

FOCUS

Newsletter of the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce



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Alexsander Matic wins the 5th National Art Competition



113 artists submitted 177 works of art for the 5th National Art Competition. Works included sculptures in limestone, wood, earthenware, ceramics and paintings in oil, acrylic, watercolour, pastels, coloured pencils and mixed media

The winner was artist Aleksandar Matic with his work in mixed media 'Figural II' (*photo top right*). First Runner Up was sculptor George Muscat (*photo middle left*) with his ceramic work 'Magma', whilst Second Runner Up was Nicholette Vella with her painting 'Klandestini' (*photo middle right*). Consolation Prizes were awarded to Louhimies Lemmikki (*photo bottom right*) with her painting 'The Joy at the Sea' and to Graham Gurr with his painting 'Shepherd' (*photo bottom left*). Valerio Schembri with 'Untitled' and Adrian Abela with 'Remind Me to Forget You' were given Honorable Mentions.



The Minister for Culture and Tourism, Dr Francis Zammit Dimech (*photo top left*), presented the prizes following a speech by the Society's President Mr Paul Ascjak and a Report by the Curator of the Exhibition Ms Isabelle Borg.

The Exhibition was open between the 24th November and 3rd December at the Trade Fairs Centre, Naxxar and considering the fact that it coincided with a Fair on three days only, attendance was not low. Furthermore the comments entered in the Visitors 'Book were very encouraging and were highly appreciative of the standard of works individually and of the Exhibition as a whole. The Malta Trade Fairs Corporation sponsored the event.



Alexsandar Matic

The winner of the competition, Aleksandar Matic, is thirty years old and is a Bosnian citizen of Serb origin. He has been living in Malta for the last six years. He studied at the Belgrade Academy as a sculptor but prefers painting. He likes painting on large canvases as he feels that contemporary art requires such formats. He also uses muddy colours which help him express the sadness and melancholy he feels towards his country that is no more. He would like to be a well known artist in Europe but his main ambition, which he is on his way to fulfilling, is to continue working in the film industry as a set designer.



Editorial

The promised refurbishment that we had mentioned in the last issue of this newsletter is now underway and as reported elsewhere various classes have been renovated although they still have to be painted.

The Society is now turning its attention to the upstairs hall as well as the basement. Ideas are making the round as to how to make best use of our premises. The ultimate intention of the Society is to have a place where works by members of the Society can be displayed on a permanent or revolving basis, be it artistic works or crafts. The objective is to have high standard of works on display which would attract a stream of visitors to the Palazzo. The Palazzo, once renovated, could be an attraction in its own right and the Knights' Hall on the first floor, which apparently is the best kept secret in Valletta, could draw tourists who would also have the opportunity to view local artistic talent. The Society is working on these lines and is seeking the help that would be required to achieve its aims.

The main activities of the Society over the past few months have been very encouraging with a record number of artists taking part in the 5th National Art Competition and also a record number of students attending the Autumn term at the Society's classes. It is up to Council members and staff of the Society to keep up this momentum in order to ensure that the Society continues and increases its role in the artistic and cultural development of our island.

A record number of 539 students attend the Winter Courses

The courses which commenced in October saw a record number of students. 539 students enrolled for these courses with 43 different classes being set up. Apart from the usual art classes which attract the bulk of the students, courses in Stone Sculpture, Woodcarving, Papier Mache and Backstage were introduced. A new course on Bridal Bouquets was also organized, whilst the Crib Building Course had a good number of participants. Craft courses, such as Malta Lace, Crochet, Embroidery, Ganutell, Parchment and Cottage Craft were also well attended. Similarly, there was a good turnout for the classes in violin, pianoforte, Guitar and Theory of Music. A very popular course was the 50+ Art Class which is aimed at students over 50 who would like to commence or continue art but never had the opportunity to do so.

Many of the students attending several of the courses exhibited some of their work in January 2007 during the Annual Students Exhibition organized by the Malta Society of Arts Manufactories and Commerce.

The Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Thursday 22nd March 2007. The formal notice with call for nominations and notice of the AGM is being sent to each member. Considering that the Society boasts of some 600 members the attendance at the General Meeting is usually quite disappointing. We urge members to attend this meeting. Your presence will encourage the members of the Council in their work and can be viewed as your appreciation for the voluntary work they dedicate to the Society. We trust this appeal will not fall upon deaf ears. Elections will be held at this General Meeting and the following have generously accepted to act as Election Commissioners, Ms Bernardette Glanville, Ms Johanna Borg Costanzi and Mr Roberto J. Buontempo.

Invitation to Exhibit Works

The owner of a Wine Bar in Gzira has offered to exhibit works of art by member artists in his premises. Those members who are interested are to contact Kevin Attard on 21340150.

Art Competition by Italian Embassy in Malta on Giuseppe Garibaldi

The Italian Embassy in Malta is holding an art competition to celebrate the bi-centenary of Giuseppe Garibaldi. This Competition is open to any artist of Maltese nationality over 21 years old as at July 4th 2007. The winner will be awarded two return air tickets Malta-Rome and possibility to stay in a private country house in Umbria for a week. Other prizes may be awarded. For more information interested artists may contact the Society or the Italian Cultural Institute.

