
TEATRU
MANOEL



1732

1499

~~1593~~



TEATRU MANOEL

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A SHORT HISTORY

The Theatre was opened in 1732 by Grand Master Manoel De Vilhena for *the honest recreation of the people*. Its unassuming facade is sober, restrained and simple, which contrasts strongly with its ornate baroque interior. Vilhena's coat-of-arms dominates above the stage, while the gorgeous panelled ceiling houses the great glistening chandelier which sparkles over the auditorium. The muted tones of the green and the 22-carat gilt boxes weave their intricate patterns around you with beautifully painted original panels. All the forty-five boxes are identical and vary only slightly in size, apart from the splendidly ornate presidential box, once graced by Grandmasters, Kings and Queens.

An important consideration is the price you will pay for your seat; it will compare most favourably to that of other countries. Recently the Management Committee has introduced a scheme whereby all students, the unemployed, senior citizens and handicapped people may book seats at half price.

The theatre's calendar is highly varied, with a steady stream of recitals, orchestral concerts, ballet, opera and, of course, plays. The management committee's major preoccupation is that of setting standards and ensuring that they are kept consonant with the theatre's image as Malta's National Theatre. Many international celebrities have over the years graced the boards of the Manoel. They include Yehudi Menuhin, Segovia, Zabaleta, Rostropovitch, Boris Christoff, John Ogdon, Samy Molcho, Ashkenazy, Sir Donald Wolfitt, Louis Kentner, the Berlin State Opera and Ballet company, the Bolshoi and the Kirov Ballets, the La Scala Orchestra, Gianni Raimondi, Katia Ricciarelli and many others.

The Manoel Theatre has its own orchestra, under the baton of Mro Michael Laus. The Theatre's Library, specialising in Music and Drama publications, opens on Saturday mornings and the membership is free. A 200-year old palace has been annexed to the Theatre and transformed into a delightful foyer. Chamber music recitals, poetry recitals, lectures, master classes and art exhibitions are held in the foyer at one end of which stands a bronze period bust of Grand Master Manoel de Vilhena, serenely surveying the continuous benefits of his considerable contribution to Malta's culture.

This fine work keeps his memory fresh in all those who cultivate the Arts and those who seek an *honest recreation* as proclaimed by the Theatre's motto granted by Grand Master de Vilhena and sculptured above the Theatre's main entrance: *Ad honestatem populi oblectationem*.


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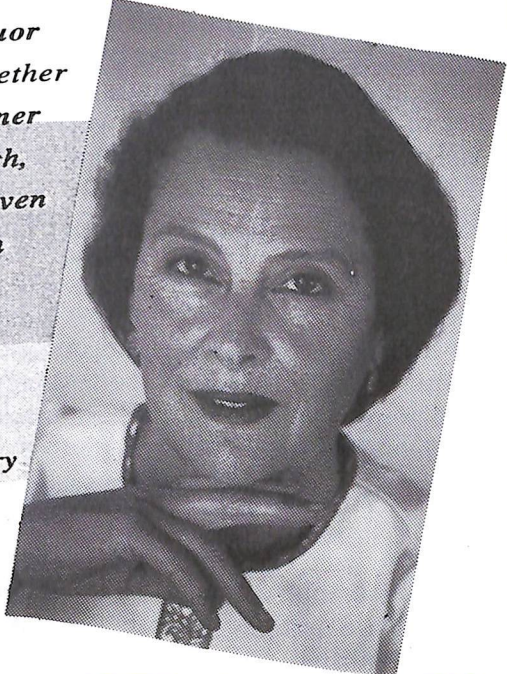
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*The famous Quatuor
de Fourvière together
with Cynthia Turner
play music by Bach,
Dohnanyi, Beethoven
and the Schumann
Quintet for Piano
and Chamber
Orchestra.*

*Tuesday 28 February
at 7.30 p.m.*



MANOEL THEATRE

Cynthia Turner

PROGRAMME

Chromatic Fantasia in D minor Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

This is an arrangement for solo viola by the Hungarian composer Zoltan Kodaly (1882-1967) of Bach's work for harpsichord, which includes also a fugue. The work is highly dramatic, full of expressive runs and expressive chromatic writing.

Solo Cello Suite no. 2 in D minor: Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

II. Allemande.

Bach's six solo cello cello suites, together with the solo violin works, are acknowledged to be the pinnacle of Baroque writing for solo strings. In these works Bach managed to create more than an impression of different lines moving against each other by creating a "compound line": what at first sight seems to be a single line is in fact a combination of lines following the rules of voice-leading as in a work for several instruments or voices. The *Allemande* is a stately 4/4 dance, with much semiquaver movement.

