

THE NEW VICTORIANS &
MATTHEW PANDOLFINO
PRESENT

TINGO

THE TUNELESS BIRD

ZiguZajg

Arts Festival for Children & Young People



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PROJECT SYNOPSIS

Three birds have migrated to Malta for the winter. The journey has been long and perilous, but they've finally touched down and have been reunited after another long year apart. They share triumphant tunes and terrible tales of their aviation adventures...but who's the turquoise feathered intruder, and why does he refuse to share his song? Join three music-making birds in their attempt to discover the truth about where Tingo The Tuneless Bird really came from, and why there's no way he can ever go back.

TINGO: The Tuneless Bird was commissioned by Žigužajg International Arts Festival for Children and Young People in 2019.

Migration stories—of cultures, people, and birds—are an impactful tool for helping people relate to, understand, and take action on climate change. They are powerful because as stories, they incorporate climate change into our shared narratives. We have all migrated, whether across long distances, from neighborhood to neighborhood, country to country, or just into new situations, when changing schools or starting a new job.

Birds travel long distances to make use of resources that are available in different places during different seasons. The story of Tingo is all about migrating birds, focusing on the various reasons different types of birds migrate and the routes they may take. Many birds migrate during the winter due to unfavourable living conditions and often face dangers and hazards during their migration. These dangers are increasing with the destruction of natural woodlands and nature reserves as well as the building of more roads and buildings. Birds have less places to stop for safety, food and rest. Tingo, a spangled cotinga, is a bird that lives in the Amazon forest. His home has been destroyed by deforestation and forest fires. As their climate and environment changes, they are migrating to try to find the resources and conditions they need to survive.

People are migrating because of climate change, too. They are climate refugees because of hazardous or unfavourable living conditions. In some cases it's a change in weather climate, with residents losing their homes as rising water levels cause destruction, in others, it's a change in political climate, where they're forced to flee their homes for safety due to wars and violence. Millions of people migrate every year - some out of choice, whilst others are forced to leave their homes due to war, abuse or violence - seeking a better life for themselves and their families.

Telling and connecting human migration stories to bird migration stories can hopefully spark a conversation about how migrants are treated on our island as they come to take shelter from their own dangerous climate, whilst also tapping into the pressing environmental issues our island is facing today. We wish to expose young audiences to the reality of immigration, highlighting practical steps they can take to make their own communities more tolerant, accepting and understanding to those around them. We believe it is important for our young people to understand the reality of immigration. We are confident in the positive effects of raising awareness, supporting migrants, creating inclusive environments that celebrate diversity and facilitating access to intercultural activities.

Main Themes: Migration, Home, Identity, Environment

ABOUT ŽIGUŽAJG

The Festival's vision is to position the creative arts for children and young people at the core of Malta's creative ecology. It does this by:

- Presenting an annual programme of high-artistic excellence that celebrates creativity and diversity in the arts;
- Nurturing audience development and active participation through our practices;
- Providing professional development opportunities for artists seeking to work in the sector;
- Developing a national repertoire of creative work for children and young people;
- Championing social inclusion and accessibility in the creative industry;
- Establishing international networks and collaborations with strategic partners.

Visit www.ziguzajg.org/schools for more information.



MEET THE TEAM

PERFORMERS

Sean Briffa

Sean Borg

Bettina Cassar

Philippa Cassar

CREATIVE TEAM

Matthew Pandolfino - Concept, Design and the Making of Puppets

(Puppet Maker - This is the person who designs, creates and dresses the puppets, helping the performers to bring puppets to life during a performance.)

Philippa Cassar - Director and Writer

(Director - This is the person in charge of the creative vision of the production, making all the important decisions about set, costume, design, story, cast and choosing the right team for the job.)

Bettina Cassar - Composer and Sound Designer

(Composer - This is the person who composes all the music, writes all the songs and creates all the sound effects heard throughout the show.)

Annalisa Schembri - Stage Manager

(Stage Manager - This is the person who organises and coordinates the production, making sure the whole event runs smoothly from rehearsals to performance.)

Zoe Camilleri - Assistant Movement Director

(Movement Director - This is the person who works closely with the director and the performers to arrange the actors' movements. This role differs from that of a choreographer in that it is not restricted to full dance routines but focuses on finding interesting physical ways of bringing the performance to life.)

Michela Mifsud - Graphic Design

(Graphic Designer - This is the person who created the posters and artwork for the performance.)

BIRD MIGRATION

WHY DO BIRDS MIGRATE?

Birds usually migrate due to weather conditions and food supply. Others are forced to migrate to escape hunting, deforestation, or pollution. Some species of birds migrate for breeding.

