
Mahakali Bonsai
by
Sri Prasad Shanti Mahanta
20th December 1973
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To commemorate the Fourth Centenary

of the

LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE

OF ST. JOHN'S CO-CATHEDRAL

THE CATHEDRAL CHAPTER

in association with the

MANOEL THEATRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

present

an ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

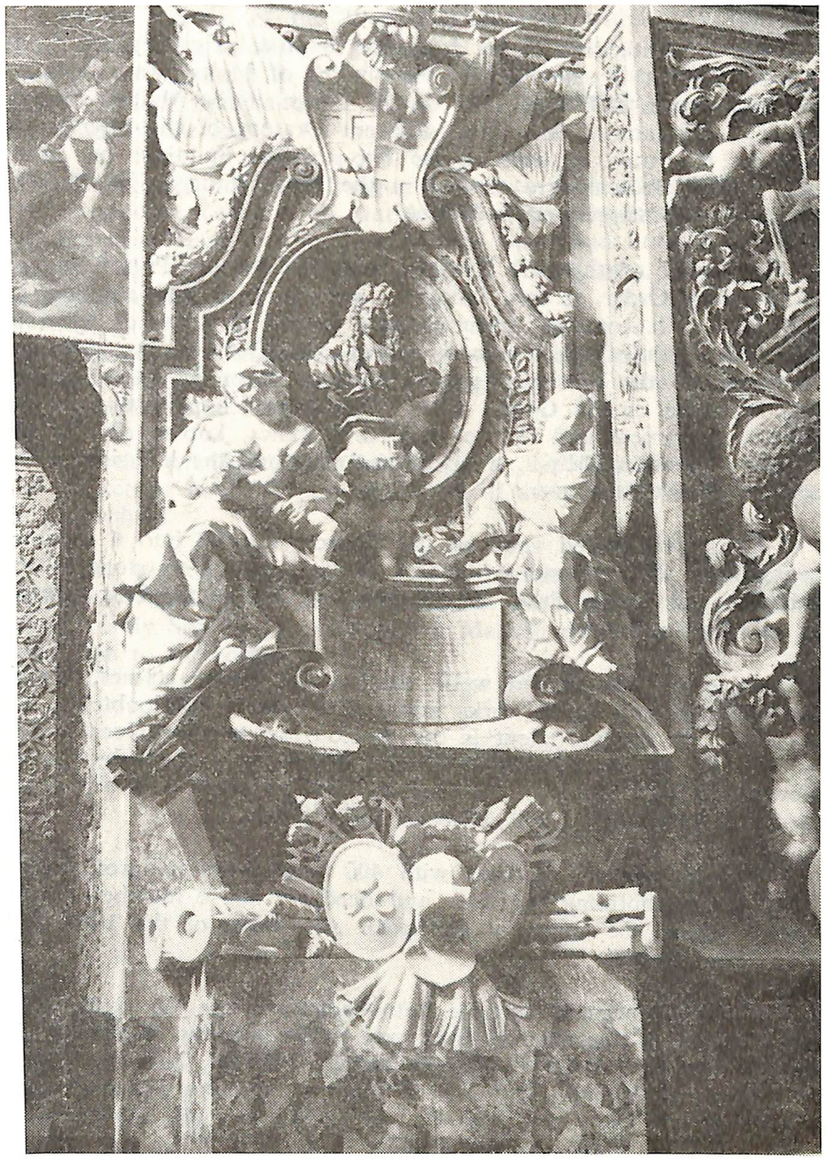
With the participation of

THE JESUS OF NAZARETH CHOIR

At ST. JOHN'S CO-CATHEDRAL

on

Thursday, 20th December, 1973.



ST. JOHN'S CO-CATHEDRAL CHURCH

The Co-Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, originally the Conventual Church of the Knights Hospitaller of Malta, was built between the years 1573 and 1577 on the design of the Maltese famous architect Girolamo Cassar. The adjacent Oratory of the Decollation and the Sacristies, as well as the two-storeyed buildings on either side of the Church were erected in the 17th century. The Church-Museum was inaugurated in 1965.

The plan of the vast Temple, dedicated to the Patron of the Hospitallers' Order, is very simple — a large nave with an aisle on each side. It contains seven chapels pertaining to seven different Langues of the Order, namely, those of Castille, Aragon and Auvergne on the Epistle side, and those of Germany, Italy, France and Provence on the Gospel side. Two other chapels, that of the Blessed Sacrament and that of the Holy Relics, known also as the Anglo - Bavarian Chapel, stand on the right and the left side of the apse respectively.

The barrel-shaped vault of the Church, divided into 6 sections, representing the Precursor's life, was painted directly on stone by the famous artist Mattia Preti, the "Calabrese", one of the best painters of the Italian Seicento.

On every side, carved walls, marble and bronze statues, beautiful paintings and silver works adorn the Temple. Undoubtedly, the most famous embellishment is the precious set of magnificent tapestries — 29 pieces — hanging around the nave, wrought by the renowned Belgian looms of Jodocus de Vos, on subjects mostly taken from the paintings of P.P. Rubens and Poissos.

