



TEATRU  
MANOEL

*97/98*

*P* R O G R A M M E



1732

## TEATRU MANOEL

*Ad honestam populi oblectationem*

Teatru Manoel, the first Maltese theatre, built on Grandmaster Manoel de Vilhena's initiative, was inaugurated on January 19, 1732, with Scipione Maffei's tragedy *Merope* acted by the Italian Knights. It was meant to be an all-purpose theatre to stage operas, cantatas, tragedies, religious plays, comedies, other spectacles and carnival balls.

During the 19th century operas became the main spectacle and it gained a European reputation for quality and innovation in this difficult field. With the inauguration of the Royal Opera House on October 9, 1866, the Manoel, which now became privately owned, lost its pre-eminence and although a few opera performances were still held, operettas, plays and later on films became the main fare.

The destruction of the Royal Opera House by German bombs on April 7, 1942, restored the Teatru Manoel's importance and when the Labour Government decided that, on the pattern of culturally advanced nations, Malta should have a national theatre, it instituted the required procedures so that on February 22, 1957, the Theatre became public property. After radical renovation which restored it to its pristine glory, the Teatru Manoel was inaugurated as

the National Theatre on December 23, 1960, with the Ballet Rambert's performance of Delibes' *Coppélia*.

The year, 1997, marks the 40th anniversary of the acquisition of the Theatre by the Malta Government and although the Manoel, now reputed to be the oldest European theatre still functioning within its original structure, continues to operate as an all-purpose theatre, there has been during these four decades a continual development of facilities not only for its devoted theatre staff but also for its patrons. Among the latter attention might be drawn to Sala Isouard which functions as a second auditorium suitable for chamber concerts, the opening of the Café Teatro and that of the Ristorante di Vilhena in the restored basement galleries, the innovatory retractable canopy over the courtyard making it an all-season functioning area, the opening of the Theatre Museum which helped fill a long felt void. Plans for the future include an orchestra pit lift whose need has long been felt, a retailing outlet for the sale of theatre-related merchandise and the establishment of the theatre archives to preserve the administrative and performing history of the Manoel.

A number of these developments have

the added incentive of contributing to the Manoel's financial resources. Other initiatives have been also instituted with this aim in view. An example is the highly popular twice-daily morning theatre tours which monthly bring to the theatre hundreds of tourists.

The Management Committee is proud to be associated with a number of private and business sponsors whose generosity and support also constitute a vote of confidence in Malta's ongoing cultural strengthening. The valued assistance of diplomatic and consular missions in Malta is also acknowledged and without it a number of internationally known artists would never have graced the Manoel's stage. The support of the Friends of Teatru Manoel is also vital and initiatives taken help to make better

known the Theatre's activities and its history.

Placing the funding of the Teatru Manoel on a sound footing is critical in securing the resources and commitment that provide the foundation for the Theatre's activities, the growth of its artistic stature and the possibility of keeping theatre prices as low as possible making the theatre accessible to as a large a section of the public as possible. The Management Committee extends sincere thanks for the generosity, support and commitment that it is privileged to enjoy and invites audiences and supporters to continue to help. Any required information can be obtained by phoning the Theatre's Administration on 222618 or 237397 (Fax. 247451).

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1732

Teatru Manoel  
presents

# Manon Lescaut

*Opera in four acts*

*Music* **Giacomo Puccini**

*(Property G. Ricordi & Co)*

*Libretto* **Leoncavallo, Praga, Oliva, Illica, Giacosa, Ricordi**

*(after the L'Abbé Prévost novel)*

*Conductor* **Joseph Vella**

*Producer/Director* **Lino Gatt**

*The Manon Lescaut Chorus*

*Chorus Mistress/ Répétiteur* **Simone Attard**

*The Manon Lescaut Orchestra*

*Leader* **Mario Bisazza**

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Said Group of Companies; Mr Antoine Xuereb; Mizzi Antiques Ltd.**

