



Wednesday 28 September 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ballad of Mauthausen: Première choral performance of love across cultures

A magnificent song-cycle about love between two cultures against the background of a Nazi concentration camp is to be performed in Sydney.

The Ballad of Mauthausen - with lyrics by Greek poet Iakovos Kambanellis and music by world-acclaimed Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis - conveys the love of a Greek prisoner-of-war for a doomed Jewish prisoner in the Nazi slave-labour camp of Mauthausen in Austria.

To be performed at UNSW's Clancy Auditorium on Sunday, October 30, the unique performance will feature the Australian Hellenic Choir (AHC) and the Sydney Jewish Choral Society (SJCS). Theodorakis is best known for composing the music of *Zorba the Greek* and the acclaimed film *Z*. Both choirs will also perform other significant Greek and Jewish songs.

The event's MC is Vic Alhadeff, whose background blends the Jewish and Greek cultures. His family was one of the largest Jewish families on the Greek Island of Rhodes, and 151 Alhadeffs, including his paternal grandparents, were murdered in the Auschwitz death camp. "I'm honoured to be involved in this exceptionally moving collaboration of the two communities," Alhadeff said. "The music is magnificent and it promises to be a very moving performance." Alhadeff is a non-executive Director of SBS. His previous roles include Chair of Multicultural NSW, CEO of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and Chief Sub-Editor of the anti-apartheid Cape Times in South Africa.

Formed in 1986, the SJCS is Sydney's premier Jewish community choir. Under the musical direction of Rose Grausman for the past 32 years, the choir is an established part of Sydney's cultural scene, performing a broad repertoire spanning Jewish and secular music of varied styles.

The AHC, formed in 2018, performs Greek Art songs and popular folk songs. Under the musical direction of Leon Vitogiannis, the Choir features at many Greek cultural events. AHC President James Tsolakis said: 'Vitogiannis has created a choral arrangement of the song cycle, previously performed as a solo. What better way to explore this music than with a choir whose members are personally connected with the history?'

Chairperson of the SJCS, Anne Spira said: "It's been a privilege for our choir to learn about the Greek language and the poetry of Greece. This has enabled us to connect with the deep emotional impact of Kambanellis' songs. How powerful and chilling it will be as 60 singers' voices resound through the Clancy Auditorium with the words:

*'Have you seen the one I love?
We saw her in the frozen square
with a number on her white arm
and a yellow star over her heart.'*

END

CONCERT DETAILS

Date: **Sunday 30 October 2022** Time: **4pm**
Venue: **Sir John Clancy Auditorium, University of New South Wales**
Tickets: **\$60, concession \$50, via Humanatix**
<https://events.humanatix.com/ballad-of-mauthausen>

Contacts

James Tsolakis, President, Australian Hellenic Choir
M: 0416 060 700 E: ah.choiraust@gmail.com
Sponsorship enquiries: M: 0416 060 700

Useful links

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNgVdj4M4KI>
www.sjchoral.org
www.ahchoir.com.au

Anne Spira, Chairperson, Sydney Jewish Choral Society
M: 0403 392878 E: info@sjchoral.org