Refurbishing Works at Palazzo De La Salle underway

Work is well underway for the refurbishment of classes at the Palazzo De La Salle. New furniture has been installed in a number of classes. After the installation of a 3-phase system and 5 distribution units for a new electricity supply, the rewiring of the ground floor and the installation of new lighting is nearing completion.

Many students have complained of the hard seats in the classes and this is being tackled by adding cushions to all the chairs. A long needed coat of paint has still to be applied to the classrooms which we hope will not be long in coming. Preparations are in hand to improve the toilet facilities.

A study is being made to upgrade the halls upstairs to exhibition standard. The electricity supply upstairs is also being re-wired. Electricity is also being installed in the Palazzo's cellars and it is hoped that full use of this area will be possible.

The Society recognizes that various other areas need refurbishment and restoration. However, as much of this requires specialized and costly skills, ways and means are being studied to see how help can be obtained to carry out the necessary works.

The London College of Music & Media Practical and Theory Examinations

The period between 16th October and 2nd November was a very hectic period at the Society with LCM Practical Exams being held. 20 students sat for their Diploma Practical Exams in pianoforte and clarinet. Another 280 students sat for the Grades Practical Exams and instruments used varied in pianoforte, classical guitar, clarinet, violin, bassoon, flute, trumpet, cornet and sax tenor classical. The LCM examiner, Mrs Carol Woods conducted these exams.

On the 25th November 280 students set for their Theory Exams. Due to the large number, these Exams were held at the St Elmo Examinations Centre.

London College of Music Examiner Carol Woods Conducts Workshop

The London College of Music examiner, Carol Woods, conducted a Workshop on the 25th October 2006. The theme of the Workshop was 'Teaching and Learning'. About 35 teachers and senior students attended this Workshop which was found to be of great interest and help to all present.

Notes for Your Diary

- 1st February - Presentation of the 2006 Gold Medal Award to Chev. Anton Agius at Palazzo De La Salle
- 8th - 23rd February - 'Faces, Earrings and More' - Exhibition of paintings by Joseph Spiteri Staines and silvercraft by Kevin Attard at Palazzo De La Salle
- 5th - 16th March - 'Bliet u Rhula Maltin' - Exhibition of paintings by the students of Mathew Cassar (Rabat) at Palazzo De La Salle
- 8th March - Annual Presentation of the London College of Music Grades Awards and Concert at Palazzo De La Salle
- 22nd March - Annual General Meeting of the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce at Palazzo De La Salle
- 28th March - London College of Music Theory Exams at St Elmo's Exams Centre
- 9th April - Beginning of 3rd Term Arts, Crafts, Music & Other Courses at Palazzo De La Salle
- 11th May - Annual Fund Raising Dinner in aid of the Special Projects Programme at Villa Arrigo
- 14th - 26th May - London College of Music Practical Exams at Palazzo de La Salle
- 15th May - Workshop conducted by the London College of Music Examiner in Malta at Palazzo De La Salle
- 18th May - Young Musicians Contest 2007 (Preliminaries) at Palazzo de La Salle
- 25th May - Young Musicians Contest 2007 (Finals) at Casino Maltese

Artists Alive at Palazzo De La Salle for the Notte Bianca

On the 14th October 2006 Valletta was alive to throngs of people all intent on enjoying the many activities planned by various organizations throughout the night in Valletta. The Society was proud to form part of this event and seventeen artists, all members of the Society, set up easels in the courtyard and painted away while a number of their paintings were exhibited. A sculptor chiseled away at block of stone in the centre of the courtyard. The courtyard was illuminated with a number of spotlights and was surrounded by fiaccoli burning away. Fiaccoli were also placed in the balconies and in the stairway and torches burned at the entrance to the Palazzo. The atmosphere created was magical. The Society set up a table in the courtyard with various savouries and wine, courtesy of Attard & Co which was offered to all visitors. It is estimated that about 300 visitors called between 7pm

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The Annual Concert and Presentation of the London College of Music & Media Diplomas

The Society, organized its Annual Concert and Presentation of the LCM Diplomas on the 20th October at the Casino Maltese. At the start of the evening, following a short speech by the President of the Society, a number of students displayed their abilities in a number of instruments. Afterwards, 46 students received their diplomas. These ranged from DipLCM, ALCM, LLCM, AMusLCM, ALCM(TD) to LLCM (TD). Six teachers also received the Loyal Service Award. All in all it was a very enjoyable evening.

At last the Les Gavroches at Palazzo De La Salle

Should you call at the Society you will not fail to notice the famous statue Les Gavroches on a marble pedestal in the main hallway of the Palazzo. This is a copy of the original which is held at the Museum of Fine Arts and is made out of fibreglass. This copy is the property of Heritage Malta and was constructed with the intention of making Sciortino's art accessible to communities outside Valletta or even Malta. In between such outreach projects the Society has been entrusted with its custody.

Les Gavroches was inspired by Victor Hugo's vivid description of the three street urchins who roamed the streets of Paris during the tumultuous days of the 1848 revolution. This work was purchased by the Society and presented to the Government of Malta in 1907.



Artists Alive at Palazzo De La Salle for the Notte Bianca

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and midnight when the Society closed its doors. The visitors appreciated the old Palazzo, they spoke to the artists and learnt about the Society. They enjoyed the wine and admired the paintings. Many joined the Society and others enrolled for courses. All in all a very successful evening. Our thanks go to the staff and to all participating artists who made this wonderful event possible.