## Manon Lescaut

*Characters in order of appearance*

<i>Edmondo, a student</i>	<b>Arsenny Arsoff</b> , tenor
<i>The Innkeeper</i>	<b>Jean Paul Attard</b> , bass
<i>Chevalier Renato des Grioux, a student</i>	<b>Kostadin Andreev</b> , tenor
<i>Lescaut, Sergeant of the King's Guard</i>	<b>Alessandro Paliaga</b> , baritone
<i>Manon Lescaut, his sister</i>	<b>Karen Notare</b> , soprano
<i>Geronte di Ravoit, Treasurer General</i>	<b>Anthony Montebello</b> , bass
<i>A Hairdresser (mime)</i>	<b>Mark Bugeja</b>
<i>A Musician</i>	<b>Simone Zammit</b> , mezzo-soprano
<i>A Dancing Master</i>	<b>Arsenny Arsoff</b> , tenor
<i>Sergeant of Archers</i>	<b>Carmel Serracino</b> , baritone
<i>A Lamplighter</i>	<b>Arsenny Arsoff</b> , tenor
<i>A Naval Captain</i>	<b>Jean Paul Attard</b> , bass
<i>Students, townsfolk, girls, soldiers,</i>	<b>Manon Lescaut Choir</b>
<i>friends of Geronte, singers, sailors, whores</i>	<b>and Actors</b>

<i>Assistant Director</i>	<b>Narcy Calamatta</b>
<i>Set Designer</i>	<b>Joseph Spiteri</b>
<i>Chorus Manager</i>	<b>Joe Fenech</b>
<i>Make-up</i>	<b>Rita Borg Carbott</b>
<i>Hairstyles</i>	<b>Michael &amp; Guy, Valletta</b>
<i>Costumes' Design</i>	<b>May Vassallo</b>
<i>Additional costumes and wardrobe</i>	<b>Connie Schembri, Lilian Attard</b>
<i>Lighting Design</i>	<b>Vanni Laus</b>
<i>Set Painter/Props</i>	<b>Marco Bartolo</b>
<i>Furniture</i>	<b>Paul Borg Antiques, B'Kara</b>
<i>Compilation, Writing and</i>	
<i>Editing of Programme</i>	<b>Joseph Vella Bondin</b>

## ORCHESTRA, CHOIR AND ACTORS

### Orchestra

**First Violins:** Mario Bisazza, Stephen Zammit, Marcelline Agius, Stephen Galea, Nadia Debono, Orietta Beaumer; **Second Violins:** Tatjana Degabriele, Mario Micallef, Mario Frendo, Maria Conrad, Christopher Muscat; **Violas:** Guido Mamo, Miriam Haidon, Ann Marie Chetcuti; **Cellos:** Simon Abdilla, Mario Psaila, Ivan Degabriele, Valeriu Popovic; **Basses:** Lino Cremona, Michelle Agius; **Harp:** Donata Mattei; **Flutes:** Rebecca Hall, Natasha Chircop; **Oboes:** John McDonough, Joseph Attard; **Clarinets:** Noel Beck, Godfrey Mifsud; **Bassoons:** Archibald Mizzi, Mario Micallef; **Horns:** Emanuel Spagnol, Alfred Spagnol, Philip Psaila, Charles Abela; **Trumpets:** Sigmund Mifsud, Paul Busuttill, Raymond Cremona; **Trombones:** Dominic Darmanin, Michael Ciantar, Michael Bugelli; **Tuba:** Paul Borg; **Timpani:** Joe Camilleri; **Percussion:** John Fenech

### Choir

**Sopranos:** Gertrude Abela, Carmen Borg, Anna Conti, Charmaine Cortis, Joanne Darmanin, Lorraine Debono, Rose Marie Falzon, Michelle Farrugia, Fabiana Mifsud, Anita Saliba, Joanne Scicluna, Tanya Scicluna, Roberta Zammit; **Mezzo-sopranos:** Ruth Attard, Marie Louise Bonello, Dorothy Borg, Elaine Cordina, Sandra Farrugia, Ruth Friggieri, Helen Micallef, Josephine Murray, May Vassallo, Simone Zammit; **Tenors:** Pierre Borg, Charles Caruana, Alfred Cauchi, Klaus Conrad, Raymond Debono, Jason Mangion, Winston Pirotta, Joseph Sapiano; **Basses:** Stephen Abela, Jean Paul Attard, Mario Attard, Mark Scicluna, Carmel Serracino.

### Actors

Leontine Camilleri, Angela Coleiro, Tania Craus, Marica Debattista, Natasha Gosney, Stefania Mangion, Sharon Micallef, Anita Piccinino, Annabel Vassallo, Anthony Attard, Mark Bugeja, Carlos Cachia, Manuel Camilleri, Charles Gafa, Joseph Grech, Victor Piccinino, Joseph Zammit.



