The Formentera Council's culture department reports that this week marks the start of the Barnasants series of performances by singer-songwriters on Formentera. At 8.30pm on Saturday February 16 in the Sala de Cultura (Cinema), artists Roger Mas and Estel Solé will give a free concert. Culture councillor Susana Labrador took the opportunity to urge “all of Formentera to come out and enjoy the music”.

The powerful, radiant voices of Roger Mas and Estel Solé will merge in a spectacle of poetry not only sung but recited. Mas is twice renowned—for dominion over a poetic universe all his own and a special respect for the work of writers from a breadth of eras. On his latest effort, *Par nàs*
, the Solsona-born singer tips his hat to Goethe, Verdaguer, Miquel Martí i Pol and Torquato Tasso.

Estel Solé, for her part, has one of the most noted voices on the Catalan cultural scene. Actress, playwright, novelist and poet, Solé deftly builds her own literary universe—and isn't afraid of bending rules and raising eyebrows. She speaks frankly about childhood, fears, human contradiction, love, oblivion, summer, towns and cities and death.

Gemma Huguet's originally scheduled Saturday appearance on stage with Solé was cancelled due to personal reasons. Mas is her substitute.

Italian and Catalan singer-songwriters

The second local concert of singer-songwriters will happen Saturday April 13. Giorgio Conte and Joan Isaac are due to take the Sala de Cultura stage at 8.30pm. Isaac came up writing and singing under the influence of Italian songwriters and the melodies of Roberto Vecchioni i Fabrizio de André. Meanwhile, Conte, who has often found himself in the shadow of his brother Paolo, is a singer in the French song-crafting tradition. When the pair team up, it will be to pay tribute to Italian and Catalan singer-songwriters. And they'll do it in the style of two Venice merchants exchanging their eminently valuable stocks in trade—their songs. The show is called “Dues cultures un sol mar”.

Workshops
Thursday and Friday (February 14-15) the Barnasants cultural project will also be the occasion for free workshops on musical performance and corporal and poetic expression for students of IES Marc Ferrer, the island's school of music and dance and performing arts groups. The first, on Thursday, will find Estel Solé flexing her chops as a poetess at 5.00pm in the Sala de Cultura.

The remaining gatherings happen Friday. Solé will guide highschoolers on a course in poetic writing and creative expression in the morning. Then in the afternoon, she gives a workshop on interpretation and bodily expression linked to a text for students at the school of dance.

Maria José Cardona in Barcelona
As part of the Barnasants concert series, last Thursday (February 7) local songstress Maria José Cardona gave a show at Barcelona's Harlem Jazz Club. With “A Cançons d'ahir, avui i demà” the crowd heard Cardona's range of heart-felt, life-affirming and dramatic material. No one left unfazed.

Exhibit
Last Monday saw the opening of “20 anys de Barnasants” (20 years of Barnasants), a fly-over of the country's biggest singer-songwriters that will be open in the Sala d'Exposicions until February 23. The show is open Tuesday to Saturday from 11.00am to 2.00pm and 6.00pm to 8.00pm, plus Monday evenings.

The Barnasants programme on the island (and Formentera artists' 2019 dates in Barcelona) is made possible by a partnership agreement between an association called República de la Cultura.

According to culture councillor Susana Labrador, “in joining Barnasants our goal was to build on a network of small-scale, independent cultural fare for islanders, especially young ones” at the same time “helping local artists get the chance to take their voices on the road”.