

# ZURRICO

## Notte Barocca

*.....reliving life in Baroque times*

Zurrieq

28th November 2009

from 8pm onwards



Segretarjat Parlamentari  
Għall-Konsultazzjoni Pubblika u Informazzjoni



ZURRIEQ LOCAL  
COUNCIL

HSBC   
The world's local bank

The Baroque era is the period when Casal Zurriq flourished architecturally and economically. Most of the buildings in the village core were erected in this era, namely the parish church (1659) dedicated to St. Catherine of Alexandria, adorned with 17th c. baroque paintings by Zahra and Preti, the Armoury (17th c.), Xarolla windmill (1724), St. James Chapel (1731), St. Bartolomeo chapel (1785). Malta at the time was still under the rule of the Knights of the Order of St. John, and indeed, perhaps inadvertently, Zurriq people got pretty well influenced by the styles and methods which these Knights brought about with them. Grand Master Fra Marc'Antonio Zondadari, elected Grand Master in 1720, at the height of the Baroque period, is believed to have had the village of Zurriq much at heart ; indeed he is believed to have resided in Zurriq for some time. Along with Zondadari, there were other Knights, including the reknown Fra Giacomo De Togores, who even built his own palace in Nigret. As can be seen, though far from Valletta, Zurriq had its share of attention by the most important and influential people of the time. Years passed by, until on 10th June 1798, Napoleon landed in Malta. General Bonaparte is believed to have passed a night at the Armoury, in Zurriq, during his brief stay in Malta. The presence of the French can be seen as the conclusion of the Baroque period in Zurriq giving way to modern periods under British rule. Zurriq Notte Barocca, organised by Zurriq Local Council, is the re-enactment of the above mentioned periods in history, giving us the opportunity to re-live 200 years of history in one night.



### ***Folk Dancing – by Paul Curmi Dancers***

The Folklore group know as the Paul Curmi Dancers took its name from the founder Paul Curmi. Born in Senglea, Paul Curmi started his dancing career in the pre-Second World War years at the tender age of 12, under the guidance of his elder brother Richard. Paul's youth was in effect characterized by his deep passion for dancing and he spent his teen researching into dance literature and practicing practically all types of dance disciplines.

The upsurge in the number of tourists' visiting the island during the 1960's was creating a demand for typical Maltese entertainments. This phenomenon had prompted the Malta Tourist Board to approach Mr. Curmi and ask him to introduce for the first time in Malta, Maltese folklore dancing.

Paul Curmi accepted this proposal and dedicated all his energies towards this new venture. He delved deeply into local past customs and eventually came up with a series of folklore dances related to Gothic peasantry and aristocratic medieval activities. His numbers are a vivid depiction of the humble fishermen's chores, the lively village fiesta celebrations, and the harvest time reveling, being in direct contrast to the sophisticated movements of the noble people of Mdina, and the leisurely paces of the spouses and guests at the traditional Maltese Wedding performance. Paul Curmi is also responsible for having composed the typical Maltese folk music, which accompanies the various dances.

The Group's wardrobe was managed by Mrs. Mary Curmi, Paul's wife and is now managed by Ms. Odette Curmi. All the costumes worn during performances were designed after a careful study of illustrations of our forefather's apparel found in the local museums and the National Library. The different costumes can be considered as authentic: the peasant clothing being made from water colored loomed material adorned with hand made lace and complemented by fine pantaloons and undershirts, the Ghonnella blouses made from heavy silk, the bride's wedding gown made of pure damasque. They are all in fact heirlooms in their own right.

The tradition set by Paul Curmi is being passed on from one generation to another and demand for the group is ever on the increase.

