

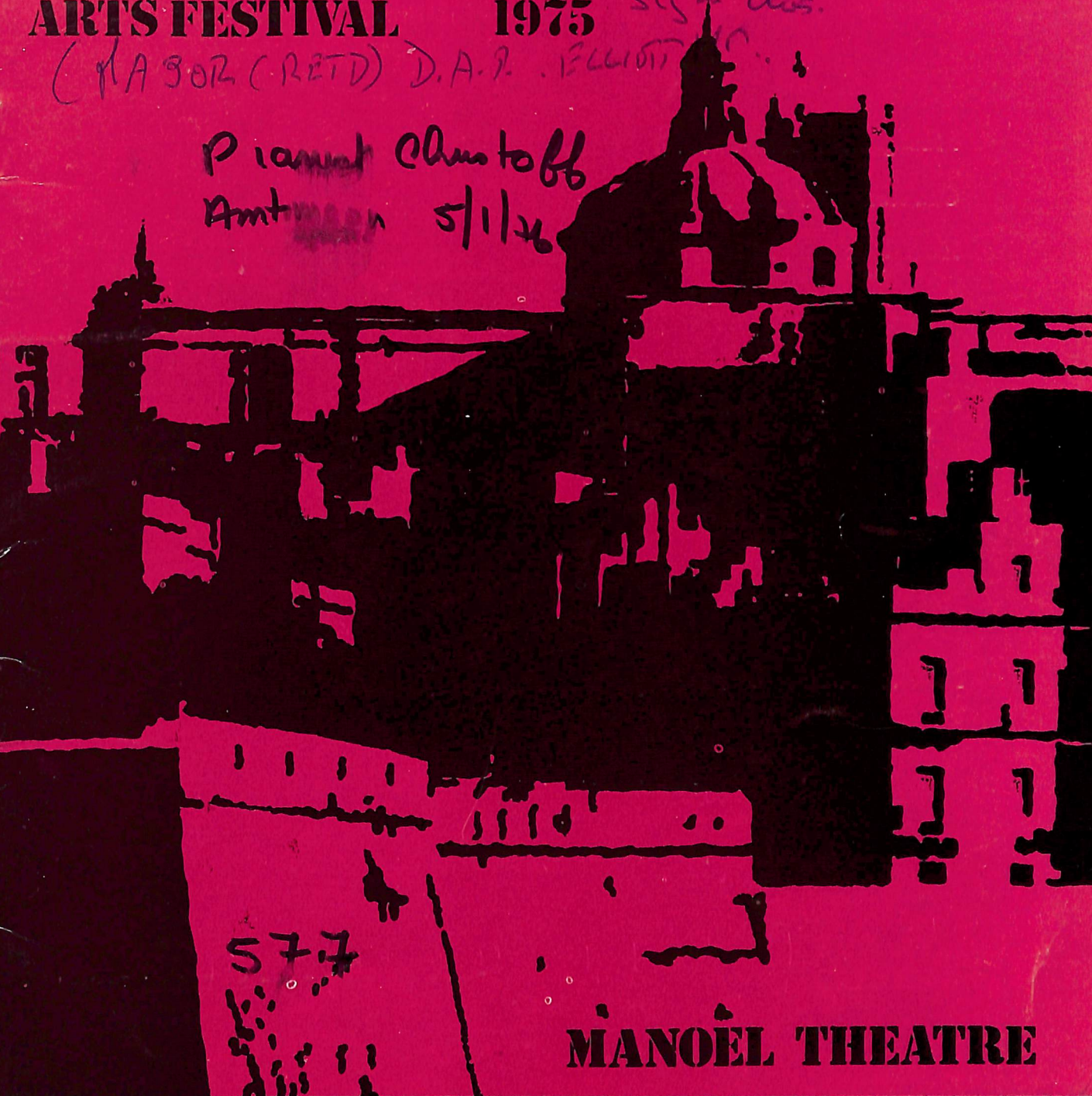
Dear Hen Antman I have a  
guest from England who is blind - and  
has enjoyed your performance so much

**MALTA INTERNATIONAL  
ARTS FESTIVAL 1975**

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be kind enough to  
sign disc.

