

THE MALTA CULTURAL INSTITUTE

The Malta Cultural Institute is a non-profit making organisation, whose aim is to promote the arts and to provide a performance platform for up-coming talented artists and also experienced performers. The Malta Cultural Institute is the only society of its kind on our Islands.

World War Two brought many major changes in the way of life and in the manner of thinking of the Maltese people. After the end of hostilities, although war-torn and very badly scarred, the Maltese nation was trying to stand on its own feet again. With this in mind, Professor Gaston Tonna-Barthet had been thinking of setting up the Malta Cultural Institute, whose aim would be to promote the activities of the Maltese people in every field of Culture, including Literature, Science, Fine Arts, Music and Drama.

The first meeting of this Society was held at the Office of the Hon. Minister for Education, Dr. Godwin G. Ganado, on the 2nd January 1949. Dr. Ganado explained the importance of starting such a Circle in Malta to initiate extra academical activities amongst all classes of the Maltese.

An appeal published in the local Press met with an immediate and generous response and the Organising Committee, headed by Profs. Tonna-Barthet, and representing a fair cross-section of the community, worked so hard that in less than two months it was able to announce to the general public that the Institute was ready to commence its manifold activities.

Over several meetings held in the office of the Minister of Education, this new Institute started to take shape. The Malta Cultural Institute officially came into being on the **15th February 1949 when an Inaugural concert was held in the Concert Hall of the Hotel Phoenicia.** This may be remembered by all Maltese as a day of National Revival.

Inauguration Concert
of the
Malta Cultural Institute
at the
Hotel Phoenicia
on
February 15th, 1949
under the distinguished patronage
of
H.E. the Governor and Lady Douglas
and the
Hon. the Minister for Education and Mrs. G.G. Ganado

The front page of the Malta Cultural Institute's Inaugural Concert Programme

PROGRAMME

MALTESE NATIONAL ANTHEM

PART I.

1. Orchestra WAGNER.
Themes from "Masters singers"
The Mozart Amateur String Orchestra.
2. Romanza: (Ballo in Maschera) VERDI.
Eri tu.....
Mr. J. Bezzina.
3. Song GOUNOD.
Sérénade Berceuse
Miss Lucy Parlato.
4. Violin Solo BEETHOVEN.
Romance in F.
Mrs. Bice Herrera.
5. Romanza: (La Favorita) DONIZETTI.
O Mio Fernando
Mrs. Rosa Sammut.
6. Piano Solo LISZT.
Rhapsody No. 2
Miss Eileen Fiorini L.R.S.M.
7. Romanza: (Otello) VERDI.
Credo
Mr. G. Satariano.
8. Piano Solo DEBUSSY.
Les Collines d'Anacapri
Miss Yolanda Abela L.R.S.M.
9. Duet: (Madame Butterfly) PUCCINI.
Bimba dagli occhi.....
Mrs. Alice Tonna and Mr. A. Galea.

PART II.

1. Orchestra MOZART.
Minuet from "Don Giovanni"
The Mozart Amateur String Orchestra.
2. Romanza: (Sanson et Dalila) SAINT-SAENS.
Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix
Mrs. Jane Buttigieg Depiro.
3. Piano Solo CHOPIN.
Scherzo in E minor
Miss Connie Muscat L.R.S.M.
4. Romanza: (~~Furandot~~) PUCCINI.
~~Nessun Dorma~~
AFRICANA **O PARADISO**
Mr. J. Sammiti-Harrison.
PAUL 1950/1915
Mrs. Bice Herrera.
5. Song CHAMINADE.
L'Anseau d'Argent
Mrs. Violette Galea.
6. Violin Solo KREISLER.
La Gitane
Mrs. Bice Herrera.
7. Romanza ALFANO.
La Resurrezione
Mr. A. Galea.
8. Piano Solo DOHNANI.
Rhapsodie
Miss C. Mangion L.R.S.M.
9. Romanza: (Andrea Chénier) GIORDANO.
Nemico della Patria
Mr. G. Satariano.
10. Orchestra PACE.
Polcaise
The Mozart Amateur String Orchestra.

