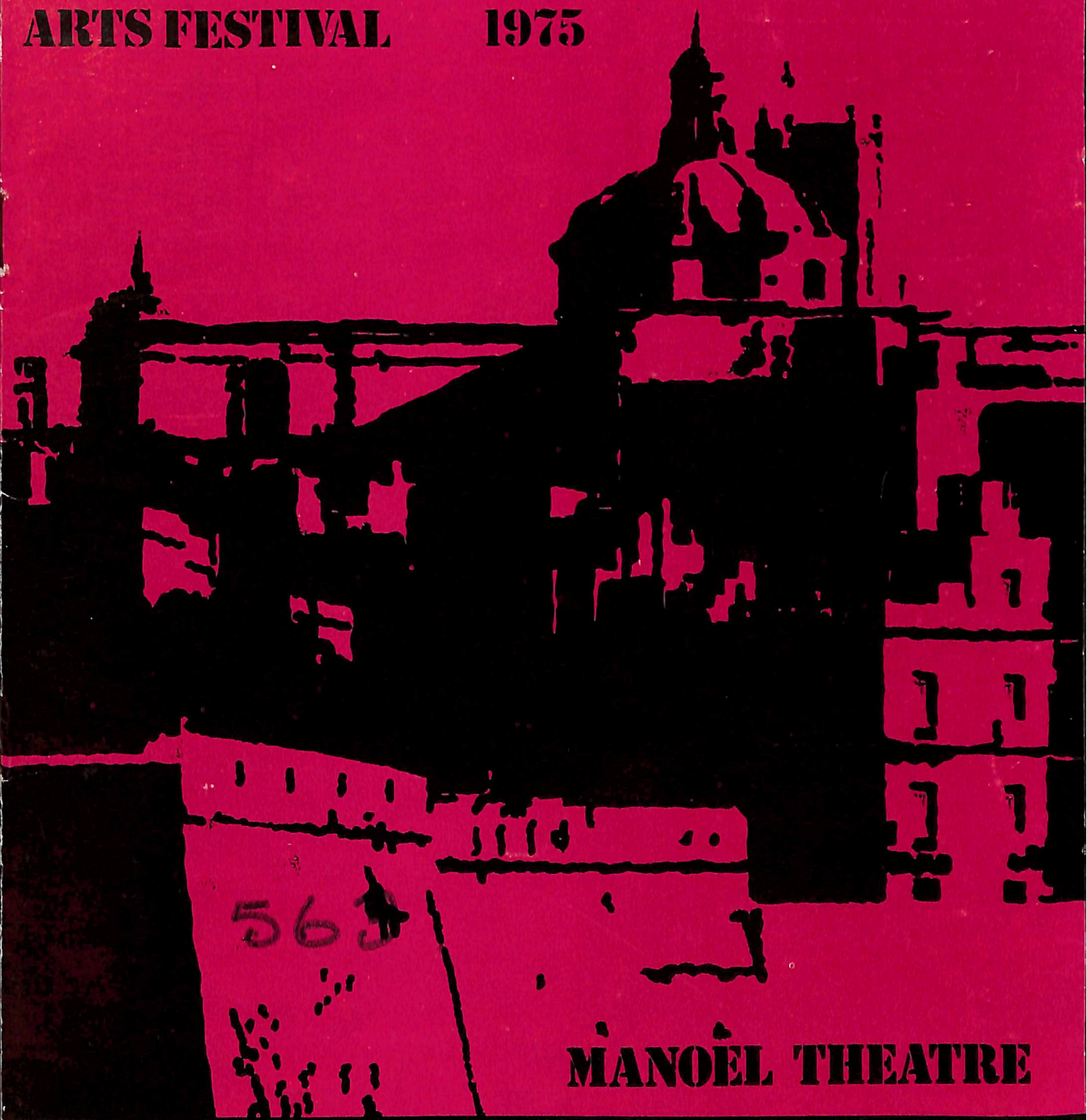


Cello and Piano Recital  
17th Nov 75

**MALTA INTERNATIONAL  
ARTS FESTIVAL 1975**



563

**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 PIPR (Tel. 73912)

Programme cover design by Richard England.

