

Mini Musical 1976.
17th & 18th Jan. 1976.

**MALTA INTERNATIONAL
ARTS FESTIVAL 1975**



549

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

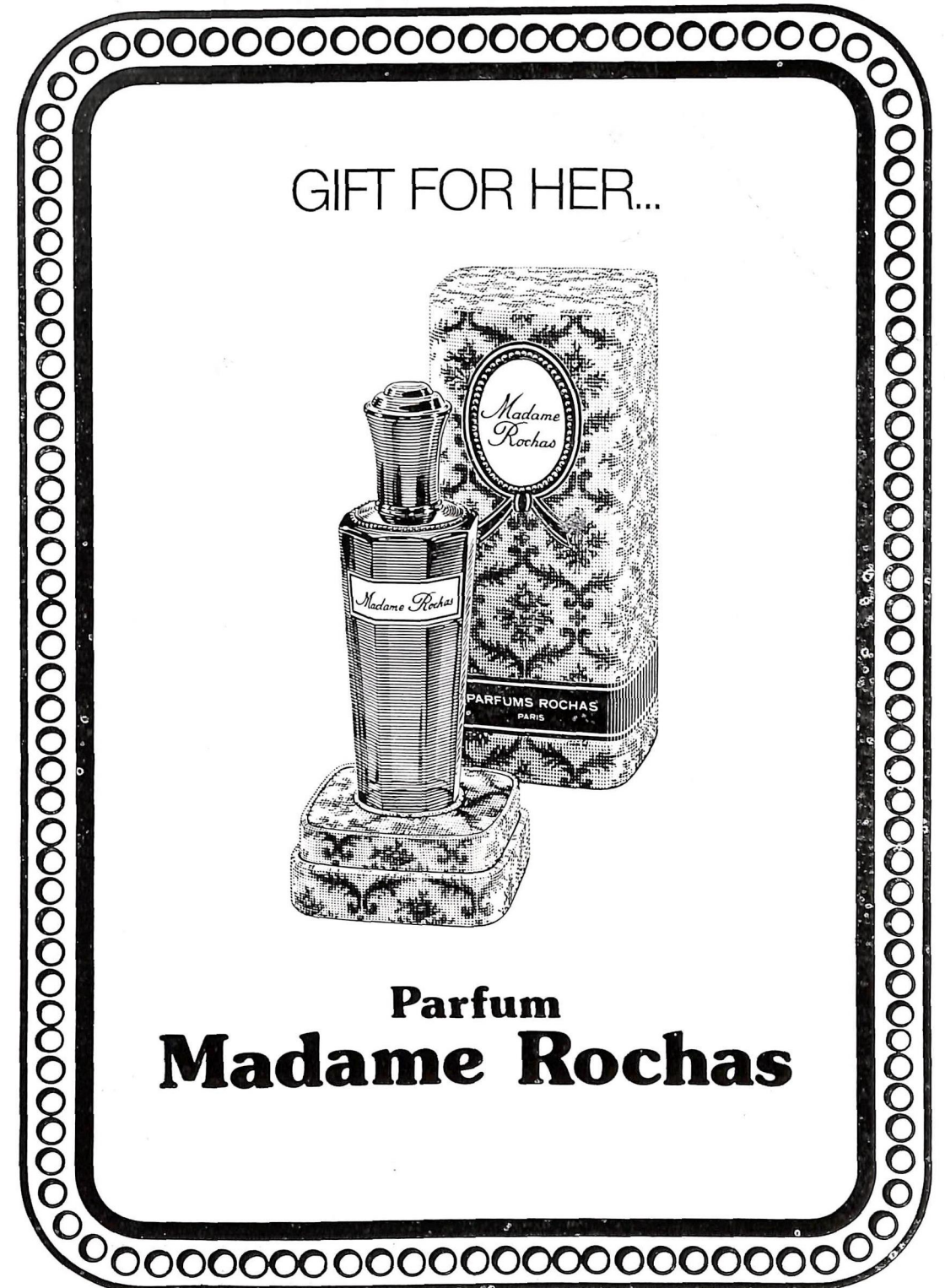
Hon. Treasurer, Miss M L Bonnici, LRSM L.Mus.LCM FLCM

