Mdina Biennale to celebrate former capital's multicultural history

Mdina will soon step back in time to embrace its multicultural past, with the launch of the city's eagerly-anticipated Mdina Cathedral Contemporary Art Biennale, which will be held between 13 November and 7 January, with APS Bank as its main partner.

This rebirth edition of the Mdina Biennale will take a radically different approach to art and religion, and is being hailed as a bridge between different cultures, faiths and, even, non-faiths.

The theme, Christianity, Spirituality and the Other, as well as the new conceptual direction for the event, has been developed by artist, art critic and academic Dr Giuseppe Schembri-Bonaci, who is the artistic director of the Biennale. Harking back to the Mdina Biennale's roots in the 1990s, it will provide a spiritual space for creativity and will feature thought-provoking and high-quality artworks by top artists from no less than 25 countries around the world.

"We are thrilled to announce that the Mdina Biennale has attracted some very high-calibre names from both the national and international art world," says Dr Schembri-Bonaci.

The long list of artists features names from across the artistic disciplines. Local artists include Richard England, Mark England, Vince Briffa, Patrick Dalli, Paul Haber, Pierre Portelli, Anna Grima, Sina Micallef Farrugia, Anthony Micallef, Victor Spiteri and James Micallef Grimaud.

Other international works are by Dario Fo, Francesco Infante, Adam Dix, Michael von Cube, Valera Loredana Longo, Silvia Camporesi, Denis Pondruel, Christian Jaccard, Bernard Cousinier, Gildas Le Reste, Frederique Lucien, Philippe Desloubieres, Vincent Come, Patrice Pantin, Kacha Legrand, Nicola Arkell, James Alec Hardy, Richard Shields and Natala and Valerya Cherkashin.

The Biennale will also present a full calendar of musical, literary and audiovisual events, with performances by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra's chief conductor Brian Schembri, composers Karl Fiorini, Reuben Pace and Albert Garzia, actor Pino Scicluna and contemporary dance creations by Francesca Abela Tranter, as well as collaborations with Caravan and Artnaked.

Caravan is a trans-cultural initiative which organises a multitude of arts events with the intention of creating peaceful dialogue between diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. Caravan will be coordinating a number of projects for the Mdina Biennale, including the Maltese Donkey sculptural installation and a series of concerts.

Artnaked is a London-based curatorial organisation which creates numerous events, exhibitions, performances, radio podcasts and literary and academic events. A group of contemporary artists from London and beyond will be participating in the Mdina Biennale under the management of Artnaked.

Scene from an Island sails to the Corinthia

Following on from the success of Saz Mifsud's first solo exhibition, Scene from an Island has moved to the Orange Grove Art Café at the Corinthia Palace Hotel and Spa, Attard.

As part of its initiatives to promote local and foreign artists, the Orange Grove Art Café will be exhibiting works by Saz Mifsud during this month. This exhibition is being curated and coordinated by Ray Piscopo, an established artist in his own right.

This exhibition includes a number of new paintings that present a modern take on historic buildings in Malta, from the instantly recognisable Valletta skyline to interpretations of the idyllic views in the south of the island.

Saz Mifsud's solo exhibition is a young artist's take on the vivid colour and movement of Maltese scenery, from luzzijiet (traditional brightly painted fishing boats) to the ubiquitous gallarija (enclosed wooden balconies) found all over Malta.

The exhibition was originally displayed at Palazzo de Piro, Mdina, in August and September. The artist evokes a semi-abstract style through bold, rough brushstrokes, contrasted with more detailed line drawing. Using different textures, she conveys the unpredictable movement of the sea and brings out the dazzling Mediterranean light. The works on show are done in mixed media, using acrylics as the main medium with ink and soft pastels as secondary media.

After obtaining a diploma in Art and Design at Central Saint Martins in London, Saz went on to pursue a Bachelor's degree in fashion print design at the University for the Creative Arts in Kent. Today she lives and works in Malta, merging art and fashion by digitally printing her own paintings and photographs on fine silk garments in brilliant colours. A recent foray into fine art has resulted in the collection of works on show.

Saz Mifsud's work will be exhibited at the Orange Grove Art Café at the Corinthia Palace Hotel and Spa, Attard until 29 October.

For more information visit www.facebook.com/sazmifsud-painting

Yuri Rozum's classical music concert in Malta

Classical music lovers, locals and tourists alike, will be pleased to attend a piano recital of Yuri Rozum, a world famous Russian musician. The concert will take place on 19 October at the Manoel Theatre at 7.30pm.

