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THE CHORUS MELITENSIS

In the summer of 1959, a group of men decided to form a small choir, and shortly afterwards, under the direction of Mro. Abela Scolaro, they went to Wales to take part in the International Eisteddfod. They were impressed by what they saw and there and then they decided to go again to Wales in some future year.

As soon as the group returned to Malta, Mr. J. Lopez the leader of the Choir, got in touch with Mrs. B. Bisazza and put forward his idea of forming a mixed choir. As Mrs. Bisazza readily agreed to the suggestion, they both proceeded to set up the requisite organisation and to find a suitable conductor. Mr. V.J. Castillo was roped in as President and Mro. J. Sammut as Conductor. Both gentlemen are still the President and the Conductor of the 'Chorus Melitensis'.

In 1960 it was decided to go to Wales again — this time as a mixed choir. In order to raise funds to help meet the expenditure involved, the Choir gave its first Annual Concert at the Radio City Opera House. The performance included both light and Choral Music. Soon after they returned from Wales, the name of the Choir was changed from 'Malta Operatic Choral Society' to 'Chorus Melitensis', as it was felt that the word "operatic" should be dropped. The following year the 'Chorus Melitensis' gave its first orchestra-backed concert at the Manoel Theatre and included in the programme the 'Inno al Sole', the 'Choral Fantasia' and 'Towards the Unknown Region'. It also took part in the International Festival at Arezzo.

In 1962, in order to raise funds for possible participation at festivals overseas, the Chorus performed the Oratorio 'La Resurrezione di Cristo' and gave a number of concerts, mostly at the Civil Service Sports Club. In the following year, the 'Chorus Melitensis' took part in the activities held at the Manoel Theatre to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Giuseppe Verdi.

In 1964 the Choir went again to Wales and obtained tenth place in the Mixed Choir competition, in which some thirty choirs from different countries took part. The choir was favourably reported upon by the press. Members of the Choir still recall with pride the fact that, during a non-competitive concert, they had to give a second rendering of Mro. Pace's "Imnarja". It was the first time in the history of the Eisteddfod that such a thing had happened during such concerts — and it has never been repeated since.

Apart from holding regularly its Annual Concert, the 'Chorus Melitensis' has taken part in various activities since 1964, as may be seen from the details shown hereunder:—

1964 — "La Resurrezione di Cristo" of Perosi.

1965 — Was chosen to take part in the opera by Mro. Pace, "Caterina Desguanez", gave a Polyphonic and Vocal Concert.

1966 — The Choir joined forces with the "Choral Society" to give Verdi's "Requiem".

1967 — Took part in the Royal Performance on the occasion of the visit of H.M. Queen Elizabeth and H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh

1968 — Performed Dvorak's "Stabat Mater" and took part in the Eisteddfod in Wales where it obtained eighth place.

1969 — Performed Fauré's "Requiem".

1970 — Vocal and Instrumental Concert.

One may as well mention that the "Chorus Melitensis", during this period, appeared various times on television. It also took part three times in the Local Festivities and Competitions organised by the "Zghazagh Haddiema Nsara" and each time it was awarded first place.

This year the "Chorus Melitensis" is commemorating its tenth anniversary, and in the programme of the Annual Concert, it has included Vivaldi's "Gloria" and Verdi's "Inno delle Nazioni". It is also giving a premier performance of Mro. Magri's "Te Deum".

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Camilleri Mary Rose
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Cefai Marion
Coleiro Janika
Coleiro Tessie
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Cuschieri Josephine
Cuschieri Victoria
Delia Yvonne
De Marco Monica

Dimech Marlene
Dingli Antoinette
Dingli Rose
Ellul Vincenti Lilian
Farrugia Isabelle
Farrugia Lina
Gauci Maistre Rosette
Gulia Violet
Magri Doris
Miggiani Monica
Monaco Aagta
Pantalleresco Alda
Said Pullicino Margaret
Schranz Rose
Shephard Mary
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Xuereb Ermelinda
Zammit Catherine
Zammit Mary Anne

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Bartolo Albert
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Borg Charles
Borg Eric
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Caligari Victor
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Ellul Joe