MIGRATING ROUTES

On their journey from the colder parts of North and Central Europe to warmer Africa, migrating birds generally take three routes: the Western Route from Great Britain, Holland, Germany and Scandinavia via Gibraltar; the Eastern Route from Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria via Turkey and over the Middle East; or the Central European, route known as the Adriatic Flyway, from Northern Europe via Italy, Sicily and Malta to Africa.

ABOUT THE BIRDS IN TINGO

CHAFFINCH

(Bil-Malti: Sponsun)

The chaffinch, sometimes called a *Spink* because of its song, is a bird commonly found all over Europe. It prefers to live in open woodland, gardens or farmland. The chaffinch mainly eats seeds but often eats insects in breeding season. In addition to its song it has nine different calls for flight, alarm or to woo a mate.

Listen to a Chaffinch: <https://www.bl.uk/the-language-of-birds/articles/chaffinch-calls>



GOLDFINCH

(Bil-Malti: *Gardell*)

The goldfinch may live in Europe, North Africa or Western Asia. It often inhabits gardens, parks, orchards and wooded areas. The goldfinch prefers to eat grains, seeds, vegetation and an occasional insect. It may be a hard bird to spot but its bubbling and twittering call often gives it away.

Listen to a Goldfinch: <https://ebird.org/species/eurgol>



HAWFINCH

(Bil-Malti: *Taż-Żebbuġ*)

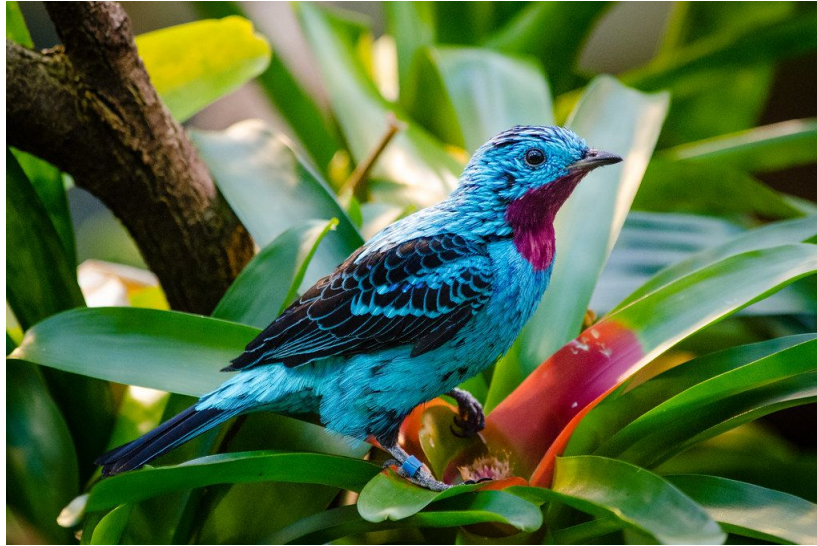
The hawfinch is mainly a resident of Europe and Asia. It feeds on seeds, buds and shoots with its large powerful beak and can often be found up in high trees that produce fruit in parks and gardens. The hawfinch is a shy bird and its song is relatively quiet.

Listen to a Hawfinch: <https://www.british-birdsongs.uk/hawfinch/>



SPANGLED COTINGA

The spangled cotinga lives in the Amazon Rainforest in fruiting trees. It is often found perching on branches at the very top of tall trees. Because it eats fruit it spreads seeds which contributes to the regrowth of forest. The cotinga has no song but its wings make a whistling sound when flying.



PUPPET-MAKING

MATTHEW PANDOLFINO

The language I constantly find myself drawn to are the many shapes, forms, textures, figures, structures that surround us. My eyes penetrate the object, any object that lies before me to discover the possibilities that lay before it.

This is how my work emerges.

A wanderer. A scavenger. A maker.

Matthew Pandolfino (b. 1985) is a visual artist, designer, and maker based on the Mediterranean island of Malta. A member of *the rubberbodies collective*, an artist collective also based in Malta (f. 2009) who make work for theatre, dance and media; where he has designed and created the props, costumes and set for a large number of their performances. Pandolfino has also exhibited some of his large scale sculptures and has even created numerous work for private commissions along the years.

His formal education includes obtaining a first class honours bachelor's degree in Fine Arts at Dartington College of Arts in the UK. Prior to this he has also obtained a Foundation Diploma in Art and Design at Malta College of Art, Science and Technology.

THE PROCESS

What goes into the process of creating a puppet?

It all starts off with an idea - of structures and shapes - but it all depends on what type of puppet, the shape it needs to have or the movement desired. Then I would research the sources of what I want to represent in the puppet. Designing would bring in a lot of different changes because of new ideas that come up, and I try to amalgamate them together for a final sketch. The final stage is the building but there are still changes which I make during this stage.



