



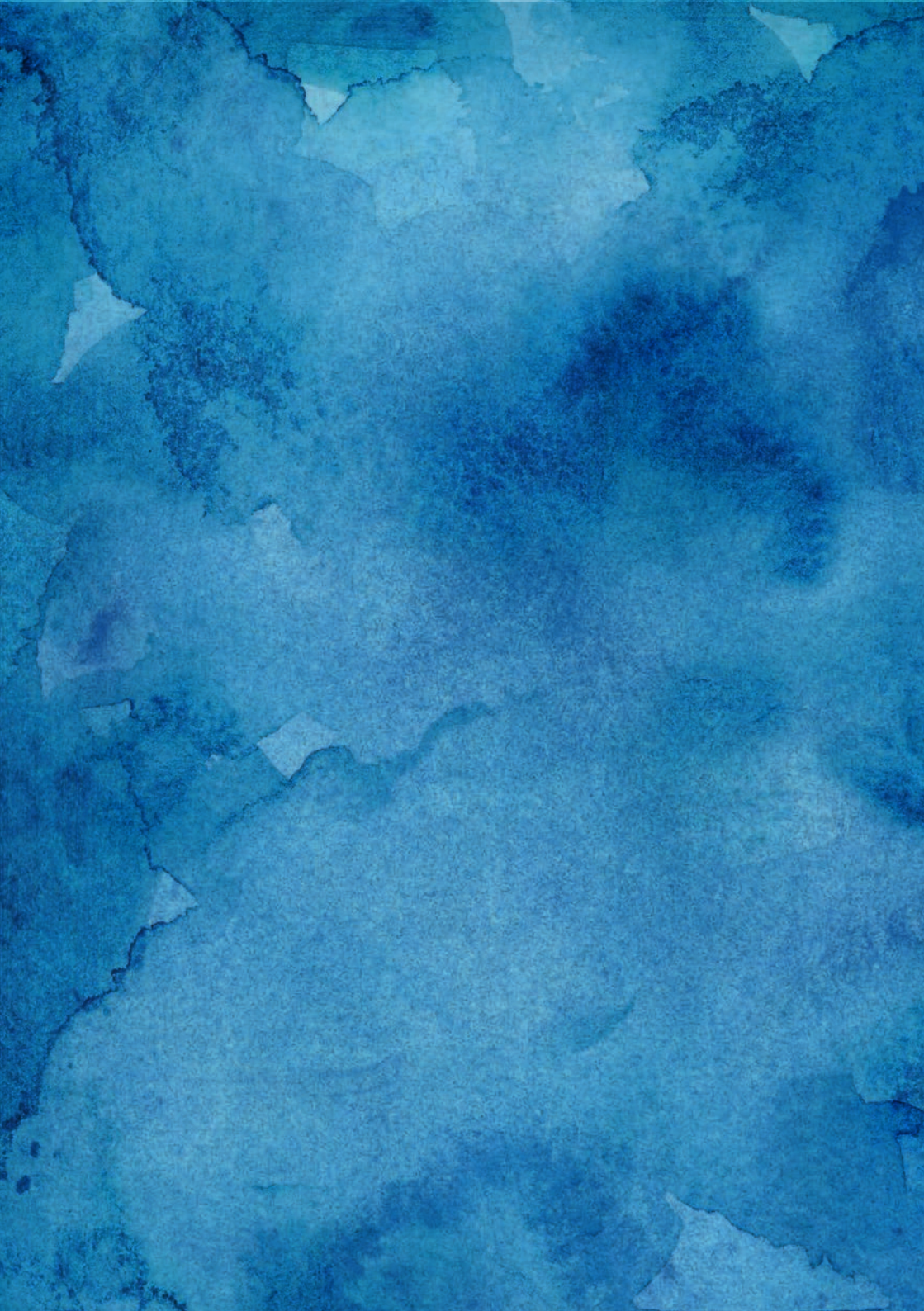
Australian High Commission

Malta

Connections

A concert of music and performance
celebrating the 60th anniversary of
Australian-Maltese diplomatic relations





Connections

30th October 2024

‘Studio B’ Spazju Kreattiv - Fondazzjoni Kreattività, Valletta



WELCOME

I would like to extend a warm welcome to ‘*Connections – a concert in celebration of the 60th anniversary of Australian-Maltese diplomatic relations*’. While this anniversary marks the year that the formal diplomatic relationship between our governments commenced, the connections between Australia and Malta are deep and broad. Interaction between governments is important, but the relationship extends well beyond these interactions - connections between Australian and Malta exist wherever you turn. I hope you enjoy this concert, which has been planned to recognise the extent of our connections by highlighting artists and music from both countries.