At the Piano: Mrs. Bice Bisazza Pitre, Miss Pandolfino L.R.S.M. and Maestro G. Camilleri.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

The Programme of the Malta Cultural Institute's Inaugural Concert

At the time of its foundation the Malta Cultural Institute received help from various sources, including the Government of Malta and those of France, Italy, Germany, Spain, the U.S.A. and Canada. Throughout the years it has been patronised by a great number of distinguished persons, who have always appreciated the work done by the Institute.

By August 1950 the Organising Committee decided to buy a brand new “Bluthner” Piano. This was acquired through the donations of a number of public-spirited firms and private persons in Malta. On the 26th January 1951 the *Bluthner Concert Grand Pianoforte* was inaugurated by the pianist **Tessie Briffa Mackin**.

The MCI Pianoforte, fitted with the “Aliquod Scaling”, was the only one of its kind in Malta at the time. The “Aliquod Scaling” is the introduction of a fourth string with a special bridge to connect it with the sound board. This lies over the normal three strings of every individual note of the middle and treble section. This gives it a distinctive “Singing” tone. It is not struck by the hammer, but, in accordance with the physical laws of Sympathetic Vibration, this string is set in motion when the parent note is struck. This String is also controlled by the damper at the same time as the parent note, so that any aftersound is rendered impossible.

By 1951 various committees were set up, including the **Astronomical & Meteorological Circle, the Drama Circle, the English Circle, the French Circle, the Italian Circle, the German Circle, the Spanish Circle, the Maltese Literature Circle and the Society of Maltese authors.**

In the first years conducted tours were organised to places of Historical and Artistic interest. The Drama Committee staged various plays. Painting Exhibitions of works by renowned artists were held and several members undertook studies in Chemistry, Bacteriology and Photography at the Floriana Laboratories.

However the development of local musical talent has always been one of the principal activities of the Malta Cultural Institute. From the Inaugural Concert and right up to 1987, Maestro Carmelo Pace was the Musical Advisor and Organiser of the Concerts. He was the Founder and Conductor of the Amateur String Orchestra of the Institute.



Maestro Carmelo Pace (1907 – 1993)

At the same time the Malta Cultural Institute acquired the honorary services of Miss Georgette Caffari, who was one of the pillars of the Institute and who continued to give her valuable services right up to her resignation in the year 2004.

Throughout the years the MCI has provided a platform for promising musicians. In fact the majority of Maltese performers, who have made a career for themselves in Malta and abroad, have been launched by the MCI. Among these one can mention some very prominent names like:



Tenor Paul Axiak



Ballet dancer Tanya Bajona



Pianist Cynthia Turner



Pianist Bice Mizzi-Vassallo

Other artists one could mention are Ballet Dancer and Teacher Mary Jane Bellia (who is now a member of the Malta Cultural Institute's Committee), Pianists Marianne and Nadia Kissaun and Sopranos Bice Ciappara, Juliette Bisazza and Antoinette Miggiani.

When Professor Gaston Tonna-Barthet retired, the post of Honorary Director was taken over by his son-in-law, Chevalier Vincent Ciancio who occupied this post from 1987 right up to his demise in 2004.



Chevalier Vincent Ciancio (1928 – 2004)



Mary Jane Bellia receiving a trophy from Mr. Vincent Ciancio after a performance.

Besides the MCI, Mr. Vincent Ciancio occupied important posts in a variety of Local and Foreign organisations and had contacts with the British Council, the Istituto Culturale Italiano, the Spanish and French Embassies, Alliance Francaise, Russian Centre for Science and Culture and others. These contacts proved to be very fruitful for the Malta Cultural Institute.

In 1987 Maestro Carmelo Pace gave up his post of Concert Organiser for the Malta Cultural Institute and from then up to 1991 the organisation was in the hands of Mrs. Helen De Gabriele and Dr. Marcel De Gabriele.

I came to the MCI as Honorary Concert Organiser when Maestro Carmelo Pace asked me to take over, which I did in 1992.



Mezzo-Soprano Marie Therese Vassallo

Over the years I have built up a system of contacts with hundreds of musicians, dancers and other performers. Our concerts keep providing a platform for talented artists of all ages, where debutants and well seasoned performers work together to share experiences and learn from each other.

