

552

Hayrest Nicolson Zabala
9/10/75

**MALTA INTERNATIONAL
ARTS FESTIVAL 1975**



552

MANOËL THEATRE

The International Arts Festival 1975
is organised by the
Manoel Theatre Management Committee
on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Culture

Management Committee: Hon. President, G Muscat-Azzopardi
Chairman, A Agius Ferrante
Hon. Treasurer, Miss M L Bonnici, LRSM L.Mus.LCM FLCM

Consultants: Richard England, Michael Ellul and
Victor Castillo

Festival Director of Publicity: Victor Lewis FIPR (Tel 73912)

Programme cover design by Richard England.



The Friendly Way to Fly

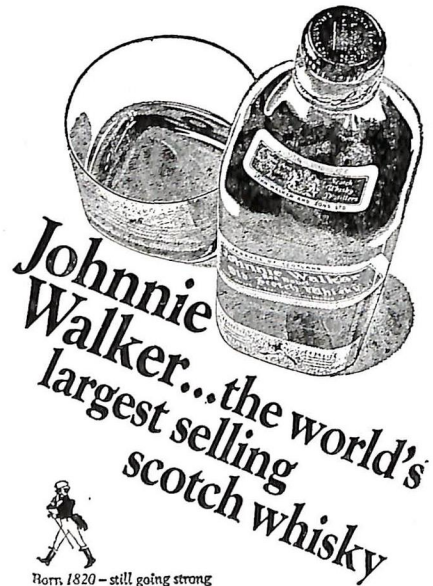


Air Malta flies, from London, Manchester, Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris, Rome, Frankfurt and Tripoli.

Air Malta's crew are an experienced international group. Pilots come from Britain, Scandinavia and Pakistan. Cabin Crews are exclusively Maltese, some of whom have already had many years flying experience, and all of whom are ready to give you a traditionally warm Maltese welcome as soon as you step aboard.

AIRMALTA 

LONDON—BIRMINGHAM—MANCHESTER—ROME—PARIS—FRANKFURT—TRIPOLI



Johnnie Walker...the world's largest selling scotch whisky



Since 1820 - still going strong

Sole Agents:—

Capt. A. Caruana Limited, Kingsway, Valletta

MALTA
INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL 1975

THE MANOEL THEATRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

has pleasure in presenting

A HARP RECITAL

by

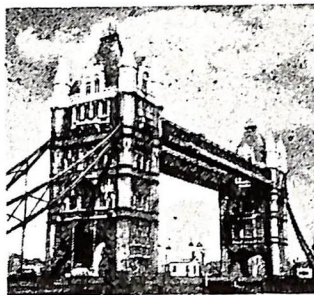
THE CELEBRATED SPANISH HAPIST

NICANOR ZABALETA

THIS IS THE EIGHTH CONCERT IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

*Manoel Theatre
Thursday 9 October 1975
at 7.30 p.m.*





TOWER BRIDGE, LONDON

GET THE BEST OF YOUR HOLIDAY THROUGH UNTOURS

UNTOURS OFFER YOU A
COMPREHENSIVE TRAVEL SERVICE
TO ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD
A CHOICE OF INCLUSIVE HOLIDAYS
IN BRITAIN AND THE CONTINENT.

TRAVEL INSURANCE AND SPECIAL INSURANCE FOR APEX FARES
A VISIT TO LONDON FOR

7 NIGHTS FROM £M64.50	14 NIGHTS FROM £M82.00	LONGER PERIODS IT'S EVEN CHEAPER
-----------------------------	------------------------------	--

INCLUDING RETURN AIR TICKET, ACCOMMODATION
WITH BREAKFAST AND COACH TRANSFERS.

