

Therese Susuath.  
15th Dec. 1975.

**MALTA INTERNATIONAL  
ARTS FESTIVAL 1975**



572

**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.

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Every Sunday in the  
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12.30 p.m. — 2.30 p.m. £M1.75 per person  
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## Dinner Dancing

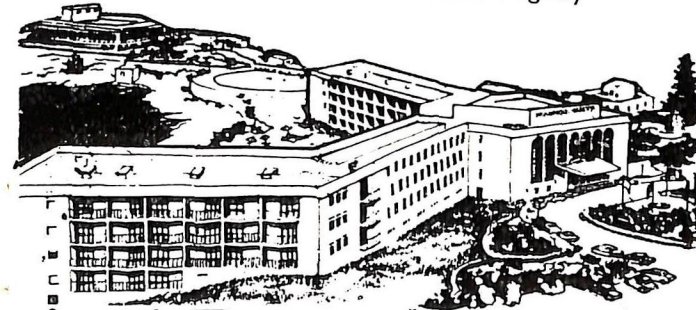
Every Wednesday and Saturday  
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## Afternoon Teas

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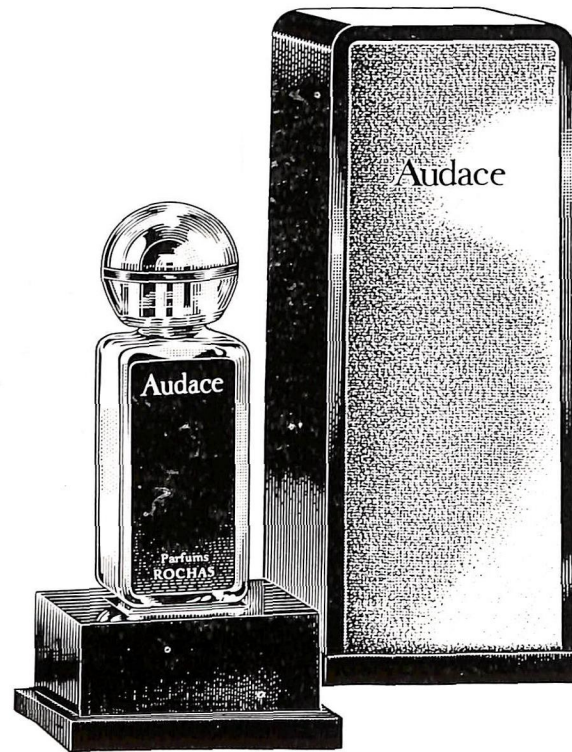
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**THERESE DUSSAUT**

IN A RECITAL OF SOME OF THE MUSIC OF  
**MAURICE RAVEL**

BORN 1875

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*The Manoel Theatre*  
*Monday 15 December 1975*



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## THERESE DUSSAUT

*Thérèse Dussaut has shown since early childhood an exceptional gift for music. She was warmly encouraged by Marguerite Long and studied under the guidance of that great artist.*

*At twelve she was admitted to the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique, in Paris, where at fourteen she was awarded a 'Premier Prix de Piano' after studying under M. Pierre Pasquier.*

*After further studies with Marguerite Long she studied abroad under Louis Hiltbrand and Vladimir Horowitz and became the latter's student after a stay in Germany where, at seventeen, she brilliantly won the 'International First Grand Prix of Munich'.*

*Thérèse Dussaut is a soloist of the great Paris music societies (Pasedeloup, Lamoureux, Orchestre National et Philharmonique) and of a number of*

*foreign orchestras.*

*She has performed under the baton of conductors such as Jean Fournet, Rudolph Alberth, George Tzipine,*

*Marian Lewandowski, Louis Auria-combe, Robert Heger, Manuel Rosenthal, Iosif Conta, Emmanuel Elenesco, Hans Muller-Kray, Enrique Jorda, Milan Horvat, Mircea Cristesco, Theodore Vavayannis and E Garcia Asencio, and has played in many countries, including Germany, Great Britain, Benelux, Greece, Rumania.*

*Tonight's concert in Malta is the last stage of a world-wide tour which has*

*included Finland, Portugal, Spain, the United States, Japan, Iran, Israel, Italy and Greece.*

*This started in London in March to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Maurice Ravel.*



*Thérèse Dussaut*

PROGRAMME  
**MAURICE RAVEL**  
1875 – 1937

LE TOMBEAU DE COUPERIN

Prelude; fugue; forlane; rigaudon; menuet; toccata

*This suite of dances was first performed in 1919 in Paris by the famous pianist Marguerite Long.*

*Maurice Ravel dedicated it to his friends who died on the field of honour in the First World War.*

*The final toccata is dedicated to one of them, Joseph de Marliave, who was Marguerite Long's husband.*

SERENADE GROTESQUE

*This was Ravel's first contribution to piano music. Its prevailing Spanish character, with the imitation of guitar playing and flamenco singing, heralds 'l'Alborada del gracioso'; its ironic overtones are to be met with later in 'Scarbo'.*

*'Serenade Grotesque', though it appeared in 'La Revue Musicale' of December 1938, was not published until 1975 on the occasion of the centenary of the Composer's birth.*

PAVANE POUR UNE INFANTE DEFUNTE

*This pavane, full of charm, and whose very title was a clever choice, immediately had a strong public appeal.*

*Ravel wrote an orchestral version in 1912 but seemed rather bored by his own success. He would have preferred less infatuation with this piece and more attention and understanding for other more genuine works.*

JEUX D'EAU

*Franz Liszt had paved the way with 'Jeux d'eau de la Villa d'Este' and 'Au bord d'une source'. But Ravel's approach is quite different: rather than a description, it is a musical notation of the feelings experienced when looking at lively jets of water playing with the light... new born springs whose murmuring voices are muffled further downstream by mossy banks... cascades roaring amid a motionless haze haloed with a rainbow...*

*This work is particularly important in that it added a great deal to piano technique. Ravel himself once said "Jeux d'Eau" is the source of all the novelties in piano music that critics have commended in my work.'*

INTERVAL

MIROIRS

*'A set of pieces that mark in my harmonic evolution a rather important change which has disconcerted even those musicians most accustomed to my style' — RAVEL*

*This suite, typical of Ravel in its impressionism, is made up of five pieces each bearing an evocative title—*

*'Noctuelles' — conjuring up the unsettled flight of moths.*

*'Oiseaux tristes' — the melancholy cry of a bird... and the languid atmosphere of a tropical forest overwhelmed with torpor.*

*'Une barque sur l'océan' — 'As soft as a call'; that is how Ravel wished this piece to be played. The thousand different aspects of the sea are displayed here and some critics were a bit baffled: 'the trouble is that the scene changes all the time; it is not a picture, it is a wild kaleidoscope; one simply does not know what the weather is like on that ocean.'*

*'La vallée des cloches' — a contemplative calm which leads to a restrained and purified lyricism.*

*'Alborada del gracioso' — the 'Gracioso' is a stereotyped character of the Spanish theatre — a kind of anti-hero, a wit and a poet; half joking, half sincere, he seems to laugh at his own sentimentality.*

*This splendid piece shows how successfully Ravel was able to grasp the salient features of popular music.*

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# 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 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 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 dosshouse 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 white wash 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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