



1732

*"An Evening with Beethoven"
Soprano - Brian Schmitt
28 April 1981*

**MANOEL
THEATRE**

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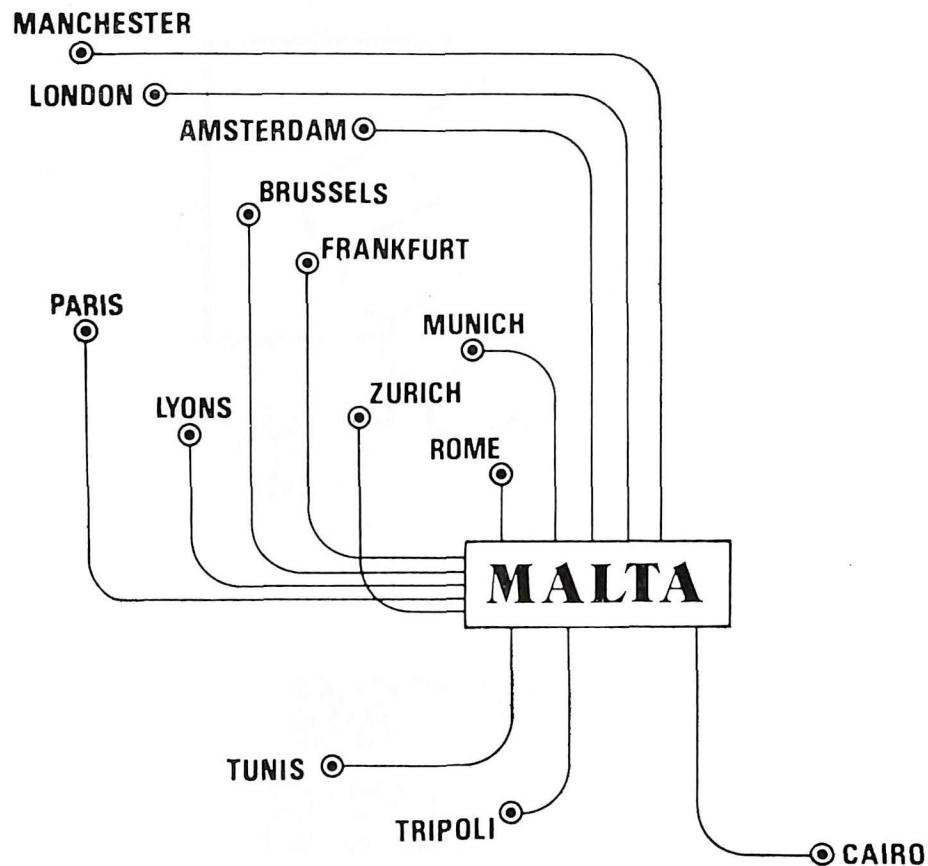
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presents the

**MANOEL THEATRE
ORCHESTRA**

Leader  GEORGE SPITERI

in

AN EVENING WITH BEETHOVEN

with

SOLOIST BRIAN SCHEMBRI

in

Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 in E Flat Major Op. 73

Conductor: JOSEPH SAMMUT


TUESDAY, 28th APRIL 1981

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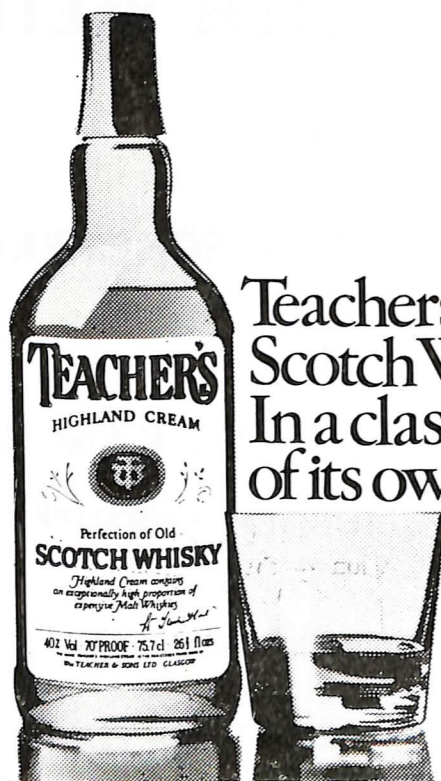
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Brian Schembri

Born in 1961 Brian commenced studying piano when he was eight years of age and, six years later, was successful in obtaining the diploma of L.R.S.M.