What is your relationship with the director? Do you come up with ideas together?

It is my first time working with The New Victorians so I am still getting to know them. The collaboration started by me presenting ideas of what these bird puppets could be and the different movement abilities that they could have. After that, we moved on to building on those ideas together so that they could develop the piece and all the elements that come with it.



Is it only the puppeteer's job to bring puppets to life or do you also contribute to this when designing the puppets?

In reality, what I design and build is all additional for the puppeteers. I believe that it all comes down to the puppeteers' capability of creating and building the character of the puppet. Obviously I have to make sure that the aesthetics are what I have in mind and that I make it comfortable for the puppeteer to move with the puppet. However, a puppet without a puppeteer will only be a sculpture and it would lose its soul. The puppeteer has to bring it to life and I have to do my best to help them achieve that.



What materials are you using and are there any particular challenges in the creation process?

The biggest challenge is to keep the balance between the simple design, the materials and techniques used, in order to build the puppets in a short period of time, as I only have around 70 days to do so. Another challenge is never having enough time for exploration or experimenting with material and ideas or movements. I have to trust in what I have designed and move on and if there's something I don't like, I have to find a satisfactory solution that works not only for me but for the whole ensemble.

This isn't the first time you're creating work for Žigužajg. Is creating work for young people any different to other work you create?

No it isn't the first time - I think I've lost count! One can surely see the difference in how the puppets have developed over the years. Working on puppets for young people is not the same as working on something personal, but I don't look at it as if I am only creating something for the young - I hope to make the older young again for a short while through my creations.



CREATING THE MUSIC FOR TINGO

THE PROCESS

“We began by learning as much as we would about each bird, their migrating routes, why they leave their homes in the winter and what challenges they face during migration. We were deeply moved when finding out what a huge affect human activity has on the survival of migrating birds. Birds find additional obstacles each year with every new high building. The destruction of habitat because of roads and buildings means birds have to go longer before finding the next place they can stop for food or water. We wanted to portray these birds as the heroes they truly are for making these long, dangerous journeys to our shores!

Writing the songs for Tingo: The Tuneless Bird was extremely exciting! We studied the songs, tunes and rhythms of these birds and then tried to bring them to life in upbeat songs that families could sing along to. It was a fun challenge - and we now get to perform them all over Malta and Gozo too!”

Philippa from The New Victorians

“In the same way some birds are being forced out of their homes due to deforestation or pollution, we believe it's vital for young audiences to understand that there are people today who are also forced to leave their homes because of war or climate change. With this short children's piece we hope to encourage them to see that everyone has their own voice, their own song and their own story to tell. Every person's home is important and together we must learn to listen more, to respect where people come from and to understand the journey that brought them here.”

Bettina from The New Victorians

WHO ARE THE NEW VICTORIANS?

The New Victorians are a Maltese songwriting sister-duo made up of Philippa and Bettina Cassar. Philippa is a multi-instrumentalist, theatre maker and MA Graduate from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, whilst Bettina is a classical pianist and MA Audio Production Graduate from Westminster University. They have a keen interest in the dramaturgical potential of original and electronic music in theatre.

2011 saw the conception of The New Victorians, following their success at the Alchemy Songwriting Competition in the U.S. In 2015, they launched the debut album *Seeker Seeker*, with singles like *Keep Me In Love*, and in 2018 they launched their latest EP titled *Silence*, with which they opened for multi-platinum artist Anastacia, on her European Tour – *Evolution*. The short film accompanying the *Silence* trilogy of original songs, was also directed and produced by The New Victorians, featuring hit single *Lie Liar*.



In 2018, the duo brought a company of female performers together to create *MARA* - an original multidisciplinary piece of theatre that celebrates the story of women through time by means of sound manipulation, and electronic and acoustic music, performed live by The New Victorians. *MARA* was supported by *The Mackintosh Foundation* and played to sold out houses as part of the *Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture Programme* and at *The National Theatre of Scotland's Exchange Festival* in 2018 in Inverness, Scotland. The show then ran at *Vault Festival*, in Waterloo London in February 2019.

