

Carl Cloped  
Suddenly at Home  
4-7 Dec 75

**MALTA INTERNATIONAL  
ARTS FESTIVAL 1975**



569

**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.



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# MALTA INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL 1975

*Carl Clopet*

**CARL CLOPET PRODUCTIONS LTD.**

*in association with*

**FONDA PRODUCTIONS and JULIAN CLOPET**

*present*

## SUDDENLY AT HOME

*a thriller*

**BY FRANCIS DURBRIDGE**

**DIRECTED BY ANTHONY WOODRUFFE**

**THIS IS THE 4th EVENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL**

*Manoel Theatre  
Thursday 4 December &  
Saturday 6 December at  
Sunday 7 December at 4.30 and 8.30 pm*



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JOAN RICE (below).

has starred in many plays and films. In the latter she played 'Maid Marian' with Richard Todd in 'Robin Hood' and, among others, with Burt Lancaster in 'Emperor Jones'.

Her stage appearances have included 'Mrs De Winter' in 'Rebecca' and a starring role in 'A View From The Bridge'. Recently she played with Rupert Davies in 'A Journey Round Father'.

Miss Rice plays Clare Dorlaton-Finch in 'There's a Girl in my Soup' and the important and exacting role of 'Sheila Wallis' in 'Suddenly at Home'.

*Joan Rice*

DEBORAH WATLING (above).

co-producer with Carl F Clopét of 'The Girl in my Soup', the first of the two plays presented by the company in the International Arts Festival, and player of the exacting role, is one of Britain's most promising young stars. She has played 'The Girl in my Soup' for many performances and her London West End stage appearances include 'The Wizard of Oz' at Victoria Palace, and the lead in 'Who Was That Lady'.

She has starred in films with David Essex and Ringo Starr in 'That 'Il Be The Day', and opposite Cliff Richard in 'Take Me High', earning the London 'Evening Standard' Award as the most promising newcomer in films 1974.

Miss Watling also plays 'Helen Tenby' in the second Clopét production, 'Suddenly at Home'.





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**PETER FONTAINE** *plays*  
the part of 'Sam Blaine' and appeared  
as Robert Danvers in the earlier *Clopët*  
production of 'There's a Girl in my  
Soup' From 1946 he spent five years in  
weekly 'rep' and appeared in more than  
200 plays. His London West End cre-  
dits include 'Fallen Angels' with Her-  
mione Gingold and Hermione Badde-  
ley; 'The Non Resident' with Gordon  
Harker; and 'Strange Journey'.

He went to America in 1956 and  
appeared in more than 100 films, as  
well as numerous television plays, and  
once had the unique opportunity of  
dubbing the voice of Frank Sinatra, in  
'English' (not singing). He is currently  
appearing in 'The Dame of Sark' at  
the Royal Theatre, Windsor.



**ANTHONY WOODRUFFE**

Producer

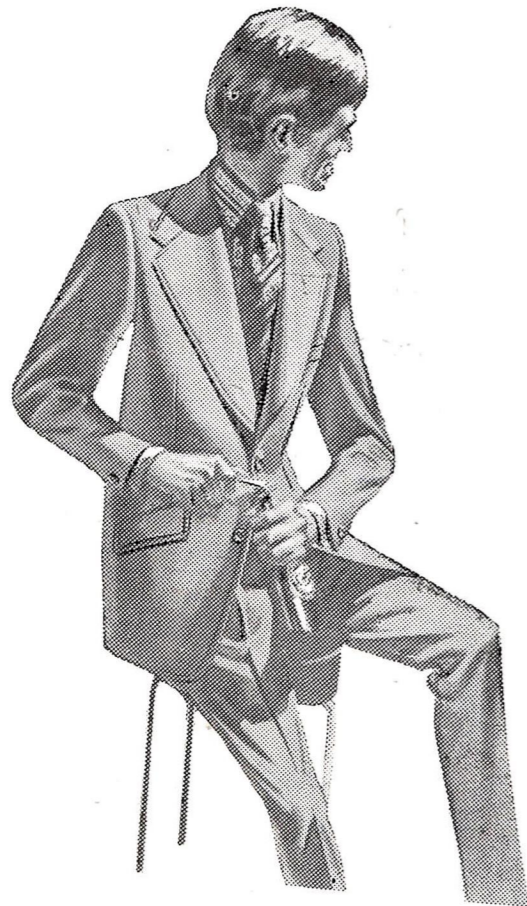
*who produces 'Suddenly at Home', while at Oxford University, joined the OUDS. He worked at the Oxford Playhouse before being called up for war service. Since the end of the war he has played in all media — stage, radio, television. Recently he played in 'Suddenly at Home' in England, Wales, Holland and Belgium, played the Marquess of Queensbury in 'The Trials of Oscar Wilde' at the Oxford Theatre Festival and at Leicester in Noel Coward's 'Blithe Spirit'.*