# THIS WEEK AT THE DRAGONARA

## Curry Luncheon

Every Sunday in the  
Mediterranean Room  
12.30 p.m. — 2.30 p.m. £M1.75 per person  
Spiro will entertain you  
on the Grand Piano

## Dinner Dancing

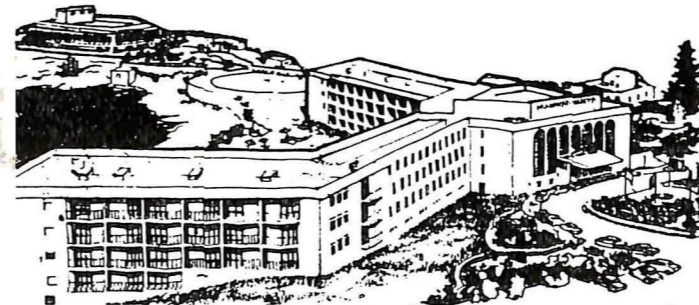
Every Wednesday and Saturday  
in the Mediterranean Room  
Music by the Black Sorrows

## Afternoon Teas

Daily in the Grapevine  
between 4 and 5.30 p.m.

## Tamarisk Bar

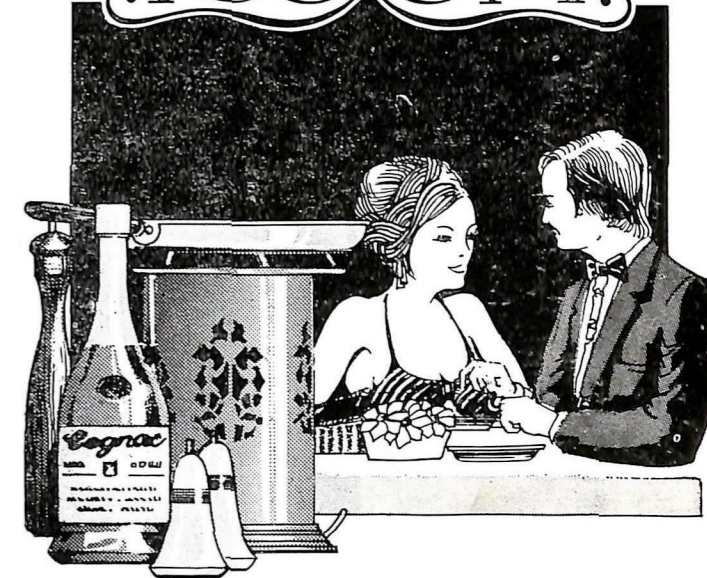
Complete your evening out with a drink in  
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Music by The Val Valente Quartet  
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**MALTA**  
**INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL 1975**

*THE MANOEL THEATRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE*  
*in association with the*  
*ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI CULTURA*

**BENEDETTO MAZZACURATI**

CELLO  
and

**VAIRO FOGOLA**

PIANO  
in a

**DUO RECITAL**

THIS IS THE 33rd EVENT IN THE ARTS FESTIVAL

*Manoel Theatre*  
*Monday 17 November*  
*at 7.30 pm*



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## BENEDETTO MAZZACURATI

studied at Bologna. He obtained his Diploma at the age of 15, quickly earned a reputation and began his concert career at 20. For several years he taught the 'cello at the School of Music in Turin and then went to the Conservatory at Bologna.

In 1949 he was among the founders of the string group 'I Virtuosi di Roma', in whose concerts he participated as 'cello soloist. He has taken part in orchestral concerts, as soloist, under such famous directors as Munch, De Sabata, Herbert von Karajan, Barbirolli and Mitropoulos. He has been president of the Filarmonic Academy of Bologna and has taught at the Academy Chigiana of Siena.

