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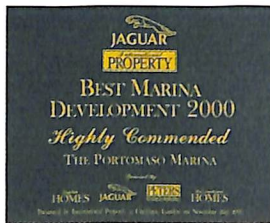
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Opera Festival 2002

Giuseppe Verdi's

LA TRAVIATA

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

with

Iwona Hossa, Joseph Calleja,
Piero Guarnera

and

Orkestra Nazzjonali

Music Director: Michael Laus

Leader: Marcelline Agius

Artistic director: Jacobo Kaufmann

Manoel Theatre

Saturday 16th & Monday 18th March 2002
at 7.30 p.m.

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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Members: Peter Fenech, Chris Gatt, John R. Gatt, Maria Ghirlando, Michael Laus, Alfred Mallia, Genevieve Mamo, Alfred Spiteri Mallia, Paul Xuereb, Kenneth Zammit Tabona

Artistic Director: Tony Cassar Darien

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Booking Office: 116, Old Theatre Str., Valletta, VLT 07

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday: 10am - 1pm & 5pm - 7pm
Saturday: 10am - 12noon

Reservations: Tel: [+356] 21 246389 Fax: [+356] 21 237340
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Tickets to be collected within 48 hours.

Payments: Accepted by cash, cheques & credit cards
(Quikcash; Electron; Visa; Mastercard; Eurocard)

Bookings: Booking opens ten days before the first performance. On the day of the performance, tickets can be purchased from 5pm up to 30 minutes after commencement.

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Performances start at 7.30p.m. Mondays to Saturdays, and 6.30p.m. Sundays. Latecomers have to wait for a suitable pause in the programme before being ushered to their seats. The Verdi Room in the foyer includes a close-circuit television where one may view the performance. The management reserves the right to alter the programme and the performance time of any production.

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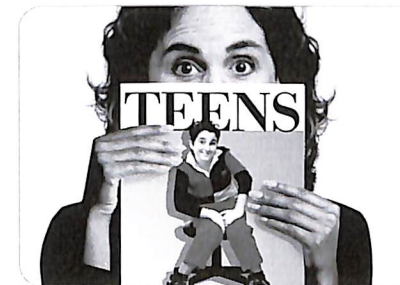
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FOREWORD BY BOV CHAIRMAN



It is my pleasure to welcome you to the third BOV Opera Festival. It gives me great satisfaction to note that this festival has grown in stature and is today a well-established event within Malta's cultural calendar.

Bank of Valletta's commitment to be the leading patron of local art and culture continues unabated. Bank of Valletta is once again this year sustaining a number of initiatives which continue to enhance our association with local culture. These include the sponsorship of restoration projects, the organisation of art exhibitions as well as support to

musical and theatrical performances. Through such an active role in the community in which it operates, Bank of Valletta is truly establishing a partnership for the promotion of art and culture.

I take the opportunity to congratulate the Manoel Theatre Management Committee for its untiring efforts and valuable work to sustain the prestigious quality of performances staged. I am confident that this year's BOV Opera Festival, featuring the two prestigious operas "La Traviata" and "Così Fan Tutte" as well as a magnificent Bellini concert, will reach new levels of prestige and professionalism providing a wonderful cultural experience.

I wish you all a most pleasant and enjoyable evening at the opera.

Joseph F. X. Zahra
Chairman
Bank of Valletta Group



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JACOBO KAUFMANN *Artistic director & Set designer*

Mrs. Jacobo Kaufmann, internationally acclaimed theatre and opera stage director, was born in Buenos Aires, where he graduated with honours from the Instituto Superior de Arte del Teatro Colón in the fields of opera stage direction, set and costume design, and theatre administration. Fluent in six languages, he directs, designs and lights opera, drama, music theatre, and multi-media productions, and also teaches master classes on opera acting and directing in many countries. Kaufmann is the founder and general director of the Jerusalem Centre for Music Theatre, and also directs the Opera Department at the Jerusalem Rubin Academy of Music. He has staged opera productions at various leading theatres in Argentina, the United States, Spain, South Africa, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and Singapore. He has directed operas by Verdi, Puccini, Mozart, Purcell, Salieri, Mascagni, Pergolesi, Mussorgsky, Menotti and others. He has been widely praised for his productions, rich in atmospheric details, precise in his direction of characters, suggestive lighting and deep understanding. Critics have written of him: "His most original offerings are total representations where music, actions and plot melt with absolute unity and strength."