(MAYOR (RETD) D.A.P. ELLIOTT)

Pianist Christoff  
Antman 5/11/76



577

**MANOEL 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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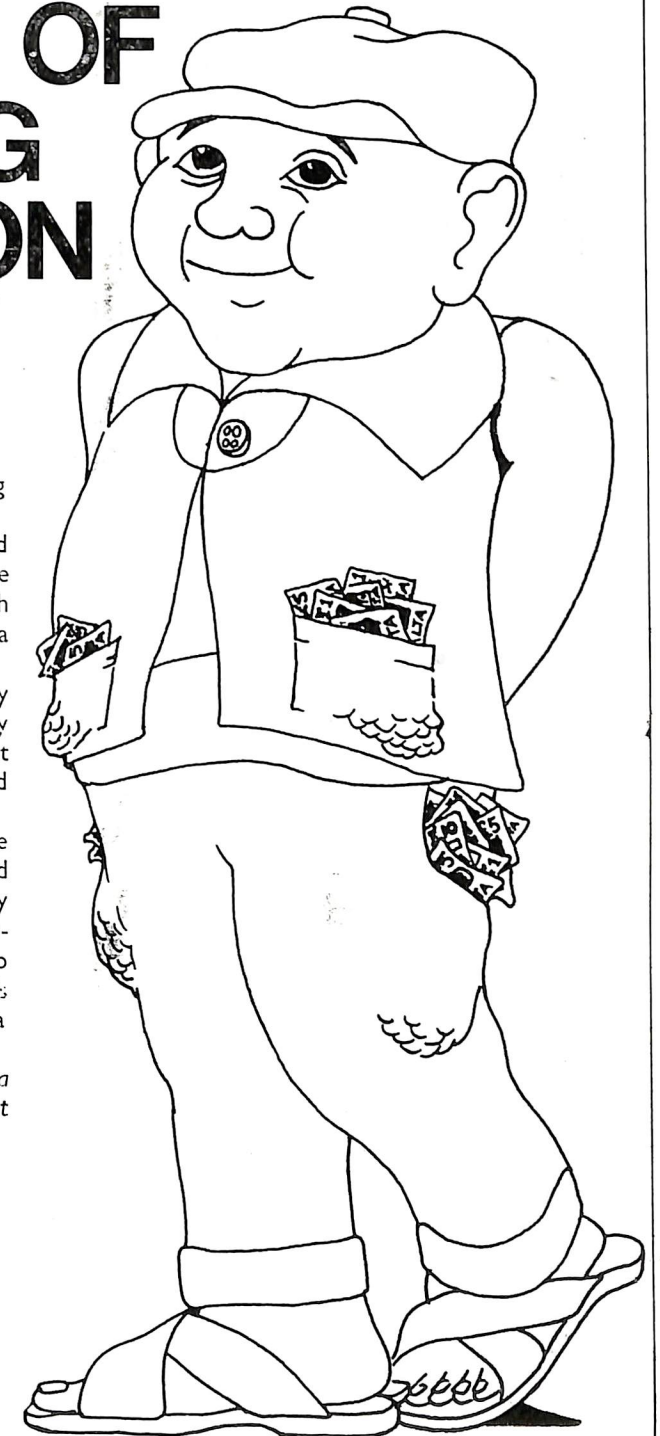
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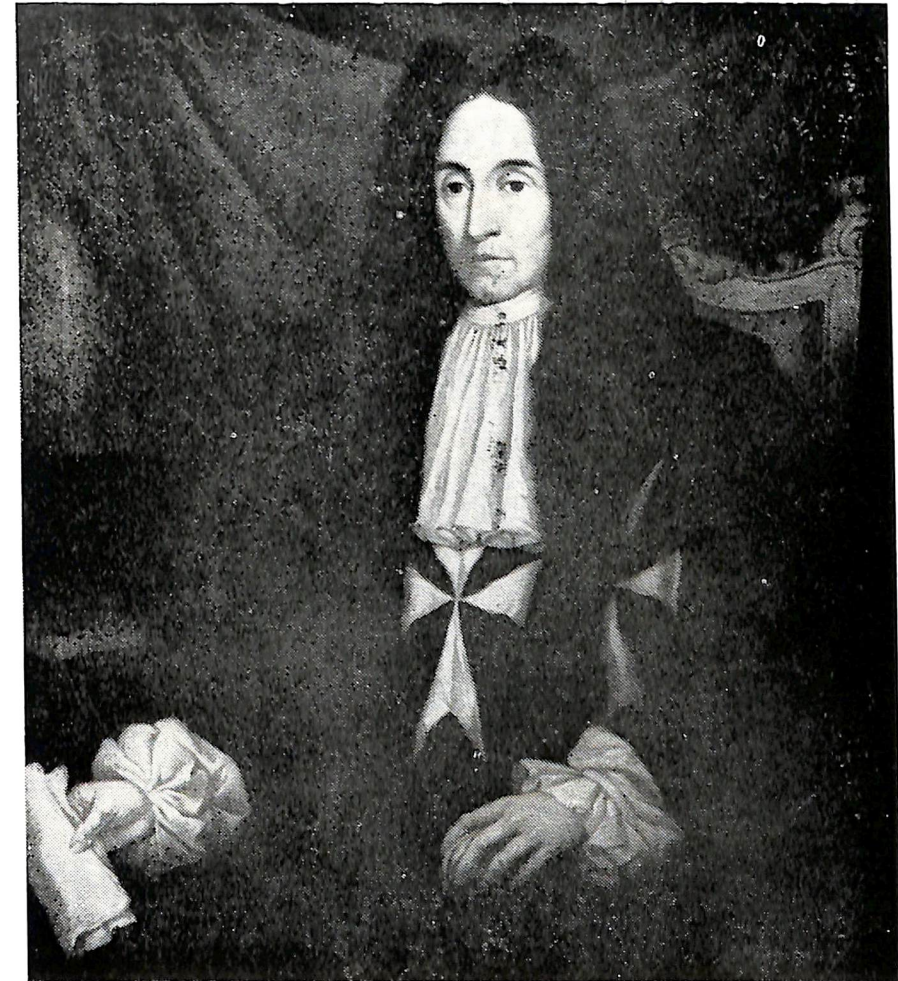
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*Antonio Manoel De Vilhena*