HE Mr Matt Skelly,
High Commissioner of Australia



WELCOME

As I explored Malta and Gozo in August this year, I was deeply moved by the significance of music to the Maltese people and the impact of the *Soċjetà Filarmonika*, choirs and orchestras on the daily lives of everyone. Is it any wonder that the Maltese emigrating to Australia over the last 60 years have continued to cherish this love for music in their new home. Tonight's programme contains both Maltese and Australian music; elements of the traditional narrative – incorporating wider eclectic favourites, alongside a new generation of music, which represents a more personal connection for the performers and audience alike. It is through the gift of both sacred and secular, old and new music, that we continue to facilitate the connections between people and our two great countries.



David Barnard CF,
Concert Curator

CONCERT PROGRAM / PROGRAMM TAL-KUNĊERT

Karina Bailey – Soprano (Australia)

Joel Parnis – Tenor (Australia-Malta)

David Barnard CF – Piano (Australia-UK)

Kor Marija Assunta, Mosta - Director: Bernard Bezzina (Malta)

Jane Marshall (Malta) | Marylu Coppini (Malta)

Xemx (Grech)

Welcome by HE Mr Matt Skelly, High Commissioner of Australia

Little Child (Abela)

*Making Wine (O'Regan)**

*Blanc Dos (O'Regan)**

*Memories from the Lake (Grixti)***

Poetry Reading – *Firda* (Marshall, 1985)

CONCERT PROGRAM / PROGRAMM TAL-KUNĊERT

Hallelujah (Cohen/Stockham)

Magpies at Sunrise (Hyde)

Firewheel (Hyde)

(In Memorandum: Giovanna Xiberras, Mosta/Adelaide 1946 – 2007)

Poetry Reading – *Connection to Country* (Weldon, 2024)

We Are One (Woodley/Newton)

Alleluja (Mozart)

All I Ask of You (Webber)

Flos Carmeli 1964 (Bugeja/Farrugia arr. Syperrek)

Acknowledgements

Innu lill-Assunta Nkurunata (Sammut/ Ġwann Debono)

ABOUT THE ARTISTS / DWAR L-ARTISTI



KARINA BAILEY

South Australian soprano **Karina Bailey** is currently based in Austria where she is a full-time member of the Landestheater Linz *Hauschor*. She regularly appears in small roles with the company; in recent seasons she has played the roles of Barbarina in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, Manja in Kálmán's *Gräfin Mariza*, una donna in Handel's *Rinaldo*, and Brautjungfer in *Der Freischütz*, each production providing the opportunity to work with the renowned Bruckner Orchester Linz.

During the pandemic years Karina sang with Opera Australia in Sydney. There she appeared in the chorus throughout multiple seasons, and also played a soprano adaptation of the roles Angelina and Tisbe in the company's touring production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola*.

Karina completed her Master of Music (Opera School) at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2020 under the tutelage of Kathleen McKellar Ferguson. Before commencing her studies in the United Kingdom, she had already made her mainstage debut as Papagena (*The Magic Flute*) in her hometown with the State Opera of South Australia and was a member of their Young Artist Program for two years. With the State Opera company, she also played the roles of Elaine (*Cloudstreet*) and Ida (*Die Fledermaus*) as well as covering numerous roles. She made her UK professional debut as Sylviane and Lolo in *The Merry Widow* with Opera Bohemia in 2019.





JOEL PARNIS

Joel Parnis, an accomplished musical theatre performer from Australia, proudly holds citizenship in both Australia and Malta. His career in musical theatre spans across continents, including Australia, Asia, and Europe, and has taken him to remarkable venues around the world.

With extensive experience in the German-speaking market, Joel's notable performances include *Mary Poppins* at the Thunerseespiele in Switzerland, the world premiere production of *Die Königinnen*, School of Rock, the European premiere of *Natascha*, *Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812* in the role of Andrej/Bolkonski, *Catch Me If You Can*, *Anastasia*, *Fanny und Alexander*, *Titanic*, *Priscilla: Queen of the Desert*, and *Wie Im Himmel* at Austria's National Theatre in Linz. In the English-speaking theatre world, he had the pleasure of performing in the United Kingdom and International Tours of *Titanic: The Musical*, *Songs For A New World* for Berlin Music Theatre, and the Australian and International Tours of *Les Misérables* for Cameron Mackintosh. Melbourne audiences have enjoyed his roles in *The Producers*, *Chess*, *The Pirates of Penzance* at the State Theatre, *Gospel* at the Melbourne Recital Centre, and *Flower-Children: The Mamas and The Papas Story* at the Comedy Theatre.

Looking ahead, Joel is extremely excited and humbled to be returning to Malta to perform at the Teatru Manuel for their season in 2025.