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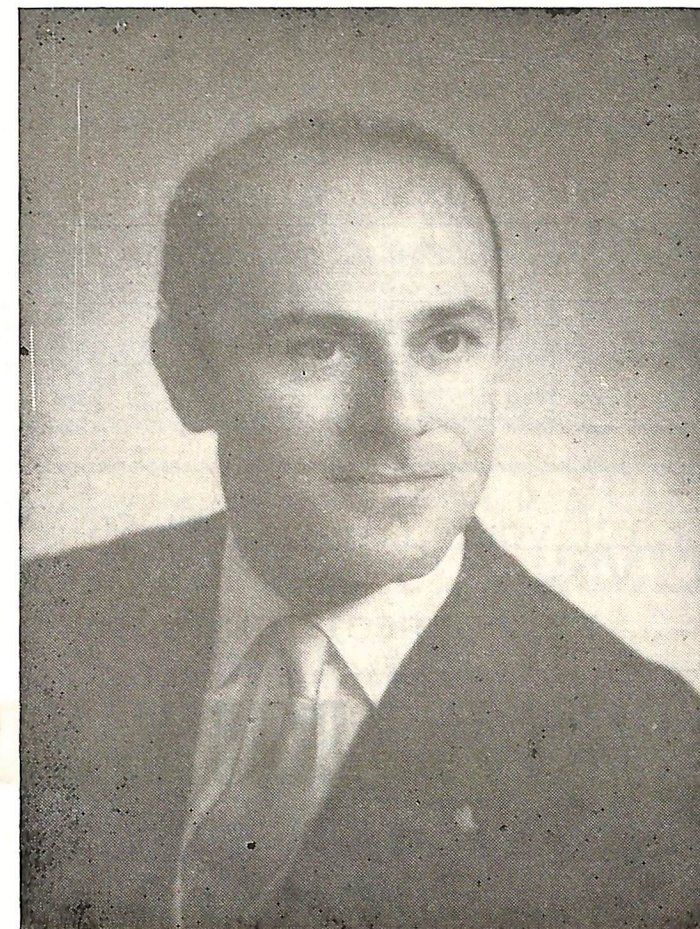
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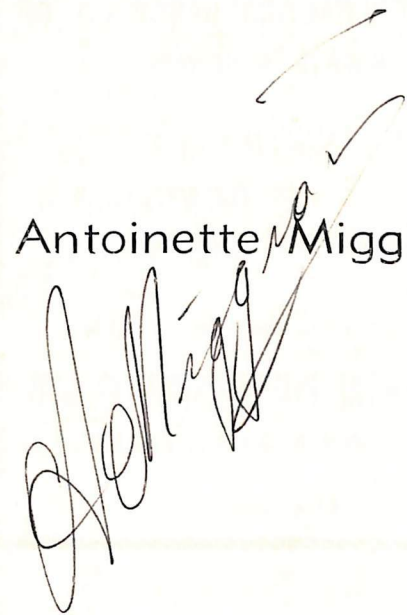
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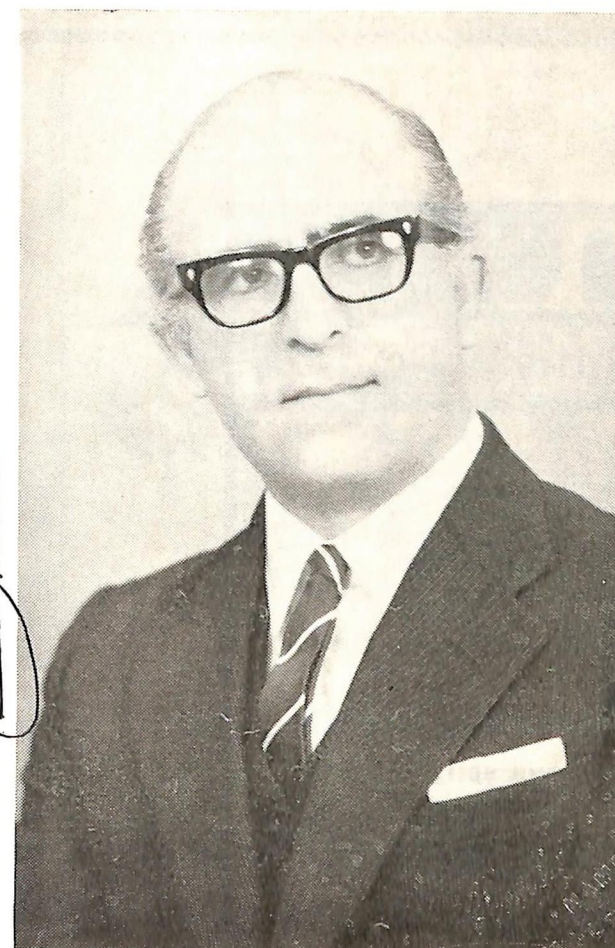
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JOSEPH MAGRI

