
TEATRU
MANOEL



1732



THE MANOEL THEATRE

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presents an

ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

with the

MANOEL THEATRE ORCHESTRA

leader George Spiteri

conducted by **Zygmund Rychert**

and guest soloists

STEFAN POPOV 'cellist
LUCIA MICALLEF piano
MARIO BISAZZA violin

Tuesday, 30 April, 1991

PROGRAMME

Overture from Egmont op 84

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770 - 1827)

There were two good reasons why the writing of *Egmont* should have been for the composer a labour of love. The first was his veneration of Goethe, the author of *Egmont*. The second was that the subject of his drama is a passionate espousal of liberty and a bitter denunciation of tyranny - something close to Beethoven's heart. When, therefore, the Burgtheatre in Vienna asked Beethoven to write incidental music for a revival of the Goethe drama, the composer responded enthusiastically.

The overture — one of Beethoven's most sublime — is a tone poem in which the essence of the drama has been fixed. Strongly accented chords in F minor create an ominous opening, which some like to interpret as the weight of Spanish oppression. Into this foreboding atmosphere lyric phrases intrude, but without providing relief from the tension. Then the main section — *allegro* - erupts dramatically, describing a rapidly developing rebellion. A gentler episode for the woodwind tells of a woman's love for Egmont. The development section is brief, then the main melodies are recalled. The earlier foreboding is once and for all dissipated by an exultant and joyous proclamation by the full orchestra, the voice of victory for the forces of freedom.

Concerto in C major, op 56

allegro - largo - rondo alla polacca

Ludwig van Beethoven

Though a product of Beethoven's middle period, the *triple concerto* reaches back stylistically, not only to the early Beethoven of the first two-piano concertos, but even further into the past. For in the C major Concerto, Beethoven reverts to the old concerto-grosso structure. He uses his three solo instruments as the concertino, and the orchestra as the ripieno. The orchestra presents the basic two themes of the first movement — the first in cellos and basses, and the lyrical second one in the first violins. When the three solo instruments enter, they restate these themes, then proceed with decorations and elaborations. The development and recapitulation are in the classic design. In the slow movement, a song is heard in solo cello, accompanied by the piano. It is repeated by clarinets and bassoons before it is amplified by orchestra and solo instruments. The concluding *rondo* follows without a pause. A lively tune in the style of a polonaise is first presented by the solo cello, after which it is discussed vivaciously by the other solo instruments and the orchestra.

I n t e r v a l (20 minutes)

Symphony No. 1 in C minor, op. 31

Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky
(1840 - 1893)

*allegro tranquillo -
adagio cantabile ma non tanto -
scherzo; allegro scherzando giocoso -
finale; andante lugubre, allegro moderato, allegro maestoso,
allegro vivo*

Tchaikovsky completed his first symphony in 1866 and called it *Winter Dreams*. The thematic material here frequently has a Russian flavour; the main subject of the slow movement, in solo oboe, sounds like a Russian folk tune. In fact, in this youthful work, the first subject of the slow movement, the adagio and the slow introduction to the finale all resemble folk-like themes, although only the last is an actual folk song. The operatic influence is visible already in the scherzo — a transposed version of a scherzo written for a piano sonata — in the dramatic pauses which introduce the middle section, and in the brass fanfare which became almost a mannerism in later works besides appearing also in the first movement.

NON SYMPHONIST

The composer himself knew that he lacked a symphonic character. He wrote in a letter to a friend, "all my life I have been much troubled by my inability to grasp and manipulate form in music...what I write has always a mountain of padding. An experienced eye can detect the thread in my seams and I can do nothing about it". Think of Beethoven's *Eroica* opening, or Brahms's Third Symphony; the composers seem merely to be



playing with the notes of a common chord out of which one idea develops into different forms, taking new meanings like a thought in a man's mind. For "Symphony" equals musical thinking equals musical intelligence. Now Tchaikovsky does not think. He *feels*, he *experiences*. However, the result is always beautiful and pleasing to the ear. His symphonies make an immediate appeal especially with the unreflecting musical public although trained musicians tend to agree with the composer Tanieiev, Peter Ilich's contemporary, who said of his 4th symphony: "Gives the effect of a symphonic poem to which the composer has slapped on three more movements and called it a symphony".

ZYGMUND RYCHERT was born in Gdansk and first studied with his father and then at the Pognan Academy of Music. A scholarship enabled him to assist Witold Rowicki with the National Philharmonic in Warsaw. In 1974 he founded the orchestra of Baltic Philharmonic in Gdansk which he conducted for seven years before being appointed artistic director of the State Opera in Bydgoszcz (heard in Malta during Maltafest 1989). Since 1984, as artistic director of the State Philharmonic at Koszalin he has given over 2000 symphonic concerts, opera and ballet performances in Bulgaria, Holland, Austria, the USSR, U.S.A., Italy, Germany, Japan, and the far east. He lectures regularly on classical and contemporary music at the Academies of Gdansk and Bydgoszcz.

Born in Bulgaria **STEFAN POPOV** entered a special music boarding school for very talented children. His debut at the age of 15 aroused great interest. On a government scholarship he entered the Moscow conservatoire, and studied with Knushevitsky and Rostropovich, graduating with honours and the special gold medal. He was invited to become a professor at Boston University and the New England conservatoire. He later settled in the UK. Stefan Popov has played with many leading orchestras and distinguished conductors. Many composers have dedicated their works to him and he has given their first performances.

He is now professor at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and cellist-in-residence at the City University in London. He was awarded an honorary degree by the Guildhall School of Music. Mr. Popov has recently returned from a tour in South America.

LUCIA MICALLEF who was born in 1961 began her music studies at the age of four under Giovanna Bascetta. In 1980, she won the three-year scholarship of the Associated Board to the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she studied with Lois Phillips F.R.A.M. until she left, after being awarded an additional year's scholarship and several prizes. She also studied at the Accademia Chigiana of Siena with Rudolph Buchbinder. In 1985 she was awarded the Young Musicians' Talent Trust prize for the United Kingdom.

MARIO BISAZZA started his studies with sister Juliet and by the time he was 12 years old he joined the M.T.O. as a part-timer. He also had lessons with Sventha Mashat and in 1975 was the first local violin teacher at the School of Music. In 1977 he studied in Salzburg with Renato di Barbieri and Sandor Veigh. Besides various recitals at M.C.I. concerts and a full recital on TV, Mr Bisazza has played the Max Bruch concerto and in Bach's and Vivaldi's double concertos. He frequently leads orchestras and chamber groups under various conductors. For 3 years he was the musical director of the Choral Society and is the founder and leader of the Brevis Quartet. A successful teacher he has coached some promising students, amongst them Carmine Lauri. He teaches violin and viola at the School of Music and coaches chamber groups.

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