

# KOR MALTA

SEASON 2022 - 2023



**SEASON PROGRAMME** 2022 - 2023





**FOREWORD BY ALBERT MARSHALL**Executive Chair, Arts Council Malta

As Arts Council Malta's Chair, it is my pleasure to present to you KorMalta's programme for Season 2022/2023.

In search of a repertoire that blends a potpourri of pieces for the taste of diverse audiences, the national choir will be staging numerous performances appealing to the gusto of aficionados and the rest.

Ever since KorMalta's inception in 2018, this important Arts Council's initiative has been evolving from strength to strength and has continued to flourish. Under the visionary artistic direction of Maestro Riccardo Bianchi, the energetic leadership of Ms Mary Ann Cauchi, ACM's Funding and Strategy Director, assisted by KorMalta's administrative unit, and the professional dedication and commitment of our choristers, KorMalta aims to continue pushing its boundaries and attain artistic highs through participation on international stages, experimentation and the celebration of indigenous music.

The '22/'23 programme highlights many important aspects which Arts Council Malta is working on through its Strategy2025, including internationalisation, and education and development - two strategic pillars the Council has decided to prioritise, as we continue to aim at, and foster growth and excellence.

Collaboration, both locally and internationally, also plays a key part in KorMalta's programme, leading to an increase in resources and knowledge.

Throughout the season, KorMalta will also be holding masterclasses because we believe that the entity should be constantly alert to identify new talent and educate choristers who aspire to further their career. KorMalta seeks to pump new blood into the national choir as part of its strategic plan on its path of growth, recognition and professionalism.





FOREWORD BY RICCARDO BIANCHI
Artistic Director, KorMalta

Welcome to the new season of Kormalta – Malta National Choir. I am really honoured to be able to present you with our new Musical Season, a truly multifaceted season full of events.

This year I would like to immediately talk about two simple facts: KorMalta is composed of 60 choristers and this Season the choir will be performing 26 times throughout the year. These are remarkable numbers, as they demonstrate the choir's vigour and its ability to attract new talent while capitalising on the favour of partners and stakeholders who provide the choir with opportunities for concerts and performances. A great novelty this year will be a unique project that combines internationalization, community and education.

The choir, in collaboration with Aerco (Emiliano Romagnola Choirs Association), the Italian Cultural Institute, the Cathedral Choir, and the Archdiocese of Malta will organise 5 Masterclasses aimed at choir directors and singers, and open to the choral community of the nation with the participation of internationally renowned professors who will study in detail on five major areas of the choral repertoire (Gregorian chant, Renaissance, Baroque, Opera and contemporary music). From the point of view of internationalization, there are several innovations: After the success of the choir's first tour in Italy, this season the choir will tour London on the occasion of the Biennale Design Week.

Also in terms of important internationalization goals, this year the choir will collaborate with the CRR Symphony Orchestra from Istanbul.

## **KORMALTA MEMBERS**

## **Voice Leaders**

Albert Buttigieg Bianca Simone Marouska Attard

## **KorMalta Members**

Adrian Sammut Alan Mulligan Aldo Zammit

Alexandra Camilleri Gambin

Alison Gatt Amy Talbot

Anastasia Megally Cassar

Anastasiya Gorodnicha

Andrea Štegani Andrea Vukanovic Andrzej Gierasimiuk

Anna Scerri

Anne Marie Bonello Anne Marie Scerri Carol Ciantar Caroline Bartoli Christian Tanti Daniela Briffa

Denise Abdilla Castillo

Dillon Camilleri Egle Pranaityte Ethan Attard

Francesca Mercuriali Gabrielle Debono Helena Micallef

Joanna Mifsud Micallef

Joanna Vella John Rusher

Jonathan Mohnani Karen Vella Mulvanev

Karl Cassar Kurt Falzon Linda Crick

Loranne Debono Madeline Grupetta Maria Grazia Grech

Mariaconcetta Califiore Mariah Costa

Mariette Borg

Marilyn Buckle Buhagiar Mark Anthony Bartolo

Mark Bartolo Mark Vassallo Marouska Attard Masahiro Tanigucchi Miriam Bartolo Nicole Vassallo