In 1970 Brian performed his first piano concerto on TV in a programme entitled 'Beethoven 100 years later — Brian Schembri today'. That programme heralded the start of a fine career as a piano soloist, Brian taking part, later on, in several concerts over TV, on Cable Radio and at the Malta Cultural Institute. In 1977, Brian was the piano soloist in a Robert Schuman concert organized by the Manoel Theatre Orchestra.

Then in 1978, Brian was awarded a Scholarship by the Malta-Soviet Friendship and Cultural Society. This award meant that he could continue his studies further and thus allow him to graduate in time as a piano soloist and as a director of symphonic orchestra at the Tchaikovsky State Conservatory in Kiev, Russia.

Whilst at the Conservatory, Brian has taken part in a number of activities. In January, 1980, he was invited by the Fa-

culty of Young Composers (at this Conservatory) to take part in a concert in which he played his own compositions. Then in the same month he gave his first public concert, which was very well received by a large crowd present. Also in Kiev, the Faculty of Directors of the Symphonic Orchestra at the Conservatory of Tchaikovsky often invited Brian to conduct their Orchestra with works by Beethoven and Schubert.

Last summer, (1980) whilst in Malta Brian took part in a concert at the Hotel Phoenicia Ballroom to mark the 5th Anniversary of the foundation of the Excelsior and Social Club, a concert which was shown in TV and broadcasted on Cable Radio.

Perhaps one of Brian's best achievements in Russia was the award he received for the best interpretation of Piano and Orchestral concerts in a competition held by the Tchaikovsky Symphonic Conservatory, Kiev. This award for the best interpretation provided the winner with the opportunity to play in the Concert by the Symphonic Orchestra and Brian's piece was his interpretation of Beethoven's Concert No. 5 — Emperor, which Brian himself performed along with the Orchestra of the Faculty of the Conservatory of Tchaikovsky, Kiev.

PROGRAMME

Overture

FIDELIO

Beethoven's only opera 'Fidelio' or 'Married Love' was first produced at Vienna in 1805 and, after changes were made in 1814. 'Fidelio' is the male name assumed by the Heroine, Leonore, in her rescue of her husband from prison. The composer made four attempts at the overture in the following order, employing the accepted but incorrect enumerations: Leonore no. 2 (1805), Leonore no. 3 (1806), Leonore no. 1 (1807), Fidelio (1814).

Piano Concerto No. 5 in E Flat Major 'Emperor'
for Piano and Orchestra Op. 73

Allegro — Adagio un poco mosso — Allegro

Beethoven's last piano concerto is the noblest of them all, its overall majesty leading an unidentified publisher to name it the Emperor. It opens with a powerful tonic chord out of which the piano emerges with a rhapsodic recitative. This alternation of orchestral harmonies and piano declamation is repeated twice more to establish at once what John N. Burk described as 'music of sweeping and imperious grandeur unknown to any concerto written up to 1812, and beside which the dignity of emperors or archdukes loses all consequence'. Now there comes a one-hundred-measure section for orchestra in which both main themes are presented. The first is proud and assertive; the second, in the unusual key of E flat minor, combines vitality with sensitivity. After the orchestra has worked these ideas out, the piano arrives with a repetition of the exposition, but with alterations. 'The solo piano', Burk explains, 'traverses elaborate figurations which, however, never obscure the thematic outlines, but unfailingly intensify it and enhance the development'. Following that development — an

epic in its own right — a stirring climax and a brief pause precede the cadenza which Beethoven himself wrote. The recapitulation and coda come after that.

There is only one theme in the slow movement. It is a stately melody with the quality of a hymn, heard in the higher strings over a pizzicato bass. The piano reflects on this subject in an improvisational manner, then restates it over plucked strings. Toward the end of the movement, the melody is repeated, this time by the orchestra, as the piano provides embellishments. Two measures before the end of the movement, a vital rhythmic subject suddenly emerges to give a hint of the main theme of the concluding rondo, which follows without pause. The opening of this finale is good-humored and energetic. This mood is carried on by a quotation of a few bars of a popular folk tune (the Gross-vatertanz), which Schumann also used in some of his piano music. With the piano in the forefront, the movement proceeds to a dynamic conclusion with many brilliant passages and effects.