ALL FLIGHTS ARE BY **AIR MALTA**
YOU CAN ALSO FLY APEX TO

LONDON £M49.50	U.S.A. £M163.25	CANADA £M163.25
16 JUN/15 OCT £M55.00	JUL/SEP £M205.20	JUL/SEP £M201.10

PROGRAMMES, BOOKINGS, AND INFORMATION FROM:-

UNTOURS LIMITED

WORKERS' MEMORIAL BUILDING
OLD BAKERY STREET, VALLETTA
TEL: 23640, 24451, 21966

BRANCH OFFICE
66 TOWER ROAD, SLIEMA
TEL: 36477, 36478

NICANOR ZABALETA

NICANOR ZABALETA, born in San Sebastian, began his musical studies at the age of seven and gave his first public concert in his native Spanish city at nine.

Since then he has become celebrated all over the world, performing with more than 200 symphony orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic, Israel Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, NHK of Tokyo, Philadelphia Symphony, the major British orchestras, Warsaw and Budapest Philharmonics, and leading orchestras in the United States. He has taken part in numerous music festivals including Berlin, Casals, Edinburgh, Osaka and Venice.

Music for the harp was scarce when Zabaleta began his career, so he searched through the libraries of Europe discovering little known harp works by Bach's sons, by Beethoven, Handel, Spohr, Viotti and early Spanish and Portuguese composers. Many modern composers of note have written works especially for him.

Says Zabaleta discussing harp music, 'People think of the harp only as an accompanying instrument. On the contrary, it is an instrument with tremendous means of response that allows a great range of nuances. It has, too, a large repertoire. One must take into account that it is one of the oldest instruments. In 1546 the first music for harp was published; there have been thousands of pieces written since'.

Nicanor Zabaleta has a special harp built to his own specifications. Normally a harp has seven pedals to make 'chromaticisme'. Zabaleta's has eight — the additional one to control the vibrations of the lower strings.

The London 'Times' said of him recently — 'Nicanor Zabaleta is one of that select company of artists who, in the course of history, have lifted the instrument of their choice to new honour among men.'

Hector Berlioz, in his 'Memoires' wrote. 'He is the Liszt of the Harp!'



PROGRAMME

*** SUITE (BWV 106a:) extracts

Gavotte en rondeau : Menuet : Gigue

For seven generations the Bachs were a family of professional musicians and Johan Sebastian was in turn choirboy, violinist, organist, court musician and cantor. An indefatigable student, he represents the period when the suite reached its highest point. He wrote several works for the clavichord or harpsichord.

BACH

1685 - 1750

SIX VARIATIONS ON A SWISS THEME, FOR HARP

BEETHOVEN

1770 - 1827

Beethoven has been called the 'Shakespeare of Music' and may be considered as the last of the classical composers and the beginning of the romantics.

Born into a poor but musical family he worked hard to revise his compositions over and over again before he would allow them to be heard in public. He wrote 16 string quartets, nine symphonies, 32 sonatas and a great many other works, including those specially written for the harp.

SONATA IN B FLAT MAJOR, FOR HARP

VIOTTI

1733 - 1824

Allegro brillante : adagio : allegretto

Viotti was a celebrated Italian violinist and composer. A pupil of Pugnani and one of the Piedmontese School, his first performance was at the age of eight, on a small violin bought at a village fair. In time he came to be regarded as the father of violin technique of his period. He was the first to apply the 'sonata form' to the concertos. He published 29 concertos, many great duets, quartets and other chamber music. It is to Viotti that the modern bow is due.

ARIA AND VARIATIONS

KRUMPHOLZ

1745 - 1790

Johann Baptist Krumpholz was a celebrated harpist and composer. The son of a bandmaster in a French regiment, he lived in Paris from childhood, learning music from his father.

PARTITA IN C MAJOR

Preludio : Pasapié : Arieta : Tocatta en rondo

This work was dedicated to Nicanor Zabaleta.

BACARISSE

1858 - 1963

Two Impressionists

UNE CHATELAINE EN SA TOUR. OP 110 (P. Verlaine)

FAURE

1845 - 1924

Gabriel-Urbain Faure for thirty years held a series of positions connected with church music, culminating in the position of organist at the Madeleine. He became a professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire, of which he was also a director. His compositions were numerous. His songs are important; so is his opera and chamber music. His style is a logical and balanced one, his music flowing easily yet attaining finish — qualities considered as 'classical' as in fact, they are, but the general bent of Faure's mind was romantic.