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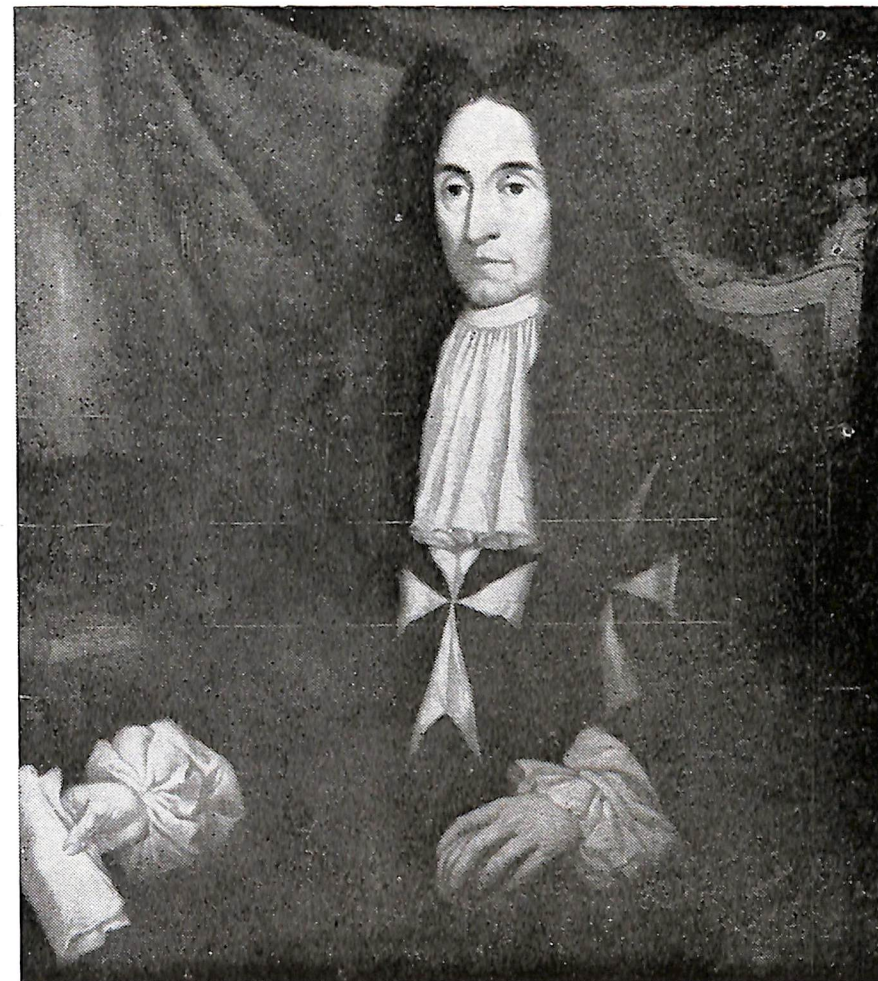
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Antonio Manoel De Vilhena

Grand Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena, a Portuguese, was elected Grand Master in 1722. A man of great intellectual qualities, he was popular with all, and his "savoir faire" earned him everyone's love.

At the beginning of his reign, fearing a second Turkish invasion of Malta, he promptly took steps for such an eventuality, and the enemy, seeing his preparedness, sailed away without even attempting a landing.

Having fortified the Island, he began to find ways and means to encourage civil enterprise, and in the political field he managed to negotiate a treaty of peace with the Sultan of Constantinople.

As a befitting gesture towards the People of Malta, he built in 1732 the Manoel Theatre, a living monument to his achievements, which keeps his memory fresh and glorious in all those that cultivate the Arts and all those who seek an honest recreation, as the Theatre's motto implies: "Ad honestatem populi oblectationem."



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at the

MANOEL THEATRE

17th and 18th January 1976

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PROGRAMME

THE RECORD SHOP

ST. VENERA SECONDARY GIRLS

Sylvana Attard, Josephine Borg, Catherine Camilleri, Tessie Caruana, Bridgit Cini, Pauline Farrugia, Rita Farrugia, Josette Falzon, Marisa Fenech, Helen Grima, Josette Lewis, Rita Micallef, Tessie Mifsud, Maryann Muscat,, Maryann Sammut, Mary Rose Sciberras, Anna Zahra, Louise Zammit.