*Recent television appearances include 'Upstairs, Downstairs', 'Crown Court', 'Sykes and a Bus', 'Intimate Strangers', 'War and Peace', 'Edward VII', 'Softly, Softly' and, with Michael Crawford in 'Some Mother do 'Ave 'Em'.*

*He plays 'Appleton' in tonight's play and appears in 'There's a Girl in my Soup' as 'Porter'.*

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# SUDDENLY AT HOME

By Francis Durbridge

## THE CAST

(In order of their appearance)

<i>Maggie Howard</i>	<i>Myrtle Moss</i>	<b>MYRTLE MOSS</b>
<i>Helen Tenby</i>		<b>DEBORAH WATLING</b>
<i>Ruth Belcher</i>	<i>Jennie Anderson</i>	<b>JENNIE ANDERSON</b>
<i>Sam Blaine</i>		<b>PETER FONTAINE</b>
<i>Sheila Wallis</i>		<b>JOAN RICE</b>
<i>Glenn Howard</i>	<i>Robert Tunstall</i>	<b>ROBERT TUNSTALL</b>
<i>Appleton</i>	<i>Anthony Woodruffe</i>	<b>ANTHONY WOODRUFFE</b>
<i>Remick</i>		<b>KENNETH OXTOBY</b>

DIRECTED BY ANTHONY WOODRUFFE

The action passes in the living room of the Howards' flat

ACT I Scene 1: A Tuesday evening in early January  
Scene 2: The following afternoon  
Scene 3: Several hours later  
Scene 4: Later the same night

ACT II Scene 1: Thursday morning  
Scene 2: Thursday evening  
Time — the present

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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 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 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.



# 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

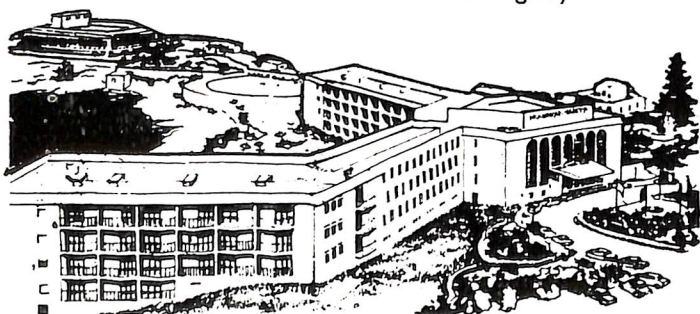
Every Wednesday and Saturday  
in the Mediterranean Room  
Music by the Black Sorrows

## Afternoon Teas

Daily in the Grapevine  
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## Tamarisk Bar

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## FESTIVAL DIARY

**MONDAY 8 DECEMBER**

*A Concert by the WOMEN'S CHAMBER  
ORCHESTRA OF SOFIA*

**BULGARIA**

**SUNDAY 14 DECEMBER**

*\*The GERMAN OPERA BALLET COMPANY W. GERMANY*  
(In association with the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany)

