

## Lifestyle &amp; Culture

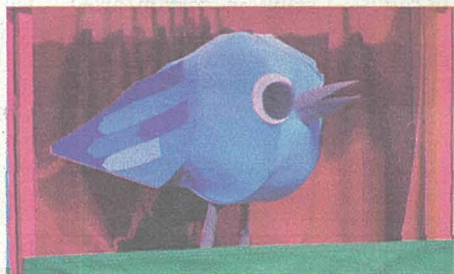
# Teatru Manoel announces jam-packed December programme

The national theatre's end-of-year season to be filled with performances for audiences of all ages

Teatru Manoel's artistic director Kenneth Zammit Tabona is delighted to announce an exciting theatrical line-up, with both in-person and online showings. Social-distancing measures are guaranteed, as is the theatre's commitment to health, safety and sanitisation protocols.

"The festive season is always an exciting time for Teatru Manoel and despite the challenges of 2020, I'm happy to say that although the traditional panto has been cancelled due to the Covid pandemic, the theatre has prepared a number of events to compensate for this loss," says Zammit Tabona. "We're adapting and innovating to bring people some astounding pieces of creativity."

A septet from the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra kicked off the December calendar with *An Evening with Beethoven*, captivating viewers with two chamber works to celebrate the composer's 250th birthday. Saturday, 5 December followed with a contemporary dance exploration of shared and personal space amid social isolation. Performed by Contact Dance Company and choreographed by Francesca Tranter with concept, visuals and music by Renzo Spiteri, *The Murmuring of Trees* gave an emotionally-charged evening.



Emme – Toi Toi Season 9.5 online performances

*Trio Immersio*, sponsored by the Austrian embassy, will today present two concerts, at 11.30am and 3pm. The first features music by Viennese composers Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms, while audiences of the second are enveloped in Ravel's early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Paris, 1980s Vienna and present day. The time in between the two concerts will allow the theatre to sanitise and the audience to enjoy a good lunch.

On 18, 19 and 20 December, the stage welcomes the much-loved *A Christmas Carol*. Teatru Manoel and Masquerade Malta have joined forces to produce Ian Moore's new adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic tale. Festive cheer continues on 22 December with *Christmas with ViBE*. Valletta Baroque Ensemble's popular concert returns with the magic of Baroque Christmases of yesteryear. ViBE is working with KorMalta and bass Albert Buttigieg to perform music by the most celebrated Baroque masters.

*Christmas at the Manoel – Project Cabaret* is an intimate evening of Christmas memories that tell of hope for the future. Directed by Zoe Alba Farrugia and Chantelle Micallef Grimaud, audiences will be thrilled by classic songs and relatable, funny tales. Then, between 29 and 31 December, *A Christmas Swing Special with Nico Darmanin* is a Teatru Manoel and FTZ Community Foundation celebration of one of Malta's finest tenors, directed by Kris Spiteri.

Teatru Manoel's Toi Education Programme is also in full swing in December, with live performances at 10am on Saturdays as part of the theatre's commitment to supporting young artists and theatregoers. The morning events are for small audiences and online viewers.

On 12 December, *Emme* is a learning-in-Maltese event that brings children aged



Nicola Said – Toi Toi Recital Series Maltese Song copy



ViBE Christmas Concert. Photo: Elisa Von Brockdorf

three to five the adventures of Emme, a baby merrill (blue rock thrush) that is bright and cheerful, but not always obedient.

On 19 December, *Tommy and Tammy's Christmas Tree!* (for ages 0-2) encourages parents to dress up their little ones in fabulous Christmas attire to celebrate Baby's First Christmas. And December also brings music for all ages when soprano Nicola Said presents an inspirational introduction to Maltese song through Baroque works, as well as those by Charles Camilleri, Joseph Vella and Alexander Vella Gregory.

"Our artists have created a December cal-

endar brimming with variety and open opportunities for Maltese artists and audiences," beams Zammit Tabona. "In 2020, Malta's artistic and cultural community has felt the impact of adversity, so I encourage people to embrace theatre once again in the Manoel's most challenging season. I thank you for always supporting us – now let's get the show on the road!"

For more information on Teatru Manoel's December calendar and to book tickets, visit [www.teatrumanoel.com.mt](http://www.teatrumanoel.com.mt), call on +356 2124 6389 or send an email on: [bookings.mt@teatrumanoel.mt](mailto:bookings.mt@teatrumanoel.mt)

## The Comedy Knights are back to fight the 2020 Blues...

The fastest-selling show of the festive season is coming to your living room!

The Comedy Knights are moving online and reinventing the way local comedy is created and performed for audiences.

It's no secret that the performing arts industry has suffered under Covid restrictions. Theatres closed nine months ago and no subsidised, independent theatre productions have taken place indoors since then.

With the Christmas season fast approaching, the Comedy Knights have decided to tackle the situation by developing a show that people can enjoy from home.

"We didn't want to disappoint our audience," said director and co-producer Wesley Ellul. "It's been a difficult year for everyone and we want to invite people to close it off by blowing off steam



and having a laugh with us."

"If our audience can't come to us, we'll go to them," added co-producer Marc Cabourdin.

The result is The Comedy Knights' House Party powered by XFM, an online event, live from a studio theatre, streamed directly into people's living rooms.

"Sketches, songs, satire, live in-

teraction, all the fun and silliness of the usual Comedy Knights' live show will be part of this online show," explains co-producer and writer Chris Dingli. "We're retaining that theatrical feeling of the show but being on camera also allows us to do things that we would never be able to do in the theatre. It's going to be fun!" he grins.



Anyone purchasing a ticket to one of the live streams will be able to watch the show on their Smart TV or on any device with a web browser, such as smartphone, laptop or tablet.

Moving the show online is especially beneficial for the public, as people only need to buy one ticket per household. Wesley explains: "Whereas in the theatre people need to pay for every seat, now your entire family can watch the show for the price of one single ticket."

In addition, the first 2,000 people to purchase a ticket will receive a Digital Voucher Pack with over €150 in savings (terms and conditions apply) from local businesses.

The Comedy Knights' House Party (the Comedy Knights' eighth annual show) will be streamed live on 26, 30 December and 2 January at 8.30pm. Tickets are available at [www.comedyknights.com](http://www.comedyknights.com) or at [www.ticketline.com.mt](http://www.ticketline.com.mt)

The show's main cast includes Jo Caruana, Pia Zammit, Chantelle Micallef Grimaud, Colin Fitz, Thomas Camilleri, Marc Cabourdin and Chris Dingli, who wrote the show together with Steve Hili and James Ryder. Special guests also feature throughout the show. Directed by Ellul and produced by Dingli, Ellul and Cabourdin.

The Comedy Knights' House Party powered by XFM is sponsored by The Atrium, Pepsi, Carlsberg, Jameson Irish Whiskey and Quizando