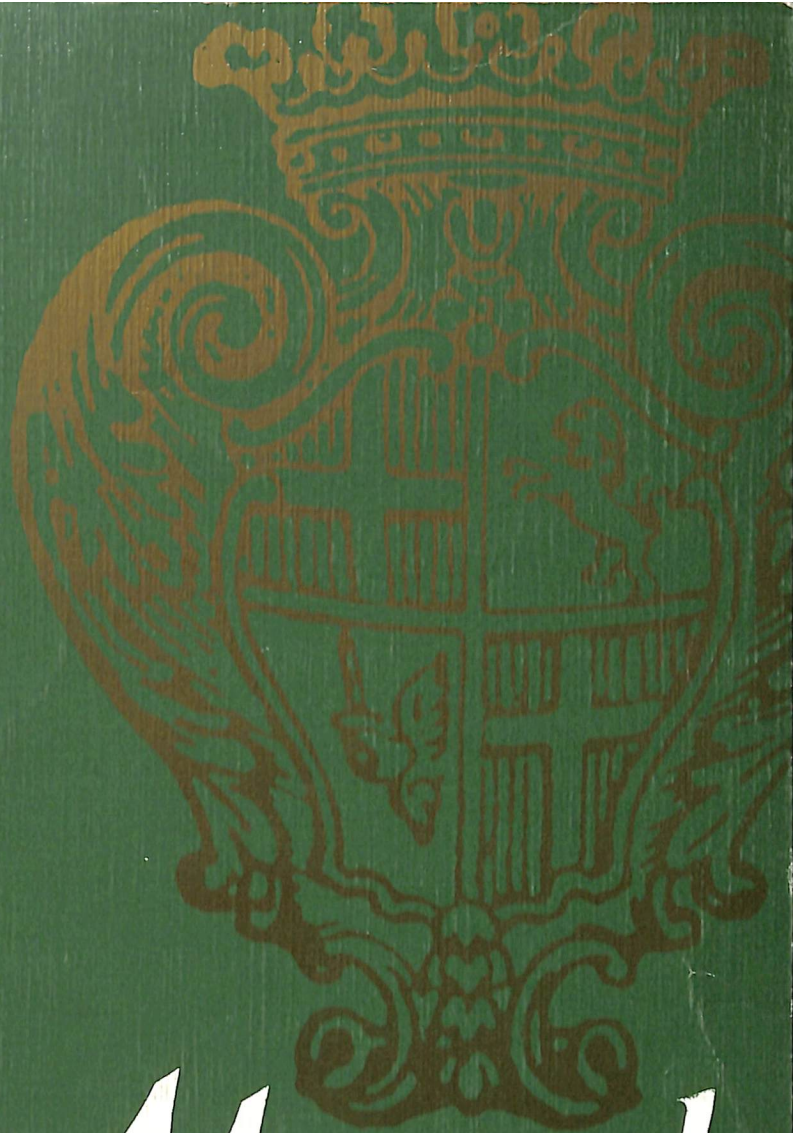




Manoel Theatre

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**ON THE OCCASION
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1985**

**THE CULTURAL DIVISION
of
THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND CULTURE
and**

**THE MANOEL THEATRE
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**in association with
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**and
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**present an
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by**

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THE MANOEL THEATRE**

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CONDUCTOR: JOSEPH SAMMUT
with the participation of**

distinguished Bulgarian and Czech Artists

SOLOISTS:

Soprano

Nadya Sormova

Mezzo Soprano

Rossitza Troeva

Baritone

Nikola Vasilev

**FRIDAY 2nd AUGUST 1985 at 9.00 p.m.
AT ST. PAUL'S SQUARE, MDINA**

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Every Saturday



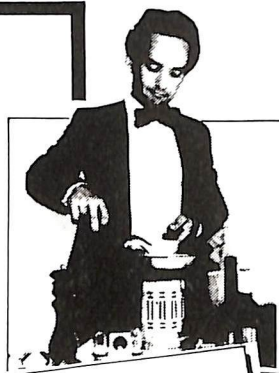
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MDINA- ANCIENT CAPITAL OF MALTA

MDINA IS THE ANCIENT CAPITAL CITY of Malta, its origins lost in antiquity though it is known for certain that it was inhabited even in prehistoric times. To the Greeks and the Romans it was known as the principal town of the Island and was in all probability the oppidum — the fortified city — described by Cicero. It certainly occupied the most advantageous site for the island's main citadel, as it lies almost equidistant from the large shallow bays to the north-west and south-east, and from the natural harbours to the north. The hill on which it was built gave it a natural defensive position and its walls, rising sheer from the ridge, gain additional height from the base of the escarpment below.