MICHAEL LAUS *Musical director*

After his early musical training in Malta Michael won a scholarship from the Italian Cultural Institute, in order to continue his studies in piano, harpsichord, composition and conducting at the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi of Milan. Later he participated in masterclasses in conducting given in the US by George Manahan. He has appeared as a pianist in Milan's Sala Verdi and in the Teatro San Carlo in Naples. As conductor he has worked with the Orchestra Filarmonica di Parma, the Youth Orchestra of the Moscow Conservatoire, the Primavera Ensemble, the New Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. He has conducted productions of *Madama Butterfly*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and *Otello* at the Berne State Theatre. Principal conductor of the Manoel Theatre Orchestra between 1991-97, he is now Associate Professor in Music Studies at the University of Malta and Chairman of the National Orchestra. He has recorded orchestral music on CD for the labels Discover International and Unicorn-Khanchana.

ORKESTRA NAZZJONALI

The National Orchestra of Malta, founded in September 1997, consists of a group of thirty-five musicians, most of whom formed part of the Manoel Theatre Orchestra which was dissolved earlier that same year. It is the only official full-time orchestra in Malta. Its annual repertoire includes a concert season at the Manoel Theatre, Malta's national theatre, and at the Mediterranean Conference Centre where it participates in opera performances. The Orchestra has no principal conductor, but is regularly conducted by its chairman, Michael Laus. A number of guest conductors are also regularly invited. These have included Peter Stark, Paolo Ciardi, Renè Clement and Jonathan Butcher. Numerous prestigious guest soloists who have appeared with the Orchestra include Alexander Rudin, Ghena Dimitrova, Miriam Gauci, Cecilia Gasdia, Sergei Glavatsky and David Campbell.

VERDI & 'LA TRAVIATA'

A full century after his death, Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) is still arguably Italy's most popular opera composer, having progressed from the traditional Italian model which exalted the singer at the expense of the orchestra to the supreme mastery of his old age operas, *Otello* and *Falstaff*. Great sensitivity and an imaginative treatment of the orchestra gave his work the character of genius. His scoring, at first conventional, became highly individual and picturesque, and always achieved complete clarity. His opera *La Traviata*, which means literally 'the misled', was given its first production in Venice in 1853, just two months after *Il Trovatore* in Rome, which scored a much more resounding success. Still, it was not long before *La Traviata* was being given the reception it deserved. In fact both operas have remained firm favourites from the late nineteenth century onwards. His librettist Piave built it on Dumas's *La Dame aux Camélias*, a play of contemporary life in mid-19th century Paris. The noted opera critic Stephen Williams has written of *La Traviata*: "(it) will always hold for most of us a peculiar and intimate sweetness. That is because it is the work of a master, whose instinctive refinement of touch never allowed its sentiment to become tawdry."

Act I

Alfredo Germont, a young shy Parisian, has fallen in love with the notorious courtesan Violetta Valery. It is a most unlikely match, because Violetta is consumptive and has cynically decided to make her short life a gay one. But Alfredo is simply smitten with her and asks her to reconsider her lifestyle and give herself a chance of happiness. She is touched by his love and for a while seems on the verge of acceptance, but then dismisses the idea.

Act II: Scene 1

Alfredo's sincerity and love finally wins her over. At this stage he and Violetta have been living contentedly together for three months in a house just outside Paris. One day, when Violetta is alone, a grave middle-aged aristocratic calls on her. He is Alfredo's father, and he has come to politely put an end to the affair. He tells her that she is ruining Alfredo's career, and asks her whether she loves him unselfishly enough to sacrifice him. Cut to the heart, she consents, and the elder Germont leaves satisfied at having done his duty as a father. She leaves to resume her gay life in Paris, leaving Alfredo a note that the call of the old life is too strong for her. In vain are the comforting words of his father, who has returned to the scene to console his son. Alfredo dashes out in a mad fury of jealousy and goes in search of Violetta.