Following the success of *MARA*, The New Victorians were commissioned by *Ziguzajg International Arts Festival* to create an original piece of electronic music theatre for children called *Rave&Behave*, which premiered in November 2018. Most recently they were commissioned *VII* by Teatru Malta, an original piece celebrating the centenary of Sette Giugno, which premiered at Fort St Elmo. This August the duo headed to the *Edinburgh Festival Fringe* with a double bill, performing two original works *MARA* and *Rave&Behave* at the *Pleasance Theatre* for the month.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

WETLAND HOPSCOTCH

1. Draw a large hopscotch course on the floor with chalk, or find some large tiles that you can use to play on.
2. Tell students that they are birds starting their journey from cold Northern Europe (1 + 2), to warm Africa (9) and each square represents a wetland where they can stop for rest, water and food. Malta can be block 8.
3. Students have to make their way across the hopscotch course to migrate to safety. The first migration should be easy and all students should be successful.
4. Next tell the students that two hotels are going to be built and 2 safe wetlands are going to be destroyed. Draw an "X" on two of the squares. Students must now migrate again, this time not setting foot on the destroyed wetlands. If they do - they die and cannot participate anymore.
5. When all students have done this destroy two more. Repeat this until the students fail to make the migration.
6. Explain how this game represents migration and continue with the discussion below.



Discussion:

1. Why do you think some birds died earlier than others?
2. Why did the rest of the birds die eventually?
3. Why did the birds die even though some wetlands remained at the end of the game?

Learn more about BirdLife Partnership and Wings over Wetlands (WOW) project to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats -> <https://www.birdlife.org/middle-east/projects/wings-over-wetlands-wow>

CREATE A BIRD FEEDER

You will need:

- pine cones
- peanut butter
- bird seeds
- paper plates
- ribbon

Instructions:

Tie a piece of ribbon to the top of a pine cone for hanging. Spread peanut butter all over the pine cone using a plastic knife or spoon, making sure not to get any on the ribbon. Place bird seeds on a paper plate and roll the peanut butter covered pine cone in the birdseed (these will easily stick to the peanut butter). Find a spot outdoors to hang your bird feeder and then watch and keep track of the birds that visit.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. If you could choose anywhere in the world, where would you like to live and why? Why do animals like birds migrate? What dangers may they face when migrating (e.g. bad weather, tall buildings, nets, cages, trapping, landscape change, etc.)? How are animal and human migrations similar and different?
2. What is your favorite thing about your home? Have you ever moved house? Have you ever moved country? What was the reason for it (perhaps a parent got a new job)? Where do most of the families in your school come from? Are there any students in your school who have migrated? Why do you think people might migrate/leave their homes or countries?
3. What do we mean when we say the environment? Can you think of any human activity that might be harming the environment? Can you think of some practical ways you can care for your environment at school and at home?
4. Have you heard about the Amazon fires? Do you know how they began or what is causing them? Why do you think it is hard to control these fires? Why does the Amazon matter? Who do you think the Amazon is *home* to? What do you think the world should be doing about events like the Amazon fires?

RELATED INFORMATION AND ACTIVITIES

BIRDLIFE

BirdLife is an organisation that works hard to conserve birds and their habitats in Malta. It is part of the international organization BirdLife International. Their mission is to protect birds and their homes; campaign for better wildlife protection; research bird species that visit our islands; educate and connect children to nature; and to care for any birds exhausted by migration or injured by hunting, providing treatment for them until they are ready to fly again. Get involved by volunteering, making a donation, signing up for their newsletter or attending one of their birdwatching events. Visit www.birdlife.org for more information.

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

This charity seeks to be the human voice of the Earth. Their aims are to bring about a peaceful, just, equitable, and sustainable society that is respectful of present and future generations by inspiring change and promoting solutions. They safeguard ecological and cultural diversity, support human's positive relationship with the environment, ensure the sustainable use of natural resources as well as champion social, economic and environmental justice, whilst giving importance to education. Help out by volunteering, fundraising, and becoming a supporter. Visit www.foemalta.org for more information.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CHARITIES

Flimkien Ghal Ambjent Ahjar www.faa.org.mt

Nature Trust Malta www.naturetrustmalta.org

Why Not? www.butwhynot.org

PHROM

The Platform of Human Rights Organisations in Malta is the nation's first network of NGOs striving to promote human rights. It provides a national forum for human rights organisations in Malta, to develop, promote and advocate for the values of human dignity and equality. Member organisations to check out include:

- **Jesuit Refugee Services in Malta** seek to accompany, serve and defend the rights of asylum seekers and forcibly displaced persons who arrive in Malta.
- **Integra Foundation** supports inclusive non-discriminating and non-disabling societies where all individuals have the right to human dignity, freedom, respect and social justice.
- **Organisation for Friendship in Diversity** work in the field of inclusion and diversity.
- **Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants** work to integrate migrants through support services, education, research, capacity building and advocacy.
- **Migrant Women Association Malta** are committed to empowering women to enable them to integrate within the society of their host country.
- **Spark 15** came together to fight the challenges faced by refugee and migrant youth, providing a space for friends to meet and support one another to overcome migration obstacles.