VERS LA SOURCE DANS LE BOIS

TOURNIER

1879 - 1951

MALAGUENA

ALBENIZ

1866 - 1900

Isaac Albeniz was born in Catalonia, a Spaniard, who became famous as a pianist but who, perhaps more importantly, as one of the first Spanish composers of importance, turned to account in developed composition the native rhythm and melodic phraseology. He first appeared as a pianist at the age of four and when he was nine years old gave recitals all over Spain. His work includes a number of musical comedies, preludes, mazurkas, capricios, suites for the piano and other works for orchestra. His music is filled with the warm and sinuous melodies, pulsating rhythms and brilliant harmonic colours of Andalusian folksongs and dances.

ZARAGOZA

ALBENIZ

This is another typical example of the composer's national compositions in the dance style.

INTERVAL

***This is a transcription for harp — probably by Bach himself — of his Partita in E Major (BWV 1006) for violin solo.

THE MANOEL THEATRE

IT IS VARIOUSLY CLAIMED that the Manoel Theatre in Valletta, focal point of this International Arts Festival after the opening concerts in Mdina, is 'the third oldest theatre in Europe' and 'the oldest theatre in the Commonwealth'. However that may be, the fact is it dates back to the earlier decades of the eighteenth century, when the Grandmaster of the Knights of St John of that time, one Antonio Manoel de Vilhena, decided one March day of 1731 to build a public theatre — mostly out of his own pocket — 'for the honest recreation of the people', a purpose which is recorded to this day in a Latin inscription above the main entrance.

That there was a demand for such an institution was certain, for drama and opera had flourished — and continued to flourish — through all the years of the Sovereign Military Order's rule over the island. The vows of charity and chastity to which the Knights were committed did not prevent them from indulging in theatrical activities and it is on record that at the various Auberges (headquarters), and in the open, pageants, operas and dramatic offerings were put on by amateurs and professionals and a love for the theatre had spread through the population.

Grandmaster de Vilhena was no time waster and the building of the theatre started the very day the deed of transfer for the site was signed. In ten months the job was finished. The original interior, constructed entirely of wood, was similar in design to the Palermo theatre of that time and is generally believed to have been modelled on it, being semi-circular with straight sides projecting to the stage. There have, of course, been many

alterations through the years, bringing the auditorium to its present effective oval shape.

Originally it was called, prosaically, 'Public Theatre'. Later it bore the title of 'Theatre Royal' but eventually and rightly, in 1866, in tribute to its founder, it became and has remained the Manoel Theatre.

The first night of all first nights was on 9 January 1732 with a presentation of 'Merope', a grand tragedy in the classic style, by Scippione Maffei. The setting was designed by Francois Moudion, who was the architect of the Order of St John, and it was played by the Knights.

The theatre was run by a Senior Knight of the Order, who bore the title of 'Protettore' and managed the house generally, approved each season's programme of plays (in the main lyric opera and French tragedy), acted as censor and dealt with 'difficulties' which arose from time to time betwixt impressario, performer and subscriber. Maltese playwrights and opera composers gradually earned their place alongside foreign authors and it was a Maltese — Nicolò Isouard, also known as Nicolò di Malta — who eventually became Commissioner (new name for Protettore) during Napoleon's siege of Valletta in the last two years of the eighteenth century.

Despite his great faith in the power of the stage Isouard was fighting a losing battle. For a time the theatre carried on notwithstanding the near starvation of the garrison and the besieged population, and 'despite the occasional shots from the Maltese mortars that passed over the roof of the building'. But there came the time when the players could no longer bear the strains of war as their dwindling wages proved insufficient for survival, let alone for the rigour of singing and acting. An amateur group, fired by the desire to keep up morale, took over and 'the show went on' until the siege was raised. But dark days followed for the Manoel.

With the arrival of the British the Theatre came to life again and throughout the first half of the nineteenth century there was a nine-months season of opera each year from September to May. There were nights of splendour, like the fourth of December 1838, when this jewel-box of a theatre shone in all its pristine glory when Queen Adelaide, widow of King

William IV, came with cheers, anthems and a guard of honour to see a performance of 'Lucia di Lamermoor'.

