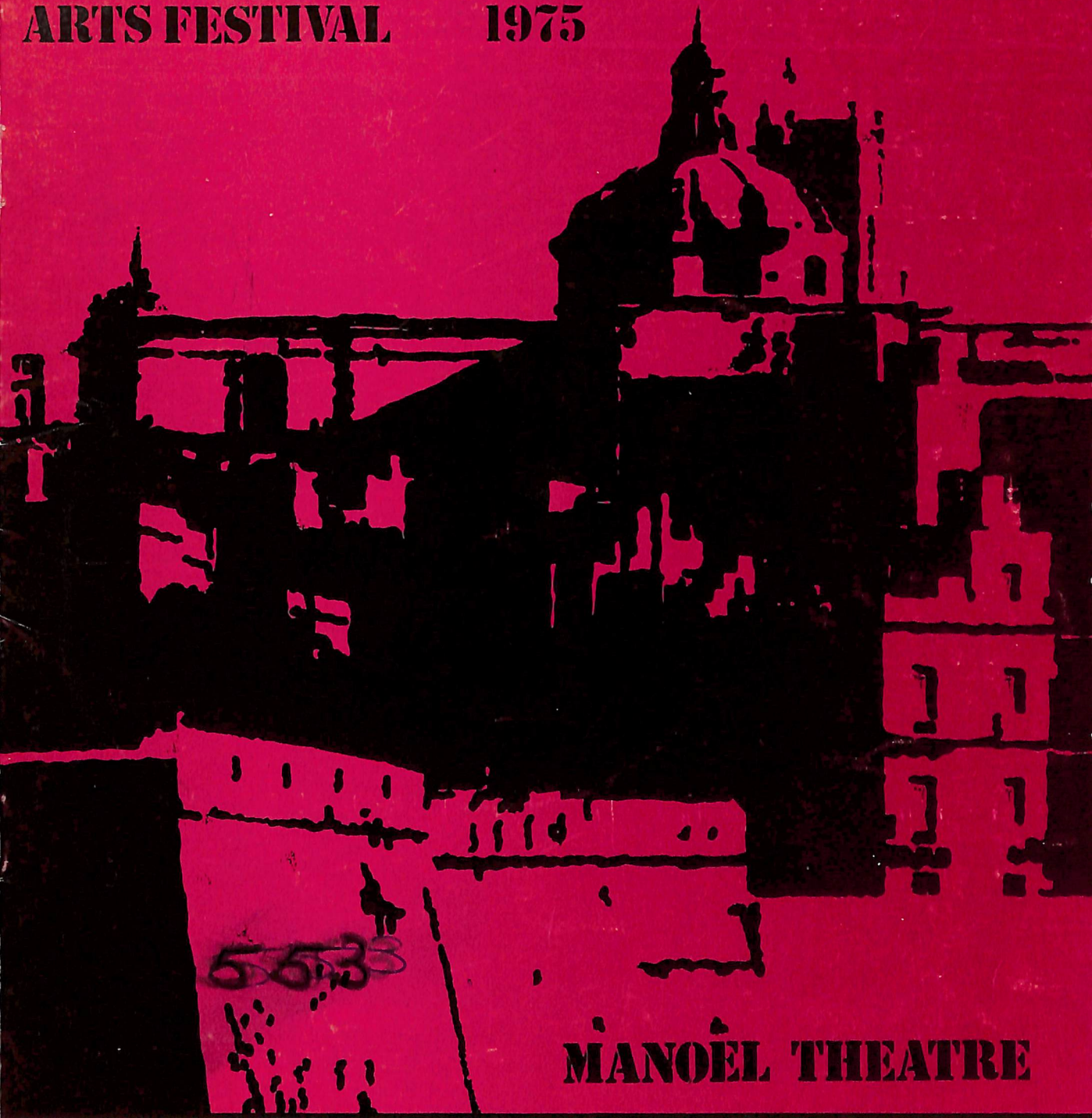


Suntant Almo Diaz  
14/10/75

**MALTA INTERNATIONAL  
ARTS FESTIVAL 1975**



**MANOEL 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

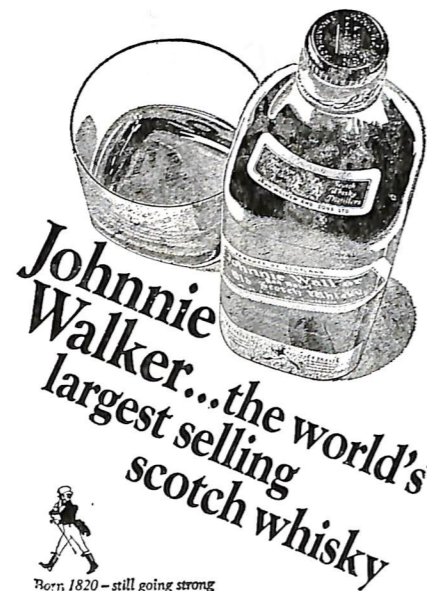


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## INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL 1975

THE MANOEL THEATRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

*presents*

THE WORLD FAMOUS  
VENEZUELAN GUITARIST

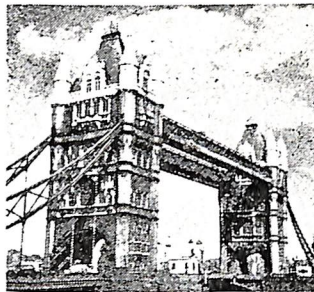
# ALIRIO DIAZ

IN A SPECIAL FESTIVAL RECITAL

THIS IS THE NINTH CONCERT IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

*Manoel Theatre  
Tuesday 14 October  
at 7.30 p.m.*





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## ALIRIO

**DIAZ** is one of the greatest and most influential guitarists of his generation. Born in Carora, Venezuela in 1923, he studied at the Caracas Conservatory of Music before going to Madrid to become a pupil of Regino Sainz de la Maza at the Royal Conservatory — the direct result of winning a scholarship after his first public concert. In Madrid he won top awards and went on to the Accademia Chigiana of Siena as a student under the great Andres Segovia. He became not only Segovia's most outstanding pupil but, later, the great master's assistant, eventually succeeding to his Chair of Classical Guitar.

