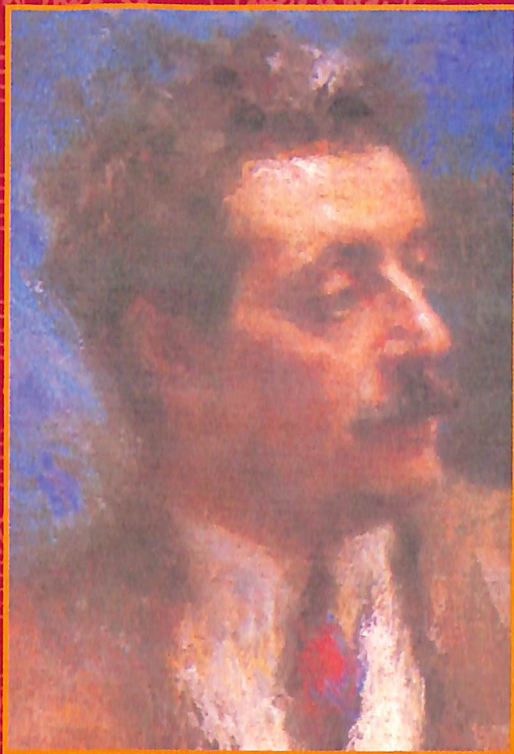


THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION
OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

presents

PUGGINI



Gala Night

at The Manoel Theatre

Saturday 13th February 1999

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THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION
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PUGGINI

Gala Night

starring
LYDIA CARUANA *soprano*
and
ANTONIO LOTTI *tenor*

featuring
the National Orchestra

Director
JOSEPH VELLA

Leader
MARCELLINE AGIUS

The Manoel Theatre
Saturday 13th February 1999

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Message by
Richard Muscat



A year ago, on Valentine's Day, I thought of presenting a concert based on Puccini's passionate arias. It is widely acknowledged that Romance and Puccini's music are a perfect match.

I undertook preparations straightaway so to ensure the success of my project. My colleagues within S.P.A.K. were enthusiastic about the idea; so was the Manoel Theatre Management Committee, particularly its Chairman and the Theatre's artistic director. I approached the Chairman of the National Orchestra who himself proved eager to set out on the programme. My colleagues and I also received encouragement from important institutions and leading commercial firms which were asked to support the project. By granting support, each of them demonstrated a fine taste for the arts.

This operatic concert recalls practically all of Puccini's operas. I am glad that this initiative will carry Puccini audiences through an enchanting, refreshing and emotional *passeggiata romantica* by virtue of which they have the rare opportunity to meet the great composer's heroines that include Tosca, Mimì, Butterfly, Liù, Doretta and others.

The interpretation has been left in capable hands. Lydia Caruana is an established and much loved stage personality who is so much familiar with Puccini's works, whilst Antonio Lotti boasts of a vast international background which gives to the concert lustre and prestige. I am sure that Malta's National Orchestra, which on this occasion will be directed by Maestro Joseph Vella, will add the necessary spice to the lovely voices and to the beauty of the Manoel Theatre.

With the Puccini Gala Night, the Society for the Promotion of Cultural Activities (S.P.A.K.) is proud to have reached another milestone in the line of activities so far organised. Art lovers will recall past successful events such as the Mozart Vienna Orchestra in historical costumes, the Beniamino Gigli concert, and the Vienna Hofburg Waltz concerts. The Society is planning to provide further entertainment for Maltese music lovers with a series of Galas based on works by Verdi, Mozart, Strauss and Lloyd Weber.

For the moment it's Puccini. My colleagues and I thank all those that flocked to the Manoel, and gladly convey best wishes on the occasion of Valentine's Day.

Soprano
Lydia Caruana



Soprano Lydia Caruana's career has lately taken a turning as a result of her engagements alongside internationally renowned singers. Lydia Caruana sang *Musetta* in Puccini's *La Bohème* alongside famous Cecilia Gasdia and Giorgio Cebrian. She also interpreted *Norina* in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* for the "Cantanti Giovani Europei" which saw her working with conductor Alessandro Sangiorgi, former principal director of the Teatro Municipal of São Paulo, and with dynamic artistic director Aldo Tarabella.

In April 1997, on the occasion of the bicentenary celebrations of the birth of Gaetano Donizetti, Lydia

Caruana sang *Don Pasquale* to capacity audiences in Malta at the Manoel Theatre and at the Teatro Petrarca in Arezzo, Italy. She performed *Norina* again in December at the Teatro Comunale of Florence. The soprano also enjoyed a particular moment of gratification when she sang in honour of the great tenor Giuseppe Di Stefano.

