

*woman's Chamber Orchestra
8th Dec 1975*

**MALTA INTERNATIONAL
ARTS FESTIVAL 1975**



570

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

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

Programme cover design by Richard England.

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Curry Luncheon

Every Sunday in the
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12.30 p.m. — 2.30 p.m. £M1.75 per person
Spiro will entertain you
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Dinner Dancing

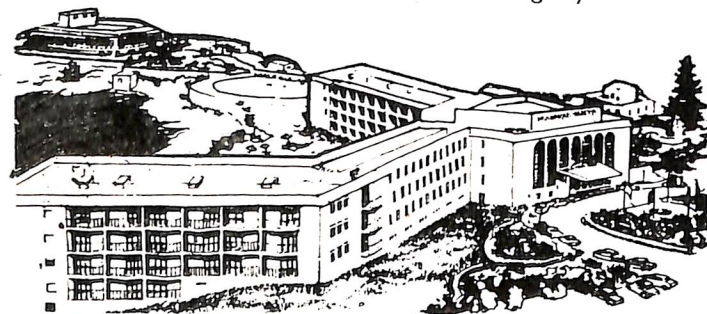
Every Wednesday and Saturday
in the Mediterranean Room
Music by the Black Sorrows

Afternoon Teas

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

Tamarisk Bar

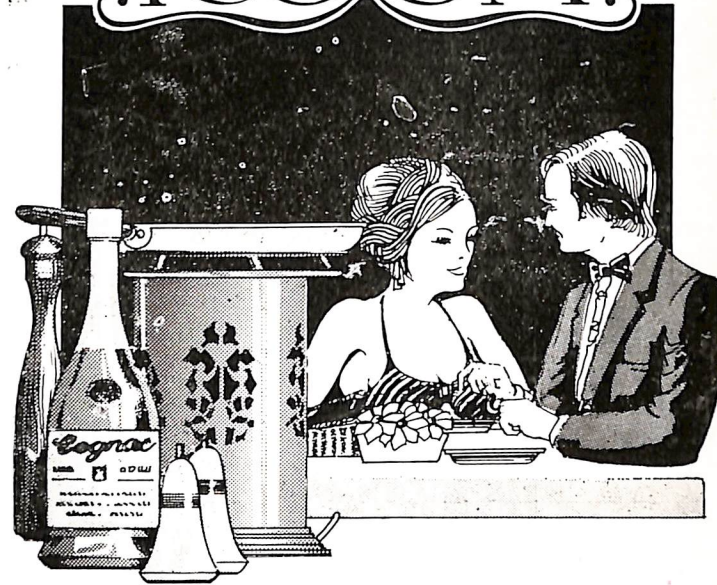
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Music by The Val Valente Quartet
International Cabaret Nightly



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MALTA INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL 1975

THE MANOEL THEATRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

present

THE WOMEN'S CHAMBER ORCHESTRA OF SOFIA

Musical Director: ROSSITZA BATALOVA

Soloist: VANIA MILANOVA

THIS IS THE 48th EVENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

*The Manoel Theatre
Monday 8 December 1975
at 7.30 pm*



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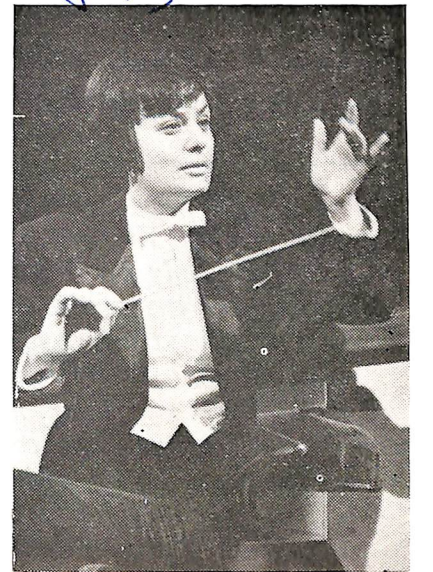


THE WOMEN'S CHAMBER ORCHESTRA OF SOFIA has given a great number of concerts in Bulgaria and has toured abroad with much success, particularly in France, Czechoslovakia and Turkey.

