

MPO STATEMENT

01 MARCH 2020

Reference is made to media reports quoting Mro Raoul Lay stating that he resigned his position as Artistic Director from National Orchestra Ltd. implying conflicting views on the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra's (MPO) forward vision.

Regretfully, the MPO is constrained to set the record straight and reply to reports obscuring the orchestra's work and reputation in the most flagrant of ways.

Mro Lay was on a contract for service by the MPO, commencing on the 5 October 2019 on a definite contract. He was on probation as stipulated at law and reported directly to the Company's Board of Directors. The Board noted Mro Lay's performance over the past months, and expressed its reservations on his vision and commitment towards the National Orchestra. His tenure left much to be desired as the orchestra's interests were not being promulgated. The Board resolved to terminate the Maestro's contract of employment within the probation period.

Mro Lay was personally contacted by the Executive Chairman, Sigmund Mifsud, communicating the Board's decision. On his part, Mro Lay asked the Board to reconsider its position over the following days. However, whilst the Board was still considering its earlier position, and waiting for Mro Lay's email regarding the matter, Mro Lay submitted a resignation letter shifting the blame ontowards the MPO's officials, not least on the Executive Chairman.

As media reports portray Mro Lay's resignation as a fall-out with the MPO, in actual fact, the cited resignation letter is a terse reaction to a decision communicated by the Board earlier on having resolved to terminate Mro Lay's employment.

As opposed to impressions given to the media, the MPO has an excellent ongoing relationship with Mro Sergey Smbatyan, contracted on 1 September 2019 as Principal Conductor, and Mro Michael Laus, Resident Conductor for more than 20 years. These relationships have developed the orchestra further and they endeavour to seek the orchestra's interests. Furthermore, the orchestra also has ongoing succesful and sustainable collaborations with guest soloists and conductors.

It is further regretful to note Mro Lay's approach in breach of confidentiality and lacking respect towards the orchestra's work and its talented musicians. The Board of Directors pursues its commitment to develop the musicians' artistic talents both locally and abroad. Musicians serve as cultural ambassadors to our country and their dedication shall always be shielded from unfounded assertions.

The Malta Philharmonic Orchestra flatly refutes the allegations made against it and reserves the right to seek legal redress in safeguarding its reputation and rights at law.