Through the years, band clubs were also key music educators, especially to children, through their schools of music. Many are the musicians who presently can boast of a musical career which kicked off from a local band club.

As times progressed, technology and educational standards have required band clubs to evolve to respond to the demands of our society. Qualifications, certifications and accreditations have become central, and society is constantly looking for opportunities to certify their knowledge and capabilities, whilst also having fun. We are also seeing a constant rise in popularity of the vocational approach of teaching and learning. Such approach involves students learning through doing, thus targeting the current industrial needs. This system fits perfectly the environment provided by the schools of music within the local band clubs.

Based on this idea, this prospectus gives an outline of the system that will be provided to the students at the "George Vella School of Music" within the *Għaqda Mużikali Marija Bambina, Banda Vittorja, Naxxar*. The aim of this system is to provide a holistic musical educational framework which will help students aim for quality. The formal course is six to seven years long, providing a strong basis of musical rudiments with application, qualified tutors to teach both the practical and theoretical aspects, and an apprenticeship period, thus giving students a complete experience to learning music. Moreover, the structure will enable students to get certified through a recognized English music college – the Trinity College of Music. Most importantly, the structure also allows for students to continue their musical studies at higher level with the possibility of targeting a musical career.

This is all embedded within the traditional ideology of a local band club: fees are kept at a minimum for accessibility to all, free loan of instruments is still provided and above all it nurtures the family and community feel, much needed today. We therefore invite you to join us to keep Maltese traditions alive by making good music together!

1. Our Classes

The school provides specialized tuition for the following instruments:

Woodwind: Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone

Brass: Trumpet, French Horn, Baritone, Euphonium, Trombone, Tuba

Percussion: Untuned and Tuned Percussion, Drumkit

Instrumental classes are complemented and supported by the school band and the youth band, both described on page 7. Attendance to these ensembles is compulsory. The framework that leads students to join our symphonic wind band is described in the next section.

The school also provides music theory lessons to enrolled students, Theory lessons are optional. However, one should note that music theory is an essential subject for students who intend to apply as students at the Malta Visual and Performing Arts school or who would like to take up music as a career.

2. Courses

2.1 Music Explorers

Ages: 7 – 9 years (born: 2016 – 2018)

	Age	Course Content
Year 1	7 – 9 years	Introduction to music notation and appreciation - Part 1 (January-May): 45-minute weekly group session, covering rhythm and pitch using body percussion, percussion toys and "meet and greet" with the different instruments of a wind band. - Part 2 (June-December): 20-minute weekly individual lesson on the instrument of choice.

2.2 Core Framework

	Course Content	*Notes*
Introductory Level	Theory of Music - Grade 1 Level 30-minute weekly group session with theory tutor Music Practice – Initial 30-minute weekly individual session with the respective tutor of the instrument of choice.	Exemption Students are exempted from the theory sessions if they hold a Grade 1 certificate in Theory of Music of one of the recognised foreign examination boards. Prerequisite Age: 10 years or older. *OR* Completion of the *Music Explorers course*
Level 1	**Music Practice – Grade 1** 30-minute weekly individual session on the instrument of choice. **School Band** 1-hour weekly group session, emphasizing on ensemble techniques and solfeggio.	**Prerequisite** Completion of the *Introductory Level* within this framework *OR* Grade 1 certificate in Theory of Music of one of the recognised foreign examination boards. **Other Activities:** • Chamber Music Sessions Students are also engaged in sessions with the school accompanist in preparation for examinations and concerts. This provides a training platform for chamber music.
Level 2	**Music Practice – Grade 2** 30-minute weekly individual session on the instrument of choice. **School Band** 1-hour weekly group session, emphasizing on ensemble techniques and solfeggio.	**Prerequisite** Completion of either Level 1 *OR* Grade 1 certificate of one of the recognised music examination boards in the instrument of choice. **Other Activities:** • Chamber Music Sessions