Solo Violin Sonata no. 3 in C major: Fugue. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Like his works for solo cello, Bach's *Sonatas* or *Partitas* for solo violin exhibit a high degree of virtuosity in compositional skill, besides requiring a comparable dexterity by the performer. The movement being played tonight is nothing less than a four part fugue for solo violin. Much of the implied counterpoint is realized in the way explained for the cello works.

Thirty-Two Variations in C minor Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Beethoven composed this set of variations for solo piano in 1806. Though they are undoubtedly a very good work, the composer, for some unknown reason, never published them. The theme consists of an eight-bar harmonic basis, upon which Beethoven weaves a total of (actually) thirty-five variations. The middle variations constitute a sort of slow movement, while the final few variations take the shape of a coda. The theme is strongly characterized and thus the variations are easy to follow.

Interval (20 minutes)

Serenade in C major, op. 10, for string trio Ernest von Dohnanyi (1877-1960)

*I. March. II. Romance. III. Scherzo. IV. Tema con variazioni.
V. Finale.*

Dohnanyi was an early twentieth-century Hungarian composer who was, however, practically uninfluenced by the musical trends of his time, composing in a post-Brahmsian idiom which does not break new territory. The serenade in tonight's programme, composed in 1902, is typical of his style. Besides the predictable Romantic elements, the work has a neo-classical tinge, a trend typical also of such Romantic composers such as Brahms and Reger, who also wrote works in forms associated with the Classical period, such as the serenade.

Piano Quintet in E flat major, op. 44 Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

*I. Allegro brillante. II. In modo di una marcia – Un poco largamente –
Agitato. III. Scherzo: Molto vivace. IV. Allegro ma non troppo.*

Schumann's marriage to Clara Wieck in 1840 ushered in an extremely fruitful period for the composer. Song cycles, symphonies, string quartets, and other works followed each other with a certain facility. Near the end of this period we find the *Piano Quintet*, dated 1842, which is certainly Schumann's most satisfying and most popular chamber work.

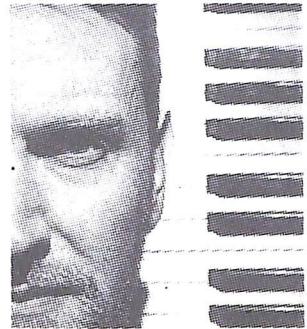
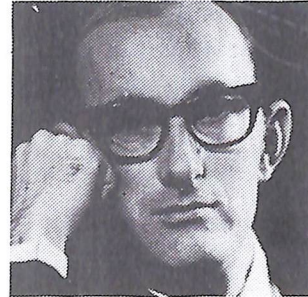
The writing of the opening movement is mostly concentrated on the piano part, with the strings mostly providing support. The thematic material and the way it is worked out provide us with a movement full of warmth and enthusiasm. The more tentative subsidiary themes enhance this atmosphere. A sad, hesitant march opens the second movement. A more song-like idea provides a contrast. This is, however, interrupted by an agitated version of the funeral march theme. This same theme subsides pathetically at the end of the movement.

Running scale-like figures dominate the high-spirited *scherzo*. A brief *cantabile* section is offset against this. The *trio* section consists also of running passages, though in a different rhythm. The main theme of the last movement is rather heavy. Schumann offers only brief periods of respite from this theme. At a certain point a *fortissimo* dominant seventh chord leads to highly ingenious *fugato* combination of the theme of this movement with that of the first movement.

March Musical Highlights

7th – The (long-awaited) return of pianist John Clegg playing Beethoven's Concerto no. 3 with the orchestra conducted by Michael Laus. "Beautiful clarity, fastidious elegance, cultivated musicianship"

– The Daily Telegraph



14th – The British Council presents Tim Richards' Spirit Level – Jazz Concert. Tim Richards *piano*, Kubryk Townsend *double bass*, Jerry Underwood *tenor saxophone* and Kenrick Rowe *drums*.

"Few British jazz artists have made such an immediate impact..."

– The Guardian

Drama Forum organised by The Friends of the Manoel Theatre on March 1 in the Bar-Courtyard area.

Piano Recital by Stefan Cassar organised by ir-Razzett tal-Hbiberija at Sala Isouard on March 3

After tonight's performance, a variety of pasta dishes are being served at the Caffe Teatro. Pre-booking is advisable.

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into first performance.

PERFORMANCE TIMES
Monday to Saturday - 7.30 p.m.
Sunday - 6.30 p.m.

*The management reserves the right to
alter the programme and performance time of any
production.*