Lydia Caruana appeared on ITV in Britain besides performing alongside celebrity artists during the Malta International Arts Festival. She has sung frequently at the Manoel Theatre in opera productions, sacred works and operatic concerts. Other important venues where she performed include Palazzo Verdala, St John's Co-Cathedral, the Mdina Cathedral, the Mediterranean Conference Centre, the Sala Isouard, the Palace Gardens, the Auberge d'Aragon, and Sir Temi Zammit Hall at Tal-Qroqq. Lydia Caruana has performed for several international delegations including the European Banking and Finance Conference, the British Theatre Goers Club, the Commonwealth Games Federation Assembly, and the "Accademia Internazionale di Scienza e Cultura". She also sang on special occasions such as Presidential Birthdays and the Independence Celebration Concerts at Mdina Square.

Ms Caruana's principal roles in opera have included *Angelica* in Puccini's *Suor Angelica*, *Musetta* in Puccini's *La Bohème*, *Norina* in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, *Thérèse* in Isouard's *Jeannot et Colin*, *Rosalinde* in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, and *Josephine* in Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Ms Caruana's engaging personality lends itself well to the dramatic requirements of opera and her acting versatility on stage makes her a popular performer.

Lydia Caruana studies vocal technique and musical interpretation with acclaimed dramatic soprano and teacher, Antoinette Miggiani.



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Tenor
Antonio Lotti



Antonio Lotti was born in São Paulo, Brazil, of Italian origin. He graduated in singing and in pianoforte at the "Conservatorio Musicale Santa Cecilia" in São Paulo in 1974. He studied singing with Maestro Marcel Klass and perfected his vocal technique with M^o Leila Farah. He is currently followed in Italy by Maestro Paride Venturi.

He made his debut in opera singing in 1982 interpreting the role of *Cavaradossi* in Puccini's *Tosca* at the Teatro Municipal of São Paulo, where he was rewarded by the "Associazione Paolista dei Critici d'Arte".

His international debut came about in 1987 in Oporto, in Portugal, with the interpretation of *Don José* in Bizet's *Carmen*. In 1991 he sang in the Netherlands as *Cavaradossi* and as *Stiffelio*. His debut in Italy took place in 1992 at the Teatro Comunale of Bologna where he interpreted *Paolo* in *Francesca da Rimini* together with Rayna Kabaywanska, and *Rodolfo* in Verdi's *Luisa Miller*. During the same season, he sang at Oslo's National Theatre and at Copenhagen's Royal Opera Theatre. In 1993 he interpreted the main role in *Don Carlo*, and *Calaf* in Puccini's *Turandot*.

The following year, Lotti sang in Germany as *Turiddu* (*Cavalleria Rusticana*), *Don José* (*Carmen*), and *Indio Pery* (*Il Guarany*), the latter with Placido Domingo. He also sang the role of *Enzo Grimaldo* in Ponchielli's *La Gioconda* in St Gallen, Switzerland. In 1995 he interpreted *Pinkerton* in Paris and in Seville. During the same year, he sang in Verdi's *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata* at Piacenza and Modena.

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary since Mirella Freni's debut at Modena's Teatro Comunale, Lotti sang *Loris Ipanoff* with Placido Domingo in Umberto Giordano's *Fedora*. He also interpreted *Luigi* in *Il Tabarro* at the Teatro Municipal de Rio de Janeiro.

In 1996 he played *Indio Pery* in his home town of São Paulo. He also interpreted three times *Renato Des Grieux* in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*. He made his first appearance in the United States interpreting the role of *Rodolfo* in *La Bohème* at Washington's Opera Theatre.

In 1997 he sang for the first time the main role in *Ernani* by Giuseppe Verdi at the Teatro Municipale of Piacenza, and also the role of *Renato Des Grieux* at the Teatro Politeama Greco in Lecce.

The Society for the Promotion of Cultural Activities (S.P.A.K.)

presents

PUCCINI GALA NIGHT

starring LYDIA CARUANA and ANTONIO LOTTI
with the National Orchestra directed by Joseph Vella

Manoel Theatre – Saturday 13th February 1999



First part

Le Villi	Intermezzo	
La Fanciulla del West	“Or son sei mesi”	Tenor
Turandot	“Signore ascolta”	Soprano
Turandot	“Non piangere Liù”	Tenor
Il Tabarro	“Bisogna aver provato”	Soprano
Il Tabarro	“Meglio non pensarci”	Tenor
Suor Angelica	Intermezzo	
Suor Angelica	“Senza mamma”	Soprano
La Bohème	“Che gelida manina”	Tenor
La Bohème	“Sì, mi chiamano Mimì”	Soprano
La Bohème	“O soave fanciulla”	Duet

Second part

Manon Lescaut	Intermezzo	
Manon Lescaut	“Donna non vidi mai”	Tenor
Gianni Schicchi	“O mio babbino caro”	Soprano
La Rondine	“Il bel sogno di Doretta”	Soprano
Tosca	Intermezzo	
Tosca	“E lucean le stelle”	Tenor
Madama Butterfly	“Un bel dì vedremo”	Soprano
Madama Butterfly	“Bimba dagli occhi”	Duet

End of Programme

Maria Callas as Tosca in her last public appearance.

