



1732

MANOEL THEATRE

AIRMALTA

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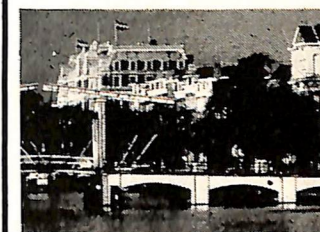
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THE MANOEL THEATRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

in association with

THE AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION

present

a

DUO PIANO RECITAL

by

RHONDDA GILLESPIE

and

ROBERT WEATHERBURN

Friday, 3rd February 1984



RHONDDA GILLESPIE AND ROBERT WEATHERBURN

The performances of Rhondda Gillespie and Robert Weatherburn have taken them to the major cities of the world - from Sydney's Opera House to Tokyo's Tower, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Paris' Salle Pleyel and London's Festival Hall.

They perform regularly at major Festivals and broadcast internationally on both radio and television networks.

It was as pupils of the eminent Russian pianist, Alexander Sverjensky, at the New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music, that they were first introduced to the duo piano repertoire, and it was at the request of the then Director of Music of the Australian Broadcasting Commission - Werner Baer - that they gave their first television duo piano recital which led to many other performances for the Australian Broadcasting Commission on radio and television, and to recitals throughout the Commonwealth.

In London, they continued their studies with the Hungarian pianist, Louis Kentner, and were recipients and winners of numerous Scholarships and Competitions.

Today, their extensive repertoire reflects their interest and fascination with the medium of two pianos and piano duet.

Miss Gillespie and Mr. Weatherburn are pleased to be able to include in their programmes, the complete original works of all the major composers who interested themselves in this field of composition. The works of Johannes Brahms have been of particular interest in this Anniversary year.

In the coming year, Miss Gillespie and Mr. Weatherburn will return to Australia for a series of concerts, in addition to their appearances in Great Britain, New Zealand, the United States of America and Holland.

PROGRAMME

Arrival of the Queen of Sheba, from "Solomon" HANDEL
The Sinfonia "Arrival of the Queen of Sheba" from Handel's Oratorio "Solomon" achieved great popularity under the baton of Sir Thomas Beecham, who regularly included it in his orchestral programmes. The arrangement we are playing this evening is by Brian Easdale.

Fantasy in F Minor Opus 103 SCHUBERT
Schubert's output of compositions for the piano covers his working lifetime. Arguably, he was the greatest melodist of all time, and he has left us a rich heritage of piano music for four hands. Arthur Hutchins tells us that the Fantasy in F minor Opus 103 was written in the last year of Schubert's life - a year which gave us many great masterpieces. From the very first bar of this great Fantasy we are transported into a magical world of sound where we find wistfulness, pathos, wit and above all, happiness.

Variations on a Theme of Haydn Opus 56a BRAHMS
The Variations on a Theme of Haydn, who took it from the St. Anthony Chorale, stands at the pinnacle of Brahms' compositions in this form, both for its technical and musical demands. He composed this famous set of variations during the summer of 1873 at Tutzing. He wrote the work first for two pianos in the version we are playing this evening, and then later the version for full orchestra. Both versions have the same Opus number. The theme is a mixture of five and four-bar phrases, an aspect that probably appealed to Brahms from the start. For each variation, one feature or aspect of the original theme is picked out for exploration and development. There are eight variations and a finale, and with each new variation the emotional feeling and general sound of the music changes.

INTERVAL

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme (Sleepers Wake) BACH
The Cantata "Sleepers Wake" by Bach is here arranged for two pianos by Gillies Whittaker, and was for the duo pianists Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson, both of whom edited this arrangement and that of Handel's "Arrival of the Queen of Sheba".

Variations on a Theme of Robert Schumann Opus 23 BRAHMS

The piano was Brahms' own instrument and he wrote music for it throughout his life. If he had wished, he could have made a career as an internationally famous concert pianist.

His first important concert was a recital in Hamburg at the age of 16, and he included a fantasy of his own in the programme. In 1853, when he was 20, he accompanied the Hungarian violinist, Remenyi, on a concert tour as his pianist.

