

Focus

Newsletter of the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce



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Editorial

Several events have taken place over the last few months as can be seen through perusal of this edition of Focus. However, the Society had to cancel the Painting Trip to Tuscany it was organizing due to a very poor response from members. Moreover, the artists' meeting held on the 30th January was also very poorly attended. The actions planned through this meeting had to be postponed. Notwithstanding, the Society's Artists' Sub-Committee is not discouraged by this and is planning a series of activities for artists later on in the year. The Young Musicians' Contest was also not held this year due to various difficulties. This will now be held next year.

The Society is intent of having well equipped classes and has recently bought a number of easels for use by members and art students. It has also purchased white boards for several classes and has also bought a digital projector for use by teachers and for presentations. A number of hall chairs have also been acquired. We wish to do more, much more, to raise the level of the classes and premises, including long overdue restoration, but over the last few months the Society has been faced with the possibility of moving to other premises and until this issue is resolved these projects and others in the pipeline had to be put on hold.

The Society is intent on playing its part in the educational and cultural field. A new course, on model ship building, in conjunction with Heritage Malta, and which will be held at the Maritime Museum, will start in July. Another new course on Maltese Cribs, in collaboration with the Ghaqda Hbieb tal-Presepuju will be held later on in the year. Also, starting this month, a number of courses will be held on Saturdays.

The Silver Palette competition was a great success and indications are that the Trade Fair Exhibition will be just as successful. Membership of the Society is on the increase with over five hundred paying members, the majority of which are artists. Students attending classes are also increasing, which also augurs well for the Society.



Mr Joseph F.X. Zahra receiving the 2005 Gold Medal from H.E. Dr Edward Fenech Adami, President of the Republic in the presence of Mr Paul Ascjak, President of the Society.

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GEORGE MUSCAT WINNER OF THE 2006 SILVER PALETTE COMPETITION

The winner of this year's Silver Palette Competition is sculptor or as he is also known, ceramic artist, George Muscat.

George, who is 44 years old, in his adolescence, received tuition under such artists as Gabriel Caruana, Luciano Micallef and Marco Cremona. He participated in various workshops with foreign and local artists. He also taught pottery and ceramics to adult students at Targa Gap. He was involved in Channel 22 on TV in a series of programmes, giving instruction and demonstrations on the use of clay.



ARTICLE ON PAGE 4

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Mr Paul Asciak, President of the Society, is seen presenting a number of copies of the Society's book celebrating its 150th Anniversary to the Director General of the Department of Education, Dr Cecilia Borg. The books are to be distributed to school libraries. Ms Mary Rose Mifsud, from the Education Department and Mr Joseph Spiteri Staines, Director of the Society were also present.

GOLD MEDAL AWARDED TO JOSEPH F. X. ZAHRA

The Society's Gold Medal for 2005 was awarded to Mr Joseph F.X.Zahra. This was in recognition of his achievements and interest in Commerce and the Arts, which undoubtedly benefited our country. Mr Zahra is very well known in commercial circles and has very ably served at the highest level in various public companies and entities. He was a director on the Board of the Central Bank of Malta. He also served on the board of the Malta Development Corporation. He headed Bank of Valletta for six years and was instrumental in developing a policy of social responsibility which was echoed in various other entities. He served as Chairman in Maltacom and is presently Chairman of the Euro Changeover Committee. He also served as Chairman on the Malta Arts Council. Mr Zahra heads his own very well known companies, MISCO and Impetus Europe Consulting Limited. The love of the arts is very evident in Mr Zahra and through his various posts he has always managed to transmit this love by introducing and applying policies and actions that promote art in Malta.

At a ceremony held at the Society's premises at Palazzo De La Salle, Valletta, following an opening address by the President of the Society, Mr Paul Asciak, the Minister for Tourism and Culture, Dr Francis Zammit Dimech gave an appreciation on the qualities and work of Mr Zahra. The distinguished audience present, which included President Emeritus Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, was then regaled with a piano recital by Ms Cynthia Turner. The President of Malta, Dr Edward Fenech Adami, then conferred the Gold Medal on Mr Zahra.