Costumes

Resyl Zerafa RESYL ZERAFA

Set

Harry Alden HARRY ALDEN

Choreography

Maria Malla MARIA MALLIA

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Xmun

SANDRA ENDRICH

Mari

RITA ZAMMIT

Ill-Ġara

JUDITH MUSCAT

Ix-Xiħa

RITA GARCIA

It-Tarbija

MARTHESE TIRCHET

L-Għannejja

PHYLLIS BRINCAT

Flimkien ma': Odette Brincat, Loraine Bugeja, Antida Buhagiar,
Josette Caruana, Edith Fenech, Marika Frendo, Joan Gatt, Natalie Gauci,
Josette Pace, Rosabelle Rizzo, Mary Grace Seychell, Josette Spiteri,
Jacqueline Zammit.

Kliem u Mużika

THERESE CASSAR

Dekor

Anthony Vella

ANTHONY VELLA LUNGARO

Kostumi

JANE SCIORTINO

Produzzjoni

HELEN CASSAR u

GAETANA BEZZINA


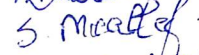



THE PUPPET SHOW

Adapted by L. Swinyard from music by Tchaikowsky

ŻEJTUN SECONDARY GIRLS

<i>Prologue</i>	JOSANNE AZZOPARDI
<i>Showman</i>	MARISA ATTARD
<i>Harlequin</i>	ROSE ANNE SALIBA
<i>Ninetta</i>	M'ANNE SCHIAVONE
<i>Antonio</i>	MARCELLE DALMAS
<i>Nadia</i>	JOSEPHINE ZAMMIT
<i>Ivanovich</i>	JOSEPHINE SCERRI
<i>Mme. Tremolo</i>	LYDIA CORDINA
<i>Herr Schmidt</i>	M'ROSE BONNICI
<i>Tim-Tom</i>	SIMONE ZAMMIT
<i>The General</i>	DORIS CUMBO

Together with: Karen Abdilla, Carol Bonnici, Jane Briffa, Mary Bugeja, Yolanda Busuttil, Josette Camilleri, Amy Cassar, Marthese Cassar, Joyce Damato, Antoinette Fenech, Monica Fenech, Rose Fenech, Bridgit Gravina, Joan Manara, Catherine Muscat, Bridgit Saliba, Josephine Sammut, Miriam Schembri, Josephine Seychell, M'Grace Seychell, Anna Spagnol, Marthese Tabone, Antoinette Testa, Giselle Vella, Miriam Zahra.

<i>Music</i>	 AMELIA LIBRERI and  SOPHIE MICALLEF
<i>Set</i>	 TREVOR ZAHRA
<i>Costumes</i>	 MONA VELLA DORIS ELLUL MAGDALEN CASSAR
<i>Choreography</i>	CONNIE BUTTIGIEG
<i>Production</i>	 JOSEPH HUBER

INTERVAL

TUG OF WAR

MOSTA SECONDARY GIRLS

Anna Abela, Josephine Aquilina, Evelyn Azzopardi, Marthese Bartolo, Josephine Bezzina, Adreana Borg, Josephine Borg, Catherine Bugeja, Josephine Camilleri, Mary Grace Camilleri, M'Ann Chetcuti, Josette Debono, Carmen Deguara, Pauline Dimech, Henriette Ebejer, Florence Falzon, Carmen Farrugia, Victoria Farrugia, Marie Louise Farrugia, Malia Galea, M'Dolores Magro, Rita Mangion, Gemma Micallef, Bridgit Muscat, Miriam Muscat, M' Therese Muscat, Margaret Pirota, Doriett Saliba, M. Anna Schembri, Jeanette Scicluna, Aurelia Tonna, Carol Vella, Salvina Vella.

<i>Music</i>	MARGARET BUHAGIAR
<i>Costumes</i>	MARY DORIS BEZZINA, RITA GALEA and ANN CHETCUTI
<i>Production</i>	PHYLLIS ZAMMIT, GLORIA ROBERTS

A GARDEN SPREE

MRIEHEL SECONDARY GIRLS

Marlene Darmanin, Christine Ebejer, Sylvana Farrugia, Anna Micallef, Carmen Mifsud, Therese Muscat, Marthese Scicluna, Monica Scicluna.