## Continuous Entertainment

### Republic Square (20.00 hrs – 22.30 hrs)

Baroque Music Concerto by the University Junior College Chamber Ensemble  
Folk dances by Paul Curmi Dancers

### Mons. Pietru Pawl Saydon Street (20.00 hrs – 22.30 hrs)

Story-telling for children by Joe and Veronica Farrugia  
Minstrels playing Mandolina by Edward Mandolin Duo  
Falconry Show by Sharp Sight Falconry  
Ganutell Exhibition by Salvina Bugeja  
Mechanised religious statues by Joseph Barbara  
Windmill exhibition by George Sammut  
Roast pig and Maltese traditional food by the clubs of our village  
Honey exhibition

Re-enactments

**21.30 hrs – 22.00 hrs**

**Republic Square**

Historical re-enactment: Arrival of Grand Master Zondadari in Zvrrico (1721)

**20.30 hrs – 22.30 hrs**

**Mattia Preti Square, Mons. Pietru Pawl Saydon Street, Republic Square**

Historical re-enactment: In Guardia (1701)

**22.30 hrs – 23.00 hrs**

**The Armoury, Mattia Preti Square, Mons. Pietru Pawl Saydon Street and Republic Square**

Historical re-enactment: The arrival of a French official in Zvrrico (1798)

Parish Church (20.00 hrs – 22.30 hrs)

Mvsica Sacra by Mro. Paul Portelli

Sacred Art Exhibition, organised by Zurrieq parish

Churches, societies, clubs and various streets will be lit by candelight, fjakkoli and torches.  
St. James Chapel (Main Street) will also be open for viewing.

### Parking

Dun Guzepp Zammit Street, St. Catherine Street, St. Michael Street and Main Street will be closed for traffic.  
Parking will be allowed in Bronja Street, Qrendi Road and Blue Grotto Avenue.

### Information

For further information, kindly contact Zurrieq Local Council on 21689111 or by email [zurrieq.lc@gov.mt](mailto:zurrieq.lc@gov.mt), or else visit the Council's website: [www.zurrieqlocalcouncil.com](http://www.zurrieqlocalcouncil.com)

## **Baroque Music Concerto – by The University Junior College Chamber Ensemble**

The University Junior College Orchestra was set up soon after the Junior College was established in 1995. It performed in Christmas Concerts and in the Students' soir e, besides other college occasions. Important venues abroad where the orchestra has participated include the Teatro L. Mercantini di Ripatransone, Italy (2001), Bolzano Fiera (Messe Bozen) as part of the Fieralingue (2005), Hamburg, Germany, (2004-5) where the Maltese students attended masterclasses at The Hamburger Konservatorium and the Musikschule Rissen, Heidelberg (2007), Pisa and Calcinaia (2008), Martigues, France, (2009), Assisi and Cannara (2009), and Frejus (2009). In Malta, the orchestra gave performances in different venues, including churches and hotels around the island. The University Junior College Chamber Ensemble, which is to participate in this edition of Zurrico Notte Barocca, comprises Kevin Azzopardi (flute), Gian Paul Gauci (violin), Mark Anthony Sammut (alto saxophone), Joseph Mallia (viola), Joseph Borg (trombone) and Maria-Elena Farrugia (keyboard), and will be under the direction of Mro. Manoel Pirotta DNESM (Lyon) [M.A.] Dip CNR (Lyon) [B.A. (Hons.)] Hon VCM LFIBA CT, FVCM (Hons.) FTCL FLCM FNCM LTCL LMusLCM. Major forthcoming events for the orchestra include: Gozo International Celebration in Qala, Gozo on the thirteenth December, and Milied Flimkien at St. John's Co-Cathedral, on the 16th December.



### **Mro. Manoel Pirotta**

Manoel Pirotta DNESM (Lyon) [M.A.] Dip. CNR (Lyon) [B.A.] Hon. VCM CT, FVCM (Hons) LFIBA FTCL FLCM FNCM LTCL LMusLCM, composer and pedagogue, graduated from the Conservatoire National Sup rieur de Musique de Lyon (1994). He is a full-time lecturer at the University Junior College where he teaches the Matsec music programme. The Research and Advisory Board of the International Biographical Centre in Cambridge nominated him "International Musician of the year" for his outstanding musical achievements (2003). He is a life fellow of this association and contributes significantly to the standing of the IBA in the worldwide forum. Pirotta was awarded the Manoel Pirotta Trophy (2006) to celebrate all his hard work in coordinating, organising and administering in Malta for ten years of music examinations by the Victoria College

