

# Cultural Activities in Gozo, 2001

Culture in Gozo is a delicate organism that needs to be cultivated with tenderness. Gozo's separation from the mainland means that for most of the time it is detached from activities that take place over there, and only a brave minority are prepared to travel to participate in these activities. Hence the need to provide for our own intellectual and cultural entertainment.

The main sources of activities in Gozo are associated with four main organisers:

1. The Cultural Council of the Ministry for Gozo,
2. Activities organised by the Local Councils,
3. Activities organised by church organisations.
4. Activities by the major Band Clubs.

## Cultural Council Activities:

There has been a considerable amount of activity organised by the Ministry for Gozo Cultural Council. These include:

- Easter Concert held at St. Augustine Church in Victoria under the direction of Mro Carmel Grech;
- Citaddella 2001: A four-day Festival and consisting of a programme of exhibitions, concerts, historical reenactments, lectures and dances in and around the Gozo Citadel;
- Merhba 2001: This is meant primarily for migrants visiting their families in summer. This year it was held at Marsalforn Bay. It included ten Gozitan singers and several dancers and shows;
- Other summer activities at Marsalforn Bay.
- Art Exhibitions. There has been no less than ten art exhibitions of Gozitan as well as foreign artists at the Ministry of Gozo Hall of Exhibitions.
- Lectures: A series of lectures was organised in conjunction with the University Gozo Centre. These were given by Prof Joe Friggieri, Prof M. Cauchi, Dr M Tabone, Ms M'Rose Lapira and Professor L Briguglio on topics relating to various aspects of science, arts, the economy, the environment etc.

## Local Councils

The Local Councils, often in association with the Ministry for Gozo are also involved in cultural activities throughout the year. Among these one can mention the group of dancers from Haltis, Greece (August, 2001), as well as the concerts given by the Russian choral singers.

## Church-Associated Activities

One cannot but be impressed by some of the musical presentations from the various choral groups as well as individual singers with which Gozo is blessed at the moment. This is often the result of hard work and encouragement, often within the milieu of a church group.

Outstanding among these are the activities of the Victoria Arts Festival which this year held a series of concerts involving both local as well as overseas artists. These included:

- 30 June: Piano Recital by Natash Chircop and Marco Rivoltini,
- 1st July: Saxophone and organ recital with Joseph Camilleri and Joseph Vella,
- 2nd July: Recital by leading Italian Harpist Cecilia Andreis,
- 3rd & 4th July: Recital by The Classic Trio: (Geoffrey Haydock, clarinet, Alexander Volpov, cello, and Penelope Smith, piano). This trio has now become a regular and much looked-for item on the cultural agenda in Gozo,
- 6th July: Recital by 'Praenestina Voces' choir of Palestrina, Rome, under the direction of Renzo Cilia,
- 8th July: Piano recital by the Italian pianist, Giuseppe Scotese,
- 9th July: *Laudate Pueri* Choir under the direction of Mro Joseph Vella.

**Opera and Theatre in Gozo:** As in previous years, this year also saw the performance of two operas organised by the Band Clubs in Victoria. That a small island like Gozo can maintain the annual production of quality operas is almost beyond belief. We have also had a variety of plays produced during this year, including *Is-Senghata' l-Imhabba*, and *Romea and Juliet*.

We look forward to an equally entertaining and even more varied programme of activities in the coming year. It is essential that these activities do not become restricted to a minority audience. All efforts should be made to encourage the general public to be aware of the variety of activities presented, to attract a discerning public to ensure that standards of performance will continually improve.