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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# MALTA INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL 1975

*THE MANOEL THEATRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE*

*presents*

## A PIANO RECITAL

*by*

# CHRISTOF AMTMANN

THIS IS THE 56th EVENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

*The Manoel Theatre*  
*Monday, 5th January 1976*



Christof Amtmann



CHRISTOF AMTMANN

CHRISTOF AMTMANN was born in 1947 in Munich, Germany. At the age of nine he had his first piano lessons with Emmi Hickl, a former student of Martienssen and Lamond. He studied privately with Charles Letestu in Lausanne and was a student of Friedrich Wuhler and Hugo Steurer at the Staatliche Hochschule fur Musik in Munich. Under Hugo Steurer he completed his studies as Meisterschuler. The DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) granted him a stipendium to study at The Curtis Institute of Music in the United States. There he was taught by Mieczyslaw Horszowski and occasionally by Rudolf Serkin.

He is a prize-winner of competitions in Munich, Nurnberg and Bonn. His most important solo engagements are recitals in Munich, Philadelphia, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Dusseldorf, Villach (Austria); chamber music recitals in Munich, Philadelphia, Reims, Salzburg, Torino, Aachen, Pommersfelden; and recordings for radio stations in Karnten (Austria), Munich, Cologne, Hannover, Frankfurt, and with the Symphony Orchestra of the Bavarian Broadcasting Station in Munich. In addition, he has appeared with the Symphony Orchestra Graunke, Munich, the Civic Philharmonic Orchestra, Wurzburg, the Orchestra of the Pommersfelden Music Weeks, the Ford Symphony Orchestra, Cologne, the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia, and others.

#### SOME PRESS COMMENTS

SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG (Karl Schumann):... the sonorous round tone in each dynamic was first-rate... facility... taste and rhythmic feeling... sharp contours... dramatic breath, and intelligently legitimate bravura... We have hardly heard a more exciting Reger since Serkin and Wuhler.

KOLNER STADT-ANZEIGER:... he merits his prizes!... elegance, brilliance, enchanting cantabile... dancing vitality...

MAINPOST, Wurzburg:... ravishingly beautiful, cultivated pianissimo...

DUSSELDORFER NACHRICHTEN: The Prelude and Fugue in G Major (Bach) could not be... more clearly articulated than by him.

AACHENER VOLKSZEITUNG (Alfred Beaujean):... effects... romantic ecstasy... with a sure grip and, despite the moulded shape of the contrasting thematic ideas, preeminently maintains the whole... (A) performance which aroused the wish to meet the young artist again in a more commanding forum.

TORINO:... outstanding interpretation.

KARNTNER TAGESZEITUNG: "A young pianist we will have to bear in mind"... a thoroughly profound performance...

KOLNISCHE RUNDSCHAU: The phenomenon... is called Christof Amtmann, Piano...