DAVID BARNARD

Australian born pianist and conductor, **David Barnard** CF MISM is the *Stellvertretender Chordirektor* (Deputy Choir Master) and *Solokorrepetitor* (lead soloist coach) at the Landestheater Musiktheater, Linz, Austria. David was born in Orange, New South Wales, and after initial undergraduate studies in Adelaide, in which he graduated at the age of 18 under the tutelage of pianist Diana Harris OAM, he moved to the United Kingdom to pursue further studies and a career in music.

David's career has now spanned opera, song, and chamber music, with radio broadcasts, recitals and contracts in Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, many European countries, and the United Kingdom. In 2009 David was invited to Buckingham Palace to meet the late Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, for David's contribution to music and as an Australian working overseas. As well as studying at the prestigious *Britten-Pears School*, David was awarded a 50th Anniversary *Churchill Fellowship* in 2015 to pursue training as a *Studienleiter* (Director of Opera Studies) and has become a member of the Independent Society of Musicians (UK).

For the University of Melbourne, David co-wrote the current Masters of Opera programme and for the Victoria University of Wellington (NZ), David wrote the current and complete *Collaborative Piano* undergraduate programme, bringing both courses in line with international models. David has collaborated with singers, instrumentalists, chamber ensembles and opera companies world-wide and has premiered several new works to great acclaim also. Further information can be found at www.barnardpiano.com





KOR MARIJA ASSUNTA, MALTA

Kor Marija Assunta is one of the parish choirs serving at the Mosta Basilica on Sunday High Mass and other functions throughout the liturgical year. The Mosta Basilica, one of the most prominent buildings in the Maltese Islands, is a Neo-Classical Catholic Church, magnificent in its size and beauty with one of the largest unsupported domes in the world. It is dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, hence the choir's name – Marija Assunta Choir.

Kor Marija Assunta is composed of female and male volunteer members of various ages, and they meet for rehearsals regularly according to liturgical needs. Although the choir is a liturgical choir, it constantly takes part in other events including musico-literary evenings and concerts. In 2023, it was invited to sing in the prestigious St. John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta for the occasion of the Officer's Day of the Malta Correctional Services Agency.

Kor Marija Assunta takes great pride in its versatility, repertoire variety, and above all professionalism. But, most of all, the members of the choir are proud of their sociability and the sheer delight they get from singing together.

The design of the Choir's logo shows a simplification of the organ pipes in the gallery of the Mosta Basilica - a representation of the place from where the choir normally provides its service. The historic organ inside the Mosta Basilica, is the largest mechanical organ in Malta and was built in 1885 by Pacifico Inzoli and contains just under 2000 pipes. Bernard Bezzina is the choir's organist and also the choir director.





ANNAMARIA WELDON

Annamaria Weldon was born in San Pawl tat-Targa, limits of Naxxar, Malta, to Victor and Marguerite Mercieca in 1950. She emigrated to Australia in 1984 with her two young children and her husband, Adrian Castillo. The family became Australian citizens and she continued to work as a journalist and to write poetry.

In 1997 Annamaria married Wayne Weldon, an Australian Army Veteran. After she was tragically widowed the same year, she took up creative writing full-time. Annamaria has been widely published in Australia and was awarded artist residencies at Symbiotica, University of Western Australia (2009) and St James Cavalier in Malta (2016). Her publications include *Ropes of Sand* (Associated Press, Malta, 1983), *The Roof Milkers* (Sunline Press, 2008), *The Lake's Apprentice* (UWA Publishing) and *Stone Mother Tongue* (UWAP 2018). Annamaria was awarded the prestigious Nature Conservancy's Inaugural Prize for Nature Writing (2011) and the Tom Collins Poetry Prize (2010). She was shortlisted in the Peter Porter Poetry Prize (2012).

Annamaria has undertaken many field trips for research, including extended stays in Malta. She was mentored in Noongar language, traditional stories and welcome protocols by First Nations cultural leader, George Walley, during her long study of the Western Australian rivers, lakes and estuary on the coast south of her Perth home, which resulted in *The Lake's Apprentice* (UWA 2014). Her poem **Connection to Country**, written for the 60th Anniversary of Maltese-Australian Diplomatic Relations, pays respect to this experience.





ALBERT MARSHALL

Albert Marshall has distinguished himself as a theatre and television director, playwright, poet, and TV presenter in a career spanning over 50 years within the culture and creative sectors.

He is currently the Executive Chairman at Arts Council Malta; the National Agency dealing with cultural policy and strategy and works on developing and investing in the cultural and creative sectors. Part of Albert's duties – amongst other things as Executive Chairman of Arts Council Malta – also include capacity building in the 11 Public Cultural Organisations found on the islands, which are also overarched by the Council.

