



1732

"Piano Recital"  
by  
Arnold Glass Bellizzi  
3. X. 79.

MANOLI  
THEATRE

779

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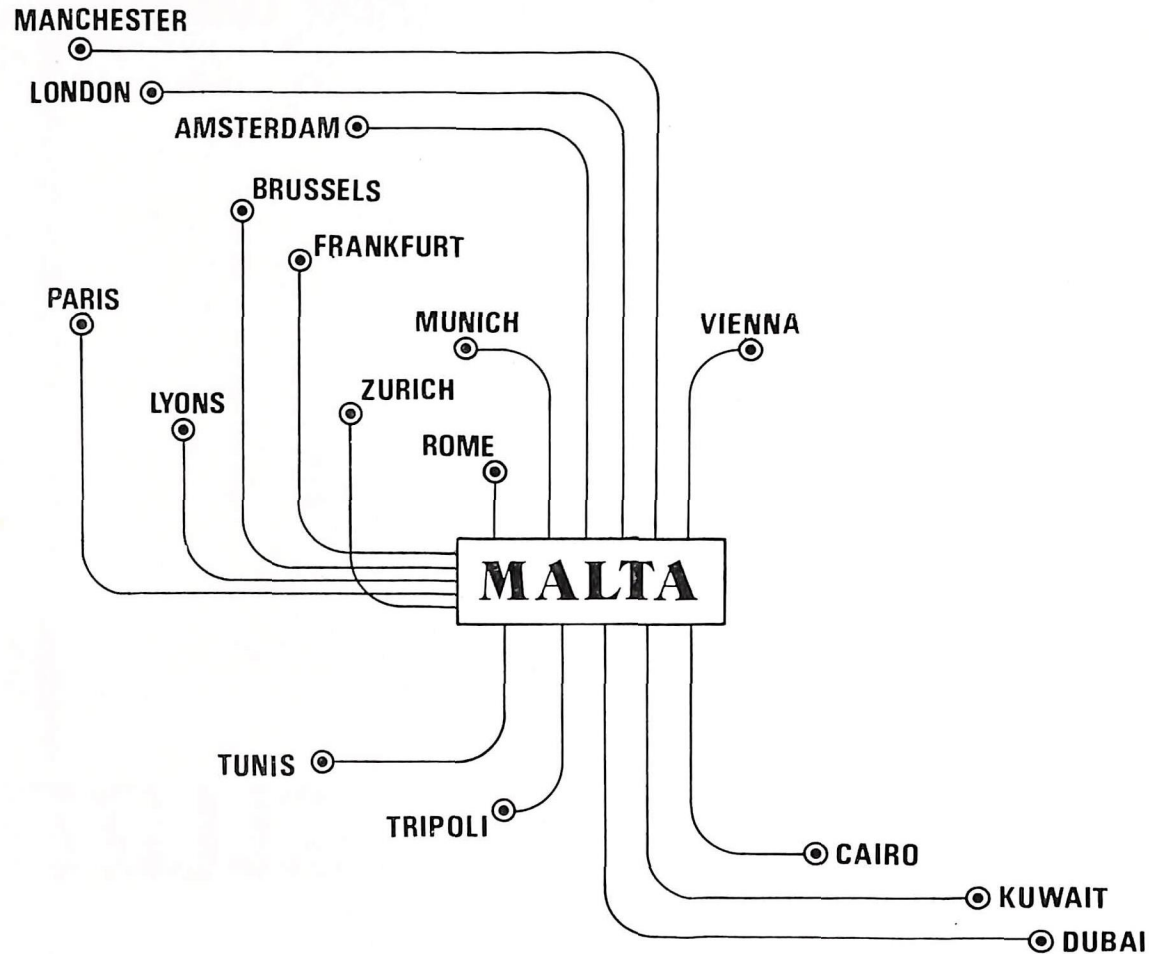
by

**MARIE CLAIRE BELLIZZI**

at the Manoel Theatre

Monday, 3rd December 1979.

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*Marie Claire Bellizzi*

*3/2/79*

Marie Claire Bellizzi was born in Malta and started learning the piano at the age of five. In 1974 she was awarded a scholarship by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music thus enabling her to study at the Royal Academy of Music in London for four years. During this time she obtained her L.R.A.M. diploma and took part in various concerts at the Academy. Since leaving the Academy, she has been studying with the concert pianist Hamish Milne and performing extensively both in Malta and abroad. Marie Claire has just returned from Italy where she took part in the concorso Viotti in Vercelli.

