



Brøttum Brass in Malta

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Brøttum Brass is a recently promoted elite brass band from a small village in Norway, close to Lillehammer. We have 30 band members aged between 16 and 63 and last year, having been founded in 1892, our band celebrated its 130-year anniversary. We participate in the Nationals every February, and we attend one or two other competitions each year too. In addition to this, we also play many local concerts. Last year we hired a talented, hardworking and skilled conductor to be our main conductor – David Morton. David's appointment has been a huge success for us as David's ability to motivate, inspire and joke with us, has enabled us to reach the level that we are at today. Brøttum Brass has never been better, and we are having so much fun!

Before we begin our trip summary, we must start with a little praise: Malta is fantastic, and we are still warm to the core after our wonderful trip.



The story of Brøttum Brass's dream trip to Malta began in 2019, long before anyone knew that COVID-19 would turn the world upside down. In 2020, at the recommendation of Helge Haukås, we made contact with Dr Noel Camilleri, the President of the Malta

Band Clubs Association, and so it began. The trip was initially planned for the summer of 2021 but alas it was not to be. The trip was then rescheduled for the summer of 2023. The dream had come true and we were ready to go! What had gradually faded away as a distant memory had now become a reality and suddenly everything was happening. We had questions though. How do you get a tuba on to an aeroplane? Can we carry percussion instruments in

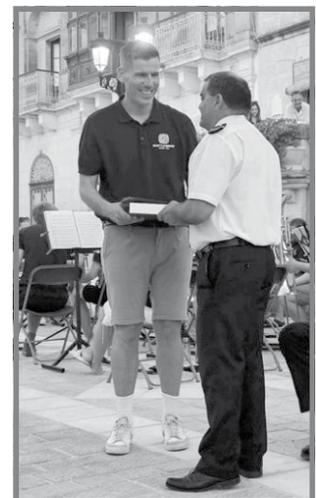
our hand luggage? Is a baritone 'special' luggage if it is packed together with toiletries?

Questions were answered and the trip went like clockwork. The train from Lillehammer to Oslo Airport was on schedule. The plane took off when it was supposed to and we landed on time too. All of the instruments arrived safely and intact and the bus was ready and waiting for us outside Malta International Airport.

When we arrived at the Solana Hotel and Spa in Mellieħa, everything had been arranged for a comfortable and pleasant stay. Of note is that the first thing that we saw at the hotel was a concert poster promoting our joint concert with the Imperial Band that would be taking place the following day. This was such a pleasant welcome and at this point, we realised that a very special few days were ahead of us.

Day 1: Mellieħa and the Concert with the Imperial Band

Early on the Sunday morning we met with the President and Secretary of the Imperial Band Club, Josef Borg and John Baptist Gauci, in order to plan the evening's concert. We could hardly believe our eyes when we saw the band's fantastic venue and heard about the band's proud history.





The evening concert with the Imperial Band was an unforgettable experience. Rarely have we encountered such a wonderful audience.

People danced on the roof terraces around the square as we played and the crowd sang along so loudly at times that we almost didn't hear what we were playing.

Our Conductor, David Morton, beamed with happiness as dusk descended and the rest of the band just smiled. Those who had already managed to get sunburned at the beach probably didn't feel the pain until the next day.

After the concert, we shared food and drink with the Imperial Band in their beautiful venue. This evening – the Maltese warmth, sense of humour and friendliness – is one that we will never forget.

Day 2: Gozo and the Concert in Għarb

Brøttum Brass didn't go to Malta just to have a holiday though, we wanted to play! So we were delighted to be able to combine a day of sightseeing with an evening concert in Gozo on day two. Happy musicians set off on a bus packed with instruments,



sunscreen, drinking water and swimwear - and we got to use everything that we had with us.

Gozo is a beautiful island and it was a special experience indeed to wind our way through the narrow village streets. We ate delicious food at Il-Kċina tar-Ramla in Ramla Bay and Grazie Mille in Għarb. We visited the cliffs at Dwejra Bay, and we played a concert in front of the Knisja tal-Għarb which was another great experience! A lot of work had gone into the planning of our visit, especially by John and Anthony from the Imperial Band, and we are very grateful for this.



Day 3: Valletta and the Concert in St. Paul's Bay

No one can travel to Malta without experiencing Valletta and after two eventful days, we wanted to take time to reflect and relax in this beautiful capital city. Some chose to go shopping whilst others visited tourist attractions or simply strolled along the streets.

The hotel in Mellieħa was a relaxing meeting place for the band during the trip, and many needed a cooling bath and something cold to drink on the hotel's roof terrace before the concert in St. Paul's Bay that evening. We were now ready for the last concert of our trip! Thanks again to Anthony and to John for organising this through St Paul's Bay Local Council. At Buġibba Square we experienced the hustle and bustle of a popular Maltese tourist spot and little by little, the square around us was soon filled with people eager to see and enjoy the music. Once again, we got to experience an audience that danced and sang as we played. What happiness!

Thanks must also go to Billy's Bar in Mellieħa, who let us fill the bar with Norwegian pop, song and dance on our last night in Malta.

In summary, the experiences, memories and impressions from beautiful Malta will be with us for many years to come. We have got to know inspiring people. We ate good food and experienced the holiday feelings of sunshine and warmth. We played music under the open sky in beautiful places and not least, we were able to experience the inspiring and proud band culture of Malta.

We promise that we will take all of these experiences with us and try to become as good at sharing the joy of music as the Maltese people are.

Many thanks to the Imperial Band Club in Mellieħa and to all of those who made our trip so wonderful. Thank you for your service, hospitality and kindness. We hope that our enthusiasm will inspire many others to experience Malta and all that the country has to offer. Indeed, one of our band members became so fascinated by Malta that she is returning with her family again in October! The rest of the band will be dreaming of another trip and fortunately, dreams can come true!

