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MANOEL

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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 Mrs 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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*Pianoforte Recital*  
by **ANNE BORG**  
on the 3rd April 1995




In Malta Ms Borg studied the piano with Miss A. Parnis England and Miss A. Hare. In 1967 she won the prize in the piano competition organised by the Malta Song Festival Board and, through the German Embassy, was awarded a year's scholarship which enabled her to study under Walter Blankenheim at the Music Academy in Saarbrücken.

She next obtained a scholarship through the German Academic Exchange Service, subsequently extended for a further three years, eventually continuing her studies under Robert Leonardy. She gained her Teacher's Diploma in 1974 and the Diploma as a professional concert player in 1976.

She attended master courses under the Russian Professor Naumov, under Vitalij Margulis of Leningrad and Freiburg Music Academies, Professor Jürgen Uhde of Stuttgart and Professor Detlef Kraus of Essen.

She has been teaching piano at Germany's Saarbrücken Academy of Music since 1976. She has done recordings for radio and television; given piano recitals, as well as chamber music performances and orchestral concerts in Germany and France, England and Russia. During the past years she has been giving duo piano recitals with Walter Blankenheim in Germany. In Malta she has often teamed up with Cynthia Turner and last year they performed together in Cairo, Egypt.



## PROGRAMME

### 4 Sonatas

**Domenico Scarlatti**

(1685 - 1757)

*K. 63 in G major, Capriccio: Allegro;*    *K. 33 in D major, Allegretto;*  
*K. 175 in A minor, Allegro;*  
*K. 513 in C major, Pastorale: Moderato - Molto allegro - Presto*

Domenico Scarlatti was born in Naples in the same year as Bach and Handel. During his early manhood he was largely overshadowed by his famous father, Alessandro Scarlatti, the leader of the Neapolitan school of opera composers. Though Domenico had already worked in Naples, Venice, Rome and Palermo, the many vocal and instrumental works he had written gave no hint that he would later become one of the most original composers that has ever lived. This startling metamorphosis seems to have coincided with his removal to Portugal, where at the age of thirty-four he became master of the Royal Chapel and harpsichord teacher to the King's eldest daughter, the Infante Maria Barbara. On her marriage in 1728 to Fernando, heir to the Spanish throne, he accompanied the Princess and her household to Spain, which remained his home for the rest of his life. Comparatively little was known about Scarlatti until the publication of Ralph Kirkpatrick's comprehensive study, *Domenico Scarlatti* (Princeton 1953; revised paperback edition 1968). Today Scarlatti is known almost entirely by the 555 keyboard sonatas which he is thought to have written mainly after his arrival in the Iberian peninsula. The majority are single-movement works in binary form – that is to say, in two roughly equal halves. Kirkpatrick suggested that the order of the works in the Queen's volumes was largely chronological, and though his theory has not been universally accepted, his numbering is now generally used to identify the sonatas. These works are noteworthy for their conciseness and variety, qualities which would later mark the mazurkas of Chopin.

### 4 Mazurkas Op. 33

**Frédéric Chopin**

(1810 - 1849)

*No. 1 in G sharp minor, Mesto;*    *No. 2 in D major, Vivace;*  
*No. 3 in C major, Simplice;*    *No. 4 in B minor, Mesto*

### 4 Mazurkas Op. 41

*No. 1 in E minor, Andantino;* *No. 2 in B major, Animato;*  
*No. 3 in A flat major, Allegretto;*    *No. 4 in C sharp minor, Maestoso*

Dance forms were a particular source of inspiration for Chopin, who made the music of dance a central part of his composition. His mazurkas only occasionally follow the

traditions of Polish folk music: although he keeps the outward characteristics of the mazurka, there are many indications that Chopin's intention was to replace the rustic element with mood-painting where the sensitive focusing would bring attention to the nuances of the Polish language. To comprehend the mental framework within which Chopin evolved these works, one should know something of the customs and the manners of the mazurka as it was danced in Poland. It was actually a creation of the province of Mazovia, in which Chopin was born, though welcomed, well before his time, into the Slavic community generally. It is a dance of encounter and separation, in which the couples trace a prescribed course of exchange and return. And if the mood is right and the company congenial, a single mazurka could be prolonged for an hour.