Act II: Scene 2

He finds her at a riotous party with Baron Douphol who has now undertaken to 'protect' her. Alfredo keeps winning at cards and taunts Violetta with the words 'Unlucky in love, lucky in play!' Later, as the guests go in to supper, Alfredo and Violetta come face to face. Totally torn inside, she implores him to calm down, lest he angers the Baron and the affair ends in a duel. A sneering laugh is all the answer he gives her. Remembering her promise to his father, she tells him that she really loves the Baron now - at which Alfredo flies into a rage. He calls the other guests and strongly berates her in their presence, even hurling his winnings into her face. The Baron promptly challenges him to a duel, at which instant Alfredo's father suddenly appears and gravely reproaches him.

Act III

Nature has taken its course on Violetta, and she now lies on her death-bed. Her doctor pretends to reassure her, but as he leaves he tells her maid Annina that she has only a few hours left. Feebly she reads a note from Alfredo telling her he has wounded the Baron and has come to learn of her supreme sacrifice. He is coming back to ask for her forgiveness and perhaps find happiness again. As revellers pass by her window, singing the Shrovetide feast, Alfredo vows never to desert her again. But Violetta knows the hour is come. Gently, she rebukes him and urges him to find happiness with someone else. It is her last wish before her tormented spirit passes.

THE CAST

Characters in order of appearance:

Violetta, <i>a courtesan</i>	Iwona Hossa
Alfredo, <i>young man from Provence</i>	Joseph Calleja
Annina, <i>Violetta's maid</i>	Yvonne Galea
Giorgio Germont, <i>Alfredo's father</i>	Piero Guarnera
Flora Bervoix, <i>another courtesan</i>	Gillian Zammit
Baron Douphol, <i>a protector of Violetta</i>	Jonathan Mohnani
Dr. Grenvil	Noel Galea
Gastone	Nunzio Galli
Marchese D'Obigny	John Gauci
Domestico di Flora	Mario Attard
Commissario	Jean-Paul Attard
Giuseppe	C. Vella Zarb.

Chorus: Rosanne Bellizzi, Anna Conti, Bridget Darmanin, Lorraine deBono, Rosemarie Falzon, Arienne Gaerty, Catherine Gauci, Diane Pace, Jane Pace, Anita Saliba, Yvonne Young (*sopranos*); Stephanina Agius, Josephine Murray, Eva Nezvalova, May Vassallo, Vernia Vella, Mary Zammit (*altos*); Edward Aquilina, Joseph Buhagiar, Mark Debono, Ray Debono, John R.Gatt, Alan Mulligan, Joseph Sapiano, Reginald Schembri, Charles Vella Zarb (*tenors*); Jean Paul Attard, Mario Attard, Francis Xavier Cassar, John Gauci, Joseph Lija, Gino Mulè Stagno, Vitèzslav Nezval, Mark Scicluna (*basses*)

Chorus mistress:

Simone Attard

Dancers: Nicola Henson, Donald Mallia, AnnaMaria Espinoza/Ingrid Sciberras, Yanika Mattei Louise Caruana Galicia, Luana Zerafa/Juana Vassallo, Silvia Galaz Estelle Sant