# PROGRAMME

FANTASIA IN C MINOR KV 475

W. A. MOZART

SONATA IN C MINOR KV 457

*Allegro molto — Adagio — Allegro Assai*

The Sonata was written in October 1784 and dedicated to Mozart's pupil, Frau Trattner, wife of the publisher. The Fantasy was written down nearly a year later, but Mozart published it with the Sonata and surely home pianists are right to accept it as the opening movement of the Sonata — not an introduction, for it is a self-contained piece.

All Mozart's "Sonata pianism" is contradicted by the four pieces called fantasies and since the sonatas were written for others to hear, the fantasies may exemplify the fiery improvisations which relieved his feelings when alone or with intimate friends. They go to the extreme of the keyboard, fill the hands with notes and even suggest a certain violence which seems foreign to "sonata" Mozart. One cannot avoid thinking of Beethoven, especially since C minor was one of Beethoven's tragic keys, and since the first theme and its treatment in the sonata are decidedly Beethovenian. The Fantasy is not Beethovenian. The Sonata invites comparisons with the C minor Concerto which so soon followed it. The opening theme and the diminished seventh harmony near the beginning are paralleled in the concerto and the calm middle movement in E Flat Major is very concerto like; indeed it could be quite well converted into the middle movement of a concerto, having a rondo like shape in which refrains and episodes could be distributed between solo and orchestra. The sonata might be thought to offer no parallel to the superb final variations of the C minor concerto.

PRELUDE AND FUGUE IN C SHARP MAJOR

J. S. BACH

*(from Das Wohltemperierte Klavier-Book I)*

Bach's "Forty-Eight" were not conceived as a whole. The first twenty-four collected in a book in 1722 were given the title "Das Wohltemperierte Klavier" but the second set of twenty-four, which did not appear until twenty-two years later were merely termed "Twenty-Four New Preludes and Fugues" by the composer. The title, however, has long been applied to both collections. In this collection of preludes and fugues — one of the great monuments of musical genius — Bach exploits various devices such as augmentation, diminution, inversion and stretto which need not deter the listener for they are merely scaffolding, by which Bach's compositions are constructed.

The *Prelude and Fugue in C Sharp Major* the third prelude of the first book possesses a pastoral like quality, which is continued in the three-part fugue: The relationship between the two seems more close than usual. Bach paints an idyllic picture for his listeners and if the contrapuntal invention of this fugue does not astound as much as some of its brethren, it is nevertheless vastly entertaining of its composer to bring a breath of fresh air into the scholastic atmosphere of the fugue.

FOUR STUDIES OP. 7

I. STRAVINSKY

The four studies which are technically very complicated could be described as pseudo-Scriabin middle-period. The fourth study in F Sharp minor dates from 1908 after which year Stravinsky gave up using opus numbers. In the style of the Russian followers of Liszt, Liapunov and Balakirev it is both brilliant and gay.

FOUR PRELUDES

H. GENZMER

German born (1909) Harold Genzmer studied at the High School for Music in Berlin and was awarded the Mendelssohn Prize for composition in 1932. In 1945 he was appointed Professor of composition and theory of music at the High School for Music in Friburg. Genzmer, in his early days, belonged to the German group of modern composers which rallied around Hindemith in Berlin and it is therefore not surprising that Hindemith's became the decisive influence on his style, which is both accomplished and effective. Genzmer writes in the modern idiom and adheres to the principles of tonality in the widest sense of the term and there are frequent bi-tonal and polyrhythmic interpolations; his forms follow classical tendencies. Genzmer's style combines the contrapuntal writing of Hindemith's middle period with a certain amount of expressive colouring. His works apart from the Four Studies (1962/63) include a Piano Concerto (1948), a cello concerto (1950), a Flute Concerto (1944) and the Bremen Symphony (1943).

NOCTURNE IN E MAJOR OP. 62 NO. 2

F. CHOPIN

It is well known that Chopin took the title and general aspect of the Nocturne from the Irish composer John Field. Generally speaking the form of these Nocturnes is always built on the simple formula 'A-B-A' (shortened), the middle section 'B' being quick in tempo and dramatic in character. The melody is 'sung' by the right hand against the background of a waving arpeggio accompaniment. There is usually a coda and for this moment the composer reserves some of his most enchanting touches.

In the Nocturne in E Major Op. 62 no. 2 inspiration is at a low ebb which remains common place and amiable with a singularly meaningless bit of fiorituri thrown in until the section marked *agitato* which imparts some energy into the wondering strains.