In Roman times its walls extended over a much longer perimeter than they do today, for Mdina was reduced to its present size, for defence purposes, by the Arabs after 870 AD. The ditch which today defines Mdina's southern boundary was dug by the Arabs; the rest of the city's boundaries are delineated by fortifications which follow the contours of the Mdina hill itself. Some of the existing walls date from the Middle Ages but extensive modifications and additions to Mdina's fortifications were carried out during the period of the Knights of St John in Malta.

The street plan of Mdina is most interesting and dates from early mediaeval times. Most of the present buildings were constructed during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries but earlier buildings can be seen.

1. **THE CATHEDRAL.** The present Cathedral stands on a site hallowed by time and tradition. According to that tradition the first Christian church in Malta was built on the site of the house where Publius, 'the chief man of the island', lived and was converted to Christianity by St Paul. One of the first acts of Roger the Norman after his landing in Malta in 1090 was to reconstruct, on the same site, a new cathedral. The eminent Maltese architect Lorenzo Gafà (1639-1710) was responsible for the present building, which is one of the best examples of Baroque art in Malta.
2. **THE CATHEDRAL MUSEUM.** In a charming little square on the left of the Cathedral is a magnificent building erected in 1733 as a seminary. The facade presents a distinct departure from the previously static Maltese Baroque; the centrepiece, with its open stone balcony supported by Atlantes, and the concave recess above are particularly interesting. Today this building houses the Cathedral Museum and contains paintings,

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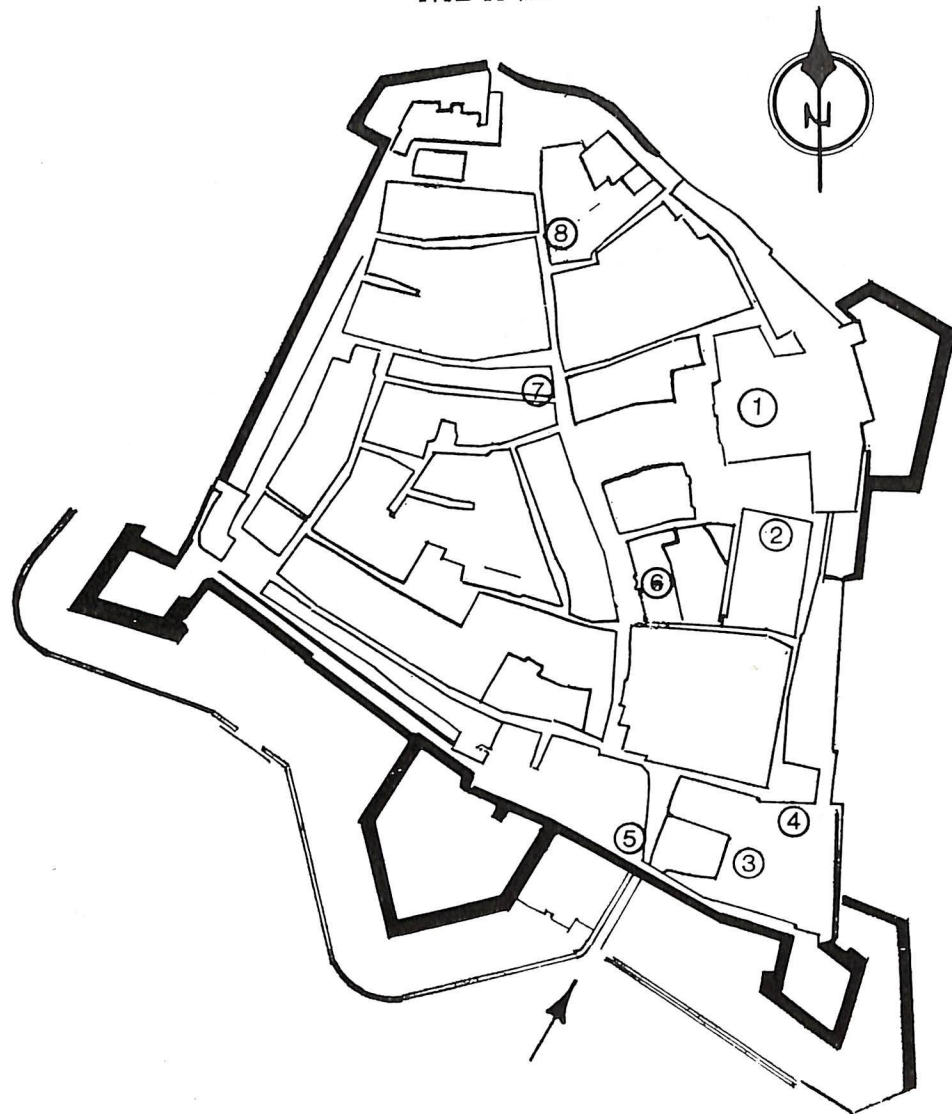
silverware and sculpture of high artistic value, as well as an extensive Dürer collection and other valuable items. It is also the repository of the Cathedral Archives and of the Inquisition records.