Artistic director/Set designer

Jacobo Kaufmann

Musical director

Michael Laus

Assistants to director

Mario Frendo, Davinia Galea

Set built by

Frans Mifsud

Assisted by

Anthony Mizzi, Leonard

Set decor/Properties

Azzopardi, Anthony Briffa

Pianists/Repetiteurs

Marco Bartolo

Wardrobe

Caroline Calleja, Simone Attard

Make-up artists

Ann Marie Chetcuti, Maki Yagi

Wigs

Maria Demicoli, Alfred Spiteri

Lighting

Susan Knox, Connie Schembri

Lighting assistant

Jackie Grima, Anton Farrugia

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Marvic Sultana

Martha Debattista

THE PERFORMERS



Iwona Hossa, soprano

Born in Poznan in 1973, Iwona graduated first class honours in opera singing from the Poznan Academy of Music under Prof. Ewa Widowska in 1998, after which the Authority of Poznan granted her a Scholarship for Young Artists. In 1999 she won the Maria Callas Grand Prix International Singing Competition in Athens, Greece. Already in 1995 she had placed highly in international contests: third prize for Mozart pieces in the 6th Ada Sari in Nowy Sacz (Poland), semi-finalist in the 34th Francesco Vinas (Barcelona, 1997) and in the International Mozart Competition (Salzburg, 1999), and finalist in the Orfeo 2000 in Hanover, Germany. In 2001 she was awarded the Medal of Young Art for opera singers. Debuting as Violetta in *La Traviata* at the Poznan Opera Theatre in 1996, she has since been a soloist at the Poznan Opera (Hanna in *Straszny Dwo* and Zuzia in *Verbum Nobile*, both by Stanislaw Moniuszko; Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Philippe in K.Penderecki's *Die Teufel von Loudon*). She also sings at the Szczecin Opera, and her role of Konstanze in Mozart's *Die Entführung* won her the Amber Ring Prize in 1998. Soloist at the Grand Theatre National Opera in Warsaw since 2000, she has taken part in opera festivals at Bydgoszcz, Luxemburg, Carcassone, Wexford, and in the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro, Italy. In June 2001 she recorded the Polish opera *Straszny Dwo* on CD with the National Opera in Warsaw. Her repertoire also includes oratorio and chamber music.



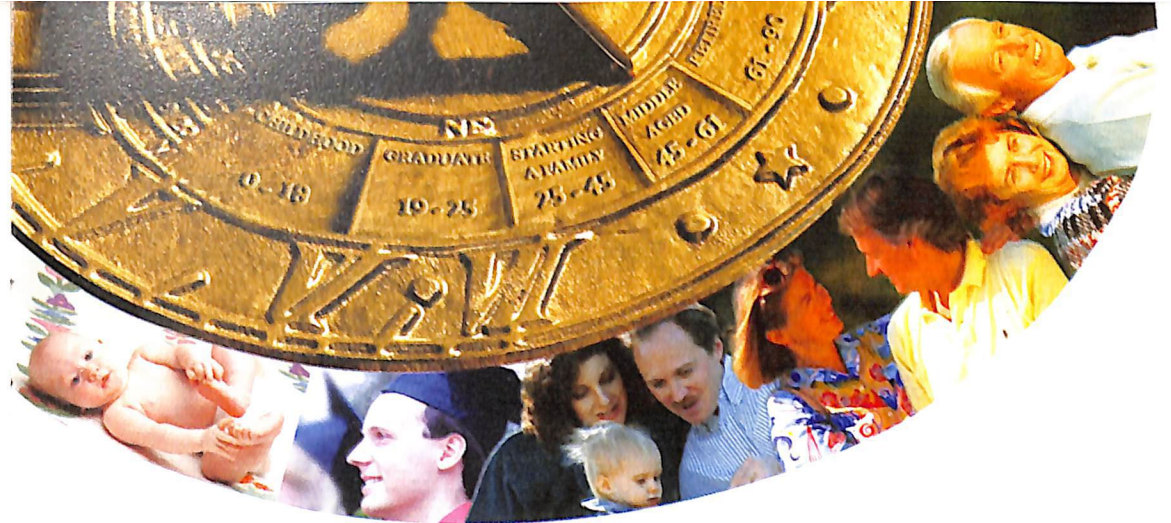
Joseph Calleja, tenor

Born in Malta in 1978, Joseph started singing lessons at the age of sixteen under Maltese tenor Paul Asciak, with whom he is still furthering his studies. He made his debut in Malta as Macduff (in *Macbeth*) in 1997 and as Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amor*. He has since sung Leicester in *Maria Stuarda* on tour with the Nationale Reisopera (Holland, 1997) and Lind in the world premiere of Azio Corghi's *Isabella* at the Rossini Opera Festival at Pesaro. Other roles he has sung include Don José in a series of scenes from Bizet's *Carmen* at the Wexford Opera Festival (Ireland), Rinuccio in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* at the Spoleto USA Festival in Charleston, Don Ottavio in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at the Regensburg Festival in Germany, Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere* at the Opera Royal De Wallonie Liege in Belgium, and Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in Toronto and with the Dresden Semperoper. Prizewinner at the International Belvedere Hans Gabor Competition 1997 in Vienna, and winner of the Premio Caruso 1998 in Milan, that same year he was awarded the John Small Bursary at the 1998 Wexford Opera Festival where he sang Zephoris in *Si j'étais roi*. He participated in the recital at the Al Bustan Festival in Beirut, and was prizewinner at the Operalia 1999 at Puerto Rico.