**MONDAY 15 DECEMBER**

*A PIANOFORTE RECITAL — THE MUSIC  
OF MAURICE RAVEL*  
By **THERESE DUSSAUT**

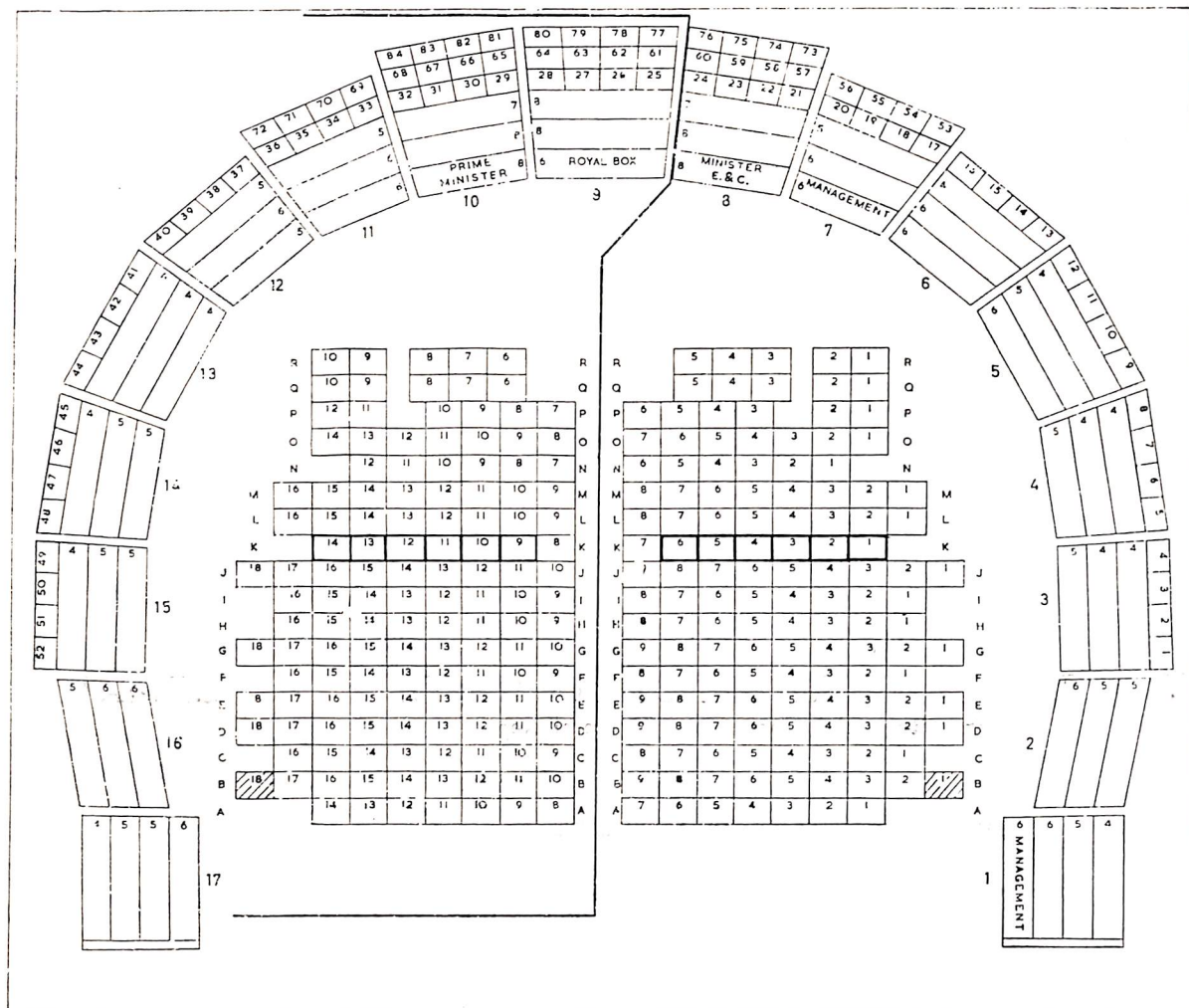
**FRANCE**

(In association with the French Embassy in Malta)

**TUESDAY 16 DECEMBER to THURSDAY 18**

**THE GERMAN OPERA BALLET COMPANY**

*\*Note: This company will present two entirely different programmes.  
Programme 1 will be presented on 14 and 17 December and Programme  
2 on 16 and 18 December.*



### MANOEL THEATRE BOOKING PLAN

Late comers will not be admitted to the Auditorium.

Smoking is not permitted in the Auditorium, in the Boxes and in the Gallery.

The Management reserve the right to vary or omit any part of the programme without previous notice.

Patrons are reminded that the taking of photographs during the performance is not allowed.

Children even when accompanied by their parents, will be required to occupy a seat.

**Australia**  
**Bulgaria**  
**Czechoslovakia**  
**Denmark**  
**France**  
**Germany**  
**Holland**  
**India**  
**Israel**  
**Italy**  
**Malta**  
**Roumania**  
**(Bucharest)**  
**Spain**  
**United Kingdom**  
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