Level 3	**Music Practice – Grade 3** 30-minute weekly individual session on the instrument of choice. **School Band** 1-hour weekly group, emphasizing on ensemble techniques and solfeggio.	**Prerequisite** Completion of either Level 2 *OR* Grade 2 certificate of one of the recognised music examination boards in the instrument of choice. **Other Activities:** • Chamber Music Sessions • Youth Band – Banda Żgħażagħ Vittorja
Level 4	**Music Practice – Grade 4** 40-minute weekly individual session on the instrument of choice. **School Band** 1-hour weekly group session, emphasizing on ensemble techniques and solfeggio. **Banda Vittorja** Students at Level 4 are introduced to the official symphonic wind band of the society by joining the band during marches. Students must also attend band rehearsals as observers.	**Prerequisite** Completion of either Level 3 *OR* Grade 3 certificate of one of the recognised music examination boards in the instrument of choice. **Other Activities:** • Youth Band – Banda Żgħażagħ Vittorja • Chamber Music Sessions
Level 5	**Music Practice – Grade 5** 40-minute weekly individual session on the instrument of choice. **School Band** 1-hour weekly group session, emphasizing on ensemble techniques and solfeggio. **Banda Vittorja** Students at Level 5 are required to attend marches and concerts as stipulated in the list of official band activities issued at the beginning of the year. They must also attend all rehearsals in preparation for the concerts and other activities that might arise.	**Prerequisite** Completion of either Level 4 *OR* Grade 4 certificate of one of the recognised music examination boards in the instrument of choice. **Other Activities:** • Youth Band – Banda Żgħażagħ Vittorja • Chamber Music Sessions

2.3 Level 6+

Students may opt to continue their studies at higher levels at the *George Vella School of Music* through our special *Level 6+* practical classes. These will consist of 45-minute individual lessons whereby students are prepared for practical Trinity College of London examinations, at Grade 6 level and upwards.

The fee of €10 per lesson should be paid in packages of 10 lessons directly to the respective tutors. Students are allowed and encouraged to participate in school activities which provide a performing platform. However, the fee does not include the services of an accompanist, internal assessments, or external examination fees. The students are responsible to engage their own accompanist for examinations and other performances.

Only students who have followed the core course with the *George Vella School of Music* can register for this class. Students who fail to attend band and youth band activities and events will be stopped from the Level 6+ classes.

3. Official School Ensembles

The School Band

All the students studying at Level 1 to 5 are required to attend weekly sessions with the school band. Through this ensemble, students are given their first experience of playing in a wind band, and guided on the attitude, behaviour, and techniques of playing with other fellow musicians.

The weekly 1-hour group session led by the school band tutor will consist of ensemble work, solfeggio sessions and other practical activities, leading to a concert at the end of the scholastic year. Moreover, the school band might also be involved in other events organized by the school.

Youth Band – Banda Żgħażagħ Vittorja

The Youth Band is made up of students at Level 3 upwards and alumni. Through this ensemble, students are trained in playing with a full wind band, through more rigorous rehearsals and more demanding music. Rehearsals will be held in preparation for specific events, and therefore, they are not regular sessions. The most important event of the youth band is the annual concert, which has been held regularly since 2003! The youth band is directed by the Assistant Music Director of the band.

Banda Vittorja – The Official Symphonic Wind Band

The Banda Vittorja is the core element of our society and our school. This symphonic wind band is currently directed by Mro. Roderick Bugeja. It performs marches and concerts in various events.

Level 4 students join the band as trainees and are presented as official band members. During the year they must play in the band during marches and regularly attend rehearsals that are held in preparation for concerts. At Level 5, students will be able to join the wind band during the main concerts, at the discretion of the band director.

V-Pop Fusion Band

This ensemble was setup to provide a different, more commercial setup and experience to students and alumni. In most cases, performances done by this ensemble are paid gigs. Students at Level 5 or upwards and alumni can join this ensemble if they are regular attendees to the various services and marches made by the official symphonic wind band throughout the year.

Those interested to join this ensemble should contact its director, who currently is Mr. Daniel Vella.

4. School Calendar

January	• 5th: Introductory Meeting for all parents and students • 6th: Start of Scholastic Year 2025, First Term • 17th – 19th: Intensive Rehearsal Weekend (Level 3+) *A complete list of band and sectional rehearsals will be communicated to the participants.* • 27th – 31st: Production Week (Level 3+)
February	• 1st: Annual Youth Band Concert (Level 3+)
March	• 9th: Awards Night
April	• 14th – 27th April: Easter Holidays • 18th: Good Friday Procession (Level 4+) • 28th: Start of Second Semester for Scholastic Year 2025
August	• 4th August – 14th September: Summer Holidays
September	• 1st: Festa Tfal (Level 3+) • 2nd: Symphonic Wind Band Annual Concert (Level 5+) • 4th – 8th: Feast week (Level 4+) • 15th September: Start of Third Term for Scholastic Year 2025
October	• 26th: Open Day
November	• End-of-year Assessments
December	• 14th: A Christmas Matinee End of Scholastic Year 2025