The pavement is covered with 400 large multi-coloured marble slabs, commemorating the lives and deeds of brave members of St. John's Order, the cream of European aristocracy of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

Within a beautiful marble balustrade one sees the costly High Altar made of lapis-lazuli, onyx and other precious stones, in the middle of which there is the gilt bronze relief of the Last Supper, attributed to Bernini. Two bronze lecterns represent Moses and St. John's Eagle. The Choir with its old carved and gilt wooden stalls and a square lectern in the middle, is dominated by the colossal group of the Baptism of Christ wrought by Giuseppe Mazzuoli, a pupil of Melchierre Gafà, the Maltese sculptor.

In the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, within the historical silver gates, the miraculous Madonna of Carafa, solemnly crowned in 1954, is venerated. In the Chapel of the Relics there are two caskets — one of silver and one of wood — containing many outstanding relics of the Saints.

The Knights of each Langue vied with each other in adorning their respective chapel with marble and bronze statues by outstanding sculptors, such as Mazzuoli, Soldani Benzi and Pradier, and with paintings of renowned artistes, as Preti, Caravaggio, Favray, Penni and Brescianino.

The Oratory, embellished with a carved and gilt-wooden ceiling and paintings by Preti, houses Caravaggio s world-known masterpiece "the Beheading of St. John".

All the Grand Masters from 1530 to 1798 are buried either in the Church or in the Crypt; almost all of them in artistic monuments or sarcophagi.

This Church, founded by Grand Master Jean de la Cassiere, embellished by the Knights and raised to the dignity of co-cathedral by the Holy See, is the pride of the Maltese people and a centre of attraction to foreigners.

PROGRAMME

Overture Suite No. 2 in B Minor	J.S. BACH
Air from Suite No. 3 in D Major	J.S. BACH
Lode a Dio	S. GALEA, O.P.
Messa Santa Lucia "Credo"	L. REFICE
Agnus Dei from L'Arlesienne Suite No. 2	BIZET
The Eternal Triumph	C. PACE
Symphony No. 104 in D Major "The London"	HAYDN

MANOEL THEATRE ORCHESTRA

Leader: GEORGE SPITERI

Conductor: JOSEPH SAMMUT.

Overture Suite No. 2 in B Minor J.S. BACH (1685-1750)

Overture; Rondeau; Sarabande; Bowree I; Bowree II;

Polonaise; Menuet; Badinerie.

Air from Suite No. 3 in D Major J.S. BACH (1685-1750)

The second suite in B Minor, is scored for flute and strings. Its movements include an Overture, Rondo, Sarabande, Bouree, Polonaise, Menuet and Badinerie. Except for the stately overture and the sedate and well mannered Sarabande, the suite is graceful, gay, and vivacious throughout. A conventional suite usually ends with a Gigue, but in this work Bach substituted a sprightly and mischievous Badinerie.

The "Air" in this suite is world famous and one of the most beautiful song movements in the entire realm of orchestra literature; its popularity has been considerably enchanced through Wilhelmj's transcription for the violin, which he called Air For The G String.

LODE A DIO — S. GALEA, O.P.

Originally composed to the words of a Hymn to the Blessed Sacrament ("Tantum Ergo"), "Lode A Dio" (Praise Be To God) is a later title which is more appropriate to the verse by E. Bezzina, O.P., set to the same composition by S.Galea, O.P. Its theme is introduced in unison by the female choir and is then developed in a "fugato" style for the four voices.

MESSA SANTA LUCIA "CREDO" — L. REFICE (1883 - 1954)

This is taken from "Missa in Honorem S. Luciae" which was written about the year 1947 and published in Holland. This movement is written for S.A.T.B. and there are many contrapuntal passages of great beauty. "Et in Spiritum Sanctum" is sung by the Bass Section only, and the full choir then continues uninterrupted to the end.

AGNUS DEI FROM L'ARLESIENNE SUITE No. 2 — BIZET (1838-1875)

For the first performance of Alphonse Daudet's drama L'Arlesienne, in Paris in 1872, Bizet composed incidental music comprising twenty-seven pieces. The best of these were later made into two orchestral Suites.

THE ETERNAL TRIUMPH — C. PACE (1906 -)

"Eternal Triumph" by Carmelo Pace is a cantata, the text of which consists of excerpts from the Bible. It was given its 'debut' on 16th May, 1966, by the Jesus of Nazareth Choir at the Malta Cultural Institute closing concert for the 1965/66 season.

The Choir takes the lead at all times, but the Soprano part provides the desired break in answering the question put to Mary Magdalene: "Tell us, Mary what you saw on the way?" Without a break, the choir then proceeds to depict the solemnity and joy of Easter morning with the appropriate fervour.

SYMPHONY No. 104 IN D MAJOR
"THE LONDON"

HAYDN
(1732 - 1809)

Adagio — Allegro — Andante — Menuetto Allegro — Finale. Spiritoso.