Rachelle Elizabeth Grech

Ray Debono Sarah De Bono Sofia Serafimoska

Stephania Farrugia Frantz

Sunny Pace Suzanne Bezzina Valentina Bezzina Vanessa Vassallo

### **Administration**

Artistic Director – Riccardo Bianchi ArtsCouncil/KorMalta Representative - Mary Ann Cauchi

Administrator – Chantelle Baldacchino Admin support – Marlon Apap

# 2022 - 2023 DATES

| 18 Oct             | Opening Season Launch                          |
|--------------------|--|
| 21, 22, 23 Oct     | <i>Masterclass Series:</i> Gregorian Chant     |
| 26 Oct             | Malta National Symposium                       |
| 8, 9 Nov           | Belshazzar Handel - Baroque Opera Festival     |
| 27 Nov             | Gaulitana Festival 2022                        |
| 18 Dec             | In Terra Pax - Christmas Concert               |
| 21 Dec             | Christmas Concert - Spazju Kreattiv            |
| 11 Jan             | The Dettingen Te Deum and other Handelian hits |
| 20 Jan             | Membra Jesu Nostri Buxtehude                   |
| 27, 28 Jan         | BaRock Concert!                                |
| 3, 4, 5 Feb        | Masterclass Series: Opera                      |
| 5, 8, 10, 12 Mar   | Tosca - Giacomo Puccini                        |
| 18 Mar             | Passion - Maltese Manuscripts                  |
| 29 Mar             | Easter Concert - Spazju Kreattiv               |
| 4 Apr              | Stabat Mater - Christopher Muscat              |
| 14, 15, 16 Apr     | Masterclass Series: Renaissance                |
| 12, 13, 14 May     | Masterclass Series: Contemporary               |
| 31 May             | Spring Concert - Spazju Kreattiv               |
| 2, 3, 4 Jun        | <i>Masterclass Series:</i> Baroque             |
| 17 Jun             | Edith Cavell - Paolino Vassallo                |
| 22, 23, 24, 25 Jun | London Design Biennale                         |

23, 24 Sep Stabat Mater - Gioachino Rossini

## **KORMALTA SEASON PROGRAMME**

2022 - 2023

**2022 - 2023** PROGRAMME

### **SEASON LAUNCH**

18 October 2022 **Phoenicia Ballroom, Valletta** 

Conductor: Riccardo Bianchi

Launch of the season - short concert. KorMalta launches its exciting new season by showcasing the iconic highlights from its' successfull past season. This includes part of the ancient repertoire that the choir proudly brought on tour in Italy, and a selection of the finest moments from Gjeilo's "Sunrise Mass": an unforgettable production that the choir performed at the break of dawn of the summer solstice at Mnajdra Temples.

### **GREGORIAN CHANT**

Masterclass Series

21/22/23 October 2022 Archbishop's Curia, Floriana

KorMalta in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Malta, the Italian Cultural Institute and with AERCO (Regional Federation of Choirs of Emilia Romagna) present an innovative concept for choral development and training. Local Choristers and conductors invited to participate in a series of 5 important Masterclasses uniquely tailored to the needs of choral music performers. The Masterclasses will be delving into several prominent genres which feature prominently in every choir's repertoire. This first workshop will be focused on Gregorian chant.

In collaboration with A.E.R.CO. -Associazione Emiliano-Romagnola Cori & Archdiocese of Malta

Genre: Educational

### MALTA NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

26 October 2022

National Museum Of Archaeology, Valletta

Conductor: Riccardo Bianchi

Arts Council Malta will be presenting Malta's first 'State of the Arts – Malta National Symposium'. This will offer a much desired platform for discussion and debate with regard to trends, challenges and opportunities which shape the artistic sector in Malta in line with the international contexts that shape the local dynamic. The overarching themes that will be at the core of these exchanges will revolve around the pertinent topics of cultural rights, the place of the arts within sustainable development and the Status of the Artist

Genre: Renaissance

#### **BELSHAZZAR HANDEL**

8/9 November 2022 - 6.00 pm St. John Co-Cathedral, Valletta

Conductor: Steven Devine Orchestra: ViBE - Valletta Baroque Ensmeble

Handel's 1744 oratorio Belshazzar is a work of considerable grandeur weaving together material from the biblical Book of Daniel and the Greek historian Herodotus.