Besides Maltese artists, I have been able to present others from foreign countries like:

Soprano Lydia Abramova from Moscow (March 1994).

The Strings of Russia from Yaroslavl in Russia and Russian Bass Boris Shtokolov (October 1993).

Rosanna and Karina Lisitsian (The Lisitsian Duo) from Russia.

Tenor Joseph Pampanella from Australia (January 1993).

The Phoenix Singers from the United Kingdom (April 1998).

The Knox Academy Choir and Orchestra from Scotland (June 1993).

Trio Da Camera “Mauro Giuliani” (February 1996).

Soprano Sun Xin Xin from China (May 1996).

Cellist Andrea Noferini & Pianist Massimo Lambertini (October 1996).

Pianist and Teacher Franco Fodera (April 1997).

Pianist Adalberto M Riva (March 1999).

The Band of the Armed Forces of Malta (October 1999).

Pianist Andrea Bacchetti (October 2000).

Harpist Marie Louise Napier from Scotland (February 2001).

Pianist Gianluca Luisi (October 2001).

The Malta Police Force Band (November 2001).

Accordeonist Nenad Aleksovski from Macedonia (January 2005).



Soprano Lydiya Abramova



**Mezzo-Soprano Marie Therese Vassallo performing with
Soprano Lydiya Abramova**

After the demise of Chevalier Vincent Ciancio in May 2004, I was offered the post of Honorary Director of the Malta Cultural Institute. A new Committee was formed and started functioning in October 2004. This Committee is made up of myself as Director and Concert Organiser, Secretary Geoffrey Axiak, Treasurer Charles Axiak, Public Relations Officer and Legal Advisor Vanessa Magro, Dance Advisor Mary Jane Bellia and Dance and Theatrical Advisor Ray Mamo.

Today the policy of the Malta Cultural Institute is to revive the aims for which it was originally founded, by opening up its horizons to include all forms of Culture and the Visual Arts. In fact, besides Concerts, we organise Painting and Ceramic Exhibitions, Book Presentations and Classical and Modern Dancing. We also plan to include Drama and Prose and Poetry Readings.



A Ballet Performance at one of the Malta Cultural Institute's Concerts



A Painting and Ceramic Exhibition being presented by Marie Therese Vassallo



The San Gwann Local Council Orchestra

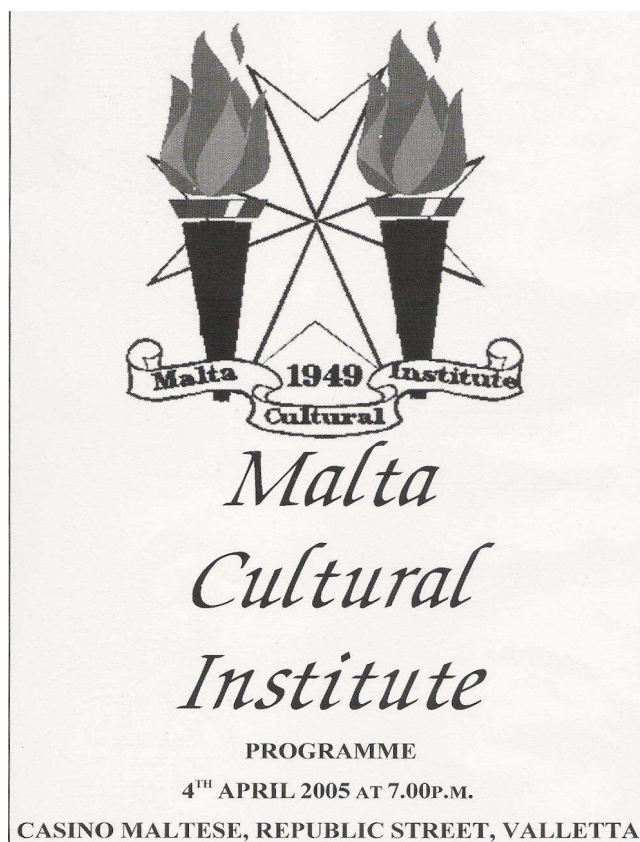


The Marie Therese Vassallo Voice Studio

The MCI is well known in foreign circles and we are often contacted by artists from outside Malta who wish to come and perform here. With the Malta Cultural Institute everybody works on a voluntary basis, as this is a non-profit making organisation to such an extent that admission to our Concerts is absolutely free of charge.

