



## **Din l-Art Helwa**

**Patron: HE The President of Malta**

17th April, 2017

Dear Member/Friend,

### **The 21st Edition of the Bir Miftuh International Music Festival**

Spring heralds the arrival of the Bir Miftuh International Music Festival which is organised annually by Din l-Art Helwa and held at the medieval church of Santa Maria ta' Bir Miftuh, limits of Gudja. The aura of the church with its medieval architecture of fluted arches and frescoes and its perfect acoustics provides an exceptional setting for the concerts.

The festival always prides itself in having an international flavour, with the participation of high-calibre international and local performers, who with their eclectic choice of repertoires render the festival very fascinating. This year's festival comprises three concerts.

Din l-Art Helwa is extremely appreciative of the generous support given to us by our loyal sponsors and it is thanks to their support that the festival has been flourishing for the past twenty years and has become one of the highlights in the music calendar of the Maltese Islands.

Din l-Art Helwa conveys its heartfelt thanks to the Embassy of France and its Ambassador H.E. Mme. Béatrice Le Fraper du Hellen, its Cultural Counsellor M. Laurent Croset, the Alliance Française de Malte – Méditerranée and its Director Chev. David Busuttil, to the German-Maltese Circle and its Executive President Ing. Arthur Ciantar and the Goethe Institute and to the London Oriana Choir for their benevolence in offering to perform for Din l-Art Helwa during the festival.

Information and details about the concerts are attached herewith. Tickets for each concert are against a donation of €20 per person and include refreshments after the performance in the medieval chapel grounds. Block tickets for all three concerts and refreshments are against a donation of €50 per person, tickets for two concerts and refreshments are against a donation of €35 per person.

Those wishing to attend are requested to fill in the attached form and send it together with their remittance to Din l-Art Helwa, Bir Miftuh International Music Festival, 133, Melita Street, Valletta VLT 1123. For further information kindly contact Din l-Art Helwa Office, Tel. Nos. 21225952/21220358 from Monday to Friday between 8:30a.m. and 13:30p.m. or email us on [info@dinlarthelwa.org](mailto:info@dinlarthelwa.org)  
Please book early to avoid disappointment, since the concerts are in high demand and the number of seats is limited.

The festival promises to be a memorable experience. Your attendance and that of your friends plays an important role in its success. Your valuable support in aid of Din l-Art Helwa's noble cause is always greatly appreciated. It also gives us the impetus and the courage to continue with our never-ending struggle to try to safeguard our Islands' cultural and natural heritage.

Yours sincerely,

Cettina Caruana Curran  
Events Co-ordinator Din l-Art Helwa

## **Programme – Bir Miftuh International Music Festival 2017**

### **1st Concert – Friday 19th May at 8:00 p.m.**

#### **A Vocal and Harp Recital by Claire Ghigo – Mezzo-Soprano and Britt Arend – Harp**

This concert entitled ‘**Beau Soir**’ is sponsored by the Embassy of France and the Alliance Française de Malte – Méditerranée. It includes some of the most exquisite melodies ever written in the French language.

**Claire Ghigo – Mezzo-Soprano** graduated from the Guildhall School of Music London and from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Claire’s operatic roles include Annio in Mozart’s *La Clemenza di Tito*, Hansel in Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*, the Third/Second Lady in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, Carmen in Bizet’s *Carmen* and Angelina in Rossini’s *Cenerentola*. Claire is also a versatile recital artist and has performed with world-renowned artists like Joseph Calleja. She has sung with well-known ensembles like the Guildhall Consort and the Rossini Ensemble. In 2016 she toured China with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra. She forms part of the MPO Voice and Harp Trio which was highly acclaimed for its recent performance in Berlin to mark Malta’s E.U. Council Presidency.

**Britt Arend – Harp** was born in Belgium and studied Harp and Musicology at famous music conservatoires in Brussels, Berlin, Milan and Rome. She has performed with highly professional orchestras such as the Orchestre Philharmonique de Liège, Dresdner Sinfoniker, Radio-Sinfonie-Orchester Frankfurt, Teatro dell’Opera di Roma, Teatro Lirico di Cagliari, Accademia di San Giorgio di Venezia and RTÉ Concert Orchestra Ireland. She has participated at various reputable festivals. Britt is also an avid chamber music player. She has been Principal Harp with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra since 2008.

The duo will delight the audience with beautiful works by Reynaldo Hahn, Camille Saint-Saens, Gabriel Fauré, Eva Dell’Acqua, Claude Debussy, Ernest Chausson, Pauline Viardot, Maria Malibran, Jules Massenet and Charles Gounod.

### **2nd Concert – Sunday 28th May at 7:30 p.m.**

#### **A Choral Recital by the London Oriana Choir**

Din l-Art Helwa is indeed privileged to have the London Oriana Choir, made up of over 40 choristers, participating at the Bir Miftuh International Music Festival.