# PROGRAMME

Prelude and Fugue from "The Well Tempered Clavier"

BK. II No. 5 in D

BACH

At Cothen on January 22, 1720, Bach began to keep a musical notebook for his oldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann. He called it a Klavierbuchlen meaning 'a little book for clavier'. After an explanation of notations, clefs and keys, comes a series of short exercises in all the twenty-four keys, major and minor. The booklet was destined to grow into The Well Tempered Clavier. In the first prints of the more famous work, its origin is traceable in the shortness and simplicity of some of the preludes. We may note with special interest that as early as this Bach had committed himself to the new equal temperament, abandoning the old tuning of the clavier that restricted the composer to the use of fifteen keys. Well-tempered means 'well-tuned'. The present prelude and fugue is taken from the second set which was not finished until 1742. The fugue, a dignified piece of architecture is remarkable for a four-note theme from its subject which completely permeates the whole work, so that it occurs at least 110 times. The fugue is admirably offset by the prelude, a heroic fanfare on Bach's "festival" trumpets.

Sonata in D Minor Op. 31 No. 2

BEETHOVEN

The story goes that Beethoven was once asked what he meant by this Sonata. His reply was "read Shakespear's play 'The Tempest'." From then this sonata has been familiarly known as 'The Tempest' Sonata. Certainly the key of D minor linked with Beethoven usually spells storms and passions and this case is no exception. The boding slow arpeggio introducing the first movement is quickly succeeded by the panting eight-note figures of the Allegro, full of disquiet. The second subject, in the dominant minor instead of relative major sustains the tragic note of the sonata. At the reprise there are two ghostly recitatives of which Beethoven remarked: "I wish it to sound as if someone were

speaking in a vault". The beautiful Adagio is like a prayer of thanksgiving after the storm — serene and majestic it is the voice of the soul speaking to its Creator. After this sublime movement the Allegretto brings the work to a close with a feeling of melancholy and quasi pessimism. The persistent use of the four-note motive and unexpected bursts of agitation give the piece a restless, nervous flavour.

Scherzo in B Flat Minor Op. 31

CHOPIN

The scherzos of Chopin diverge widely from the merry character implied in the name. No wonder Schumann asked: "How is gravity to clothe itself if jest goes about in dark veils?" The first three of these works, at least are wildly tempestuous in mood. Only the fourth, in E, is amiable, if not noticeably humorous. They are all written in much expanded but easily recognizable dance form. The difficulty of this composition lies in combining the required abandon of style with the technical control needed to preserve clarity. The tempo is so rapid that the count is always one to the measure. The second scherzo is the most complicated in form. Although it fits in the basic ABA form the abundance of material cannot but lead to expansion. Lyricism prevails in this piece and drama unfolds here rather by the gradual accumulation of emotion than by its sudden release. The Scherzo ends in obvious triumph.

Variations on a Theme of Schumann Op. 9

BRAHMS

In Brahms we find a contradiction of personality leading to a subjugation of temperament by craftsmanship. Form to Brahms, was end in itself. Starting out as a romanticist deeply impressed by the spirit of Schumann. Brahms put a curb on his imagination instead of giving it rein. Progress to him meant progress along classical lines. In his life, the conflict of ideas took the form of a struggle between bourgeois and idealistic tendencies. He han-

kered after a home, wife and children. But although his desires for domestic security could have been easily gratified (the death of Schumann removing any obvious impediment to a union with Clara, the grand passion of his life), he could not bring himself to suffer any loss of independence. The contradictory elements in Brahms' nature show themselves curiously in his music of which this set of variations is no exception. Based on a theme from Schumann's Bunte Blatter, some of the variations are undeniably Schumann-esque i.e. Variations 2, 6 and 16. Three of the numbers are contrapuntal exercises; Nos. 8 and 14 being incomplete canons and No. 15 a complete canon. This very interesting piece of music ends mysteriously in the manner of "Eusebius" at Variation 16 with no finale or coda.