I N T E R V A L

Symphony No. 4 in B Flat Major Op. 60

Adagio; Allegro vivace — Adagio — Allegro vivace —
Allegro ma non troppo

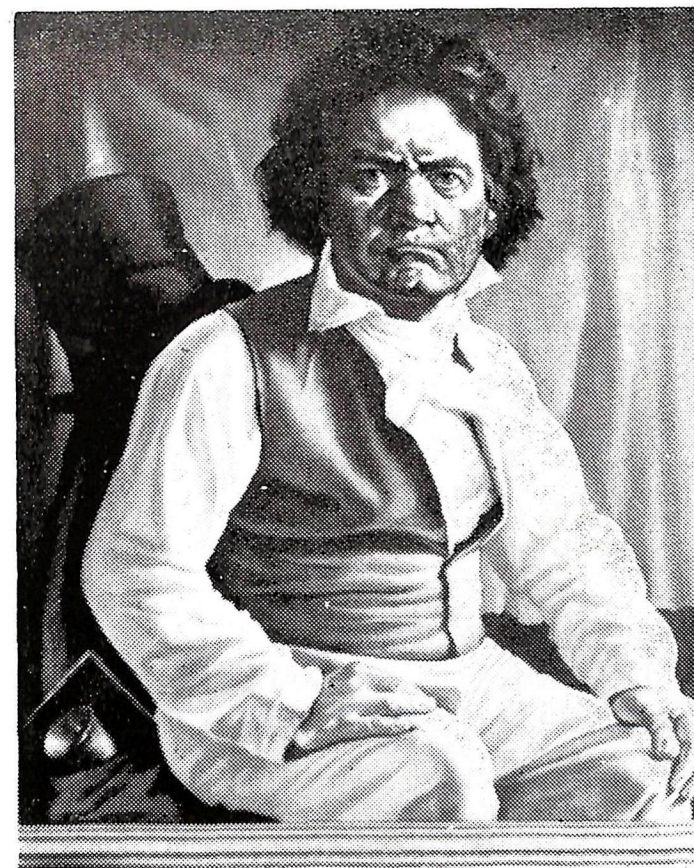
It is known that Beethoven was already at work on the C Minor Symphony when he turned aside to complete the Symphony in B Flat in 1806. There is no doubt that this period was, on the whole one of comparative happiness and the composition contemporary with the symphony, such as the G major Piano concerto and the Violin concerto, belong to the more serene aspects of Beethoven's art. But all attempts to read into the symphony a reference to any specific emotional experience are mere guess-work.

Apart from the seventh symphony, the fourth contains the most imposing introduction of any in the series. This is also the only instance in which the theme of the Allegro is actually born out of the figures of the introduction. The principal subject is a full blown tune made up of broken chords followed by a quiet legato scale passage.

The Adagio for sheer beauty of sound and texture is unsurpassed in the whole series. The throbbing accompaniment in the second violins is a feature almost throughout, and its initial figure recurs just before the close of the movement as an unaccompanied drum solo.

The third movement, though labelled minuet, is actually a scherzo and the first example in the series in which the trio is also repeated in alternation with the minuet section.

The finale is full of innocent humour and high spirits, with its swirling first subject and almost Haydinish second subject, but the whole treatment and temper of the movement are pure Beethoven.



BEETHOVEN

BEETHOVEN was born at Bonn in 1770 and died in Vienna in 1827 aged fifty-six. More than any other composer he deserves to be called the Shakespeare of music for he reaches to the heights and plumbs to the depths of human spirit as no other composer has done, and it was his own ambition to be called 'tone poet'.

In him were combined, in a measure that remains unique, the power to feel both passionately and tenderly and the mastery of musical resources necessary to express his feelings in the most direct and vivid way.

Beethoven was born into a poor but musical family, that of a tenor singer in the service of the Elector of Cologne at Bonn, whose father, a sound old musician was also in this service. He published a piano piece at the age of twelve, worked shortly afterwards as a pianist, organist and viola-player and he was well grounded in the violin.

At seventeen he was sent by his Elector on a visit to Vienna, where he remained for three months and received a little teaching from Mozart who fully recognised his genius. The comforts of a home were ever denied to him, for, more than once disappointed in love, he never married. When he was about thirty the first signs of deafness appeared; then onward the malady was progressive, until at last the loss of hearing was total.