This unique chamber orchestra is composed entirely of women — all of them eminent artists and members of the leading orchestras of Sofia, particularly the Bulgarian Radio and Television Orchestra, the National Operetta Theatre, and the Bulgarian Conservatory.

The orchestra, which has been very active for more than eight years, has one of the country's most distinguished artists, Rossitza Batalova, as its conductress, and the soloist (violin) in tonight's programme is the very talented Vania Milanova.

The orchestra's repertoire covers the works of pre-classical and classical composers: but it also interprets with great success the work of contemporary composers, particularly those of their own country.



*Poetry
Newspaper
p. 711-1375
Marta*

PROGRAMME

SUITE No 1

PURCELL

Henry Purcell (1658 - 1695) can surely be said to be one of the best musicians England ever produced. In his relatively short life span he not only managed to compose a lot of music for all available media but in so doing also secured a place among the immortals of music. His official duties as composer of the Chapel Royal led him to the composition of a large amount of church music besides a good number of royal odes. However, as is the case with most composers, his church music tends to look backwards. This is not the case with his instrumental music. His harpsichord suites, trio sonatas and string fantasies are still fresh and delightful. His opera 'Dido and Aeneas' still ranks among the best in the operatic literature. The Baroque suite is a series of dances which had become rather stylized and so lost all their originality of music to be danced to. Minuets, Bouree, Gavottes, Allemandes etc., are some of the more popular examples. As is the case with Couperin, Purcell sticks to the same key throughout the whole suite.

CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN IN D MINOR

TARTINI

Giuseppe Tartini (1692 - 1770) is one of the leading names of the Italian Violin School of the 17th - 18th century. He is not only famous for his violin compositions but also equally known for his pioneer work in violin playing. He introduced improvements in violin strings and bows, but mostly he is remembered for his discovery of the 'terzi suoni' or 'resultant tone', also called 'difference tone'. His celebrated sonata "Il Trillo del Diavolo" is known to most music lovers.

INTERVAL

PASSACAGLIA

HANDEL-ASLAMAZIAN

George Friedrich Handel (1685 - 1759) was born at Halle in Saxony but spent most of his life in England. Here he found a strong choral tradition that went back to the times of Byrd and this helped him in no small way in his work in the field of oratorio, a genre for which he is mostly famous. However, his work in other spheres like opera and instrumental music were equally prolific. His operas, written in the current Italian idiom are today almost completely forgotten, but not his instrumental music, amongst which we find orchestral suites, concertos and keyboard music. A passacaglia is a musical form that originated from a slow three-beats-in-a-measure dance from Spain or Italy. Its characteristic peculiarity is that it is composed on a ground bass, a phrase in the bass that is repeated with ever changing harmonies and textures above it.

FOUR MINIATURES ON FOLK SONGS

MARTIN GOLEMIVON

The 'Sofia' Orchestra has a considerable reputation as an interpreter of Bulgarian composers and especially of compositions, such as this, based on Bulgaria's folk tunes.

THREE OLD DANCES

RESPIGHI

Ottorino Respighi (1870 - 1936) was born in Bologna, Italy. Amongst others he studied under Rimsky-Korsakov in Russia, and Max Bruch in Berlin. His place in the regular orchestral repertoire is today based on two orchestral suites — 'The Pines of Rome' and 'The Fountains of Rome'. These are both very effective pieces of orchestral writing and of course betray the influence of the 'King' of the orchestra — Rimsky-Korsakov.

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 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.