All his early works require a formidable technique and could only have been conceived and written by a pianist with large and powerful hands - such as his own. In her diary of the autumn of 1853, Clara Schumann refers to his "beautiful hands, which overcome the greatest difficulties with perfect ease - his things are very difficult". Another of Clara's observations, a year or so later, is particularly interesting. She notes the constant changes of tempo in his early music, and also his own particular way of playing his compositions with a great deal of rhythmic licence. Brahms adhered to the classical tradition and moulds, but as a young man he was an out and out Romantic.

After Robert Schumann's death in 1856, a marked change occurred in Brahms. It was as though he began to cultivate a more rigid emotional self-discipline. The intensity of his feeling for Clara Schumann must have played a considerable part in

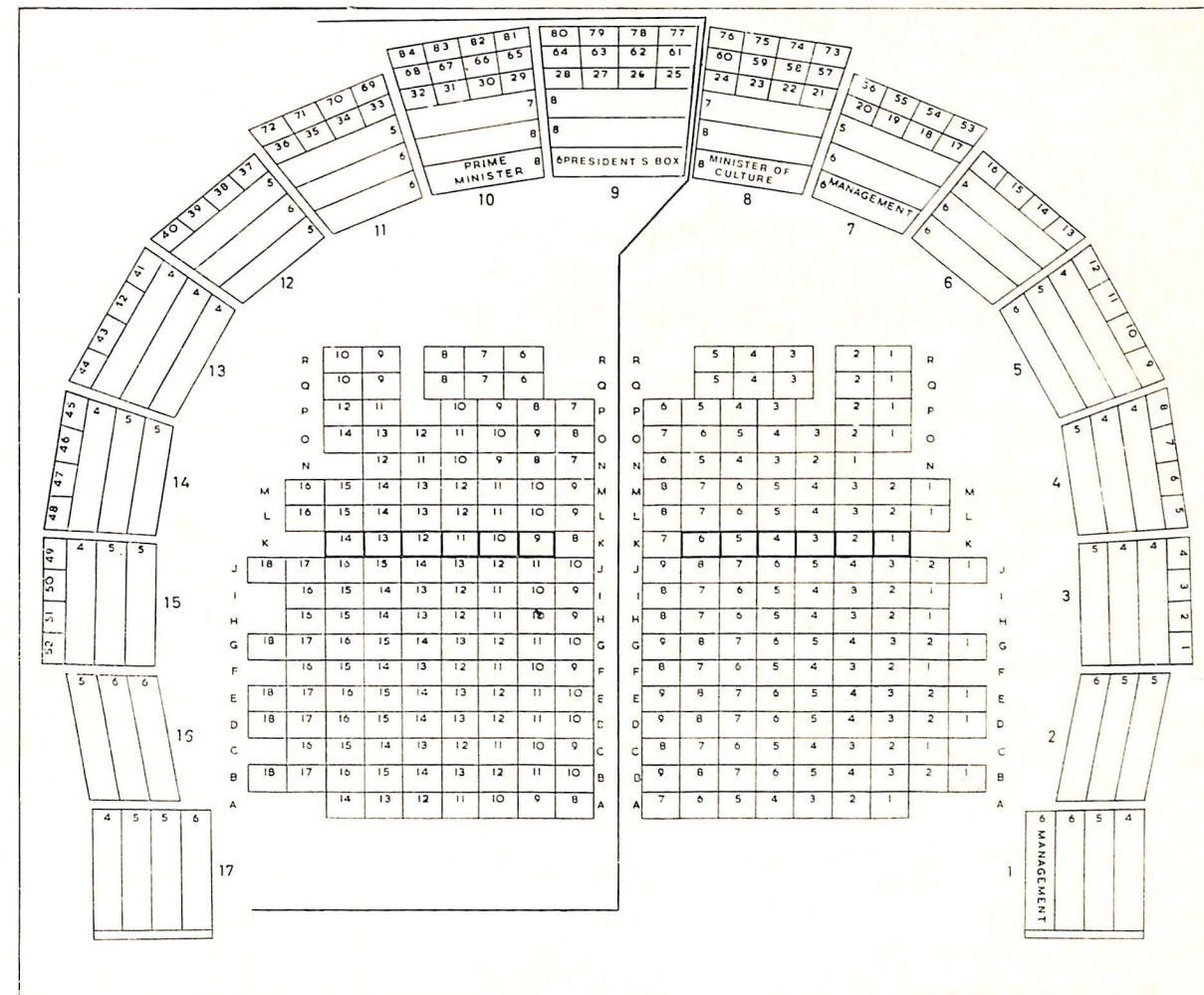
this. After the completion of the D minor piano concerto in 1859, his output of compositions for the piano took the form - in the main - of abstract sets of variations. He strove to re-invest this form of composition with an intellectual nobility, as he felt that the then current vogue for virtuoso frills and fancies had seriously debased it. Even the delights of the sonorities (often for their own sake) of Liszt and Chopin were not for Brahms. For all that, these works are out of bounds for all those without a virtuoso technique. The set of variations on a theme of Robert Schumann, Opus 23, date from 1861.