of Music, London. The trophy will be presented each year to who is considered the most deserving music student for that year, will be kept by him for one year, before it passes on to another meritorious Maltese student. He was also awarded the Grand Prix des Arts for music composition and conducting at the 8th Malta International Art Biennale (2007). Pirotta conducted both the Catholic Institute Youth Orchestra (1987-9) and the Maltese Youth Orchestra (1994-6). He is musical director of the University Junior College Orchestra, and The Euro Academy Youth Orchestra since 1999 and 2002 respectively. His incidental music - Antony and Cleopatra won him an entry in the "Shakespeare Music Catalogue" issued by Victoria College, Canada. The work was revised and played by the orchestra Citt  di Ravenna (2005). His La Lyonnaise for solo piano features in Murray MacLachlan's CD Piano Music from Malta. Other works are also included in piano anthologies, among which, "Kinder Garden" and "A musical Tribute to Mozart from Malta".

In this first edition of Zurrico Notte Barocca, Mro. Pirotta will be directing The University Junior College Chamber Ensemble, in a Baroque Music Concerto.



## Baroque Music Concerto – The singers



### ***Eleonora Schembri B. Ed. (Hons.)***

Eleonora Schembri is a 28 year old soprano from Safi. Recently married, she is currently living with her husband in Zurrieq. Eleonora graduated as a teacher in 2003 from the University of Malta and is currently teaching a Year 5 class at St. Ignatius College Luqa Primary School.

She started studying voice and music theory with Mezzo-Soprano Ms. Marie Therese Vassallo in October 2004 and has now moved on to studying voice and music theory at the Johann Strauss School of Music in Valletta. Her vocal coach and mentor at the moment is the renowned Gozitan Soprano Ms. Miriam Cauchi.

Eleonora has sung in different churches and venues around Malta, both as a choir member and as a solo artist. Amongst others, she sang at the Phoenicia, Hilton and Excelsior Hotels, the Russian Cultural Centre, The Casino Maltese in Valletta, St. James Cavalier and the Manoel Theatre. She has

collaborated on various occasions with Mro. Ian Peter Bugeja and his Orchestra Magna Armonia, including contributions as his guest in the television programme Allegro con Brio. Prior to that, Eleonora performed as a choir member in The Magic Flute: an opera by Mozart produced and directed at the Manoel Theatre in Valletta with Ms. Miriam Gauchi as Regia and Mro. Michael Laus as Director of the Malta National Philharmonic Orchestra.



### ***Joseph Zammit***

Joseph is twenty years old and lives in Safi. He is in his final year at the University of Malta, where he is reading a degree in History and Archaeology. Joseph is a tenor and he started studying voice and music theory with Marie Therese Vassallo in October 2004. He went on to study voice with Mro. Brian Cefai and then started studying vocal technique and theory at the Johann Strauss School of Music in Valletta. His current mentor at this school is Ms. Claire Massa.

As an artist, Joseph has performed as a soloist and chorister with a number of choirs and ensembles, with whom he has taken part in a variety of concerts. Joseph also sang as leading baritone in various churches, concerts, and musicals amongst which Missa Sancta Cecilia, and for concerts organised by his former schools St. Albert the Great College in Valletta and G.F. Abela Junior College Msida. He took part in an opera by Mozart, The Magic Flute, and played leading roles in Masquerade's Christmas

Pantomime of 2008 Jack and the Beanstalk, the musical Jekyll and Hyde, plays such as Words, Words, Words and All in the Timing, and Who's Breaking? by Philip Osment. His next goal is another demanding role in Masquerade's Aladdin, this year's Christmas Pantomime.



### ***May Caruana M.Sc, B.Psych(Hons), ALCM***

MAY CARUANA started studying the piano at a very early age with various Maltese and foreign teachers, including Fransina Abela Brincat, Nina Kasimirova and Cynthia Turner. She also attended various Masterclasses with pianists such as Ruth Harte, Marcel Baudet, Balasz Szokolay and other prominent artists. May performed in many recitals at various locations such as St James Cavalier, the foyer of the Manoel Theatre and others.

While always interested in singing, it was only 3 years ago that she took up formal classical voice training as a mezzo-soprano with Claire Massa, and is fast gaining knowledge and experience as a performer.