### Interval

### 6 Bagatelles Op. 126

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

(1770 - 1827)

*No. 1 in G major, Andante con moto;*    *No. 2 in G minor, Allegro;*  
*No. 3 in E flat major, Andante;*    *No. 4 in B minor, Presto;*  
*No. 5 in G major, Quasi allegretto;*  
*No. 6 in E flat major, Presto - Andante amabile e con moto - Tempo I*

Beethoven's Bagatelles have been dismissed as both slight and enigmatic. True, their ruthlessly and often eccentrically self-critical composer hardly helped their cause when he called them "Kleinigkeiten", or trifles. Yet such indifference surely stems from a notorious fallacy, the assumption that small is trivial rather than beautiful. Beneath their deceptive surface the Bagatelles suggest, albeit in pocket form, a wholly Beethovenian strength, elusiveness and profundity. Their mix of what has aptly been called "lyricism and horseplay", too, suggests that Beethoven understood as well as anyone, that brevity is indeed the soul of wit. In their dried space the Bagatelles range through moods of deep solace to an almost elemental force and ebullience. Occupying a place roughly analogous in classical terms to the Chopin Mazurkas, (Chopin's most intimate and confessional diary), they are diamond-like chippings from the Master's work-shop, and their essential enigma lies in Beethoven's capacity to achieve greatness within such an outwardly modest scope. The Bagatelles – if the contradiction is allowed – are epics in miniature.

The last group of six, Opus 126, was completed in 1824, the period of the Ninth Symphony. The composer described them in a letter to his publisher as the best things of that kind he had done. The first of the set, in G major, allows its principal melody to re-appear in the bass in its second section, after a brief cadanza. The second, in G minor, with a central B flat cantabile melody, offers a contrast of mood and key, and is followed by an E flat major Andante, marked cantabile and grazioso, in which the opening melody is elaborated. There is a strong element of drama in the B minor – B major fourth Bagatelle, capped by a gentle G major Allegretto fifth. The set, which makes a coherent whole when played as one work, ends with an E flat major Bagatelle in which a rapid outer frame-work holds a pleasing and more extended central Andante.

## Fantasien Op. 116

Johannes Brahms  
(1833 - 1897)

- No. 1 *Capriccio in D minor*;      No. 2 *Intermezzo in A minor*;  
No. 3 *Capriccio in G minor*;      No. 4 *Intermezzo in E major*;  
No. 5 *Intermezzo in E minor*;    No. 6 *Intermezzo in E major*;  
No. 7 *Capriccio in D minor*.

The Fantasien, Op. 116 were composed in 1892 and are the first of the four cycles of piano works written at Bad Ischl where the ageing Brahms spent several months every year. The four cycles are a kind of pianistic testament, and Brahms himself called them "cradle songs of my sadness".

No. 1 *Capriccio in D minor* (presto energico) is typically "Nordic" in its dark ruggedness. It is dramatic but spare in material, with flashes of virtuosity kept in check until the climatic last page. "It is still a 'private piece' in spite of its athleticism. It reflects rather than displays a virtuoso manner, and in so doing accords with Richard Specht's ear-witness account of the later Brahms: 'He always played as if he were alone; he forgot his public entirely' ". (Denis Matthews)

No. 2 *Intermezzo in A minor* (andante) introduces the truly introspective Brahms. It is a sweet and gently resigned song of which Clara Schumann compared the celestial middle section to the song of the nightingale.

No. 3 *Capriccio in G minor* (allegro appassionato) is a kind of ballad, fantastic and vehement in character. It begins and ends passionately, but it has a majestic interlude in-between written in the heroic style which recalls a much younger Brahms.