Belshazzar is one of many masterpieces composed bv George Frideric Handel during his prime years which is nonetheless considered to be the most dramatic of his oratorios. It is de facto a sacred opera. As a result of the ban on biblical plots on theatrical stages in England at that time, it had to be composed in the form of an oratorio, Handel's "invention" to circumvent the restrictions imposed through a non-staged performance which could be performed in churches as well. For this work Handel chose one of the most enthralling subjects in world and religious history: the fall of Babylon and the liberation of the Jewish people.

In collaboration with ViBE - Valletta Baroque Ensemble & Festivals Malta

Genre: Baroque

## **GAULITANA FESTIVAL 2022**

27 November 2022

Conductor: Riccardo Bianchi

"A Cappella Live". KorMalta proudly participates for the first time in the Gaulitana Festival in Gozo. As part of the theme "A cappella Live" KorMalta will present a Cappella repertoire focused on early music and casting a ray of new light on important manuscripts from those times which have been rediscovered and appreciated. This concert will include excerpts performed during KorMalta's concert in Smarano, Castell'Arquato, Bologna during its last tour in Italy.

Genre: A cappella

## IN TERRA PAX - CHRISTMAS CONCERT

18 December 2022

Church of the Jesuits, Valletta

Conductor: Riccardo Bianchi Orchestra: ViBE - Valletta Baroque Ensmeble

KorMalta renews its collaboration with VIBE ushering in the yuletide spirit with a Christmas Concert. While Christmas carols capture most of the attention during the season, other musical masterpieces can sometimes be overlooked. KorMalta and VIBE will be presenting a sublime interpretation of immersive musical masterpieces music by Purcell and Finzi which are not often performed in mainstream concerts.

In collaboration with ViBE - Valletta Baroque Ensemble & Festivals Malta Genre: Christmas

## CHRISTMAS CONCERT - SPAZJU KREATTIV

21 December 2022 Spazju Kreattiv, Valletta

Conductor: Riccardo Bianchi

After the thrilling performances in 2021, KorMalta will once again present a heart-warming evening of carol favourites thematic of the Christmas season in collaboration with Spazju Kreattiv. A varied programme of traditional and contemporary works will be setting the mood for a cheerful evening, sung and performed in the way they were originally conceived. The concert will once again feature its' much-loved hallmark – the

audience participation in the carol singing together with the choir—together as a musical party.

Genre: Christmas

## THE DETTINGEN TE DEUM AND OTHER HANDELIAN HITS

11 January 2023 St John Co-Cathedral, Valletta

Conductor: Christian Curnyn Orchestra: ViBE - Valletta Baroque Ensmeble

KorMalta returns to the prestigious International Baroque Festival for a grand opening night of the Festival at the glorious St. John Co-Cathedral. The majestic presence of George Frideric Handel's high baroque wonders deservedly take centre stage once again. Handel's Dettingen Te Deum was written in commemoration of the last battle led by an English king; specifically, George II in 1743. This concert will also feature two audience favourites by Handel, Zadok the Priest and Eternal Source of Light Devine'.

In collaboration with ViBE - Valletta Baroque Ensemble & Festivals Malta



# MEMBRA JESU NOSTRI BAROC

20 January 2023 – 4.00 pm Santa Teresa Church, Cospicua

BUXTEHUDE

Conductor: Riccardo Bianchi Orchestra: ViBE - Valletta Baroque Ensmeble

KorMalta together with VIBE shed light once again on the works of Danish/German composer Dietrich Buxtehude as part of the Baroque Festival. Buxtehude's work offers a rare dramatic power which enchanted both G.F. Handel and J.S. Bach. Buxtehude's cantata cycle, Membra Jesu Nostri, is a unique work based on texts from a mediaeval Latin hymn, 'Salve mundi salutare'. The cycle contains seven cantatas each dedicated to a different part of Christ's crucified body.