She has performed as chorister in various large-scale events, such as the production of the Magic Flute, Rossini's Stabat Mater both at the Manoel Theatre, as well as other concerts at St John's Co-cathedral and various other locations.

As a soloist she has performed in several concerts including one of sacred works by Maltese Composers, several Christmas concerts and in various other performances organized by local Philharmonic Societies, Government entities and other musical organizations.

Ms Caruana teaches piano performance, theory and singing both privately as well as with the Masquerade school of performing arts.

She has a first degree in psychology and a Master's degree in Health Services Management and works as a Manager of Community Mental Health Services within the civil service.

## IN GUARDIA

During the IN GUARDIA re-enactment, several soldiers will be walking around the streets of the village core, on their usual military routine. They will be preparing for the arrival of Grand Master Fra Marc'Antonio Zondadari in Zvrrico. When the Grand Master arrives, a bandu will be read and the soldiers will accompany him to his place of residence in Zurrieq. Grand Master Fra Marc'Antonio Zondadari, from Siena, was elected Grand Master of the Knights of Malta in 1720, after the death of Fra Ramon Perellos de Roccaful. Although his reign only lasted until 1722, he was popular with the Maltese. During his reign Carnival traditions were strengthened with the establishment of the Kukkanja. His body is buried in a magnificent monument by Massimiliano Soldani Benzi in St John's Co-Cathedral while his heart was buried in his native Siena, much to the dismay of the Maltese. This monument is baroque work of art in bronze and marble which shows the Grand Master reclining. This is the only monument found in nave of the church because it did not fit in the chapel of the langue of Italy.



### What happened to Santu Formosa?



On the 10th June 1798 Napoleon landed in Malta. There were already early signs of insurgencies against the French in Malta, but, as time progressed, the situation became even more intolerable for the Maltese, who began to get mercilessly robbed by French officials and soldiers alike. In Zurrieq, Santu Formosa, resident in an alley accessible from Piazza Maggiore, began to work on a plan, together with other friends and a number of peasants, which would lead to a planned rebellion against the French in Malta. Somehow, the French got to know about all this, and on the 3rd September 1798, Santu and his friends, had to withstand several unpleasant surprises. What happened next?... Well, we'll get to know on the same date, two hundred and eleven years later, during Zvrrico Notte Barocca.....

### Mvsica sacra – by Mro. Paul Portelli

Mro. Paul Portelli hails from Jurrrieq, Malta. He started to take piano lessons at a very young age with his late uncle Rev. Michael D'Amato until he managed to get a good result, both in theory and practice, up to grade 8 of the Royal School of Music. At the age of 9, he was already playing the church organ during funeral services. After a short break during the adolescent period, he decided to start studying again at the age of twenty, now with more conviction. At that time, he studied harmony and counter point with Fr. Albert Borg O.S.A. Later on, he studied orchestration with Mro. Ronnie Debattista until he got 3 diplomas, A.L.C.M. in piano practice, A. Mus. L.C.M., and L. Mus. L.C.M in theory. During this particular time, his love for music has become more widespread and he became more aware of the versatility of music. Consequently, he started studying Jazz improvisation with Mro. Paul Abela at the Johann Strauss School of Music. In 2002, he was asked to direct the Jurrrieq parish choir – 'Cantate Domino' A.D. 1956, after the death of his uncle, who was its founder and director. Besides inheriting all his compositions, he also inherited his love for sacred music. This induced Mr. Portelli to take a 3 year course at the University of Malta which then led him to a diploma in this field, with particular emphasis to Gregorian chant and polyphony. When he finished University, he started studying contemporary orchestration and composition with Profs. Charles Camilleri. This made him more open minded and now he can understand better the complexity of works written by contemporary composers such as Oliver Messaien, Luciano Berio, Gyorgy Ligeti, Pierre Boulez, Giacinto Scelsi, Charles Camilleri, Joseph Vella and others.



Last but not least, Mro. Paul Portelli is married to Catherine and has two daughters Martina and Michela.

In this first edition of Zvrrico Notte Barocca, Mro. Portelli will be performing various sacred Baroque music pieces on the parish church organ.