Diaz now lives in Rome and divides his time between concert tours of every continent, masterclasses at musical centres throughout the world, and research into the history of the guitar and its music. His researches into old musical texts, which he brings to life with new guitar interpretations, are done with that seriousness and profundity which are essential elements in his personal character.

Segovia once described him as 'first and foremost a serious and reflective musician whose emotional depth flows with ease through his finger, thanks to his well developed instrumental technique. I had the pleasure of seeing him become a real master.'

The Venezuelan National Institute of Culture and Fine Arts this April held in his honour an 'Alirio Diaz International Guitar Contest'. His records include the Rodrigo and Giuliani concertos and one of the most influential guitar records ever issued — 'Four Centuries of the Classic Spanish Guitar'. Diaz was chosen to inaugurate the BBC's hugely successful 'Guitar' series on Radio 3.

With best wishes...  
*Alirio Diaz*



# PROGRAMME

## ROMANESCA AND FANTASIA

*This piece from the vast 16 century repertoire of the lute, was researched by Alirio Diaz and adapted for the guitar.*

## FOUR DANCES

Pavane — Spagnoletta — Marizapalos — Canarios

*Gaspar Sanz was a 17th century guitar player of note, and a composer. A considerable technician, he published, in 1694, an important book on guitar playing.*

## ALLEMANDE

Corrente — Bourée — Fuga

*Bach was a modest, home-loving man, sensitive and with the highest artistic ideals. He loved his fatherland and his countrymen. His home, his religion and his art were the watchwords of his life and he once said in a preface on four-part writing, 'The end and aim . . . should be the honour of God and the reaction of the mind; where those are not the moving springs there is no real music, but a devilish jabbering and barrel-organ playing'. Allemande is a binary form dance, in common time, fairly brisk.*

## SUITE CLASSICA

Preludio — Allemande — Sarabande — Gavotte — Giga

*Manuel Ponce was born in Mexico. He studied in Italy and Germany and then returned to win, in time, high regard as composer, as collector of Mexican folk songs and as orchestra conductor. His song, 'Estrellita', won universal popularity. He composed a guitar concerto for the great Segovia.*

## ALONSO DE MUDARRA

c.1510 - 1570

## GASPAR SANZ

1640 - 1710

## J. S. BACH

1685 - 1750

## MANUEL PONCE

1886 - 1948

## TWO PIECES

*Manuel de Falla, born in Cadiz, was a pupil of Pedrell, founder of the Modern National Spanish School. A keen student of native folk song, he organised festivals. In the literary subject-matter and musical idiom of his compositions he stood out as a strong representative of national musical aspiration. He was not a prolific or fluent writer and took the greatest care to revise and polish his compositions before they reached the public. In his Harpsichord Concerto and some other of his later works he used pungent and personal harmonies. His gift for the subtle use of orchestral colour was an outstanding quality.*

*In 1929 Falla was invited to write a piece of music as a tribute to Debussy. He wrote 'Homage', an elegy for guitar.*

## HOMAGE TO MANUEL DE FALLA

## ASTORIAS (Legenda)

*Albeniz had an adventurous life, appearing as a pianist at the age of four, being refused admission to the Paris Conservatory as being too young (he was seven when he applied). He later studied in Madrid and by the time he was 13 he had 'played his way' round South America and elsewhere. Back in Europe Pedrell convinced him of the artistic and musical significance of Spanish folk song and dance, and he turned serious composer of national Spanish music. He eventually became the first major creative figure in the Spanish national school, which was soon to include such as Manuel de Falla.*

## SIX SOUTH AMERICAN PIECES

CHORO (H. Villa-Lobos).

VALZER (H. Fernandez)

DANZA PARAGUAYANA (A. Barrios)

CUECA CILENA (Anon.)

NORTEGNA (J. Gomez Crespo)

DANZA VENEZUELANA (A. Lauro)

*Villa-Lobos was a prolific Brazilian composer. Some of his most popular works are in forms of his own invention, including the choros. These six rarely heard pieces are from Alirio Diaz's personal collection.*

## MANUEL DE FALLA

1876 - 1946

## JOAQUIN RODRIGO

1902 -

## ISAAC ALBENIZ

1860 - 1909

INTERVAL

# THE MANOEL THEATRE

**I**T 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 mani 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

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*The Manoel Theatre Management Committee is pleased to present the following artists for the pleasure of their patrons during October.*

- 16 — *A Piano and Violin Recital by the talented*  
**CLEMENS LESKE and BERYL KIMBER** **AUSTRALIA**
18. *The Manoel Theatre Orchestra,  
The Chorus Melitensis,  
Catherine Azzopardi, Andrew Sapiano,  
Joe Vella Bondin and Joe Fenech in*  
**A VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL CONCERT** **MALTA**
- 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**



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Denmark

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Holland

India

Israel

Italy

Malta

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(Bucharest)

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Venezuela