There can be no doubt that the long association between Brahms and Clara Schumann, enhanced by the great affection they had for each other, was a source of inspiration for his compositions for four hands. We know that he played most of them with her many times, and that it gave them great pleasure to perform these works together.

Danse Macabre Opus 40

SAINT-SAENS

The Danse Macabre of Saint-Saens has long been a favourite with audiences, and is best known in the orchestral version (1874) featuring a solo violinist. The version for two pianos is by Saint-Saens himself, who was a formidable pianist, and well illustrates his suave and sophisticated style.



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.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

MANOEL THEATRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE —
MANOEL THEATRE ORCHESTRA — SOLOIST MICHAEL
LAUS (PIANIST) — Tuesday 7th February.

SLIEMA THEATRICAL COMPANY — MADAME X —
Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th February.

MANOEL THEATRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE —
COMPAGNIA ITALIANA DI OPERETTE — IL PAESE DEI
CAMPANELLI — Monday 13th; SCUGNIZZA — Tuesday
14th; CIN CI LA' — Wednesday 15th; LA VEDOVA ALLEGRA
— Thursday 16th; IL PAESE DEI CAMPANELLI — Friday
17th; SCUGNIZZA — Saturday 18th; CIN CI LA' AND LA
VEDOVA ALLEGRA — Sunday 19th February 1984.

MANOEL THEATRE OPERA COMPANY — CAVALLERIA
RUSTICANA AND AN OPERATIC CONCERT — Saturday
25th and Sunday 26th February 1984.

CHARLES THAKE ID-DI W ID-DO — Saturday 3rd and
Sunday 4th March 1984.

MANOEL THEATRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE —
PIANIST ANNA MARIA STANCZYK — Tuesday 6th
March 1984.

THE MANOEL THEATRE FOYER

The Bonici Palace on the corner of Old Bakery Street, acquired by the Manoel Theatre two decades ago, has been completely restored and now constitutes its foyer. It can be approached from the auditorium, the level of your box, or from the original courtyard. Climbing the staircase with its shallow steps of white Carrara marble you see at every turn shell-shaped niches in one of which you may find the bust of your favourite composer. Further up, double doors inset with bevelled-edged mirrors lead to impeccable cloakrooms.

There are wall brackets and chandeliers from Vienna, heavy silk curtains in bluey/green and gold, a pair of candelabra and, at the top of the stairs, a truly magnificent chandelier once the property of the Messina family.

You will see engravings depicting characters and scenes from famous operas and show-cases in which are to be found *memorabilia* of the Theatre collected throughout the years. An antique mirror hangs above the eighteenth century mantelpiece. Beautiful furniture has been collected from the Auberges and carefully restored. The ceiling is a particular delight, the newly hand-painted beams, so near in colour to the curtains, are decorated with the Maltese Cross and small crowns picked out in gold.

Keeping guard over all this splendour stands the bust of Grand Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena which was recovered from Manoel Island.

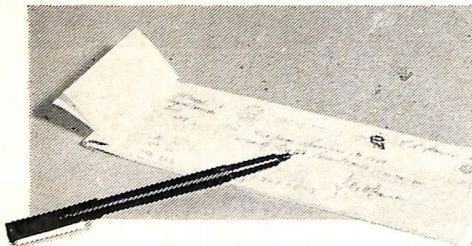
A visit to the Manoel Theatre Foyer is a must for every art lover, this splendid old house, restored to its pristine glory, makes a marvellous venue for any art Exhibition. The setting and accoustics are perfect for recitals and poetry reading.

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