3. **VILHENA PALACE.** One of the greatest patrons of the arts among the Grandmasters, Manoel de Vilhena constructed this palace for his own use in 1730. Built on three floors around three sides of a courtyard, it is screened from the street by a high wall with a fine gateway. The timber gate itself is of first class workmanship and a very good example of the local craft of the early eighteenth century. The courtyard is of the cloister type with open arcading, the arches becoming flatter as one proceeds upward. The main door is one of the finest in Malta.
4. **OLD COURTS OF LAW.** Known also as the Corte Capitanale, this building formed part of the Municipium, or seat of the Municipality of Mdina, which had control over most of the internal affairs of the commune. In one of the halls of the upper floor can be seen the coat-of-arms of what was known as the Captain of the Rod, who presided over the Courts of Law. The facade is a mixture of styles and is undoubtedly the work of different architects of different periods.
5. **TOWER OF THE STANDARD.** This is the first building on the left as one enters the city of Mdina. It was built by Grandmaster Manoel de Vilhena during the reconstruction of the fortifications and was the main City Gatehouse. As the name implies, it flew the Standard of the Order. It replaced a much older tower which, along with the Cathedral bell tower, was visible from most of the coastal towers.
6. **TESTAFERRATA PALACE.** This is a magnificent building and a very important link in the history of the development of palace architecture in the Old City. One of the later palaces to be built, it was the house of the Marquis of St. Vincent Ferreri. Its facade is one of the most restful and elegant in the whole of Mdina.
7. **PALAZZO SANTA SOFIA.** Reputed to be the oldest surviving building in Mdina, a tablet gives the date as 1233, but this almost certainly refers to an earlier building on the same site, as the present palazzo belongs to a later period. The first floor is a recent addition constructed in 1936.
8. **THE NORMAN HOUSE.** One of the best known buildings in Mdina. Although much restored, it still retains its mediaeval character. The string course, a double row of inverted triangles with balls as pendants, is typical of the period, as are the pointed windows, hood moulds and double windows separated by slender circular columns.

Michael Ellul.

A map on page 6 shows the position of the principal features of Mdina as numbered in this article.