The Friendly Way to Fly

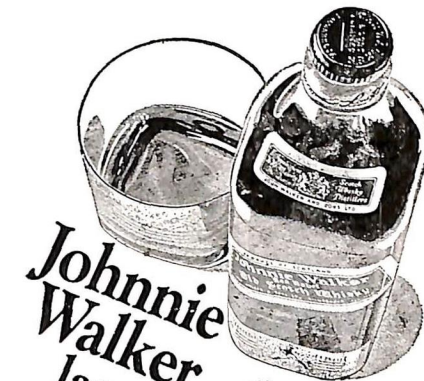


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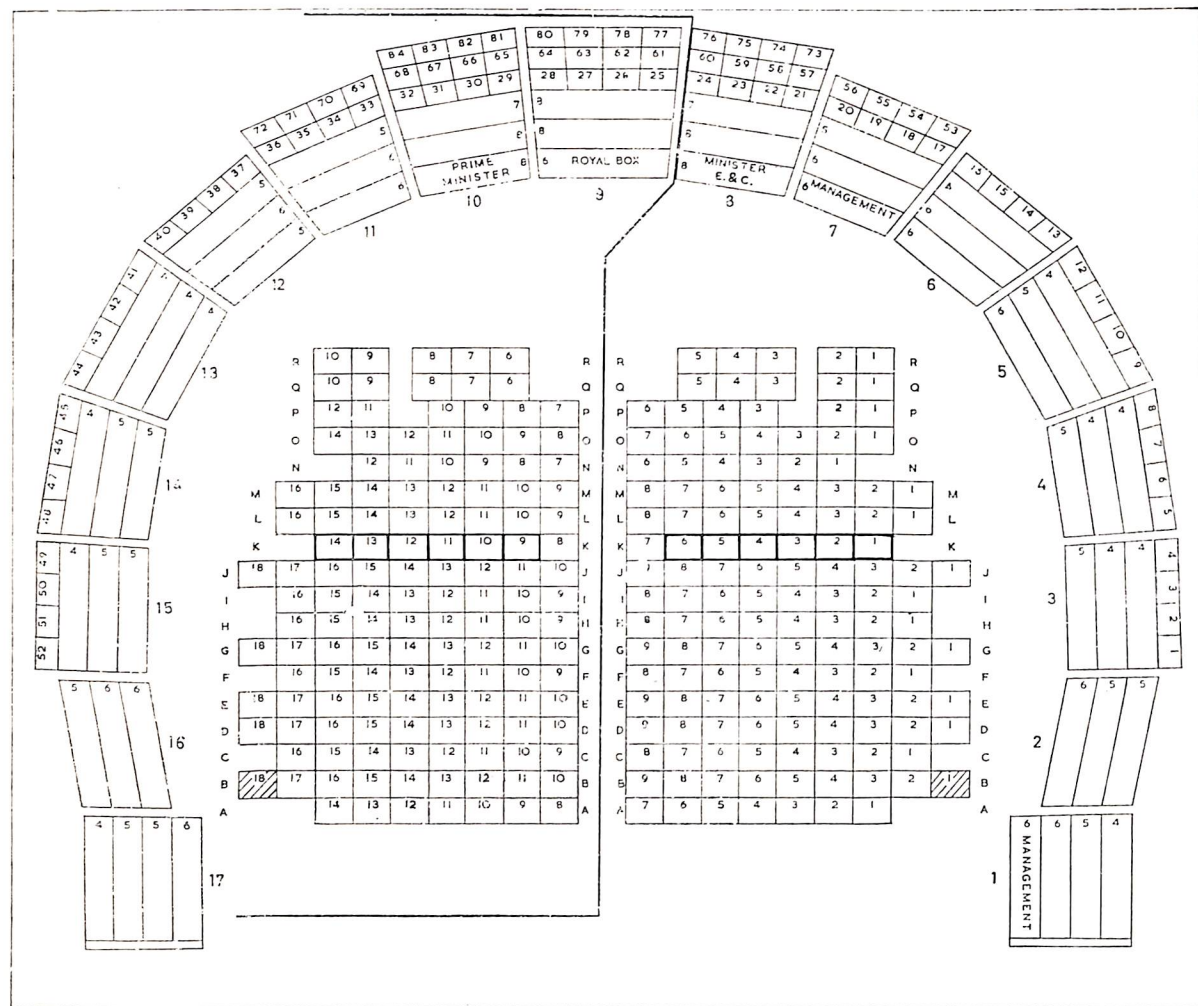
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MANOEL THEATRE BOOKING PLAN

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.

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