*The Ricordi poster for Manon Lescaut, premiered at the Teatro Regio in Turin on February 1, 1893*

# MANON LESCAUT: THE STORY

*The action takes place in the second half of the 18th century*

## ACT I:

*A large square near the Paris Gate of Amiens, France.*

It is evening and an idle crowd of students, soldiers and townsfolk is strolling outside the inn or drinking and gambling. Edmondo, a student, sings of youth and love (*Giovinetta è il nostro nome*), light-hearted sentiments readily approved by the young girls in the crowd. Renato Des Grieux, a fellow student, enters and is teased by his friends for his indifference towards love. He replies by mockingly serenading all the women present (*Tra voi, belle, brune e bionde*). The coach from Arras arrives and Lescaut, a sergeant in the King's Guards, his beautiful sister Manon, who is 18, and Geronte di Ravoire, the treasurer general and a wealthy old libertine, are among the passengers. Manon's beauty impresses the students, especially Des Grieux who, when Lescaut and Geronte leave to check into the inn, engages her in conversation. She informs

him that she is being taken against her own aspirations to a convent in Paris. But it is love at first sight between them and, before she goes into the inn, they agree to meet again after dark. Des Grieux sings of his love for her (*Donna non vidi mai simile a questa!*) and it is now the students' turn to laugh at him. Later, Edmondo overhears a conversation between Geronte and Lescaut which reveals Geronte's plan, approved by Lescaut, to abduct Manon and take her to Paris with him. To do this, Geronte orders a carriage and horses to be made ready in an hour's time. Edmondo informs Des Grieux of the plot and when Manon rejoins him as she had promised (*Vedete? Io son fedele alla parola mia.*), he persuades her to flee with him. They elope to Paris in the same carriage Geronte has ordered. The frustrated libertine is infuriated but Lescaut, who is well aware of his sister's love for luxury, assures him that Manon will soon abandon her young but impoverished student in favour of the wealthy treasurer general.



*Joseph Spiteri's studies for the set designs – Act I*



*Joseph Spiteri's studies for the set designs – Act II*

## Interval

## ACT II:

*A sumptuous salon in Geronte's Parisian house*

Exactly as Lescaut has foreseen, Manon is now installed in Geronte's luxurious house in Paris. But to Lescaut who comes to visit his sister while her hairdresser is with her, she complains that in the house's silken curtains there is a chill which freezes her (*In quelle trine morbide nell'arcova dorata*) and she wishes she was back in the humble dwelling where she knew love with Des Grieux. Lescaut now observes some characteristic scenes of Manon's new life - singers perform a madrigal in her honour; Geronte and some admiring friends witness her dancing lesson. But before this actually begins, the wily Lescaut, knowing that Manon's tedium is dangerous, hurries away to inform Des Grieux where he can find Manon. When the dancing lesson is over and Geronte and his friends have left for a party which Manon promises to join later, Des Grieux appears at the door and passionately reproves her for abandoning

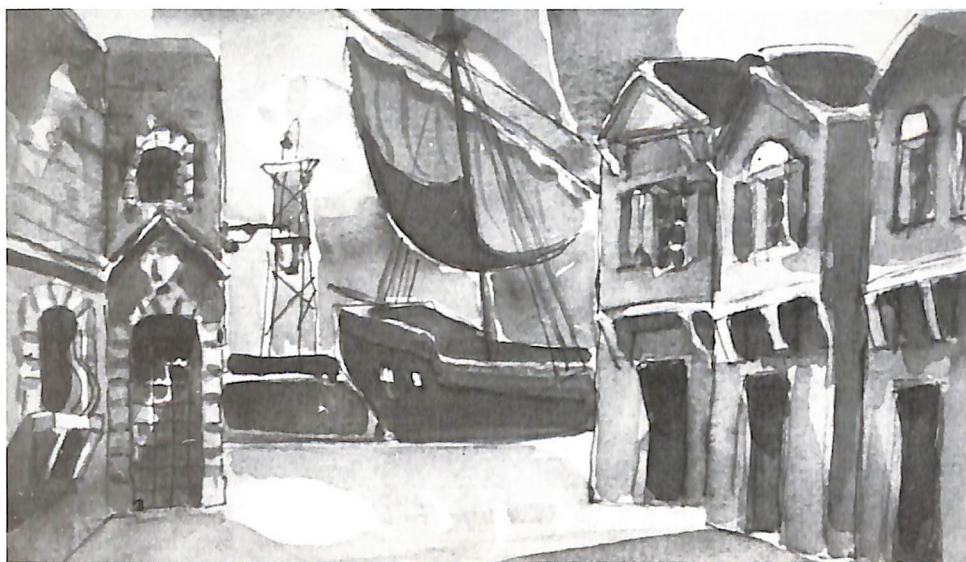
him. But her beauty soon wins him over and an impassioned love scene develops (*Cedi, son tua. Ah! vieni!*). Geronte surprises them in each other's arms and, after Manon makes fun of him, angrily goes out. The two lovers decide to flee but their flight is delayed by Manon's reluctance to abandon her jewels (*Ah! Manon, mi tradisce il tuo folle pensiero*). Lescaut hurriedly returns to inform them that Geronte has denounced Manon as an immoral woman and that the police are on their way to arrest her but she continues to collect her jewels. The delay is fatal. The police arrive led by a vindictive Geronte and arrest Manon.