No. 4 *Intermezzo in E major* (adagio) was originally entitled "nocturne". It is a piece of great beauty and great melancholy, akin in spirit to many a romantic Lied by Brahms. It is written in an unusually free, almost improvisatory form, with the composer adopting a favourite plan of his – that of developing a piece of fragrant enchantment out of two trifling scraps.

No. 5 *Intermezzo in E minor* (andante con grazia ed intimissimo sentimento) is a short, imaginative and rather elusive little piece, short but full of harmonic invention. "Brahms did not aim here at charm or ease, and there may have been deliberate irony in his indication 'con grazia ed intimissimo sentimento'. Intimate sentiments are not always idyllic – a knowledge of Brahms' life and outward character would bear this out – but the middle section and coda resolve the tensions with a warmth of heart that goes beyond mere compositional needs and philosophical detachment." (Denis Matthews)

No. 6 *Intermezzo in E major* (andantino teneramente) is probably the crown of Op. 116. One of the composer's most touching melodies, it is both the simplest of all the intermezzi and one of the most deeply felt. Enhanced by hauntingly beautiful and sad harmonies, its gentle sentiment give it an almost Schubertian flavour.

No. 7 *Capriccio in D minor* (allegro agitato), sombre, fast and restless, dispels all intimate thoughts with its characteristic cross-rhythms, and closes the cycle tumultuously as it had begun.

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

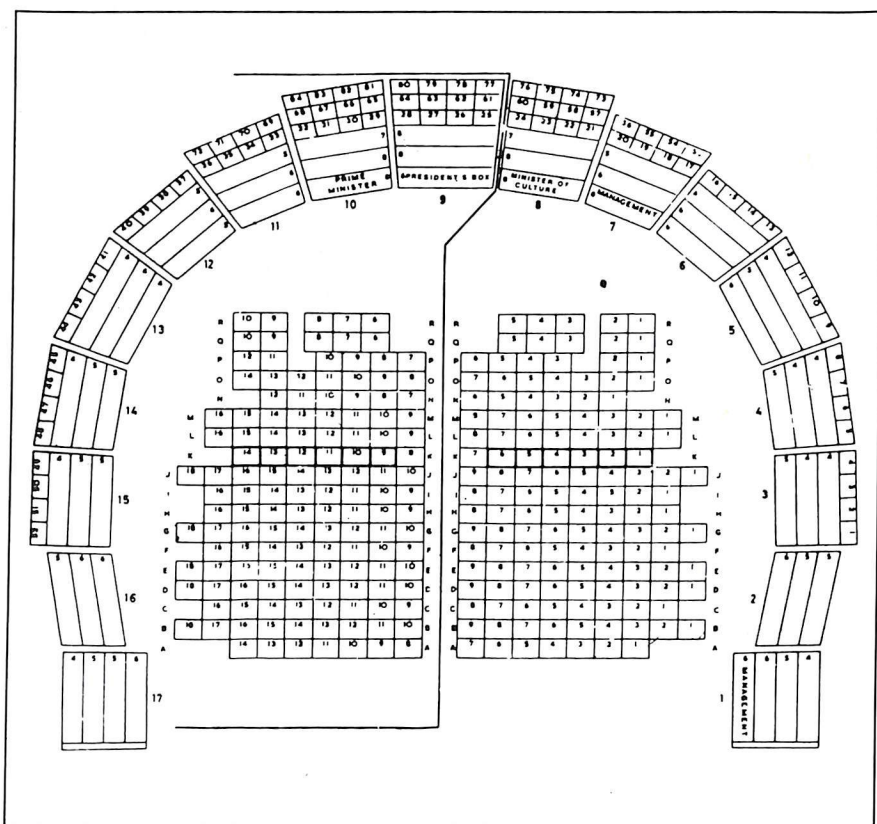
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