Piero Guarnera, baritone

Born in Rome, Piero studied with Maria Carbone and Maria Vittoria Romano. In 1984 he won the International Competition of Spoleto and had the chance to debut in *L'Elisir d'Amor* (Belcore). In the same year he appeared in *Don Giovanni* (Masetto) at the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. His career took him to some of the most important theatrical institutions in Italy and abroad. At the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma he sang Ifigenia in *Tauride*, Maltesta in *Don Pasquale*, Ford in *Falstaff*, and in Bartolucci's *Miserere* for the opening of the 1996 concert season. Other venues include Teatro di San Carlo in Naples (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *The Rape of Lucrezia*), Teatro alla Scala (*Idomeneo* and *Arabella*), Teatro Regio di Torino (*Enrico, il Campanello*, conducted by Carminati), Teatro Massimo di Palermo (Marcello in *La Bohème* under Renzetti) and Teatro La Fenice di Venezia in the title role of *Falstaff* under the guidance of Kabaratchevsky. He has taken part in several festivals, such as the world premiere of *Amor vuol dire sofferenza* by Leo and at the Opera Festival in Bellinzona. At Montepulciano he sang Paesello's *Re Teodoro a Venezia*, followed by *L'Armida immaginaria* at the Festival della Valle d'Itria in Martina Franca. He has also sung Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Arena Festival in Avenches. In Japan he sang *La Traviata* and he recently recorded *Il Campanello* on the Bongiovanni label.



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SIMONE ATTARD, *choirmistress*

Started pianoforte lessons aged four, in 1988 was awarded a scholarship in Siena in modern pianoforte teaching and performing techniques. In 1991 she graduated B.Ed (Hons) in Music from the University of Malta, and a year later obtained her L.R.S.M. diploma as a performer. She is now an accomplished accompanist, having played with both local and foreign singers and instrumentalists. A member of various choir groups, she has participated in operetta productions and as musical coordinator in a number of musicals. She was the first chorus mistress and musical director of the Malta Children's Choir founded by 'ActReact' in 1998. Joining the Manoel Theatre Choir at an early age, she has participated in all the theatre's productions and is now the rehearsal pianist and répétiteur for opera productions at the Manoel.

NUNZIO GALLI, *tenor*

Palermo-born, has attended masterclasses with tenor Pietro Ballo and continues specialisation and repertory studies with Mro. Danilo Lombardini of Palermo's Teatro Massimo. He made his opera debut in Rossini's *Adina* (1998) at the city's Politeama Garibaldi Theatre, followed by Cimara's *La Finta Pazienza*, a first performance recorded by the Bongiovanni recording company of Bologna. In the same period he debuted in Goffredo Petrassi's *La Morte dell'Aria*, and sang in Teatro Massimo's *Manon Lescaut* which also played in Rome. The following year he was 'Commendatore' in Nino Rota's *La Notte di un Nemesiteo* for Operalaboratorio, while the Teatro Massimo hired him for their productions of *Werther* and of Kurt Weill's *Lady in the Dark*. In May 2000 he formed part of a cultural exchange programme between the cities of Palermo and Detroit, where he performed in several recitals and in Britten's *Peter Grimes* at the Michigan Opera Theatre. For Operalaboratorio he recently sang the role of Fernando in Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte*.

GILLIAN ZAMMIT, *soprano*

Studied vocal training under Antoinette Miggiani and Paul Ascak and later at the Accademia Verdiana Carlo Bergonzi in Parma, Italy, after auditioning for the renowned tenor. She also took masterclasses in Siena at the Accademia Chigiana with Victoria de Los Angeles. Has worked with renowned accompanist Robert Sutherland, and has participated in a series of baroque concerts in Germany. Gillian has performed regularly in Malta and abroad, including Mozart's *Mas in F major* and the *Vesperae Solemnnes de Domenica K. 321* at St John's Cathedral. Apart from various lieder, chansons and operatic recitals, she has sung in concerts at the Manoel Foyer and at the President's Palace at San Anton. Last year she sang Flora in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* at the Manoel and in *Tales of Hoffmann* at St James Creative Arts Centre. In May she is due to play Cupid in Handel's opera *Semele* during the Baroque Festival at the Manoel.