<i>Choreography</i>	DORIS R. BORG
<i>Costumes</i>	MARIE LOUISE INCORVAJA

BRIJU FIL-FAR WEST

BLATA L-BAJDA SECONDARY GIRLS

Annie LORAINÉ AZZOPARDI,

Hutha BRIGITTE u MARY SPITERI, PAULINE CASSAR,

M'HELEN MIFSUD, MARGARET VELLA,

MARCETTE FENECH, THERESE FARRUGIA,

RITA BORG

Frank MARGARET FALZON

Zeffiena Ewlenin VALERIE CUTAJAR, TESSA BUGEJA

Flimkien ma': Eveyln Agius, M'Grace Agius, Imelda Aquilina, Carmen Attard, M'Rose Attard, Natalie Attard, Melita Buonanno, Christine Camilleri, Laura Camilleri, Karen Calleja, Tania Agius, Natalie Cauchi, Lina Caruana, Grace Chircop, Anna Maria Cristiano, Emily Debattista, Tanya D'Ugo, Anna Farrugia, Pauline Farrugia, Rose Ann Garcia, Irene Magri, Margaret Mallia, Doris Micallef, Josette Muscat, Cynthia Sammut, M'Ann Scerri, Tania Scerri, Josette Sciberras, Natalie Vella, Cettina Vidal, Glorianne Vigar, Jennifer Zammit.

Muzika  LINA GALEA

Koreografja LILIAN AZZOPARDI

Dekor ALFRED DEBONO FLYNN

Lyrics GODWIN SCERRI

Props ELVIA AGIUS

Produzzjoni GODWIN SCERRI

Make-up MAY BORG, JANE GRECH,
TANIA PARLATO

Director

Production Adviser

Make-up

JOSEPH VELLA

GODWIN SCERRI

LINA CUMBO, MARY C. CAMILLERI

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

JOSEPH VELLA (*Chairman*)

MARIE L. BONNICI

VERENA MASCHAT

CARM. BORG

PAUL GALEA

GODWIN SCERRI

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FOR THE MANOEL THEATRE

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MARTHESE VASSALLO

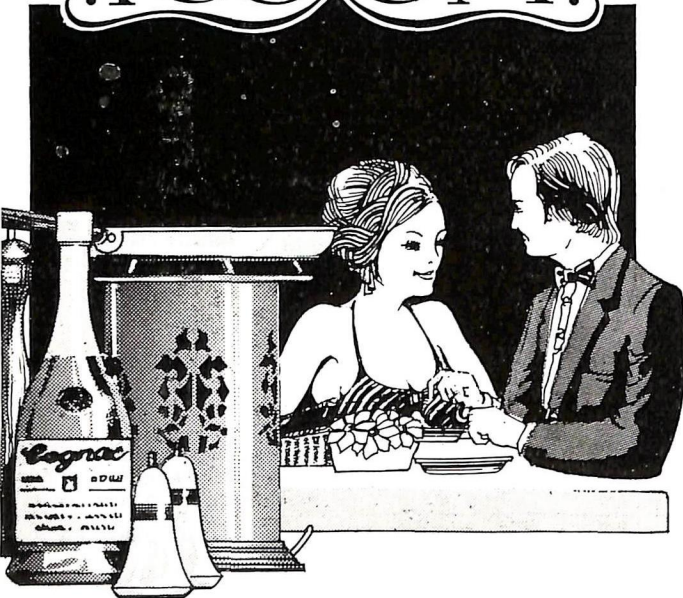
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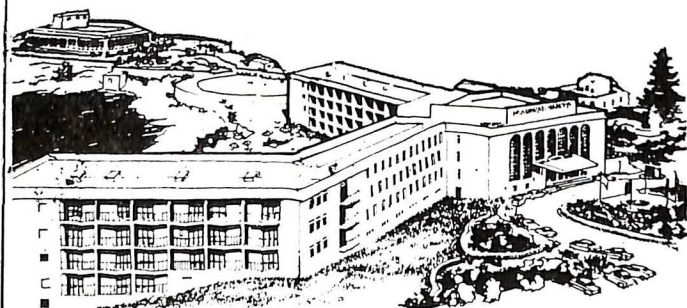
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THE MANOEL THEATRE

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.

