

Newsletter, Spring 2016.

*Happy Birthday!*

**This month marks the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Coro dos Amigos. The Committee wish to thank all members and supporters, past and present, for the part they have played in creating and sustaining this valuable and life-affirming local institution. Onward and upward!**

#### **New Faces, New Directions.**

Who was it talked about doors closing and opening? The last three months have seen considerable change for the Coro dos Amigos, and yet, as we look towards our next performances, the future seems brighter than we could have dared to hope in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

To begin with, we have a new maestro. Shortly before Christmas, our director of two and a half years, Francisco Brazão, announced that would be taking a break of at least a year from his choral commitments in the Algarve. The fear at that point was that there would be a break in the continuity of rehearsals, since finding a new leader at such short notice appeared to be very problematic. In the event, several people were suggested and approached. The final choice was between two candidates, and our decision was to ask António de Jesus to take on the task. António had in fact been singing with the choir in the tenor section earlier in the year, and so is acquainted with our situation and history. The Coro dos Amigos is delighted to welcome a man of such experience and ability as our new maestro, and we look forward to working with him as we further the cause of music-making in the Algarve. You can find a brief musical biography of our new leader elsewhere in this edition.

The choir also has some new members. The tenor and alto sections have been strengthened considerably over the last twelve months. A choir that can boast a more than adequate tenor section is indeed fortunate in these days! New recruits are very much needed in the bass department, however, and the soprano section is looking to add to the numbers. See the contact details below if you would like to join us.

Finally in this optimistic scenario, the choir is embarking on a most ambitious programme of work, headlined by preparation to sing **Vivaldi's Gloria** in the early summer, linking up for this purpose with the Coro Academia de Tavira. This is the first collaborative effort with another choir mounted by the Coro dos Amigos, and we look forward eagerly to making music with our friends in the east.

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Singing Workshop with Zêzere Arts**

Every year in July, a major Arts Festival is held at the Convento do Cristo in Tomar, north-east of Lisbon. Choral singing, with rehearsals and concerts, forms a major part of the Festival. We are very lucky to have secured the services of two of the principal tutors, who are coming here to run a choral singing workshop for singers based in the Algarve. Brian MacKay is the Festival Artistic Director, and he will be accompanied by Aoife Hiney. Aoife is not only a talented singer, but has spent many years working with a range of choirs in Ireland and Portugal, as a regular or guest conductor.

The workshop will be held at the museum in São Brás, from 14.00 to 19.00. The cost for the five hours is 20 euros. If you would like to enrol, or would like further information, please contact Diane at [dianezezerealgarve@gmail.com](mailto:dianezezerealgarve@gmail.com) All levels of experience are welcome, no matter what style - or language - you sing in.

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May Concert in Tavira**

This is the first of two concerts presented jointly by the Coro dos Amigos and the Coro Academia de Tavira. It will be held at the Misericórdia church in Tavira at 18.00. The choirs will sing Vivaldi's Gloria together, and also sing items from their own repertoires separately.

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June. Concert in São Brás .**

This will be a repeat of the Tavira concert. It will take place in the Igreja Matriz, time to be announced.

**15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> July. Street Opera, São Brás.**

This project, entitled 'O Misterio de São Brás' will be presented in the town on three evenings, and the choir will be taking part. More information in the next edition.

**And for those who like to plan ahead...**

Looking much further ahead, our Christmas concert this year will be on 10<sup>th</sup> December, and the choir has been asked to sing in Tavira on the 17<sup>th</sup> December, as part of the ongoing Musica nas Igrejas series.

## Our New Maestro

### António Manuel Maria de Jesus.

António started his musical studies at the Seminário de S. José in Faro and went on studying in the Conservatório Regional do Algarve, "Maria Campina". Later he studied choral directing with Edgar Saramago, then with Hubert Velten and Josef Stoiber, both of whom are professors of the university of Regensburg, Germany. He also studied vocal technique with Lúcia Lemos attending masterclasses with Ana Ester Neves, Rui Baeta and Birgit Wegemann.

He was co-founder of the Grupo Coral Ossónoba in 1980, first as an assistant Maestro, then in 1992 taking over the role of Maestro of the choir. He founded and conducted the choir of the "Pequenos Cantores d'Ossónoba" as well as the Chamber choir of the Coro Ossónoba and the Coro Juvenil, and conducted the Coro da Sé Catedral of Faro for many years. During this time, he also instructed leaders and conductors of liturgical choirs of the Algarvian diocese, being also part of their department of liturgical music.

He was artistic director of many choral festivals in the Algarve, touring with his choirs to Spain, France, Holland, Switzerland and Brazil, as well as choral meetings throughout the country.

António participated in various concerts with the Orquestra Clássica do Sul: Christmas concerts, Carmina Burana (Carl Orff), the Messiah (Handel). He has conducted works of many composers, countries and areas, the most outstanding of which, for him, were the Coronation Mass (Mozart), West Side Story (Bernstein) and The Sound of Music (Rodgers and Hammerstein).



### Cantorum

The chamber choir of the Coro dos Amigos is always available to sing at family events. We do this to raise money for the choir. If you know of anyone planning a wedding or other celebration, who might like to have us perform on the day, do let us know.



**Walter Sulzer.** As many of you will know, our first maestro, Walter Sulzer, has been unwell over the past year. He is now recovering well, and we wish Walter and Paula all the very best for the time ahead.

