

Susana Labrador, Formentera's vice-president and councillor of education and culture, stood in Palma's Teatre Principal today to unveil the lineup of performing artists at this year's jointly-organised —and two-time visitor to Formentera— Barnasants festival of independent songwriters. Labrador gave a press conference with Bel Búsquets, her opposite number on Mallorca, plus Teatre Principal boss Josep Ramón Cerdà, Barnasants director Pere Camps and the head of the Manacor city government's culture division, Mateu Marcé, where all eyes were glued to the scheduled list of contributors—this year even on Menorca and Mallorca. Artists at the gathering included Quico Pi de la Serra, Tomeu Penya, Clara Fiol, Joan Muntaner "Xanguito" and Marcel Pic.

Susana Labrador pointed out the two very special Formentera concerts included on the Barnasants 2020 programme, along with another key component of the festival's formula: promoting Formentera acts further afield. Labrador identified the success of last year's Barnasants as the main driver behind the decision to go for it again in 2020. "We chose once again to partner with Barnasants in their promotion of independent music because it's a way to connect islanders with cultural programming". Labrador called the effort "particularly important with regard to younger generations and local artists, not to mention everything it does to make sure people in the other places Catalan is spoken have access to these cultural expressions".

Topping the lineup is Marina Rossell, who performs to Formentera audiences at an 8.30pm show on Saturday 1 February in the Sala de Cultura. *Cançons de resistència* —"Songs of resistance"— showcases the sweet, unmistakable voice of new Catalan standards. Admission is free.

Rossell's visit to the island is preceded by forty-plus years performing, more than twenty albums and a laundry list of awards and accolades earned by the artist. After blockbuster hits and homages to friend and object of admiration Georges Moustaki, Rossell revisits songs that shaped history, and does it as if singing about just one landscape, a single moment in time. She'll sing songs-turned-hymns like "Bella Ciao", the collaboration she cut with Manel that was later rocketed into stratosphere by an Italian group, or "Lili Marleen", the mythical ballad that proved the gap between the German and Allied standards was all in our heads.

Attempting to squeeze Rossell's career into the space of a few lines is a fool's errand, but near endless tours of Europe, the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa surely merit mention. Among her many other distinctions, in 2017 she nabbed Barnasants' own "Best Live Show" award.

7 March, Les Kol·lontai
On 7 March, Meritxell Gené, Ivette Nadal and Sílvia Comas, AKA Les Kol·lontai, will commemorate International Women's Day (8 March) with a spread of feminist ballads. The free show starts at 8.30pm in the Sala de Cultura.

Cultural exchange
Formentera's partnership with Barnasants means more than just programming concerts here on the island; it's also about drumming up interest in Formentera acts away from local shores. In that spirit, having recently celebrating thirty years making music, hometown outfit Aires Formenterencs will present their latest effort before crowds at Barcelona's Centre Artesà Tradicionàrius on Sunday 16 February. Then there's Maria José Cardona. Barnasants 2019 saw her performing at the Harlem Jazz Club in Barcelona, and now the Formentera native is back for round-two, this time with a pair of recitals on Menorca: on Friday 6 March (Ciutadella) and Saturday the 7th (Maó).

Other acts on Mallorca and Menorca include Guiem Soldevila, who plays to the Manacor conservatory on Saturday 1 February, and Maria Jaume Martorell, performing in the Ciutadella bookshop Va de llibres on Friday 13 March.

Twenty-five this year, Barnasants' independent music venture is unlike any other in Europe. The 2019 edition of the festival—when audiences saw duets from Roger Mas and Estel Solé alongside the pairing of Giorgio Conte and Joan Isaac—was the first where the Balearic Islands were represented.

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