## Interval

## INTERMEZZO:

*The imprisonment - The journey to Le Havre.*

Des Grieux's desperate efforts to obtain Manon's liberty are fruitless and her sentence is banishment with other women of loose character to the French colony of



Joseph Spiteri's studies for the set designs – Act III

Louisiana in America. Manon's misfortunes and the journey to Le Havre for embarkation is represented by an orchestral intermezzo

### ACT III:

*A square near the harbour at Le Havre*

Dawn is breaking and Des Grieux and Lescaut are hoping to spring Manon from the harbourside prison where she awaits deportation to America. Lescaut bribes a guard who allows the lovers to have a few words through the barred windows (*Tu amore!? Nell'onta non m'abbandoni?*). A lamplighter goes across the stage singing a song. Lescaut enters to inform Des Grieux that their plan to free Manon has failed. There is a lot of boisterous noise when the Sergeant starts calling one by one the women to be deported. His desperate attempts to defend Manon failing, Des Grieux begs the ship's captain to take him aboard and allow him to work his way to America so as not to abandon the woman he loves (*Guardate, pazzo son, guardate*,

*com'io piango e imploro*). Moved, the captain grants his request.

**Pause.** *The audience is asked to remain seated.*

### ACT IV:

*A vast plain bordering the New Orleans Territory*

Night is approaching. Manon and Des Grieux have left New Orleans, the victims of jealousy and intrigue, and are now alone, lost in an arid land. Thoroughly exhausted and in rags, Manon cannot go on and, in despair, Des Grieux leaves her to seek help. Realizing her end is near, Manon gives expression to her terror and misery (*Sola, perduta, abbandonata*). Des Grieux returns to find her dying and she begs his forgiveness for the misfortunes she has brought him (*Fra le tue braccia, amore, l'ultima volta!*). He falls senseless and broken with grief across her lifeless body.

## MANON LESCAUT: PRODUCTION HISTORY

*Manon Lescaut* was the first major Puccini opera to reveal fully his compositional style - a continuously spun, skillfully orchestrated musical thread where an act is a single movement with episodes instead of being a succession of separate numbers, where themes are treated symphonically and adapted to suit the characters' development. It was also the first opera to demonstrate fully the standard poignant Puccinian habitat - a world combining erotic



Giacomo Puccini

passion, sensuality, melancholy, pathos, despair, death. Manon was also the first typical Puccinian heroine, a frail creature who lives and dies for love and the pivot around which the action revolves. But more than this, Puccini's exquisite melody, lyrical, persuasive and all-pervading, one of the secrets of his art, comes through very plainly for the first time.

The opera's première took place at the Teatro Reggino, Turin, on February 1, 1893. The title role was created by the 29 year-old Cesira Ferrani who in 1896, in the same House was also to launch another Puccini role - that of Mimi in *La bohème*. Her Des Grieux was Giuseppe Cremonini, her brother Achille Moro, Geronte Alessandro Polonini and the conductor Alessandro Pomé. It had a success such as Puccini was never to re-experience. The *Gazzetta del Popolo* wrote that Puccini "left the audience stunned and overcome by emotion and they broke into frenetic applause as from a need

to persuade themselves that it was not reality but a piece of scenic fiction that they had witnessed."

*Manon Lescaut* reached La Scala on February 7, 1894, and its enthusiastic reception ensured for the opera a run of nineteen performances. The heroine was portrayed by the Russian soprano Olga N. Olghina and her Des Grieux was again Cremonini. Later Manon's role was taken over by the Romanian soprano Hariclea Darclée (in 1900, the first Tosca).

The opera was given in Covent Garden soon afterwards, in May 1894, where Manon was again interpreted by Olghina, with Antonio Pini-Corsi as her brother and Umberto Beduschi as Des Grieux. The opera did not please and ran for only two performances. But George Bernard Shaw, reviewing it for *The World*, was impressed: "In *Manon*, the domain of Italian opera is enlarged by an annexation of German territory. The first act, which is as gay and effective and romantic as the opening of any version of Manon need be, is also unmistakably symphonic in its treatment... Puccini looks to me more like the heir of Verdi than any of his rivals."