Joseph Magri, a performer, Conductor and Composer, showed talent at an early age as a Clarinettist. In 1936 he was selected to attend a pupil's Course at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, at the end of which he won three first prizes including the Cousin's memorial medal for the best instrumentalist of the year. In 1946, Joseph Magri, was once again nominated to attend a 3 years Conductor's Course at the R.M.S.M. Kneller Hall. In 1948 Joseph Magri qualified as a British Army Bandmaster and he also obtained the Conductor's Diploma of the Royal College of Music.

In the field of Composition Joseph Magri is a Fellow of the London College of Music and he was also awarded two diplomas by Sir Arthur Bliss, Master of the Queen's Music for compositions submitted during the year 1957 and 1958.

Amongst his Compositions, which include Concert Overtures, Suites, Ballet Music, Sonatas and a Symphony, we find "An Ode to St. Paul" a Cantata written for St. Paul's Centenary Celebrations which was performed by both the National Band of Malta and the King's Own Band during the national Festivities. His latest composition was a Maltese Rhapsody which was performed in this theatre on the occasion of the Manoel Theatre Commemoration Concert.

The work was an immediate success and both Mrs. Joseph Sammut, who conducted the work, and Mrs. Bice Bisazza the "Chorus Melitensis" instructor, who was present at the Concert, agreed to include Magri's "TE DEUM" for this Concert. This work is written for a full Orchestra, Choir, Soprano and Tenor Solo and Organ. It is being performed for the first time today.

The work opens with an introduction which introduces the various themes and leads to a Motto Theme "We praise Thee, O God" for Chorus and Solo Voices.

The Solo Soprano on the part with the Female Section of the Choir in an ANDANTE CANTABILE sing "To Thee all the Angels". The choir follows, in a mood of exalted praise, with a four part fugue "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts". The mood is now changed to the Gregorian modes and "Thee, the glorious choir of the Apostles" is taken over by the Solo Voices and answered very softly by the choir. "The Father of incomprehensible Majesty" is a slow movement of the choir and orchestra in the Major Minor Mode. An orchestral interlude leads to "Thou, O Christ, Art the King of Glory" for Soprano and Tenor Solo voices in which the chorus echoes various phrases.

For the first time the chorus is unaccompanied in "We beseech Thee, therefore, to help Thy servants" and leads to a vivid triple Fugue "Make them to be numbered with Thy saints".

"Day by day we bless Thee" is a duet for Soprano and Tenor Solo voices the end of which is echoed by the choir in "O Lord have mercy on us".

"Let Thy mercy O Lord, be upon us as we have trusted in Thee" based on the motto Theme, is first taken by the solo voices alone and then is taken by the chorus and builds itself into a climax. The final section is now in full swing in which Chorus, Solo voices trumpets and Strings vie with each other.

"In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted let me not be confounded for ever" is a sort of Counter theme to the preceding one, and the music builds up to a triumphant end.

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PROGRAMME

PART I

OVERTURE

ROSSINI

TANCREDI

Although the opera "TANCREDI" is not so well known as the "Barbiere di Siviglia", "Cenerentola" and others, the overture to this opera is, as all other overtures, played often. The opera was first produced in Venice in 1813, on a libretto by R. Rossi.

GLORIA

VIVALDI

Soprano — ANTOINETTE MIGGIANI

Mezzo Soprano — RACHEL FLORIDIA

Born probably in Venice, circa 1685, Vivaldi was a violinist, a composer and also a priest, nicknamed, "The Red Priest" from the colour of his hair. Pupil of Ligrenzi, and long in charge of music at an orphanage-conservatory in Venice, he wrote more than 250 concertos with various solo instruments as well as a great number of operas, church music and oratorios. The Gloria is not part of a mass, as its title might suggest, but is one of the many church compositions mainly for organ and choir (and later on adapted for the orchestra) written by Vivaldi, and meant to be sung alone.