In collaboration with ViBE - Valletta Baroque Ensemble & Festivals Malta

Genre: Early Baroque

## **BAROCK CONCERT!**

27/28 January 2023 **Teatru Manoel, Valletta** 

ProMuzika Ensemble and The Rock Troupers

Is it really possible to use baroque music in a modern way? A concert that goes beyond the usual boundaries of the history of music to keep together ancient and modern in a concept that is certainly stimulating and fun!

In collaboration with Sarah Spiteri, The Rock Troupers and Festivals Malta

Genre: Crossover Baroque-Contemporary

### **OPERA**

Masterclass series

3/4/5 February 2023 Archbishop's Curia, Floriana

The second workshop from the Masterclass Series organized by KorMalta with its partners and collaborators for local conductors and choristers. This time we will explore the world of opera choirs, in preparation for the opera productions that KorMalta will be performing a few weeks later! The Masterclass will be aimed at choristers and conductors of all ages and experiences.

In collaboration with A.E.R.CO. -Associazione Emiliano-Romagnola Cori & Archdiocese of Malta

Genre: Educational

### **TOSCA - GIACOMO PUCCINI**

5/8/10/12 March 2023 **Teatru Manoel, Valletta** 

Conductor: Mario de Rosa Orchestra: Malta Philharmonic

Orchestra

KorMalta will be the Opera Choir for the new production of Giacomo Puccini's Tosca produced by the Manoel Theatre and Valletta Cultural Agency Directed by and featuring José Cura. As conducted by Mario De Rose with costumes designed by Silvia Collazuol. KorMalta will once again be exploring the operatic scene and bringing to life the melodramatic opera set in 1800 Rome. KorMalta remains driven to provide a diversified approach to the local choral scene and to the development of its choristers as they collaborate with a stellar cast.

In collaboration with Teatru Manoel, Valletta Cultural Agency & Bank of Valletta

Genre: Opera

## PASSION - MALTESE MANUSCRIPTS

18 March 2023 **St Gregory's Church, Zejtun** 

Conductor: Riccardo Bianchi Orchestra: ViBE - Valletta Baroque

Ensmeble

The name Tenebrae is the Latin word for "darkness" or "shadows," and has for centuries characterised the ancient monastic services taking place at night or the early hours of the day during the peak of the Easter triduum during the Holy Week, which in medieval times came to be celebrated on the preceding evenings.

This service is marked by a reading from the book of Lamentations and the gradual extinguishing of candles and other lights until a single candle, considered a symbol of the Lord, remains. Towards the end of the service, this candle is hidden, typifying the apparent victory of the forces of evil. At the very end, a loud noise is made, symbolizing the earth-quake at the time of the resurrection (Matthew 28:2), the hidden candle is restored to its place and by its light all depart in silence.

The choir will perform, in modern premiere, a collection of Lamentations by various authors together with choirs taken from the Passion according to Luke by Vincenzo Amato whose manuscript is kept in the archives of the Metropolitan Cathedral in Mdina.

In collaboration with ViBE - Valletta Baroque Ensemble & Festivals Malta

Genre: Early Renaissance

## EASTER CONCERT - SPAZJU KREATTIV

29 March 2023 **Spazju Kreattiv, Valletta** 

Conductor: Riccardo Bianchi

KorMalta continues its' fruitful collaboration with Spazju Kreattiv through a chamber performance with inspiration from lieder for voices and piano. The concert promises an intimate and poetic space for reflection as coordinated by Bianca Simone, Alto section voice leader of KorMalta.