*Manon Lescaut* reached America on August 29, 1894, when it was performed in Philadelphia's Grand Opera House, but had to wait for its first Metropolitan staging till January 18, 1907, when it was sung by a 'model' cast which included soprano Lina Cavalieri, a beauty once with the Parisian Folies Bergères, tenor Enrico Caruso and



Soprano Lina Cavalieri (left), once with the *Folies Bergères*, the first *Manon Lescaut* and Antonio Scotti (right) as her brother Lescaut at the Metropolitan on January 18, 1907.

baritone Antonio Scotti (début Malta 1889 as Amonasro).

The opera was introduced to French audiences in 1910 when the Metropolitan Opera Company under Arturo Toscanini presented a season at the Théâtre du Châtelet. For this performance, for which Caruso had the Spanish soprano Lucrezia Bori as his *Manon*, Toscanini lightened the orchestration, changes which pleased the composer who, later, incorporated them in the published score.

*Manon Lescaut* came to Malta just over two years after its premiere in Turin. It was the only new opera presented by Achille W. Malfiggiani, then impresario of the Royal Opera House, during its 1894-95 season and the opening performance on April 2, 1895, was dedicated to him as a *serata d'onore*. To sing *Manon*, he had engaged an exciting rising Italian star who had studied piano and singing in Paris with Jules Massart, Angelica Pandolfini, then only 23 years old. Her interpretation gave ample proof of her

suitability to the *verismo* repertory for which she became especially famous. Her Des Grieux was Federico de Gambarell whose vocal and histrionic abilities had made him a firm favourite with Maltese audiences, her brother baritone Giuseppe Borghi, while the conductor Enrico Riboldi.

The opera initially did not have the success expected and the audience seemed to have been bewildered by its stark emotionalism. *Il Portafoglio Maltese* reported: "Puccini's music is beautiful and magnificent, but, as it was the first time it was heard, the majority of the audience did not understand or appreciate its merits."

The newspaper was correct for two performances later, it was able to state: "The new opera *Manon Lescaut* was repeated on Thursday and Saturday to an escalating success - a splendid, enthusiastic, complete success. As anticipated, Puccini's delicious, passionate, melodic music was relished and appreciated and the singers were applauded and fêted."

The opera had a run of ten performances and such was the Royal Opera House's international importance that even Puccini himself wanted to know how his opera was received. On April 6, he wrote from Milan to Enrico Riboldi, the conductor: "I have learnt with great satisfaction of the success my *Manon* had in your Opera House. I gratefully express my satisfaction for the result obtained and believe me, distinguished Maestro, I will always think of you with true gratitude. I beg you to express my sentiments to the gifted artists, orchestra and choir who have contributed to the happy result."

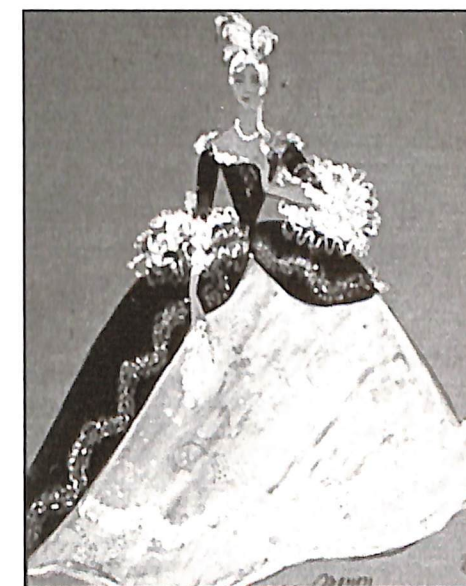
Four years later almost to the day, *Manon Lescaut* returned to the Royal Opera House when it was given a run of 8 performances, the first being on April 14, 1899. The conductor was Pietro Duffau, *Manon* the dramatic soprano Aida Alloro, Des Grieux tenor Carlo Caffetto and Lescaut baritone Guido Checchi. Alloro who had already performed in three of that season's strongest presentations - Marchetti's *Ruy Blas*, *Aida* and *La bohème* - was especially brilliant: "In the first three acts, both as a singer and as an actress, she was extraordinary, but in the fourth Alloro reached sublime heights and moved the audience to tears with her interpretation of those heartrending scenes which precede *Manon's* death." (*Il Portafoglio Maltese*)

Since then, there were performances at the Royal Opera House in 1903, 1910, 1914, 1919, 1923, 1927, 1934 and 1938. The greatest number of performances in one season was during 1919-20 (16 times) with Magda Dorini as *Manon* and Gino Puccetti conducting. The *Manon* of the 1934 performances was the famous Pia Tassinari, born in Faenza in 1909, and considered one of Italy's leading lyric sopranos. Later, her darkening voice led her to assume mezzo roles (*Carmen*, *Charlotte* in *Werther*) Des Grieux was Giuseppe Caruti while Lescaut

was Giuseppe Satariano in one of his earliest baritone roles after his initial career as a bass.