JONATHAN MOHNANI, *bass-baritone*

Began his music education with pianoforte tuition, and in 1997 took up vocal studies under the tutelage of Alice Horne, his current coach. Has attended masterclasses in Siena, Cheltenham and Dublin. Has played leading roles in Charles Camilleri's *The Maltese Cross*, Carmelo Pace's *I Martiri*, in *Tosca* and *La Traviata*, as well as in Gilbert & Sullivan operettas like *H.M.S. Pinafore* and *Pirates of Penzance*. The year 2001 marked a high mark in his career, with roles in *Tales of Hoffmann* and *Hansel and Gretel* at St James Cavalier and as Tomio in *Il Pagliaccio* at the Manoel. Within the sphere of sacred music he has performed bass solo in Mozart's *Missa in C, kv. 257* and Handel's *Dixit Dominus* with the Willholden Choir and Blankenese Kammerorchester. He was first bass in the *Messa a Due Cori* by Francesco Azopardi.

YVONNE GALEA, *soprano*

Studied vocal technique and interpretation with Prof. Dobrova and furthered her studies under Stefano Ginevra at the 'Claudio Monteverdi' in Cremona. Has sung in various concerts and recitals at various locales including the Vatican and the Royal Concert Hall, and has interpreted a number of operatic roles at the Manoel. Following Nicolò Isouard's critically acclaimed *Messa leggera* at the Manoel she was engaged to record the work on CD, and also John Galea's symphonic poem *Ggantija*, at the Bulgarian National Radio featuring the Sofia Symphony Orchestra and the Chorus Urbanus.

NOEL GALEA, *bass*

Studied vocal technique under Prof. Dobrova, and has appeared in concerts, operas and oratorios in notable venues like Sala Nervi in the presence of Pope John Paul II in Rome. In Malta he has interpreted various roles in operatic productions with international casts: *La Traviata* and *Macbeth* at the Astra Theatre; *Così Fan Tutte*, *La Cambiale di Matrimonio*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Compostella*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Tosca* at the Manoel Theatre; *The Maltese Cross* at the MCC. Has sung in Carmelo Pace's *Stabat Mater*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, and Verdi's *Requiem*. In 1999 he sang with the Sofia Symphony Orchestra in the recording of two CDs: Isouard's *Messa leggera* and Galea's *Ggantija*.

JOHN GAUCI, *baritone*

Started singing at a young age in school choirs. Being a regular chorister, he sang solo parts with the choir of Santa Caterina d'Italia in Valletta. In 1995 he sang his debut as Ceprano in *Rigoletto* at the Manoel Theatre. More recently he took part in Verdi's *Requiem* and Beethoven's *9th Symphony*, both held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. A graduate teacher at St Edward's College, Cottonera, he is currently attending a post-graduate course in Theatre Studies at the University of Malta.

JEAN PAUL ATTARD, *bass*

Started musical studies with Sr. Beniamina Portelli, obtaining his A.L.C.M. in pianoforte, and singing at the Johann School of Music with Erios Jones, Alice Horne and Claire Massa. A member of various choir groups, he is presently assistant director of St Monica Choir and choirmaster of the St Clare Choir. As soloist has performed locally and abroad including Austria where the St Monica Choir was awarded the Bronze Medal during the 1st Choir Olympics. Has figured as soloist in a CD launched by St Monica Choir.

CHARLES VELLA ZARB, *tenor*

Notary Public by profession, he has been singing as first tenor since 1978, mainly in local churches and in most of the Opera productions at the Astra Theatre and Auroara Theatre of Gozo. Has studied voice production with Joseph Huber and is now under the guidance of Claire Massa. As a member of the Malta Opera Company he recently played in the *Tales of Hoffmann* at St James Cavalier.

BANK OF VALLETTA GROUP

The major components of the Bank of Valletta Group are Bank of Valletta p.l.c., Valletta Fund Management Limited and Bank of Valletta Stockbrokers Limited. Bank of Valletta p.l.c. also holds a qualifying equity stake in Middle Sea Insurance Co. Limited and Middle Sea Valletta Life Assurance Co. Limited.

Bank of Valletta p.l.c. is a licensed credit institution, an authorised foreign exchange dealer, a financial intermediary on the Malta Stock Exchange, is licensed to conduct investment services business by the Malta Financial Services Centre and is an insurance sub-agent of Middle Sea Valletta Life Assurance Co. Limited. It is the parent of the Group.

The BOV Group's total assets, as at 30th September 2001, stood at Lm 1.74 billion. Bank of Valletta's history dates back to 1809. It is today one of Malta's leading financial services providers. Bank of Valletta p.l.c. has over 14,000 shareholders and is the largest public company listed on the Malta Stock Exchange.