*Benedetto Mazzacurati*

## VAIRA FOGOLA

Vaira Fogola was born in Turin and studied under Luigi Perrachio. She did further studies under Walter Schaufuss, Bonini and Jacques Février. She has taken part in many concerts and recitals in Paris, Zurich, Rome, Milan, Venice and on Italian and Swiss television, and has been the pianist with Benedetto Mazzacurati for several years.

*Vaira Fogola*



# PROGRAMME

## TOCCATA

*The Toccata for 'cello and piano begins with a 'grave' of ten beats which serve as an introduction to the 'allegro giusto', that is, the real toccata given in the beginning in the form of a canon. Before the end we are given again a reduced version of the 'grave', pouring itself again into the 'allegro' in canon through a consistent cadential part whose characteristic are the tremolo of the pianoforte and the scale, first ascending and then descending, of the violincello.*

## SONATA No 2 IN G MAJOR

Allegro: Largo: Allegro

*The first movement starts with an energetic and vibrating theme which dissolves itself across a passage whose rhythmical element is the triplet in a tender and gentle theme adorned with thrills and chromatic passes.*

*The largo in F which follows has a hurried beginning in syncopation and envelopes the melody in a floridness of a virtuosic character which, however, does not take away its limpid clearness. The end is an allegro, both vivacious and graceful*

## ADAGIO CON VARIAZIONI

*Originally composed for 'cello and orchestra, in 1920, Respighi produced, a year later, a version in which the orchestra was replaced by the piano. The theme in B major expresses itself passionately on a pizzicato bass which for twelve beats goes up and down the remarkable sequence of 96 quavers.*

*For the variations — not all of them in the initial tonality — the theme is taken over by the piano to allow the 'cello to go its own way in evolutive formula, thus building up an animated rapport between the two instruments.*

## G. FRESCOBALDI

1583 - 1643

## L. BOCCHERINI

1743 - 1805

## O. RESPIGHI

1879 - 1936

## NINNA - NANNA

## MINUETTO ALL'ANTICA

## CANTO NOSTALGICO

*These three short pieces by Mazzacurati, the 'cellist in tonight's recital, are interesting and significant pictures in sound. The Ninna-Nanna, which was inspired by the Castello di Gradara, unfolds itself in a calm and monotonous 4/8, beginning with a thematic-rhythmic cell obsessively repeated. The old fashioned Minuetto, composed in Siena, is a delicate page of instrumental music in G major. The Nostalgic Melody, a sad allegretto written in Cairo, justifies the title with its various themes which go from the floating initial rhythm to the finale of the pianoforte, spaced with short cadences of the violincello, to the main lamenting theme given on a base barcarolle style.*

## B. MAZZACURATI

## INTERVAL

## SONATA IN G MINOR Op 65

Allegro moderato: Scherzo: Largo:  
Finale Allegro

*The last work published during the composer's life, it is held that this Sonata 'is a step to an evolution of the syntatic elements on the lines indicated by the style of the fourth Ballad and the Barcarolle. Only one step separates the Sonata from the chamber music of the beginning of the 20th century'.*

*While the part of the 'cello is completely independent and the virtuosic possibilities of the instrument are used to the full, the part of the piano is not secondary. The first movement shows us at once that we are dealing with Chopin, thanks to an analogy (even if only of a few notes which are not very exact) with the first movement of the Concerto No. 2 in F Minor.*

*From the Scherzo, remarkable for its melodious parts, we go on to the Largo, a 'dolce' and 'cantabile' with an intonation and writing in the style of Brahms.*

*In the last movement it is essential to follow the magnificent sequence of quavers and semiquavers accompanied by triplets on the pianoforte, which starts on beat 61.*

## CHOPIN

1810 - 1849

# 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 main lyric opera and French tragedy), acted as censor and dealt with 'difficulties' which arose from time to time betwixt impresario, 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 the French occupation of Malta 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.*

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