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Maestro
Joseph Vella



Maestro Joseph Vella was admitted as a Fellow of the London College of Music in 1967. He graduated in music from the University of Durham and he continued his studies in composition with Franco Donadoni and in conducting with Franco Ferrara. In 1968 he composed an orchestral suite entitled "Three Mood Pieces" which was played at the Manoel Theatre and which introduced him as a composer. In 1972, in conjunction with Verena Maschat, he set up the School of Music in Valletta.

As a composer, Joseph Vella has touched on a considerable variety of styles, all ingrained in a

personal idiom, stemming mainly from the 20th century neo-classical movement. As a consequence, his music is never consciously "nationalistic", although the Mediterranean influence does emerge in some of his works. The song cycle "Seher", for example, was the first ever written using the Maltese language as a medium.

Up to the present time, Vella's official catalogue of works reaches just under a hundred opus numbers. He has also written a large number of minor works which include liturgical pieces, hymns, marches, and music for wind band. Vella's works have been performed, and critically acclaimed, in most European countries, in the United States and also in Japan. Many of his works are available on compact disc.


As a conductor, an activity that dates back to his student days, Vella has a wide repertoire and has received invitations to appear in many countries. During his long and fruitful association with the Malta Choral Society (1970-1992), and with the Astra Opera Theatre in Gozo (since 1970), he has introduced to Malta outstanding works by Mozart, Beethoven, Orff, Britten and Bruckner. Critics attribute to Vella's conducting a respect for the composer's perceived inclinations, manifesting an exceptional feeling for large-scale musical architecture, rhythmic dynamism, and a heightening of the musical line. His conducting sensitivity and instinctive insights have been acknowledged by various artists. After a concert at the Manoel Theatre with world famous soprano Cecilia Gasdia, the soprano remarked that "Joseph Vella is one of the few conductors I know with whom I would be quite willing to sing a whole opera without even one rehearsal".

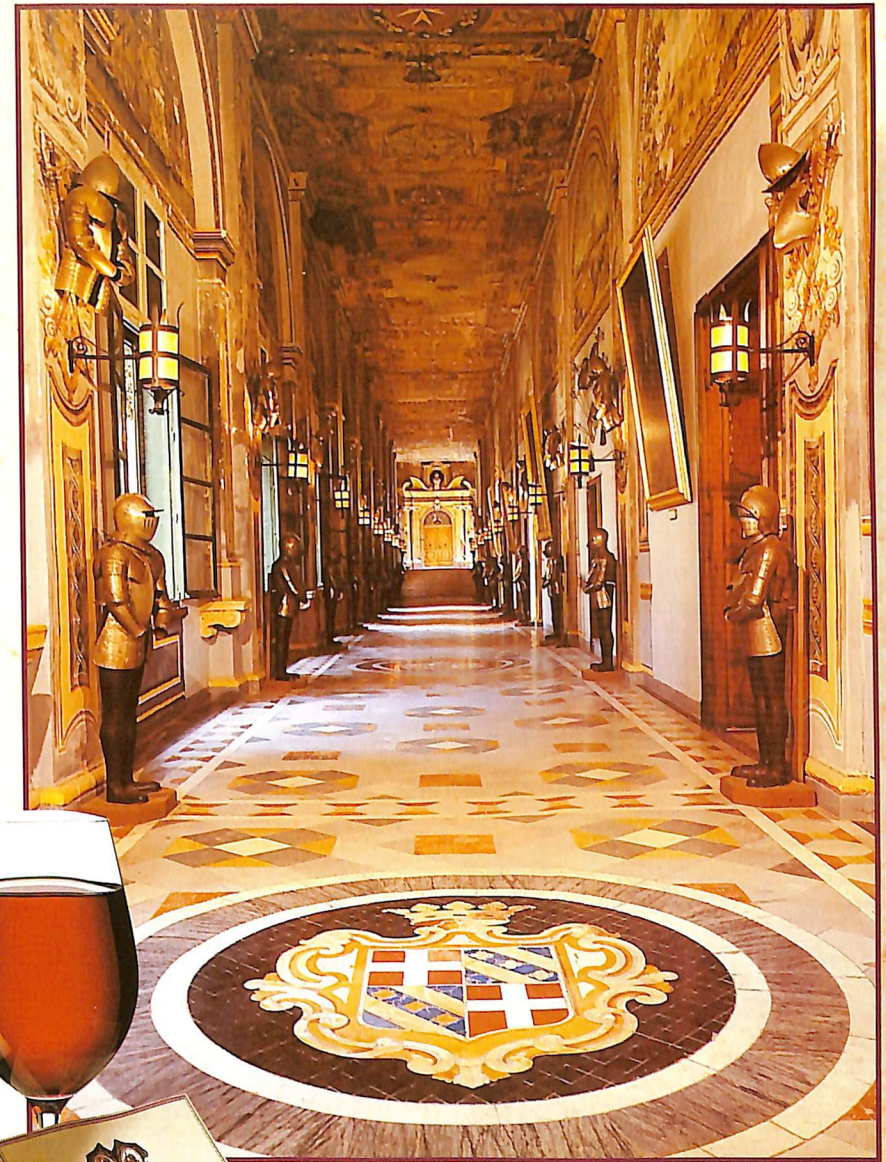
Vella was appointed as the first conductor of the National Orchestra.