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PART II

FIRST PERFORMANCE IN MALTA

TE DEUM

MAGRI

Soprano — ANTOINETTE MIGGIANI

Tenor — AURELIO MICALLEF GRIMAUD

This work, which is being performed for the first time, has been written for a full orchestra, choir, Soprano and Tenor Solo, and Organ. The work opens with an introduction to the various themes, each treated separately and in a different motif to emphasize the various sections of the hymn, such as andante cantabile for "To Thee All The Angels", and a slow movement for the choir and orchestra for "The Father of Incomprehensible Majesty". The music gradually builds up to a triumphal end, at which all sections participate.

INNO DELLE NAZIONI

VERDI

Tenor — ANDREW SAPIANO

"Inno Delle Nazioni" by Verdi (1813 - 1901) is remarkable for the fact that its text is by Arrigo Boito, and its finale consists of "an apostrophe to England, France and Italy, set to a contrapuntal combination of "God Save The Queen", "La Marseillaise", and Novaro's "Inno di Mameli".

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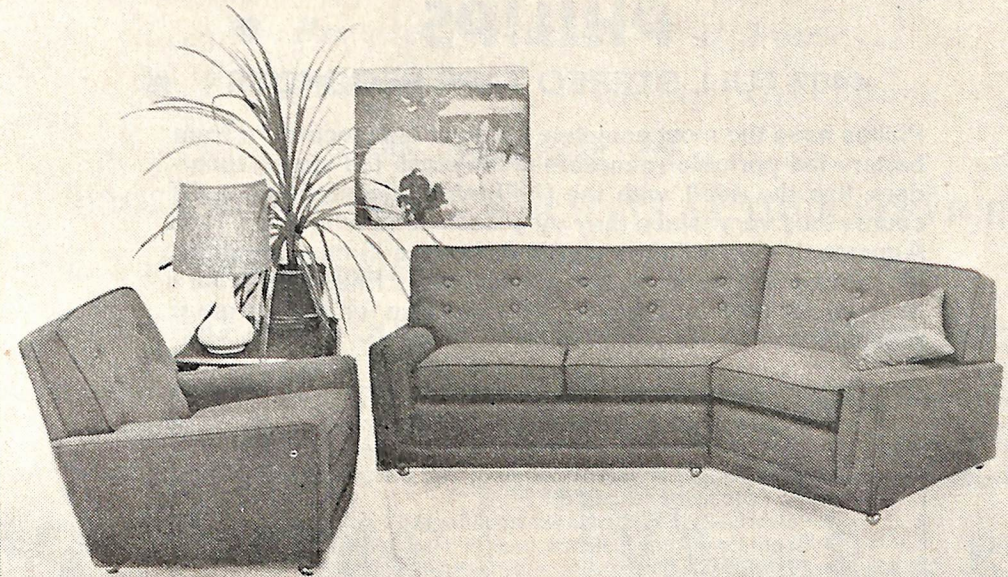
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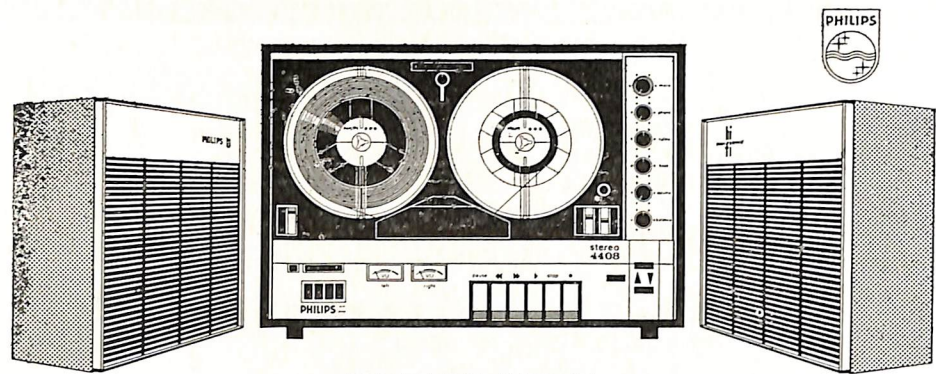
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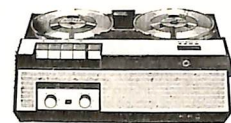