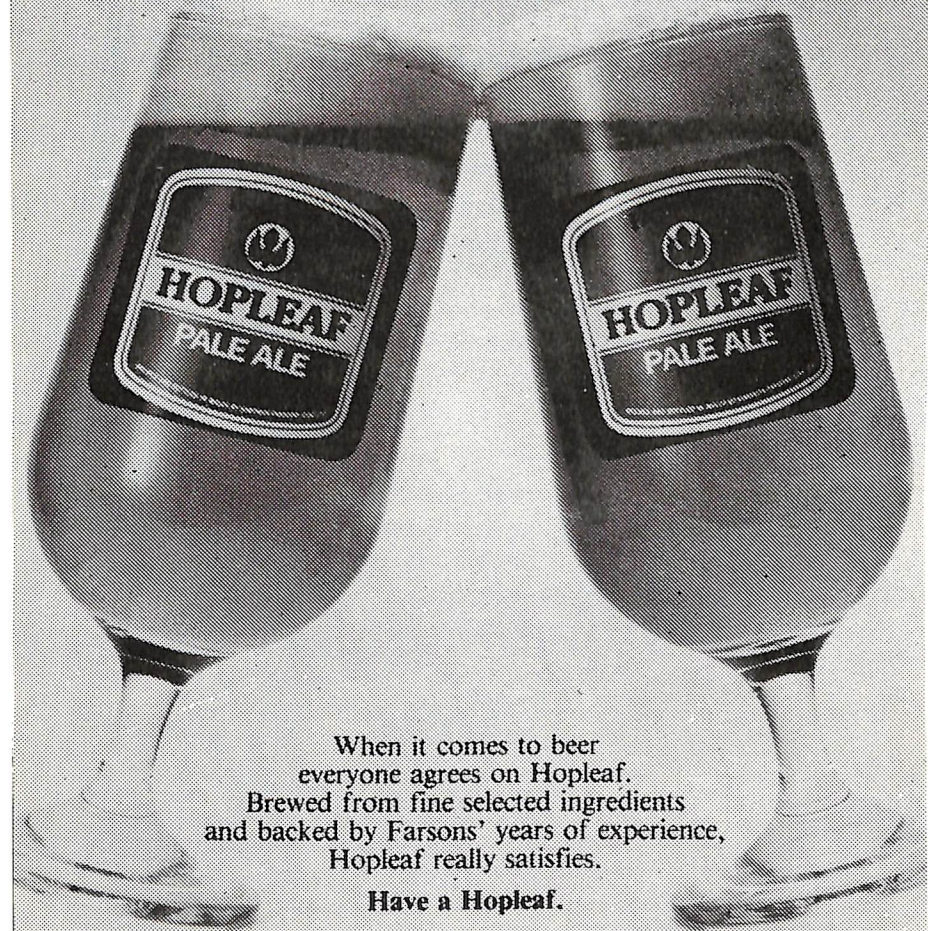
MDINA



LEGEND

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Cathedral | 5 Tower of The Standard |
| 2 Cathedral Museum | 6 Palazzo Testaferrata |
| 3 Vilhena Palace | 7 Palazzo Santa Sofia |
| 4 Old Courts of Law | 8 The Norman House |

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PROGRAMME

LUISA MILLER	Overture	<i>Verdi</i>
PAGLIACCI	Prologo	<i>Leoncavallo</i>
	Baritone Nikola Vasilev	
LA CENERENTOLA	Nacqui aff'Affanno	<i>Rossini</i>
	Mezzo Soprano	
	Rossitza Troeva	
LA BOHEME	Si, Mi Chiamano Mimi	<i>Puccini</i>
	Soprano Nadya Sormova	
DON CARLO	Aria e Morte di Rodrigo	<i>Verdi</i>
	Baritone Nikola Vasilev	
ADRIANA LECOUVREUR	O Vagabonda Stella	<i>Cilea</i>
	Mezzo Soprano	
	Rossitza Troeva	
MANON LESCAUT	Aria in Quelle Trine Morbide	<i>Puccini</i>
	Soprano Nadya Sormova	
SANSONE E DALILA	Baccanale	<i>Saint Saens</i>
RUSALKA	Aria	<i>Dvorak</i>
	Soprano Nadya Sormova	
LA FAVORITA	Aria O Mio Fernando	<i>Donizetti</i>
	Mezzo Soprano	
	Rossitza Troeva	
RIGOLETTO	Monologo, Pari Siamo	<i>Verdi</i>
	Baritone Nikola Vasilev	
PAGLIACCI	Quel Fiamma Aria	<i>Leoncavallo</i>
	Nel Guardo	
	Soprano Nadya Sormova	
IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA	Dunque lo Son	<i>Rossini</i>
	Duetto:	
	Mezzo Soprano	Rossitza Troeva
	Baritone	Nikola Vasilev

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