Genre: Chamber

### STABAT MATER

4 April 2023

Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta

Conductor: Christopher Muscat

Stabat Mater by Christopher Muscat is a very interesting contemporary rendition of the very famous prayer of the 13th century. The seven movements alternate traditional and non-traditional styles. In the fourth movement, Eia Mater, a cantor, symbolising each and every one of us. initiates an intimate praver to (almost a conversation with) the Holy Mother. Here the composer pays his respects towards the great composers of the Renaissance era In stile di cantico Gregoriano. The composer takes us on a voyage from a gloomy atmosphere of the opening movements into a bright ending fully loaded with hope. The composer conducts his own work. He beautifully reproduces all the timbres of choir and orchestra, but very sparingly used together.

In collaboration with Jubilate Deo Choir, Malta Philharmonic Orchestra & Mediterranean Conference Centre

Genre: Contemporary

## **RENAISSANCE**

Masterclass Series

14/15/16 April 2023 Archbishop's Curia, Floriana

The third workshop from the Masterclass Series organized by KorMalta with its partners and collaborators for local conductors and choristers. This masterclass leads us deep into the Renaissance repertoire, One of the historical-musical periods that represented the apogee of choral music. The masterclass will focus in particular on the figure of the composer and teacher Adriano Banchieri.

In collaboration with A.E.R.CO. -Associazione Emiliano-Romagnola Cori & Archdiocese of Malta

Genre: Educational

## **CONTEMPORARY**

Masterclass Series

12/13/14 May 2023 Archbishop's Curia, Floriana

The fourth workshop from the Masterclass Series organized by KorMalta with its partners and collaborators for local conductors and choristers. This time round, will be in collaboration with a guest choral group, an unmissable opportunity for comparison and artistic growth on the most stimulating and eclectic repertoire of the choral world: contemporary music!

In collaboration with A.E.R.CO. -Associazione Emiliano-Romagnola Cori & Archdiocese of Malta

Genre: Educational

## SPRING CONCERT - SPAZJU KREATTIV

31 May 2023 Spaziu Kreattiv. Valletta

Conductor: Riccardo Bianchi

"KorMalta's collaboration with Spazju Kreattiv culminates in an enjoyable evening on the famous ""Festino nella sera del Giovedi Grasso".

It is in fact, as announced by the title, a lively carnival party. The singers, with jokes and jokes, involve the public in a lively succession of scenes. Ridiculous characters are intertwined with young lovers or even unlikely sellers of spindles that wander in the middle of the night. Uniquely seasoned with unbridled dances and onomatopoeias of all

kinds. The performance features the transformation of human voices into musical instruments or animal verses, as in the famous and irresistible bestial counterpoint "alla mente".

Genre: Late Renaissance

## **BAROQUE**

Masterclass Series.

2/3/4 June 2023 Archbishop's Curia, Floriana

fifth workshop from Masterclass Series organized KorMalta with its partners and collaborators for local conductors and choristers. After having participated during the Musical Season which strongly features Baroque repertoire and elements. The Masterclass is intended to serve as a constructive development component for the choir to confront external experts of Baroque repertoire and work together to reach new heights utilising the work done during the season as a benchmark. This will enable KorMalta to sustain a strong foundation of professional development while opening up to new horizons and new perspectives.

In collaboration with A.E.R.CO. -Associazione Emiliano-Romagnola Cori & Archdiocese of Malta

Genre: Educational

## **EDITH CAVELL**

17 June 2023 Teatru Rjal, Valletta

Conductor: Dario Salvi Orchestra: Malta Philharmonic

Orchestra

Nearly one hundred years since Paolino Vassallo composed the opera; Edith Cavell, a concert version of this production by Pjazza Teatru Rjal will bring back to life this masterpiece in the same, albeit transformed, venue in which it received its première performance on 21 March, 1927 when it was immediately a sensation.

In collaboration with Pjazza Teatru Rjal & Malta Philharmonic Orchestra.

Genre: Opera

#### **LONDON DESIGN BIENNALE**

22-25 June 2023 Somerset House, London, United Kingdom

Conductor: Riccardo Bianchi Orchestra: VIBE Valletta International Baroque Ensemble

London Design Biennale is a global stage for world-leading contemporary design and design-led innovation, creativity and research. KorMalta will participate with pride, presenting a selection of some of the best productions prepared by the choir during the current musical season.