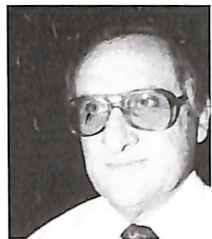
Outside the Royal Opera House, the opera has been performed in four theatres - Teatro Orpheum in 1952 (with Augusta Oltabella as *Manon*), Radio City Opera House in 1958 (with Elena Todeschi), the Manoel Theatre during the Impresa Ines Cantoni 1962-63 season and in Gozo's Teatro Aurora on September 29, 1979. Two famous sopranos were engaged to sing the role of the heroine in these two theatres. Teatro Aurora had Raina Kabaivanska in a scintillating performance. The Manoel had Magda Olivero, distinguished both for her acting and singing and who continued to perform brilliantly until she was well over 60 (e.g. *Tosca* in 1975 at the Metropolitan).

Although somewhat overshadowed by Puccini's later operas *La bohème*, *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*, *Manon Lescaut* continues to maintain a firm hold in the international repertory.



Soprano Pia Tassinari's costume for the 1934 performances of *Manon Lescaut*

## BIOGRAPHIES



**Joseph Vella**  
conductor

One of Malta's leading contemporary composers and conductors, writer and editor of old Maltese music. As a conductor he has introduced works, like

*Carmina Burana* and Beethoven's *Ninth*, previously considered beyond the reach of local musical forces. For Gozo's Astra Theatre, where he is musical director, he has conducted a series of highly acclaimed opera productions including, recently, Verdi's rarely performed *Macbeth*. His overseas engagements have included *Madama Butterfly*, *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* in Sicily. Operas conducted in the Manoel include Isouard's *Jeannot et Colin*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Suor Angelica*, *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*. He is Associate Professor of Music at the University of Malta.



**Lino Gatt**  
producer/director

His early musical studies were with Anton Muscat Azzopardi. In 1960 he was at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama studying singing with

Joseph Hislop. On returning to Malta he continued his musical activities - participating in recitals and operas (*Il Trovatore*, Pace's *I Martiri*), lecturing on music appreciation, giving courses on voice production at M.T.A.D.A. - and also branched into broadcasting. He has produced and presented cultural programmes on Radio Malta on the invitation of the Broadcasting Authority's Chief Executive, on television and for the Department of Culture. For the Teatru Manoel he has produced and directed *L'amico Fritz* in 1991.



**Karen Notare**  
soprano

Graduated from the Manhattan School and made her professional debut in the role of *Madama Butterfly* with the New York City Opera Company in

1987. As the winner of various vocal prizes and the Lincoln Centre's Martin Segal Most Promising Newcomer award, she has gone on to make a substantial career in America, Europe and the Far East, performing major roles in the lirico spinto soprano repertoire including *Tosca*, *Mimi*, *Lady Macbeth*, *Aida*, *Desdemona*, *Requiem (Verdi)*, *Donna Elvira*, *Zazà*, *Mariella (Il piccolo Marat)*, *Carmela (La vida breve)*, *Lisa (The Queen of Spades)*, *Leonora (Il trovatore)*. She sang her first *Manon Lescaut* in 1994-5 for Bonn Opera.



**Kostadin Andreev**  
tenor

Graduated in 1994 from the State Academy of Music in Sofia. He was appointed soloist of the Sofia National Opera House in 1995 and his international debut was

in the Puccini Festival in Torre del Lago as Calaf in a performance of *Turandot* in a cast which included Gena Dimitrova, Katia Ricciarelli and Paata Burguladze. He has now sung in many of the leading opera houses of Europe in such roles as The Duke of Mantua, Alfredo, Don Carlos, Radames, Faust, Don Jose, Cavaradossi, Rodolfo (*La bohème* and *Luisa Miller*), des Grieux, Dmitri (*Boris Godunov*). He first sang *Otello* when only 26.