Important:

- *The above schedule is not final, and events may be changed, removed or added.*
- *No lessons will be held on public holidays.*
- *There will be no lessons during the highlighted holidays. However, rehearsals, services and concerts might still take place.*

5. Terms and Conditions

The "George Vella School of Music" is the school of music within the *Għaqda Mużikali Marija Bambina, Banda Vittorja, Naxxar*, referred to as "the society" within this section. The school provides high standard, holistic musical tuition, specializing in woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments. Within this text the term "the school" will refer to the "George Vella School of Music". The term "student" or "students" will refer to a person or persons who have enrolled and are following/will be following one of the courses or levels provided by the school.

4.1 Registration Procedure

Registration is open to all adults and children of any gender, nationality and musical level who would like to learn a wind band instrument and who comply by the following criteria:

- ✓ Be at least 7 years of age (i.e., born by the end of December 2018) or older.
- ✓ Be a paying member of the named society. In the case of minors, at least one of the legal guardians must be a paying member of the society. Registration for membership can be done at the time of application.

Registration can be conducted by applying online through our website: www.gvsom.org

Given that the number of students in each instrumental class is limited, a waiting list will be created when that class exceeds its number of students.

Prospective students may be asked to sit for an audition.

4.2 Obligations

Students with the school agree to the following conditions:

- Students are not allowed to give their musical service to other musical entities before finishing Level 4.
- In return for the highly discounted price for the lessons covering the whole course, students and alumni who use or have made use of the services of the school are obliged to give their musical services to the *Għaqda Mużikali Marija Bambina, Banda Vittorja, Naxxar* without any financial return. They should also give priority to the named band over other musical commitments that the student or alumnus/alumna might have.

Prospective students who are not willing to fulfil these obligations should reconsider their decision to enrol in the school. Students who do not abide by these obligations will be at once suspended from the school.

4.3 School Procedures

A scholastic year starts from January and ends in December, with a total of not less than 30 weekly lessons annually.

New students under the age of 10 will start their musical journey with the *Music Explorers* course. Students who are 10 years or over will start from the Introductory Level within the Core Framework unless equivalent certifications are presented at the time of application as highlighted in the prerequisites for each level.

4.3.1 Attendance

Students are required to attend all sessions pertaining to the level being followed. No exceptions will be made. Attendance will be recorded.

Automatic Dismissal - Students who miss three consecutive practical sessions or school band sessions are considered to have resigned from the course, unless a blue medical certificate is presented for the missed dates.

Attendance Percentage - Students who do not attend at least 70% of the required lessons, rehearsals, band services and concerts will not be allowed to sit for the annual assessments at the end of the year, and therefore will not progress to the next level. Students who do not attend the required percentage by the end of the year will not be allowed to register with the school the following scholastic year.

4.3.2 Commitment to Study

All the students attending the school should show commitment towards their studies and the society within which the school works. Students should prepare the requested work diligently and constantly to achieve the best results. A tutor may curtail the lesson if a student is found to not have prepared the assigned work diligently.

4.3.3 Assessments

Students will have two kinds of assessments:

1. A continuous assessment – this will be conducted by both the instrument tutor and the school band director. These assessments aim at providing guidance on areas of improvement as well as highlight the achievements. These assessments will also have a weight on the final internal annual assessment.
2. An annual assessment which will be held towards the end of the scholastic year. The practical assessment will include scales or technical work, two accompanied pieces, a study and a sight-reading test. Annual assessments will also include marks for continuous assessment, ensemble work and school band. Practical annual assessments will only be held for students in Level 1 to Level 5.

Students following the *Introductory Level* or theory classes are required to sit for a final written exam covering the syllabus of the respective level.

4.4 School Fees and Sponsorships

4.4.1 Annual School fee

All students following the introductory courses or the core framework as highlighted in section 2 are kindly requested an annual subsidized fee of €100[1]. The fee should be settled within one week of registration.