The concert is being organised by the European Foundation for the Support of Culture under the patronage of the Embassy of the Russian Federation and the Russian Center for Science and Culture in Malta. This event is dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Russian Cultural Centre and sponsored by the Corinthia Hotel, St George's Bay.

"I am looking forward to see Malta again," says one of the world's top pianists, who has already visited the island at least twice, opening a music school here and performing at the Teatru Rjal in Valletta in line with a series of his jubilee concerts in 2014.

Yuri Rozum is a famous musician, People's Artist of Russia and Dagestan, winner of numerous international competitions, soloist of the Moscow State Philharmonic society and president of the Yuri Rozum's International charitable fund, which annually awards more than 100 fellowships to young talented musicians. Yuri Rozum also holds the Chair of Piano Music at the famous Gnesins' Academy of Music and serves on the Board of Trustees of music schools. He is also a founder of Star Festival of Arts at Zvezdny, the Russian space centre.

This time the pianist will present to the audience well-known works of the prominent Russian composer and conductor Pyotr Tchaikovsky, the German composer and influential music critic Robert Schumann and of course, of the great Polish pianist Frederic Chopin, Rozum's favourite composer who was coincidentally born on the same date as him.

Simon Bartolo's new play

His first play after last year's smash hit *Jiena Nħobb, Inti Tħobb* Simon Bartolo's explosive new script is the story of an extraordinary boy with a brilliant mind, a heart of gold and a tortured soul.

When Albert Chetcuti goes to a local theatre, he thinks he is up for a night of entertainment and fun. Little does he expect a life-shattering experience that will turn his whole existence upside down and make him start questioning everything ... from who he is to what he is doing there.

Both funny and poignant, *Tikber u Tinsa* is the unforgettable journey of a man who moves not in space but in time, in search of a memory lost and not wanting to be found, of good times and difficult ones. But most of all, it is about a son who never really understood his place in the big plan of life that he designed for himself.

Directed by Roderick Vassallo and featuring Clive Piscopo, 15-year-old Jamie Cardona and Alison Abela, this new play is a beautiful yet unsparing depiction of what it means to be a human in search of redemption and healing.

"Simon has written a brilliant, brilliant script," comments Clive Piscopo, producer and actor. "And together with Roderick's vision, *Tikber u Tinsa* is going to be one hell of a roller-coaster ride ... for both audience and actors alike."

Tikber u Tinsa will premiere on Thursday, 22 October at Spazju Kreattiv (St James Cavalier) and run for one weekend only.

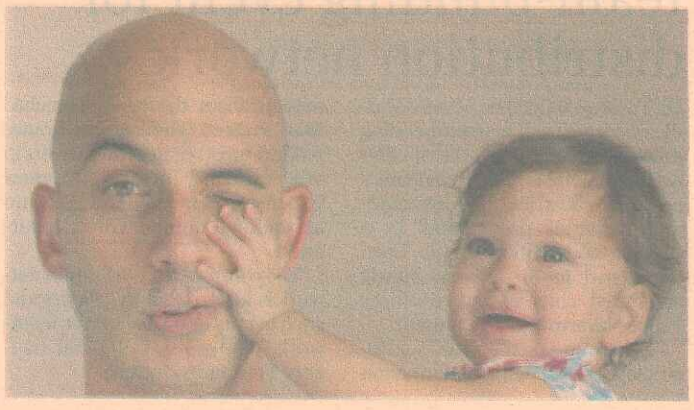
Performance dates include 22, 23, 24 and 25 October. Tickets can be obtained from www.kreattivita.org

Chris Dingli is 'Bad Dad'

Popular actor and comedian Chris Dingli will be performing *Bad Dad*, a brand new one-man comedy show.

Dingli, who is best known as the writer and performer of the hugely popular satirical show The Comedy Knights and its spinoff television series, as well as the pioneering Dingle Bells Malcolm Smells, spent the last decade working as a professional actor in London, starring on the BBC and in many of the UK's most renowned theatres.

Bad Dad is a self-penned comedy that playfully chronicles the trials and tribulations of becoming a first-time father. Dingli bravely tackles the subjects of smelly nappies and lack of sleep, as well as the nagging suspicion that parenthood may simply not be suitable for the likes of him.

The show will be performed at the Blue Box Theatre at M-Space, Msida on 7, 13, 14, 15 November as a special limited run preview ahead of a planned international tour.

Tickets for the first Saturday are all €10 and are available from *www.baddadshow.com* or from the M-Space Box Office.