SONATA IN A FLAT MAJOR OP. 110

L. VAN BEETHOVEN

*Moderato cantabile molto espressivo — Allegro molto — Adagio ma non troppo —  
Fuga Allegro ma non troppo.*

This Sonata represents a most personal confession, so it is no wonder that Beethoven wished to keep it for himself and did not dedicate it to anyone. *Moderato cantabile molto espressivo*: An intimate light shines out of the two unwordly themes which are linked by rising and falling arpeggios. In the Development the principal theme makes its way through the various keys and it is sometimes darkened, to radiate light again at the beginning of the recapitulation. Beethoven seems to be remembering the days when he could live in full possession of all his senses. The robust theme is based on an old popular song. In the recitative (*Adagio*) and the concluding *Arioso dolente* the piano is called upon to act as the medium for one of the most moving of human utterances. *Fuga*: *Allegro ma non troppo*; Beethoven gives the fugue a new psychological significance seeking to free himself from personal grief by having recourse to this higher discipline. Once again we hear the music of the *Arioso* "wearily lamenting". Thereupon the fugal theme appears inverted and mystically transfigured in a bright G major. Its original form is taken up powerfully in the bass and leads up to a triumphant conclusion.

INTERVAL

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Spiro will entertain you  
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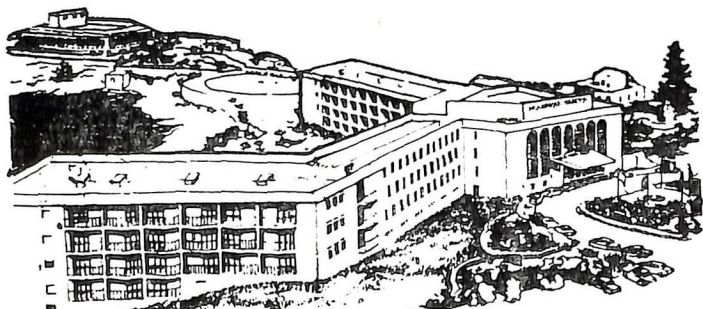
Every Wednesday and Saturday  
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Music by the Black Sorrows

## Afternoon Teas

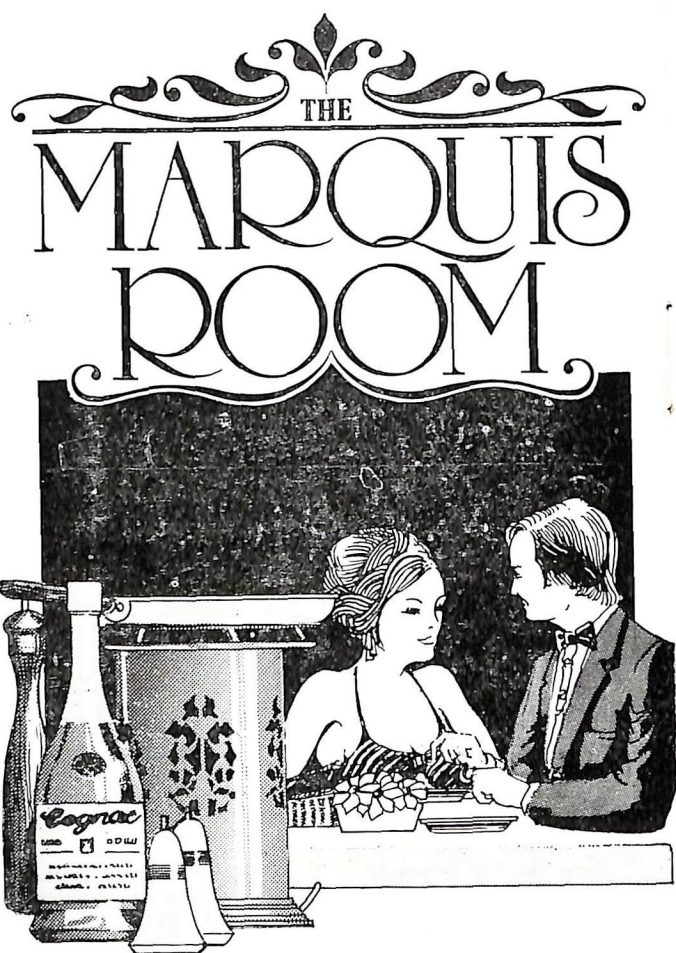
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# THE MANOEL THEATRE

**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 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 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 Villhena 'for the honest recreation of the people'.*

*Victor Lewis.*

# FESTIVAL DIARY

## MANOEL THEATRE DRAMA GROUP — META MORNA TAL-MELLIEHA.

Thursday 8th January at 7.00 p.m.  
Friday 9th January at 7.00 p.m.  
Saturday 10th January at 7.30 p.m.  
Sunday 11th January at 6.30 p.m.