**Alessandro Paliaga**  
baritone

After a grounding in classical guitar, he concentrated on singing at the Scuola di Musica di Firenze and, later, with Walter Blazer, at the Manhattan High

School of New York. His repertoire includes many roles of popular Donizetti, Puccini, Mozart, Rossini, and Verdi operas and also such gems as Demefonte (*I due baroni - Cimarosa*), Notaro Pistofolo (*La molinara - Paisiello*), Axur (*Axur Re d'Ormus - Salieri*) and Gonzales (*Il Guarany - Gomes*). These he has executed in the leading theatres of Europe, America and the Far East. His interpretation of Malatesta last April in the Manoel revealed his outstanding vocal and interpretative qualities.



**Arsenny Arsoff**  
tenor

A native of Sofia, he graduated from the Bulgarian Musical Academy in the singing class of Blagovesta Karnobatlova Dobрева, a leading Bulgarian

soprano and teacher also very well-known in Malta. He is a laureat of the Athene '87 Maria Callas International Competition, is a soloist of the Varna Opera Theatre and has successfully performed in Spain, Italy, Austria, France, Belgium, Egypt, Greece and China. His recent performances include the Duke of Mantua in Palma de Mallorca and Skopje, Pinkerton in Varna and Vladimir (*Prince Igor*) in Berlin.



**Anthony Montebello**  
bass

Studied with Blagovesta Karnobatlova Dobрева and Elena Mindisova. His operatic roles include Colonnello Lorenzi (*I Martiri - Carmelo Pace*), Don

Alfonso, Monterone, Timur, Lodovico (*Otello - Verdi*), Ferrando (*Il trovatore*), Angelotti (*Tosca*). His concert performances include Mozart's *Requiem*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, Zerafa's *Magnificat*, *Te Deum Laudamus* and *Lauda Sion*, Camilleri's *Pawlu ta' Malta*, Diacono's *Il Canticum di Frate Sole* and *Stabat Mater*, Pace's *Sultana tal-Vittorji*, Galea's *San Gorg f'Demmna*, *Maria Immacolata* and *Virgo Triumphans* and Sammut's *Pietro e Paolo*. He also sang Zerafa's *Magnificat* and *Te Deum Laudamus* in Vienna and Salsburg.



**Simone Zammit**  
mezzo-soprano

Studied acting at MTADA and singing at the Johann Strauss School of Music. Her twenty years stage experience ranges from acting in straight plays

(*Macbeth*, *Medea*), singing in operettas, musicals and pantomime (*La danza delle libellule*, *Oliver*, *The Wizard of Oz*) and going on a two week London theatre tour presenting three Maltese plays. Her solo singing includes a role in *Suor Angelica*.



**Jean Paul Attard**  
*bass*  
 Started early musical studies, including piano, with Sr. Beniamina Portelli and later studied singing at the Johann Strauss School of Music. President of

Mosta's St. Monica Choir and choir master of Qawra's St. Claire Choir. As a soloist he has participated in concerts at the Teatru Manoel, during the Valletta Week and in Scotland. He is a senior engineer at the S.G.S. Thomson Microelectronics.



**Simone Attard**  
*chorus mistress/  
 répétiteur*  
 After early piano studies with Sr. Beniamina Portelli, she perfected her pianoforte teaching and performing techniques in Sienna

with Marta del Vecchio and, later, with Michael Laus. In addition to her regular performances as a soloist, she is in great demand as an accompanist and such famed singers as Nadia Klintcharova, Eric Frachey, Leonardo Wolovsky, and Blagovesta Karnobatlova Dobрева have praised her perceptive playing. She has instructed and prepared choirs for operas, concerts and musicals and for the Teatru Manoel has been répétiteur for *La traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Pagliacci* and *Don Pasquale*. After she graduated B. Ed. (Hons) in Music in 1991, she has been employed as piano teacher and répétiteur at the Johann Strauss School of Music.



**Carmel Seracino**  
*baritone*  
 This young singer began studying voice production and interpretation with Antoinette Miggiani, currently attends the Johann Strauss School

of Music and sung in the School's presentation of *The Mikado* in 1997. He is a 1996 D.U.P.T. drama graduate and is presently concluding his M.A. thesis on the Ancient Greek Language for the University of Malta.



