

media release

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The Malta Tourism Authority launched the 23rd edition of the Malta International Choir Festival, an event organised by the Authority and supported by the Ministry for Tourism. The prestigious festival brings together people from different nations who are bound together by singing and participating through their choirs. This year, 36 choirs and over a thousand choristers are coming to Malta during the first week of November.

Mr Paul Bugeja, the MTA's CEO, said that the festival is part of a continuous effort that the Malta Tourism Authority makes in order to promote our Islands' rich culture and heritage, both of which form part of our core values which are a perfect representation of Brand Malta.

He pointed out that the festival forms part of the winter calendar so it serves to increase and support events during the quieter months of the year. Its international dimension strongly complements the MTA's marketing and promotional efforts.

Mr Chris Muscat, Chairman of the Malta International Choir Festival, provided details on the festival's programme.

On Friday, the third November, participating choirs will take part in a concert by the name of Choral Ethnic Sounds. This concert, which is being organised for the very first time, will bring together ethnic music from different countries. Choirs will sing in traditional costumes and accompany their singing with folk dance movements.

On Saturday, the fourth November, another highlight of the festival will feature the participation of the Gentlemen Singers from the Czech Republic and the Arsis Handbell Ensemble from Estonia. The former is a choir made up entirely of male singers who will be presenting an eclectic programme of classical, contemporary and jazz selections. On the other hand, the Arsis Handbell Ensemble consists of eight professional players who make use of one of the most perfect sets of bells in the world. They have prepared a very popular programme that will also include a work based on Maltese folk themes.

Three workshops will be given by international experts on choral singing. No less than 22 choirs will participate in friendship concerts in Valletta and 17 choirs will sing during the Sunday mass in as many churches around Malta. A unique opening ceremony will be

held, whereby choirs and leaders of various religious denominations sing and pray together for peace.