Estampes: Pagodes DEBUSSY  
 La Soiree Dans Grenade  
 Jardins Sous La Pluie

Debussy's full mastery of the impressionistic genre dates from the fine Estampes, published in 1903. In the three pieces of this group, his exceedingly individual style is developed to perfection. Pagodes makes liberal use of the Oriental five-tone diatonic scale without any pretense of genuine Chinese idiom. The quickening rhythms may be taken to suggest tiers of rising height. To my personal fancy, this piece conjures up a Javanese gamelan orchestra playing in the shade of delicately gilded pagodas — the music mingling with the tinkling of silver bells gently swayed by the breeze. Manuel de Falla said of Soiree dans Grenade that it was "characteristically Spanish in every detail" — an extraordinary acknowledgement because Debussy had never set foot in Spain. This piece, best of the Estampes, brings before us the magic that is Spain — exotic colours, heady perfumes — ably evoked by the sensuous habanera, the lazy strumming of a guitar, a serenader wooing his maja . . . Jardins sous la pluie returns to France. Rain and wind sweep over thirsty Parisian gardens; in a lull of the storm heavy drops fall from wet bushes; at the end the sun bursts forth and the flowers rejoice to see it again. Two children's songs dexterously woven into the piece have been identified as 'Nous n'irions plus au bois' and 'Do, do l'enfant do'.