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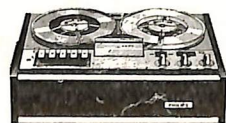
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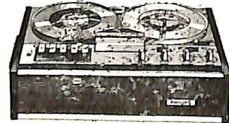
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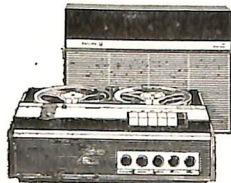
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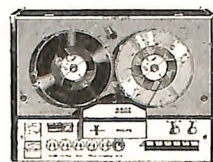
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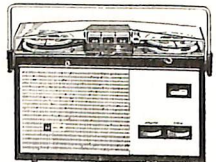
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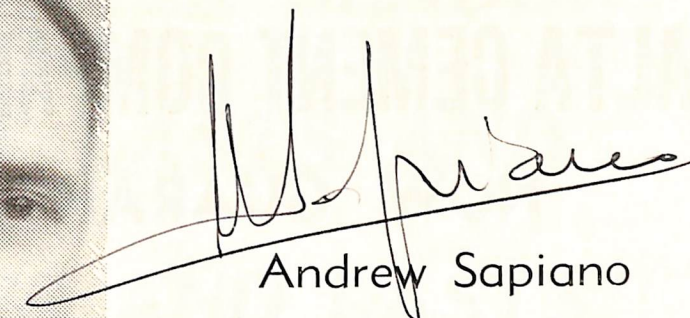
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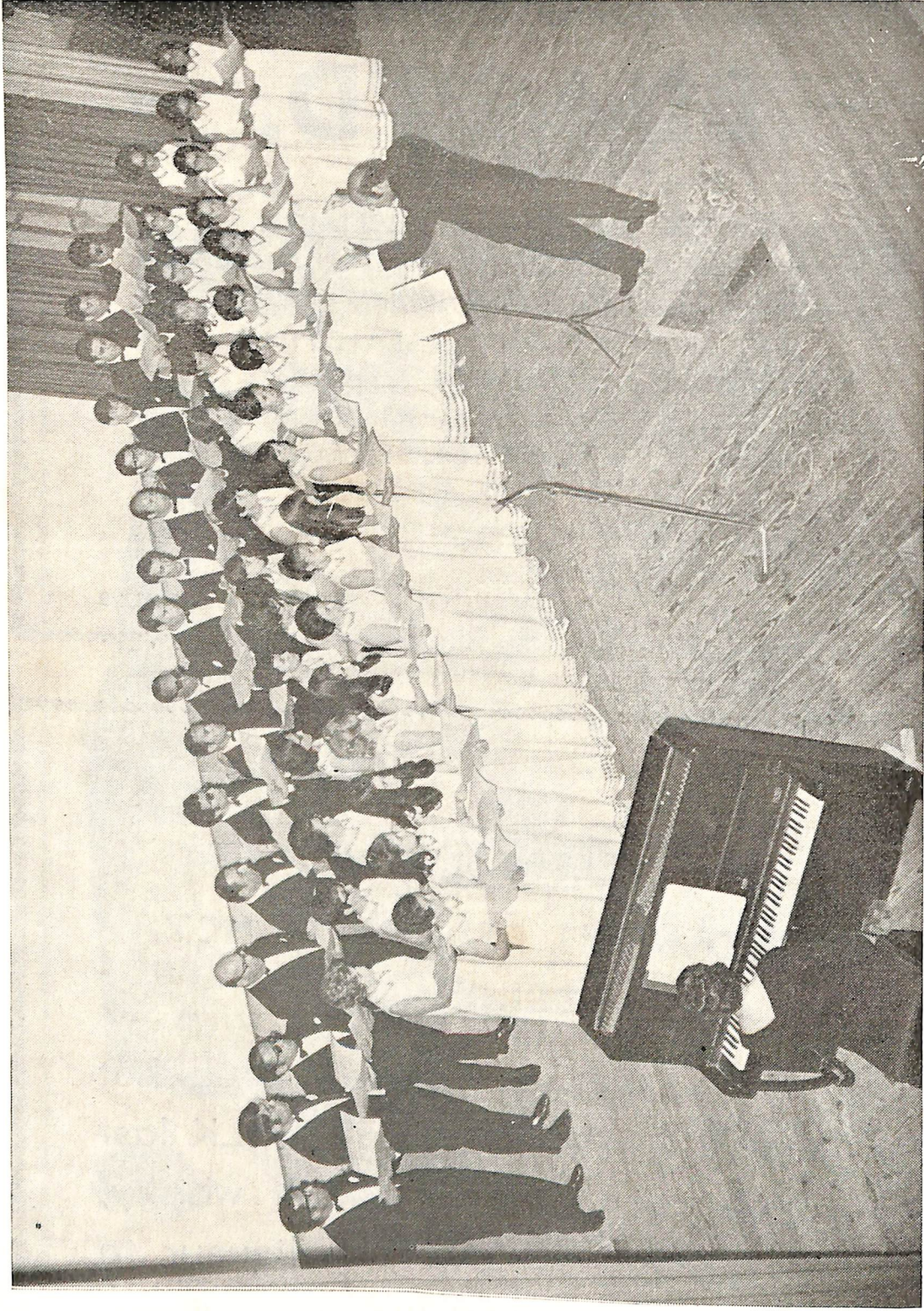
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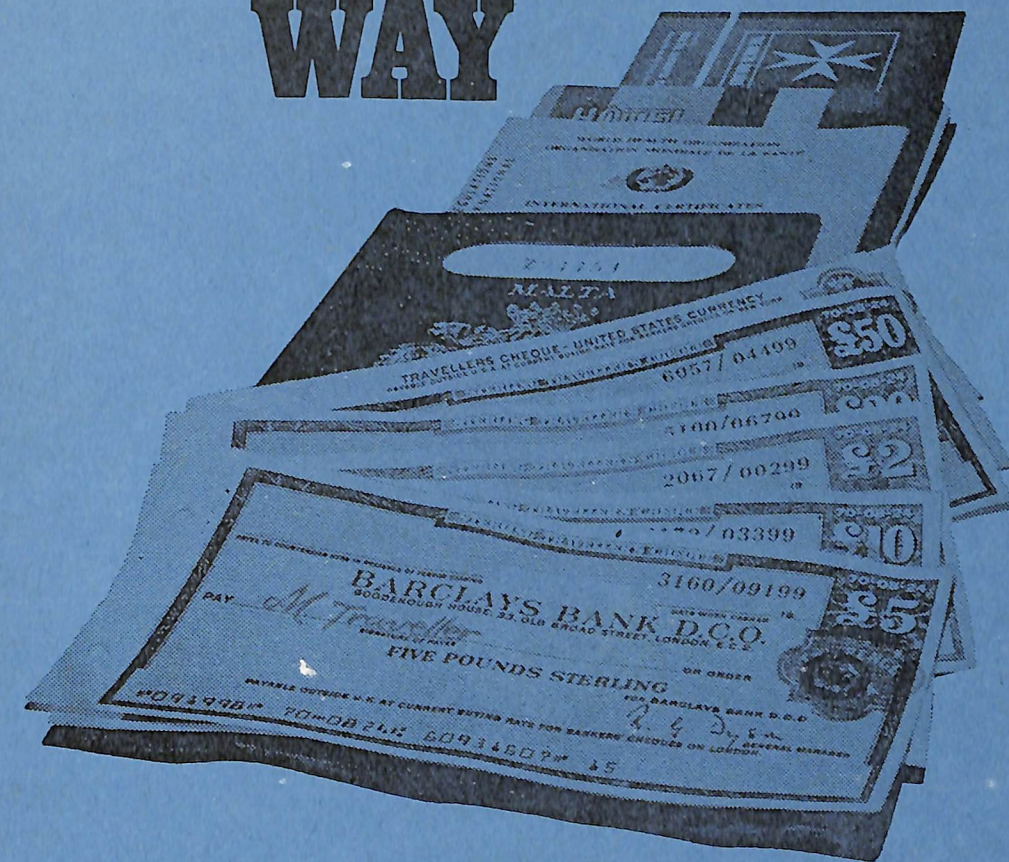
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