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by the Society for the Promotion of Cultural Activities
(S.P.A.K.)
on the initiative of its President
Richard Muscat.

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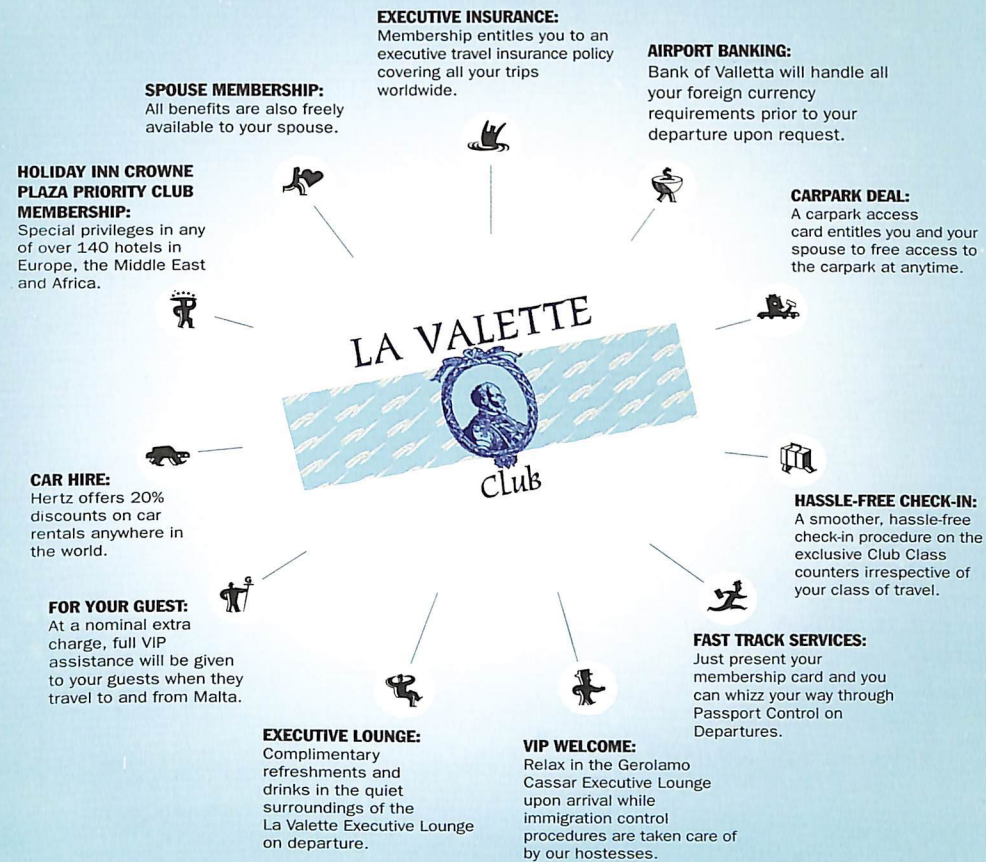
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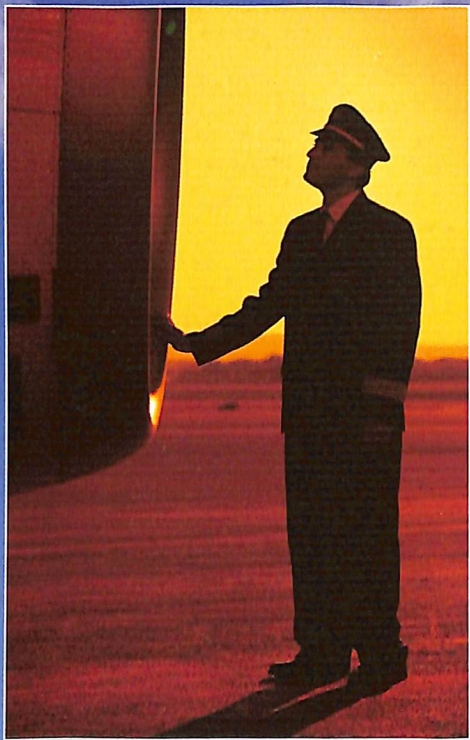
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