FESTIVAL DIARY

MALTA TALENT ARTISTES GENN U L'IBEN L'IEHOR (Maltese Plays)

Friday	23rd at 7.00 p.m.
Saturday	24th at 7.30 p.m.
Sunday	25th at 6.30 p.m.

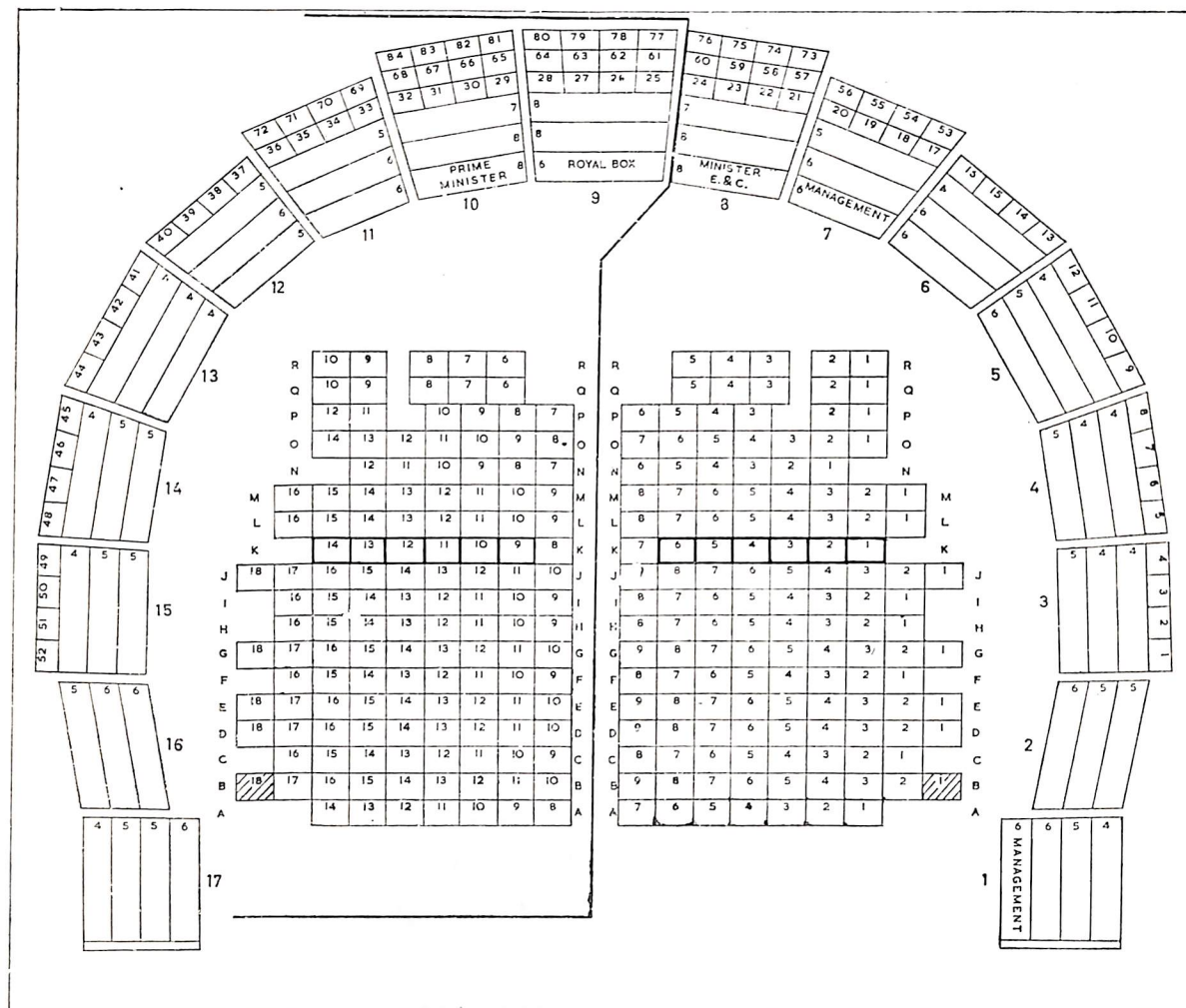


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MANOEL THEATRE BOOKING PLAN

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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