The fee will cover the following services and expenses:

- ✓ All lessons and activity sessions as highlighted in the Courses section.
- ✓ The organization of annual musical activities directly targeting students.
- ✓ The provision of an accompanist for preparation for the internal examinations, including two piano accompaniment rehearsals and accompaniment on the day of the practical internal examination.

The fee excludes:

- × Books required during the scholastic year.
- × Theory lessons, excluding the theory sessions provided to students following the *Introductory Level*.
- × Application fees and extra services (such as rehearsals with the piano accompanist) for external examinations.
- × Instrument loan deposit.
- × Workshops, masterclasses, and other activities that might be organized during the year.
- × The annual club membership fee.

The fee is important for the continued provision of quality musical tuition. However, the school is aware that social circumstances can make it difficult to honour any financial contributions. Given so, following communication, a prospective student can be exempted from the school fee.

Students following *Level 6+* classes are exempt from this fee.

4.4.2 Loan of Instruments

The school provides the service of instrument-loaning to students such that students are given the opportunity to experiment and experience their chosen instrument before incurring the actual expense of a new instrument. Students might be asked to return the instrument back to the school by the end of Level 2, whereupon the student will be expected to buy his/her own instrument.

During the period of the instrument loan, the student is responsible for the care and frequent services of the loaned instrument. All expenses made by the student in relation to general upkeep and/or maintenance and/or repairs during the loan-period should be paid in full by the student.

At the commencement of the loaning period, the student should pay a €50 deposit which will be returned in full at the end of the loan if the instrument is in good condition. If the instrument requires any repairs, the deposit will be kept by the school to be used to pay for such.

[1] The society is investing over 90% percent of the total cost per year to provide this service at the highest standards possible.

4.4.3 Lessons in Theory of Music

Theory lessons are not compulsory except for students following the *Introductory Level*. However, the school provides lessons in theory of music to help students who would like to take up music in a more professional direction.

Theory sessions will be delivered during weekly class sessions of 40 minutes and will follow the Trinity College of London syllabus. Theory lessons start in January and finish in October with an internal written, time-constraint assessment,

Students may opt to sit for the Trinity College London theory examinations held at the beginning of November. Such students will have extra lessons between the internal assessment and the actual external examination.

Students who wish to follow theory lessons should apply through the school website during the official registration period. The fee for this service is €50 and covers not less than 20 lessons. Students in the *Introduction Level* are exempt from this fee, as it is included in the annual fee.

Theory lessons are only provided to enrolled students at the George Vella School of Music. Classes are limited to not more than 5 students. Students will be accepted on a first come first served basis. However, priority will be given to students who have been attending theory classes regularly.

4.5 External Examinations

The school follows the syllabus provided by the Trinity College of London (TCL)[2]. Given so, the students who complete a given level can sit for the official grade provided by the highlighted college for the respective level in December.

If a student would like to sit for the relevant external examinations provided by the TCL, the student should inform the respective tutor at once. Students who choose to sit for these external examinations should pay the fees as requested by the college and supply the required personal information by a date that will be announced in due course.

Currently, examinations in practical subjects are being held in digital format. At the time of printing, digital examinations consist of a non-stop recording of the main pieces and scales and technical studies.

To give further support to students who choose to also sit for practical external examinations, the school will provide the Exam Support Package. This package will include the following:

GRADES	PACKAGE SERVICES	PRICE
GRADES 1 - 3	• 2 accompaniment sessions (in addition to the accompaniment sessions included in the annual school fee) • Accompaniment during the recording of the digital examination	€60
GRADES 4 - 5	• 2 accompaniment sessions (in addition to accompaniment sessions included in the annual school fee) • Accompaniment during the recording of the digital examination	€75

[2] http://www.trinitycollege.com/

The *Exam Support Package* will be delivered by the school's official accompanist.

Students who opt to sit for external instrumental examinations should pay the relative fee for the *Exam Support Package* directly to the school's official accompanist during the first rehearsal. The Exam Support Package is not needed for theory examinations.

4.6 Health Guidelines and Procedures

The school will be following guidelines as issued by the Health Department. It is important that students who are unwell do not attend lessons at the school premises.

4.7 Għaqda Nazzjonali Każini tal-Banda

Enrolled students at the George Vella School of Music are automatically registered with the Għaqda Nazzjonali Każini tal-Banda (GħNKB) as official musicians of the society. The GħNKB is the entity that represents all band clubs in Malta.

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