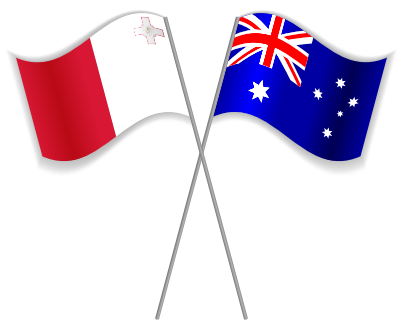
He also lived in Australia, whereby he got a Master's degree in Communication Studies at the Victoria University, Melbourne. Albert has worked for Australian radio, television stations including the ABC, as well as for Australian mainstream, community and multicultural theatre.

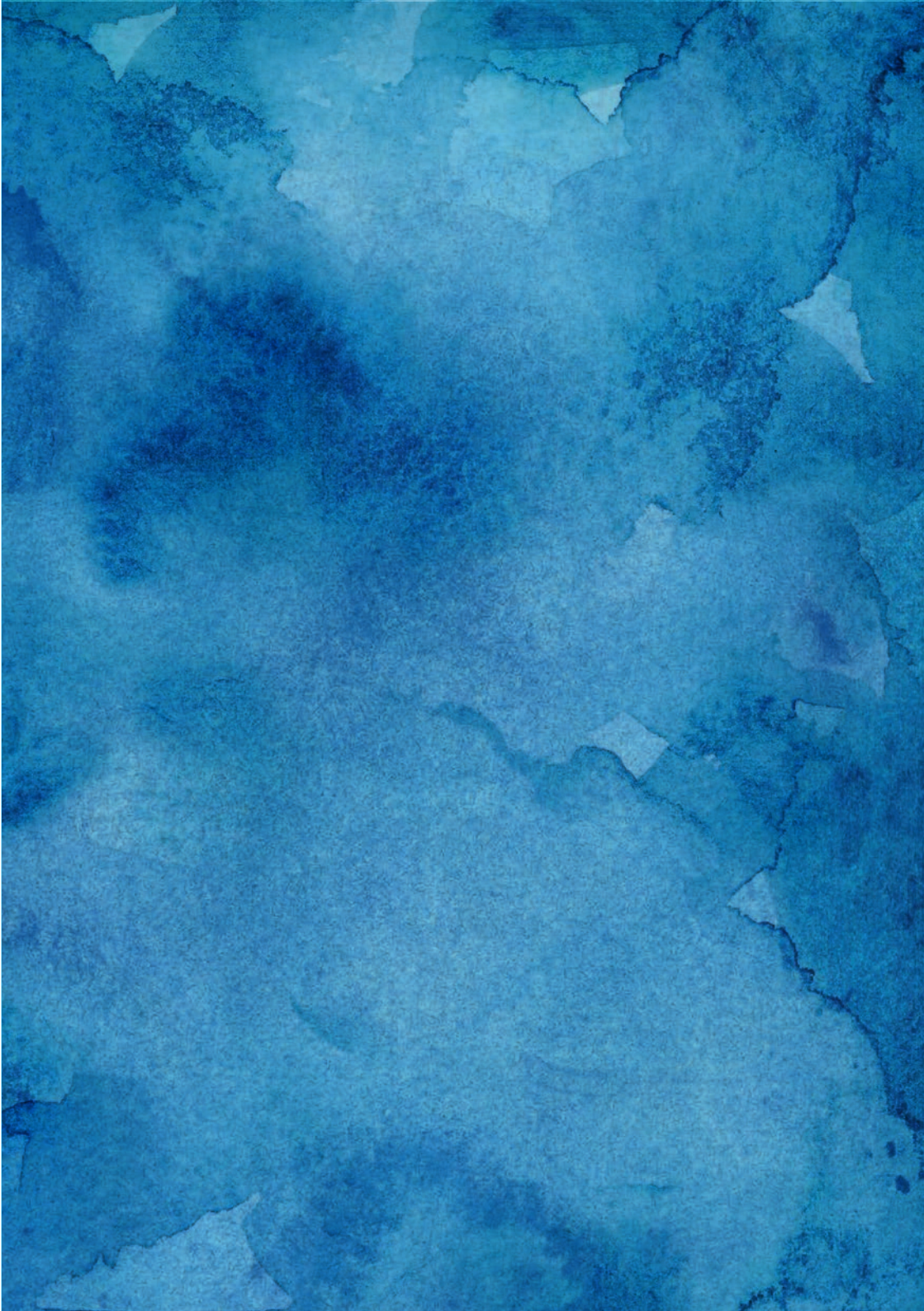
On his return to Malta, Albert was a Communication Studies lecturer at the University of Malta and served as CEO of the Public Broadcasting Services Ltd. Albert also worked as a Linguist for the European Commission's Directorate for Languages in Luxembourg.

Albert's literary works have been extensively published in Australia, Canada, and Malta.

In 2018, Albert was appointed a member of Malta Republic National Order of Merit, and in 2021 he was awarded Fellowship of the Royal Society of Arts.









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