To meet the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities in the future, the Bank is building a platform to be the leading provider of value-added and relationship-based financial services. The pillars of success will be centred on customer focus, service and technological innovation and high efficiency. Bank of Valletta is intended to sustain its leading position by securing customer loyalty through service excellence. The Bank is now concentrating more closely on the diverse needs of the different customer segments it services.

With the new business structure in place, BOV has the agility to respond quickly to changing client demands. Efforts are concentrated to maximise shareholder value whilst limiting risk. Indeed, BOV's commitment to increasing shareholder value exerts a powerful discipline and engenders confidence that the right decisions are being made for shareholders.

Concurrently, BOV has taken a number of initiatives to improve the skills and capabilities of its people knowing that their input is a major determinant of service quality. High priority is given to career planning, training and management development.

Bank of Valletta is committed to contribute to the prosperity of the communities in which it operates and acknowledges its responsibility to invest in these to keep them vigorous and prosperous. This dimension goes beyond the day to day operations of the Bank. With the largest share of the Group's community investment devoted to education, health, welfare and community projects, BOV is also a strong supporter of the arts, culture, sports, heritage preservation and environmental programmes. The BOV Opera Festival is one such initiative.



TEATRU MANOEL

'Ad honestam populi oblectationem'

The Teatru Manoel, built on the initiative of Grandmaster Manoel de Vilhena, was inaugurated on January 19, 1732, with Scipione Maffei's tragedy *Merope* acted by the Italian Knights. It was meant to be an all-purpose theatre, a cultural and entertainment centre for plays, operas, cantatas and comedies, as well as other spectacles and Carnival balls. Hence its Latin inscription, which means "For the honest recreation of the people".

During the 19th century operas became the principal attraction and the Manoel gained a reputation in Europe for quality and innovation in this field. However the inauguration of the Royal Opera House on October 9, 1866, overshadowed and subsequently engulfed it. The Manoel, now privately owned, lost its pre-eminence and although a few operas were still held, plays and later on films became the main fare. Sadly the building's scope was completely changed and it went through many decades of neglect.

The bombing and complete destruction of the Royal Opera House on April 7, 1942, ironically restored the Teatru Manoel's importance; more so when the Maltese Government decided that, on the pattern of culturally advanced nations, Malta should have a national theatre. The required procedures were instituted in 1957, and after radical renovation the Teatru Manoel reopened on December 23, 1960, with a splendid performance of Delibes' *Coppelia* by the Ballet Rambert.

Since then the Manoel has seen a continual development of facilities in order to improve standards. Among the more recent developments are the Sala Isouard which functions as a second auditorium suitable for chamber concerts, the Theatre Museum and the establishment of the theatre archives, the Café Diva and the Ristorante di Vilhena in the restored basement galleries, the innovatory retractable canopy over the courtyard making it an all-season functioning area, the orchestra pit lift which lends the stage further depth when needed, and the opening of a retailing outlet for the sale of theatre-related merchandise.

Above all, Teatru Manoel has grown in artistic stature and is today well known for the quality fare it offers its patrons. The Manoel is now reputed to be the oldest European theatre still functioning within its original structure.

Programme editor: Victor Fenech

The Theatre Museum

A walk through Malta's theatrical history since 1732



OPENING HOURS
 Mondays to Fridays 10.00am - 12.30pm
 Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays 06.00pm - 07.00pm
 Saturdays 10.00am - 12.30pm

Tour of the Theatre plus Museum: Lm1.65 Museum only Lm1.00
 Tel: 237396/237397, Fax: 247451 • Booking Tel: 246389 Fax: 237340



Manoel Theatre Shop

Melitensia, CDs, Posters,
 Painting, T-Shirts,
 Exclusive Giftware, Books
 & much more for
 the Art lover.

Open 10.00am - 3.00pm
 Monday to Saturday

Also open 1 hour before the performance
 through to the end of the interval.

After the performance, your evening
 continues at Teatru Manoel's



Café Diva



The Theatre Restaurant

A superb range of choice delicacies
 & refreshments to make your evenings
 something special.