**Joseph M. Spiteri**  
*set designer*  
 Graduated in architecture in 1958 and was awarded a 1961 Commonwealth scholarship to pursue studies in landscaping in the UK. His long

career in design, mainly architectural, include designs for Trade Fairs in Malta and abroad (Malta 1966-1971, Osaka 1970, Tripoli 1966-1971, Berlin 1988) and for Balluta's Carmelite Church. Since 1967, he has taught Architectural Design in the University of Malta. It was Lino Gatt, knowing his keen interest in opera and love of drawing, who persuaded him to do the sets for *Manon Lescaut* and he gratefully acknowledges the help of Marco Bartolo and the Teatru Manoel's other backstage hands.



**Nancy Calamatta**  
*Assistant Director*  
 Started his comprehensive stage career in opera - singing in the children's choir for the operas *Carmen* and *La bohème* at the Radio

City Opera House in the late 1940s under the direction of his father. Since then, he progressed through a lifetime of acting, designing and directing. His drama productions include American (O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms*), European (de Vegas' *Fuente ovehuna*, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*) and Maltese (Alfred Sant's *Min hu Evelyn Costa?*) classics. His happiest stage memory is his direction of *La Traviata* with Miriam Gauci, the Teatru Manoel's 1986 first Maltese-signed production - with his father in the audience.



**Joe Fenech**  
*Chorus Manager*  
 An accomplished baritone, actor, conductor and producer. His operatic repertoire includes main roles in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *La traviata*, *Ernani* and

*La vedova allegra* while his portrayal of Don Michele Scerri in Pace's *I Martiri* was acclaimed as outstanding. For the Manoel he has produced *L'elisir d'amore*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Tosca* and was both producer and conductor for the operettas *Santarellina* and *La danza delle libellule*. His work with choirs is long-ranging and includes the organisation and conducting in the 1960s of the Gruppo Corale *Primavera* and the chairmanship of the *Ghaqda Kantanti Lirici* between 1989 and 1993.



Joseph Spiteri's studies for the set designs - Act IV

# TEATRU MANOEL

## Season 1997-98: October - December Performance Diary

### October:

- 14, 15 *French Week: Messiaen: Les Trois Petites Liturgies de la Presence Divine*  
(Conservatoire National de Region de Lyon, France)
- 18, 19 *French Week: Caprice Rebel* (La Compagnie de Danse Baroque L'Eventail)
- 25, 26 *Play: Vince Vella: Duhhan* (Koperatturi)
- 29 *Recital: Pascal Rogè, piano.*
- 31 *The Children's Opera: Bel and the Dragon* (music: John Gardner; libretto: Timothy Kraemer)

### November:

- 6, 7, 8, 9 *Play: Alan Ayckbourn: Chorus of Disapproval* (M.A.D.C.)
- 10, 11 *Recital: Feng Dan, piano, and Liu Yvnhz, violin, (in collaboration with the Chinese Embassy)*
- 15, 16 *Play: George Feydeau: Tailleur pour dames, translated into Maltese (Maleth)*
- 18 *Orchestral Concert: Mozart: Concerto for Two Pianos in E-flat major* (K.365),  
Martinu: *Concerto for Two Pianos*, (Soloists: Glenn Inanga & Jennifer Micallef)
- 21, 22, 23 *Play: Ronald Harwood: Taking Sides* (Atturi Productions)
- 25 *Recital: Igor Roma, piano (in collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute)*
- 29 *Band Concert: The Annual Band Concert organised by the Ghaqda Kazini Banded*

### December:

- 6, 7 *Play: Tony Cassar Darien: Il-Kummidjant* (Valletta Dramatic Co.)
- 13, 14 *Play: Mark Twain, adapted by David Pace: Il-kannibali* (Politeatru)
- 15 *Recital: Giovanni Angilleri, violin, & Michaela M. Mingardo and Maurizio Baglini, pianists, in a concert dedicated to Prof. Giuseppe Xausa, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute.*
- 26-11 Jan *Christmas Pantomime: Puss in Boots* (M.A.D.C.)

**Performances start at 7.30 p.m. on Mondays to Saturdays and 6.30 p.m. on Sundays**

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

## BOOKING OFFICE

117 Old Theatre Street, Valletta, VLT 07.

*Opening Hours:* Monday to Friday: 10.00 a.m.- 12.00 noon & 5.00 - 7.00 p.m.; Saturday: 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon.

*Telephone Bookings:* 246389; Fax. 237340. Tickets to be collected within 48 hours.

*Payments* accepted by cash, cheques and major credit cards (Quikcash; Electron; Visa; Mastercard; Eurocard)

*Booking opens* ten days before the first performance. On the day of performance, tickets can be purchased between 5.00 p.m. and up to 30 minutes after its start.



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MANOEL