CERAMICS PROJECT UNDER EU PROGRAMME

As advised in the previous newsletter the Society is involved in a project under the EU Interreg IIIA Italia-Malta. The project has started and the Society is undertaking research on the ceramic industry in Malta and also as regards the tourist industry in Malta. A meeting of all the partners, including the Italian partners, was held at the Society's premises on the 29th March. A number of ceramists are now due to travel to Sciacca in July for a workshop to be held there. A small number of Society members are also involved. The local partners, besides the Society, are the Italo-Maltese Chamber of Commerce and the Parliamentary Secretariat for Small Business and Self-Employed, whilst the Italian partners are Comune di Sciacca, as Lead partner, Federazione Regionale dell'Artigianato di Sicilia, and CNA-Federazione Regionale della Sicilia.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on the 24th March 2006. The minutes of the previous general Meeting were read and approved. The President, Mr Paul Asciak gave a report on the Society's activities for 2005. The Society's accounts were then approved. Elections were then held to appoint three members to the Council of the Society. Four nominations were received. These were Rita Chircop, Carmel V Galea, Carmel Micallef and Stephen Sant'Angelo. The following were elected: Rita Chircop, 22 votes, Stephen Sant'Angelo 22 votes, and Carmel Micallef 15 votes.

The Council is now composed as follow:

PATRONS

His Excellency Dr Edward Fenech Adami, KUOM., B.A., LL.D.
President of Malta

His Grace Mgr Joseph Mercieca, BA, Ph.D., S.Th.D., J.U.D.
Archbishop of Malta

COUNCIL 2006 - 2007

President Mr Paul Asciak, LRSM (PD), LRSM (TD), LTCL, FLCM, FTCL, Hon.TCL, MQR

Vice President Mr Joseph J. Mifsud

Hon. Secretary Mr Stephen Sant'Angelo

Verification Officer Mr Mario Tabone Vassallo MD.
FRCSed. FRCSend., FFAEM.

Members Mro Lawrence Borg, FLCM, Hon LCM, Mr Charles M. Mercieca, Mrs Rita Chircop, Mrs Jessica DeBattista, BA(Hons), Mr Francis Galea, Dip. in Edu., Mr Carmel Micallef, Mr Saviour Zammit, Ing. P.Eur., P.Eng(UK), MSE(Mech), MIEng.Sc., AIED, FRSA(Lond)

Director Mr Joseph Spiteri Staines ACIB

GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE

Dr Paul V. Mifsud, BA(Hons), MA, Ph.D
Malta Council for Culture and the Arts

Folklore and Cultures Exhibition



Folklore & Cultures was an Exhibition of works by the students attending the Art Courses of Mr Matthew Cassar (of Rabat) at the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. The exhibition, held at Palazzo De La Salle between the 13th and 24th of March, depicted the cultural and folkloristic patrimony of nineteen different nations seen through the eye of twenty-one budding artists. Each individual student portrayed a different country, after having researched, analysed and developed the theme. The Exhibition was a sequence to another one held last year at Palazzo De La Salle.



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Society's Web Page

Member artists and musicians can publicize their services through our web page. Members also have the opportunity to set up a direct link with their own web page through our web site. For more information contact the Society at info@artsmalta.org or phoning 21244339.

Members are also reminded that their subscription fee of Lm2 has fallen due.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH THE LONDON COLLEGE OF MUSIC

Charlene Farrugia attended a two-week scholarship with Thames University and London College of Music. Charlene won the Young Musician's Contest last year which is organized by the Society and which was sponsored by the Malta Experience and the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts.

For Charlene this was an unforgettable experience. She was struck by the innovative way of teaching. She also enjoyed 4 hours of piano lessons by Andrew Zolinski. She attended lectures on 20th and 21st century performance, music tools for analysis, advanced musicianship, history and conducting. She was also given the opportunity to conduct an ensemble of seven students.



Charlene with Peter Rudnick at the Thames Valley University

SOCIETY'S PLASTER CASTS RESTORED

Ninette Sammut, who is a qualified restorer and who also is a teacher at the Society, recently completed the restoration of a number of plaster casts and stone carvings held by the Society.