Of all Haydn's slow and solemn symphonic introduction this one, the last, is without question the grandest. The incisive initial, unison phrase is Beethovenian in character, as is also the dynamic contrast between fortissimo and pianissimo at the close. The first subject in the Allegro dominates the movement throughout to the virtual exc'usion of any other thematic material, even goes so far as to say that the first theme does duty for the second subject as well.

The second movement, Andante, is monothematic principle of the first movement which it is carried over into the second and consists in variations and developments of a single subject, embellished by counterpoints and elaborate instrumental figuration. Dramatic developments and conflicts occur midway through the movement, but are resolved in a tranquil close.

The third movement, Menuetto Allegro, is menuet conforming to type, in that the first statement of the theme is succeeded by a sequel which is a development and extension of it. But this particular exemplification of the conventional formula is more symphonic in its developments than usual. The subsequent trio section is in the comparatively remote key of B flat, which is entered abruptly, without any preliminary modulation. It is characterized chiefly by one of these flowing quaver figurations which Haydn so often favours in this section of his menuet movements. But the initial rising minor third recurs throughout the trio.

The fourth movement, Finale: Spiritoso, is one of whose most noteworthy stylistic features consists in clarity of texture, and rapid movement in the parts, the first subject of the final movement is given out by the first violins without any other accompaniment. The form of the movement is no doubt technically a rondo. The second subject appears like the first movement; but with a short scalic quaver motif, which is soon fully worked into an active tutti transition. With this astonishing instrumental gesture concludes his last symphony. Haydn takes rank with the greatest masters in the history of music. There may be others as great: there is assuredly none greater.

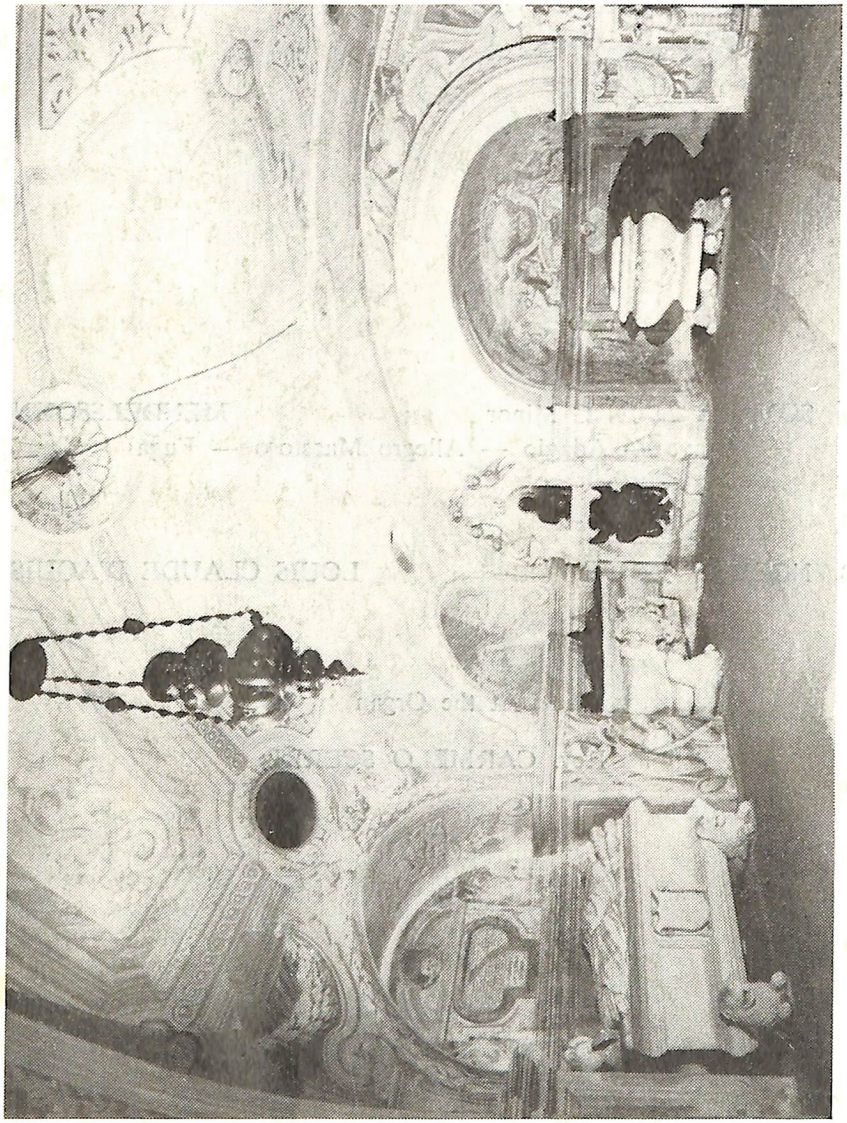
1) SONATA 2a IN C Minor — MENDELSSOHN

Grave — Adagio — Allegro Maestoso — Fuga

2) NOEL — LOUIS CLAUDE D'AQUIS

At the Organ

Rev. CARMELO SCERRI



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