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE MINI MUSICAL

Saturday 17th at 6.30 p.m.  
Sunday 18th at 6.30 p.m.



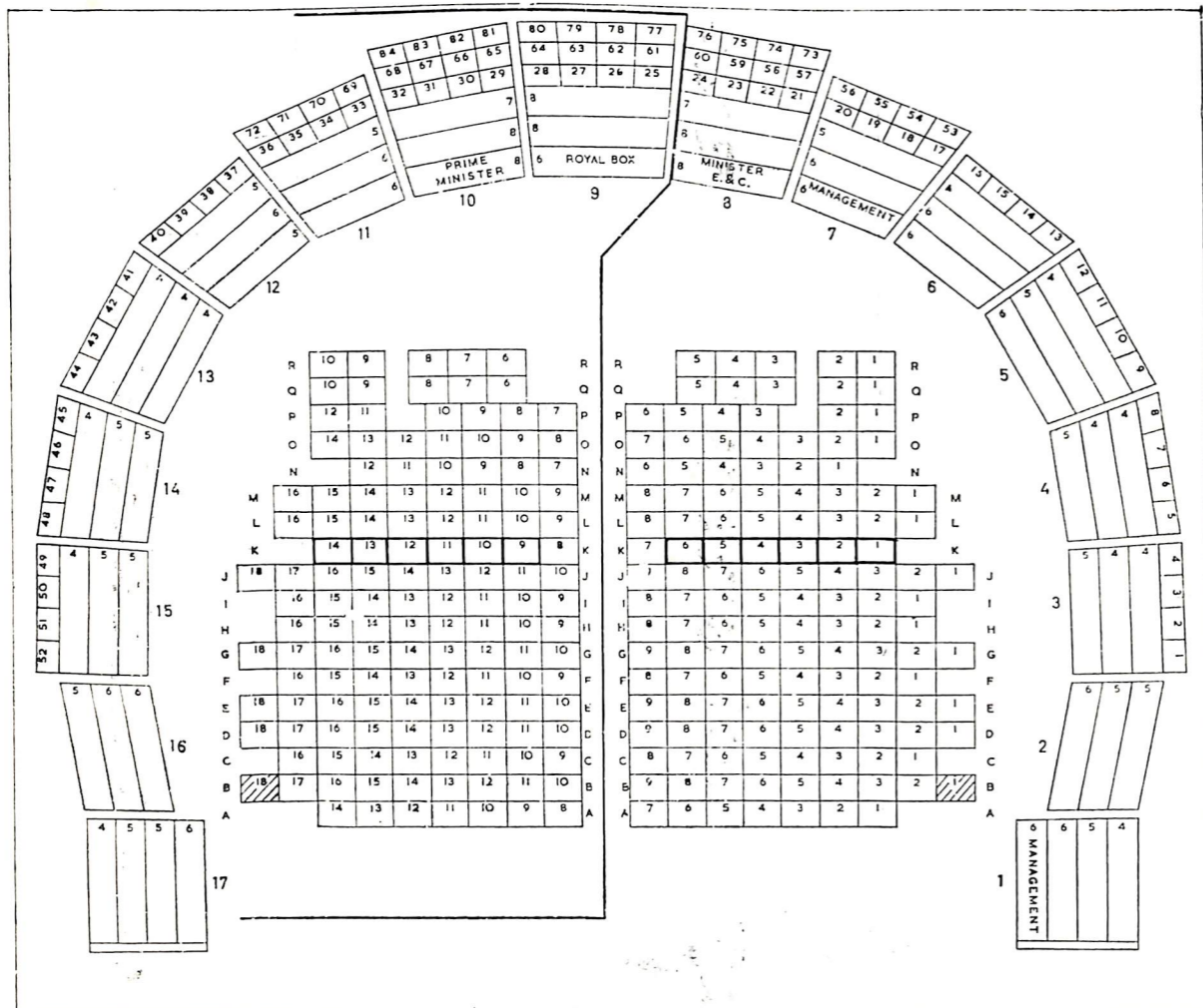
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### MANOEL THEATRE BOOKING PLAN

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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