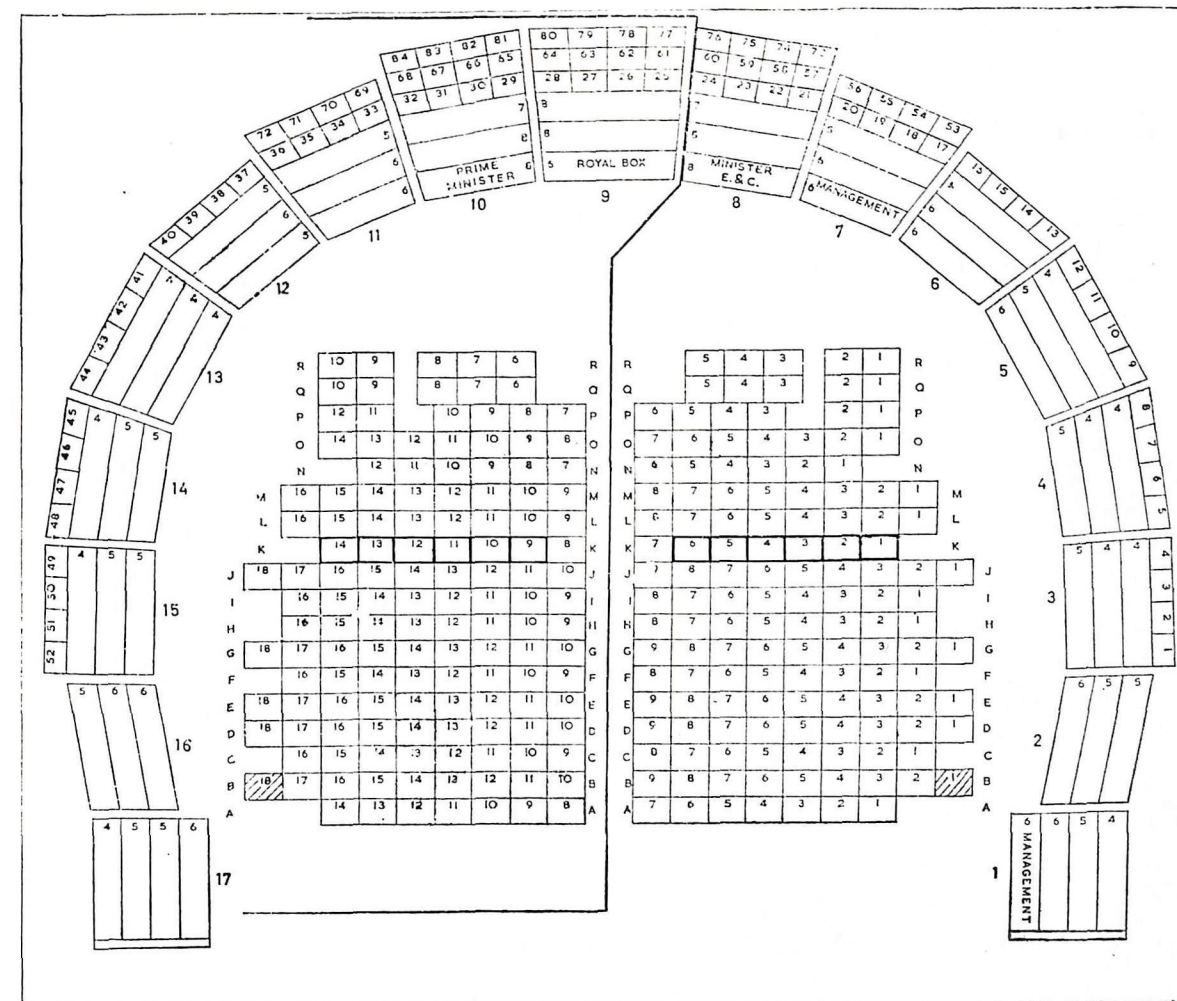
His output includes nine symphonies, thirty two piano sonatas, ten violin sonatas, sixteen string quartets (and the Grosse Fugue), five piano concertos, a violin concerto, a triple concerto for piano, violin and ce'lo, the opera Fidelio and several other choral, orchestral and chamber works.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

M.T.M.C. — MANOEL THEATRE ORCHESTRA — AN EVENING WITH TCHAIKOVSKY — SOLOIST CYNTHIA TURNER IN PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1 IN B FLAT MINOR. THURSDAY 14th MAY at 7.30 p.m.

M.T.M.C. IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE AMERICAN CENTRE — DORIAN WOODWIND QUINTET — SATURDAY, 23rd MAY at 7.30 p.m.

M.T.M.C. IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE EMBASSY OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY — GERMAN OCTET — SATURDAY, 30th MAY at 7.30 p.m.



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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