115, Old Theatre Street, Valletta
 Tel: 232574 Fax: 223005

Opening Hours:

Cafeteria ~
 Monday to Friday 9.30am - 3.30pm

Tavola Calda ~
 Monday to Friday 11.30am - 2.30pm

Restaurant ~
 Monday to Friday 11.30am - 2.00pm
 Tuesday, Friday & Saturday 7.30pm - Midnight
 Sunday 12.00 noon - 2.00pm

Also open during evening performances
 (except Sundays) from 7.30pm - Midnight

We're groovy.

Need a crowd?
 Text message your friends and
 tell them where to meet you.

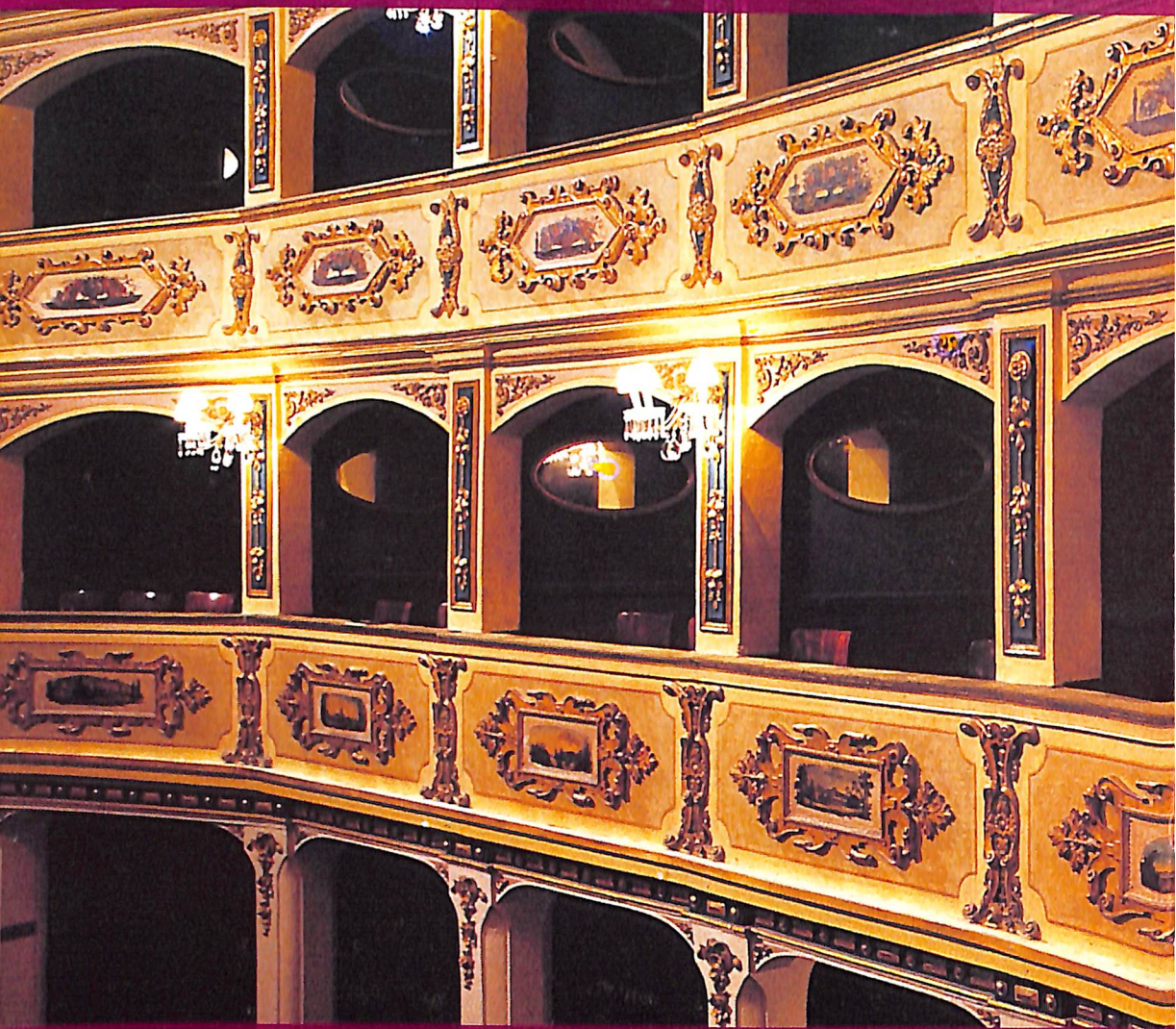


How are you?

The people you need are only a touch away.



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