**The London Oriana Choir** is one of Britain’s leading amateur choral groups and one of the most exciting and versatile in London. Since its inception in 1973, the choir has grown from strength to strength performing at London’s top venues such as the Royal Albert Hall and St Martin-in-the-Fields. It is regularly invited to sing with major international promoters, at prestigious festivals and notable events such as a Raisa Gorbachev Summer Gala at Hampton Court, attended by Mikhail Gorbachev.

The choir’s repertoire is broad, ranging from great choral and orchestral works by Verdi, Brahms, Mozart, Handel and Bach to contemporary commissions. A cappella music is sung in many languages and in all styles. The choir has performed with leading orchestras like the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra and the Brandenburg Sinfonia. Each year, the choir embarks on at least one overseas tour. Its Musical Director, David Peckham is hailed as one of the U.K.’s most dynamic and exciting conductors of his generation.

The programme of the London Oriana Choir includes enchanting works by Thomas Louis de Victoria, Claudio Monteverdi, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Eric Whitacre, Bob Chilcott, James MacMillan, Elizabeth Alexander, William Hawley, Mia Makaroff and Moses Hogan.

**3rd Concert – Friday 9th June at 8:00 p.m.**

**A Vocal, Flute and Piano Performance by the Trio Sweet Birds**

comprised of **Katharina Ruckgaber - Soprano, Tatjana Ruhland – Flute and Christian Schmitt – Piano.**

This concert is sponsored by the German-Maltese Circle and the Goethe-Institut.

The **Trio Sweet Birds** was founded in 2013. It has made a name for itself as a specialist for special programme compilations and has among other engagements musically inaugurated the 200th session of the Executive Council of UNESCO in 2016.

**Katharina Ruckgaber - Soprano** is a member of the International Opera Studio at the Frankfurt Opera. She has interpreted several operatic roles including Eurydike in the premiere production of Telemann’s *Orpheus*, Susanna in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Frasquita in Bizet’s *Carmen*, Servilia in Mozart’s *La Clemenza di Tito* and the female leading role in the World Premiere of W. Hiller’s *Der Flaschengeist*. She has performed at important theatres among which the Konzerthaus Berlin, the Konzerthaus Wien and with leading orchestras such as the Bamberg Symphony and the Munich Radio Orchestra.

**Tatjana Ruhland – Flute** is principal flutist with the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra. She has been dubbed by the press as the ‘Paganini on the Flute’ and since her debut at Carnegie Hall, New York she is in very high demand. She has given recitals at renowned festivals like the Bayreuth Festival, the Haydn Biennale Belgium, the International Flute Festival Taiwan and the German Forum New York. As a soloist she has appeared with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, the Prague Symphony Orchestra, the Bach Collegium Stuttgart and other distinguished orchestras. Concert venues include the Musikverein Vienna, the Suntory Hall Tokyo and the Royal Albert Hall London. Her chamber music concert tour to Brazil and Argentina was highly lauded.

**Christian Schmitt – Piano** is principal organist with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra and is one of the most sought after organists of his generation. He has given concerts across Europe and around the globe including the Tonhalle Zurich, Vienna Konzerthaus, Philharmonie Cologne and Mariinsky Theatre Concert Hall St Petersburg. As a soloist he has appeared with prominent orchestras such as the Berliner Philharmoniker, the Kamerata Salzburg and leading radio orchestras under illustrious conductors. Schmitt has over 30 CDs to his credit.

The Trio Sweet Birds will regale the audience with stimulating compositions by Georg Friedrich Handel, Carl Philip Emanuel Bach, Giulio Caccini, Johann Sebastian Bach, Ernst von Dohnanyi, Franz Schubert, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Sir Henry Bishop.

**Booking Form – Bir Miftuh International Music Festival 2017**

Name.....

Address .....Tel no. ....

**Tickets for concerts and refreshments are against a donation of €20 per concert per person**

**Block tickets for three concerts and refreshments are against a donation of €50 per person**

**Block tickets for two concerts and refreshments are against a donation of €35 per person**

**1st Concert Friday 19th May at 8:00 p.m. - A Vocal and Harp Recital**

**No. of tickets.....**

**2nd Concert Sunday 28th May at 7:30 p.m. - A Choral Recital**

**No. of tickets.....**

**3rd Concert Friday 9th June at 8:00 p.m. - A Vocal, Flute and Piano Performance**

**No of tickets .....**

**Total No. of tickets.....**

**Total remittance enclosed .....**

**BLOCK TICKETS BOOKING FORM**

**I confirm booking for three concerts .....**

**I confirm booking for two concerts .....**

**I confirm booking for one concert .....**