In collaboration with Arts Council Malta

## **ROSSINI STABAT MATER**

23/24 September 2023 Teatru Manoel, Valletta

Conductor: Riccardo Bianchi Orchestra: CRR Istanbul Symphony

Orchestra

The Stabat Materisto Rossini what the Requiem would be to Verdi. A unique full-scale religious setting which still seems to have its essence within the lyrical theatre. For Rossini it was also a case of a composer coming out of retirement to create one of his finest works and then retreating back to compose little salon pieces to please his Parisian friends. The Stabat Mater is written for full orchestra with four soloists and chorus which is divided into ten sections Operatic and highly melodic in style, it ranges from an impressively grand opening through the popular tenor aria Cujus animam to the two remarkable unaccompanied chorus passages that impressed Wagner so much. The serious nature of the piece is confirmed by the use of a big double fugue as conclusion. Certainly more forward looking towards Verdi rather than Bach, this is one of Rossini's finest and most appealing works. The jokes of the Barber may not be there. nor the patriotic words of William Tell, but the popular expression of Mediterranean belief in life and faith shows that Rossini still was able, after his self-styled retirement, to create another new masterpiece.

Genre: Romantic

## **ABOUT KORMALTA**

KorMalta – Malta's National Choir is an initiative of the Arts Council Malta within the Ministry for National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government. Founded in 2018, KorMalta has undertaken intense work to make the national choir a qualified choral group, meeting even the most demanding and the widest type of choral repertoire: from a cappella polyphony to baroque, up to operatic symphonic productions.

The Choir presented a number of masterly performances, namely Beethoven's Ninth Symphony under the guidance of Brian Schembri and in collaboration with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, "The Planets" by G. Holst conducted by Michalis Economou, Mozart's Great Mass of C minor (edition completed by E. Levine) conducted by Peter Manning, The Armed Man by K. Jenkins conducted by Michael Laus, Requiem of Faure directed by Riccardo Bianchi, Chichester Psalms by Bernstein directed by Wayne Marshall. In the symphonic field, February 2019 saw the participation of the live choir together with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra for the soundtrack of the Disney Film "Beauty and the Beast".

In the operatic field, 2020 KorMalta performed "Otello" by G. Rossini and in 2022 it proudly participated in the staging of "Le Maschere" by Pietro Mascagni, together with the reknown Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini, under the baton of Maestro Jacopo Brusa within the prestigious Illica Festival.

In addition to collaborations with the national orchestra, the choir collaborated closely with the Valletta International Baroque Ensemble, performing over the years critical acclaimed productions of Baroque music within the prestigious Valletta International Baroque Festival including: "Requiem" by F. Biber conducted by Stefano Molardi, "Messiah" by Handel in full version directed by Christian Curnin, "Membra Jesu Nostri" by Buxtehude conducted by Riccardo Bianchi.

During the last two musical seasons the choir consisting of 56 members and directed by its artistic director worked on numerous a cappella music projects both on the ancient and contemporary side. Recent engagements included William Byrd, Italian Renaissance motets and medieval polyphony in the concert dedicated to Dante, a cappella performances of Xenakis "A Helena"

together with music by Pizzetti and Castelnuovo Tedesco as part of the Malta International Spring Festival.

The most stylistic trait of KorMalta is the musical eclecticism and the propensity to collaborate with other art forms, creating innovative performances with the collaboration of visual arts artists, actors and dancers, as in the case of the iconic performance of Sunrise Mass by Ola Gjeilo performed at dawn in the Megalithic Temples of Mnajdra in collaboration with the national dance company, ZfinMalta in collaboration with Heritage Malta.

KorMalta also provides continuous professional training for its choristers with masterclasses and workshops with local and international tutors. The artistic and musical direction of the choir is entrusted to Riccardo Bianchi assisted by voice leaders Marouska Attard and Albert Buttigieg and voice coach Bianca Simone.







kormalta.mt