The MCI has an unbroken record of 56 years of activities and concerts, which traditionally have always taken place every first Monday of each month from October to June. There are no concerts during the months of July, August, and September. The tradition of holding our concerts on Mondays has given them the name of "*Monday Ovations*".

Since 1949, the Institute has also kept up the tradition of issuing a monthly bulletin containing information about the forthcoming concert and a newsletter to our members and friends. We mail over 350 copies of the Bulletin every month all over our Islands.



The front page of the Bulletin of a Malta Cultural Institute Concert held on 4th April 2005



M.C.I. Programme

MALTA CULTURAL INSTITUTE

Founded 1949

The M.C.I. Committee:
Secretary: Geoffrey Axiak, Treasurer: Charles Axiak,
P.R.O. & Legal Advisor: Vanessa Magro,
Dance & Theatrical Advisors: Mary Jane Bellia & Ray Mamo

The M.C.I. Director & Concert Organiser:
Marie Thérèse Vassallo Dip.L.C.M., L.L.C.M.
"La Paloma", 16, St. Henry Street, Sliema SLM 03. Tel.: 21338923 Fax: 2133

PART ONE

VIOLIN AND PIANOFORTE PRESENTATION

Concerto Op. 8 No. 3 A. Vivaldi
"Autunno" from *Le Quattro Stagioni*
Allegro, Adagio, Allegro

Lullaby B. Britten
from *3 Pieces for Violin and Piano Op. 6*

Liebesfreud F. Kreisler

Violinist: Jean Noel Attard
Pianist: Mro. Colin Attard

VOCAL RECITAL

Ideale F.P. Tosti
So Deep Is The Night F. Chopin
Morning O. Speaks

HELEN KEITH SCHOOL OF BALLET

"Winter" from *Sonne Une Erde* J. Bayer
Dancers: Julia Aquilina, Sharon Mifsud, Annalisa Pizzuto, Christa-Marie Vella

"Spring" from *Sonne Une Erde* J. Bayer
Dancers: Melinda Sue Balzan, Jessica Pace, Laetitia Mariae Troisi de Menville
Soloists: Martha Cutajar, Antonella Quattromani, Rebecca Sammut

DEAR MEMBERS, PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRESENT YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD BEFORE OUR CONCERTS AT THE DOOR. NON-MEMBERS CAN PAY A DAY MEMBERSHIP. THOSE WHO WISH TO RENEW THEIR MEMBERSHIP OR BECOME NEW MEMBERS MAY ALSO DO SO AT THE DOOR.

PART TWO

VOCAL RECITAL

In Quelle Trine Morbide G. Puccini
from *Manon Lescaut*

Voi Lo Sapete, O Mamma P. Mascagni
from *Cavalleria Rusticana*

Soprano: Louiselle Pace Gouder
Pianist: Dr Romina Morrow

HELEN KEITH SCHOOL OF BALLET

Extracts from *I Vespri Siciliani* G. Verdi
Dancers: Julia Aquilina, Sharon Mifsud, Annalisa Pizzuto
Soloist: Christa-Marie Vella

Morning E. Grieg
Soloist: Helen Keith

Petit Adagio from *The Seasons* A. Glazunov
Dancers: *Spring* Ann-marie Spiteri *Summer* Vincienne Attard
Autumn Saskia Azzopardi *Winter* Kimberley Charlie Mifsud

Allegro from *The Seasons* A. Glazunov
Soloists: Ann-marie Spiteri, Vincienne Attard, Saskia Azzopardi, Kimberley Charlie Mifsud, Helen Keith

Programme Coordination and Presentation:

Marie Thérèse Vassallo Dip.L.C.M., L.L.C.M.

The Malta Cultural Institute Programme of 4th April 2005

The Malta Cultural Institute has its own website and e-mail address, which appear on the Bulletin. The website is to be found on <http://www.geocities.com/maltacultinst>

The e-mail address is maltacultinst@yahoo.com