Strangely it was the very prosperity of the latter years of the nineteenth century which brought the eclipse of the Manoel Theatre. The large garrison, the fleet, and an increasing number of tourists, rendered the theatre inadequate. In 1861 it became private property. With the proceeds of the sale a new Opera House was built and Grandmaster Antonio Manoel de Vilhena's little house fell into disuse. For a period it was a doss-house for beggars. And then, suddenly, some of the old glory returned when the Royal Opera House was destroyed by fire in 1873. Grand opera replaced the evicted beggars until the Opera House was reconstructed and then the once loved little place in Theatre Street looked to be on its deathbed. It served, fitfully, as dance hall and, in this century, as cinema.

But then, once more, the fate of the Opera House brought revival to the Manoel. The former was completely destroyed in the Second World War. Dreams of bringing the Manoel back to life turned to reality when the Malta Government acquired the building in response to public appeals. Experts from Britain and Italy were called in and under their supervision and with loving care the delicate process of restoration was carried out by Maltese artisans.

All sorts of technical improvements were made on stage and back stage, with the lighting and an enlarged orchestra pit. Comfortable stalls replaced the old wooden seats and there was a rearrangement of boxes. But, in particular, the once lovely decoration of the auditorium was restored from behind the grime and whitewash and even paint which had for so long hidden the theatre's beauty. Inch by inch the great ceiling with its 22 carat gilding was restored; the dozens of tiny attractive panels and paintings which decorated the tiers of boxes were brought to life again. This jewel box of great warmth and beauty glowed with a radiance deeply moving to those who had seen their theatre in distress. More than two hundred thousand pounds sterling were spent on re-acquisition and restoration.

Came one splendid December night in 1960 and a grand opening performance — the famous Ballet Rambert company's presentation of 'Coppelia'. And on all sides there were gasps of

delight as the audience walked in to find this new and shining jewel in Malta's national heritage.

'The Manoel' is now officially Malta's National Theatre. The duties of the early Protettores are now entrusted to a Management Committee who run the theatre on a non-profit basis. Under their guidance the theatre has maintained a very high standard. International celebrities who have graced its stage include the like of Yehudi Menuhin, Rostropovitch, Boris Christoff, Leon Goosens, Richter, the Berlin State Opera Ballet; Sir Donald Wolfitt, Margaret Rutherford, John Neville, Louis Kentner, Moura Lympany, John Ogdon, Ram Gopal and a host of others, to say nothing of a great deal of local talent including distinguished concerts by the Manoel Theatre's resident orchestra.

By the end of this International Arts Festival a whole gallery of famous names will have been added to those who have graced the Manoel — solo performers and companies from many nations taking part in this Festival organised for the Ministry of Education and Culture by the theatre's Management Committee whose only reward is the satisfaction of their devotion to the furtherance of that enterprise first created by Grandmaster Manoel de Vilhena 'for the honest recreation of the people'.

Victor Lewis.

OCTOBER FESTIVAL DIARY

- 14 — *Another outstanding night,
with a world renowned guitarist*
ALIRIO DIAZ VENEZUELA
- 16 — *A Piano and Violin Recital by the talented*
CLEMENS LESKE and BERYL KIMBER AUSTRALIA
- 20 — 21 *Tel Aviv's unique Mime*
SAMY MOLCHO ISRAEL
- 22 *Prague's popular string instrumentalists,*
FOERSTER TRIO CZECHOSLOVAKIA
- 24 — 25 *The brilliant choral group singing everything
from medieval music to jazz,*
THE SCHOLARS GREAT BRITAIN
- 27 — *A Clarinet Recital by*
AURELIAN-OCTAV POPA RUMANIA

Australia
Bulgaria
Czechoslovakia
Denmark
France
Germany
Holland
India
Israel
Italy
Malta
Roumania
(Bucharest)
Spain
United Kingdom
U.S.A.
Venezuela