These casts go back to the early 1900's and some were executed by prominent Maltese artists, such as Sciortino, Cefai and Cremona. In all 46 plaster casts and 6 stone carvings were restored. Ms Sammut started the work in September 2004 and finished it in January this year. Several of the restored plaster casts have been placed on specially made plinths and are now on display in various rooms of the Palazzo.

Restorer Ninette Sammut explaining to the Society's Council Members the restoration work



Annual Fund Raising Dinner For the fifth year running, the Society held the Annual Fund Raising Dinner in aid of the Special Projects Programme. The Dinner, held at Villa Arrigo on the 4th of May was attended by 126 people. The President Emeritus, Dr. Censu Tabone and Mrs Tabone, the Austrian Ambassador to Malta, H.E. Ms Elizabeth Kehrer, the Australian high Commissioner to Malta. H.E. Mr Richard Palk, Judge Maurice Caruana Curran and Mrs Caruana Curran, MP Dr Anglu Farrugia and Mrs Farrugia, and the Society's Council Members were amongst the guests. Mrs Paul Asicak, the President of the Society announced that this year the Council decided to use the funds to award 17 students that obtain the highest marks during the exams of the various courses in Arts, Crafts and Music organised by the Society at Palazzo De La Salle. He also thanked all those who helped to donate gifts for the raffle, Farsons, CDS Office Trade, V&F Portelli, Photocity, Joseph Filletti, Paradise Bay Resort Hotel, Petrolea, Osborne Caterers, Ms Salvina Grech, Ms Fiorentina Guliano and Ms Carmen Ellul. He also thanked the Bank of Valletta for sponsoring the mail expenses incurred for the event and Mr Stanley J. Parker for his donation.



Notes for Your Diary

- 5th to 16th July - Art Exhibition at the - 49th International Fair of Malta, Marchese Scicluna Hall, Naxxar
- 10th July to 9th September - Summer Courses (Art, Music, Crafts)
- 15th July to 9th September - Saturday Morning Courses (Art, Music, Crafts)
- **NEW!** 15th July to 9th September - Model Boat Building Course (at Maritime Museum)
- **NEW!** 22nd July to 26th August - Christmas Crib Building Course.

LCM Concert & Awards



The Society held a concert for students and their parents, who had obtained a certificate from the London College of Music following the 2005 examinations in Grades 5,6,7 and 8 in both theory and practical, at Palazzo De La Salle in Valletta. The concert was ably compered by Ms Rita Chircop.

Eight students played a variety of pieces for the audience present. These included works by Turina, Mazio, Clementi, Poulenc, Beethoven and Lantier and were played on the piano, the clarinet, guitar and saxophone. The President of the Society, Mr Paul Asciak then presented the certificates to the students to conclude an enjoyable evening.

The XIII edition of the Silver Palette Competition

George Muscat was the overall winner of the 2006 Silver Palette Competition with a ceramic sculptur. The theme for this year's Competition was 'Nostalgia'. Section winners were: Watercolours – **Doranne Alden**, Oils – **Joseph Pulo**, Acrylics – **Maria Rosella Dalmas**, Sculpture – **George Muscat**. No winner was announced for 'Other Media' as according to

the judges none of the entries in this section reached the required standard. The following artists were awarded an honorable mention: **Grace Cassar** (Oils), **Angela Theuma** (Acrylics) and **Joseph Barbara** (Sculpture and Ceramics).

A total of 66 artists entered the competition, submitting 107 works, which is an increase over the number of participants and works of art over the previous edition. It is to be noted that the previous edition was also won by a sculptor, Charles Bonnici.



*Watercolours
Section Winning
Work by Doranne
Alden*



*Oils Section
Winning Work
by Joseph Pulo*

Sculptor George Muscat

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He is now a part-time lecturer at MCAST, besides organizing training workshops at his own well equipped ceramic art studio.

George has held several personal exhibitions in Malta and also participated in exhibitions abroad, besides participating in many other collective art exhibitions, such as the Christian Art Biennale organized by the Mdina Cathedral Museum.

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*Acrylic Section
Winning work by
Maria Rosella
Dalmas*