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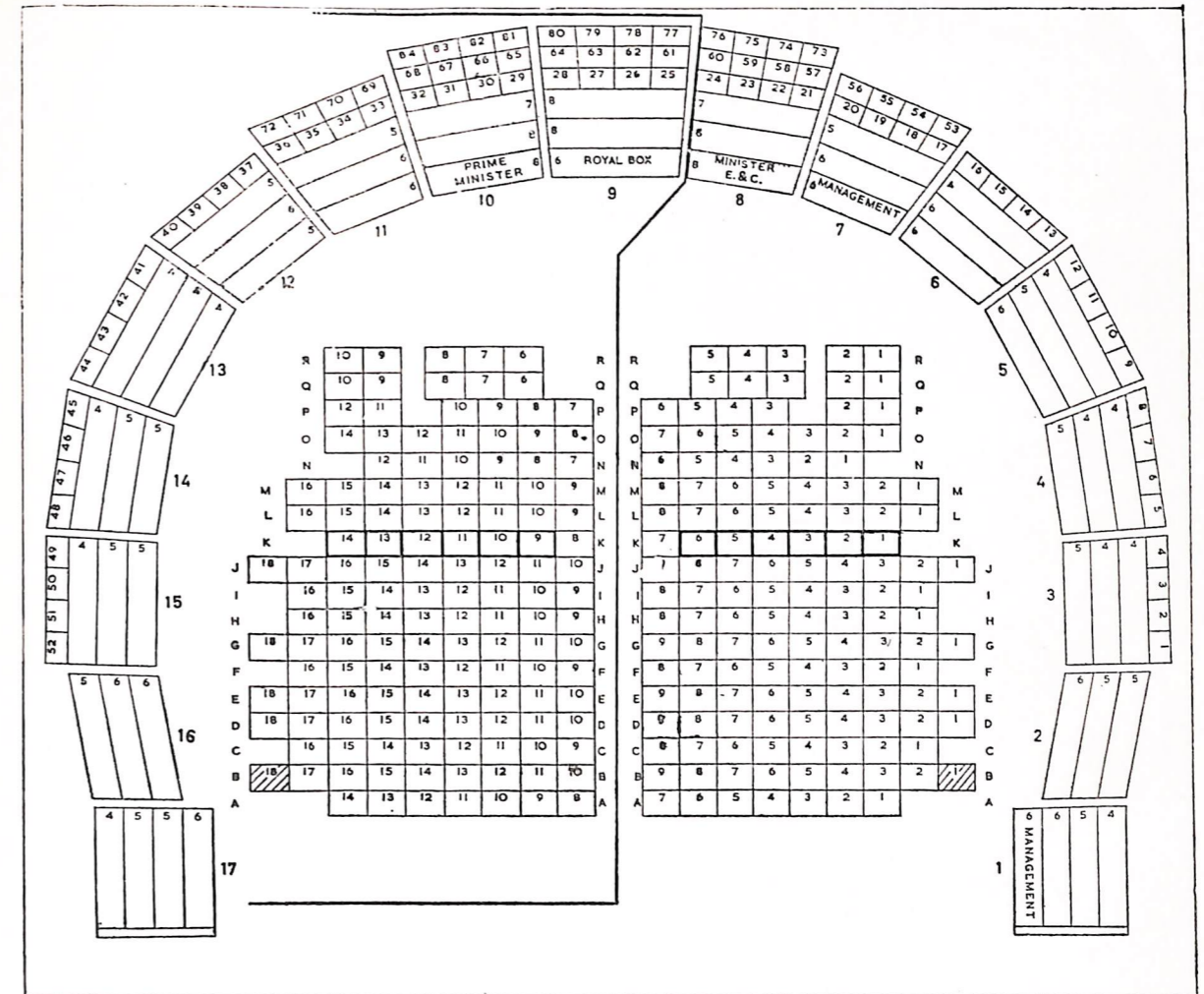
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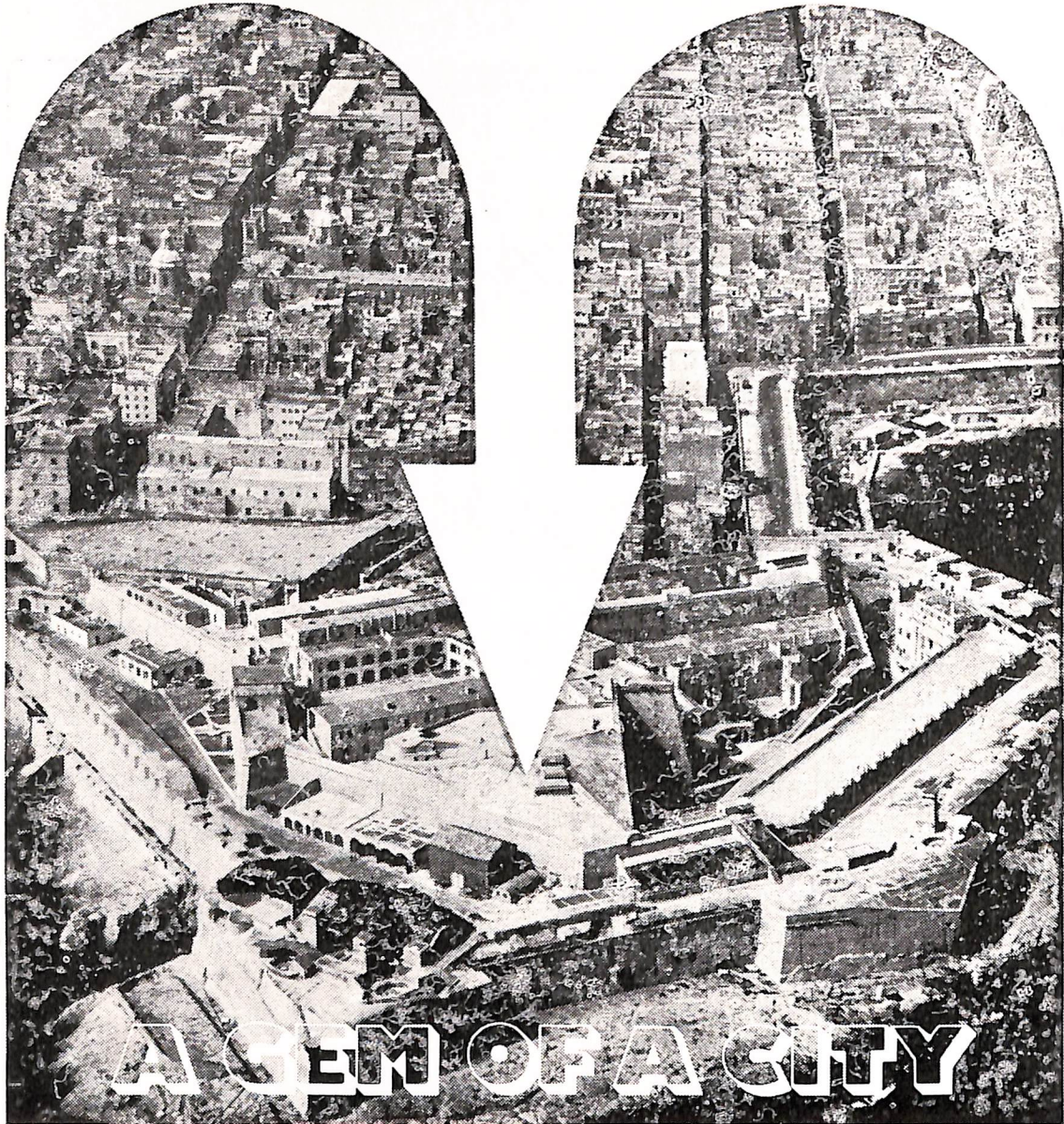
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