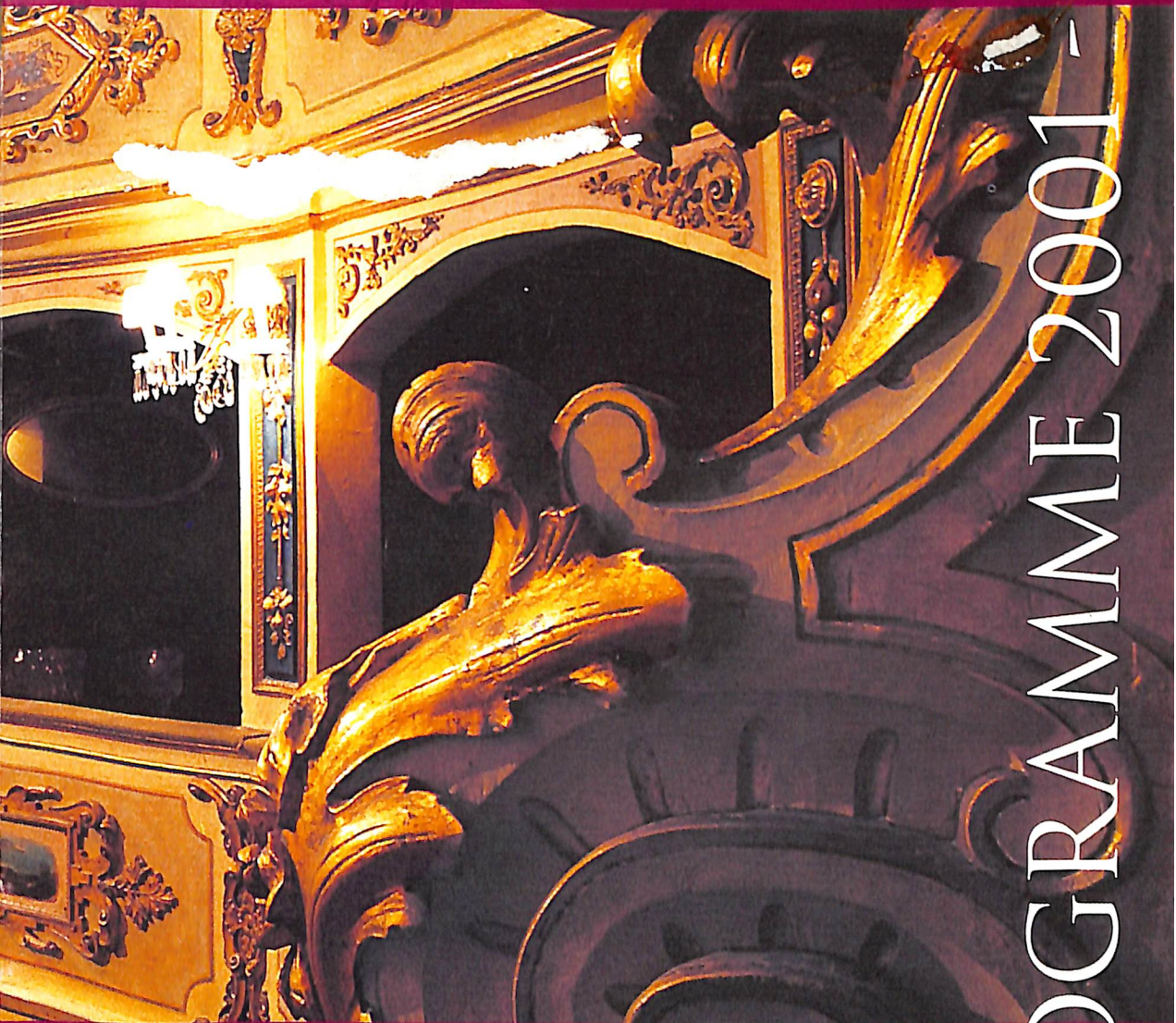




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PROGRAMME 2001-2002

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Teatru Manoel

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The Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Mrs Borg

have the pleasure to present a

VOCAL & INSTRUMENTAL CONCERT

featuring

CHARLENE FARRUGIA
CLAIRE DEBONO and SIMON THACKER
TRIO VERSATIL MUSIK

at the Manoel Theatre

Thursday, 10th January 2002
at 7.30 p.m.

1983

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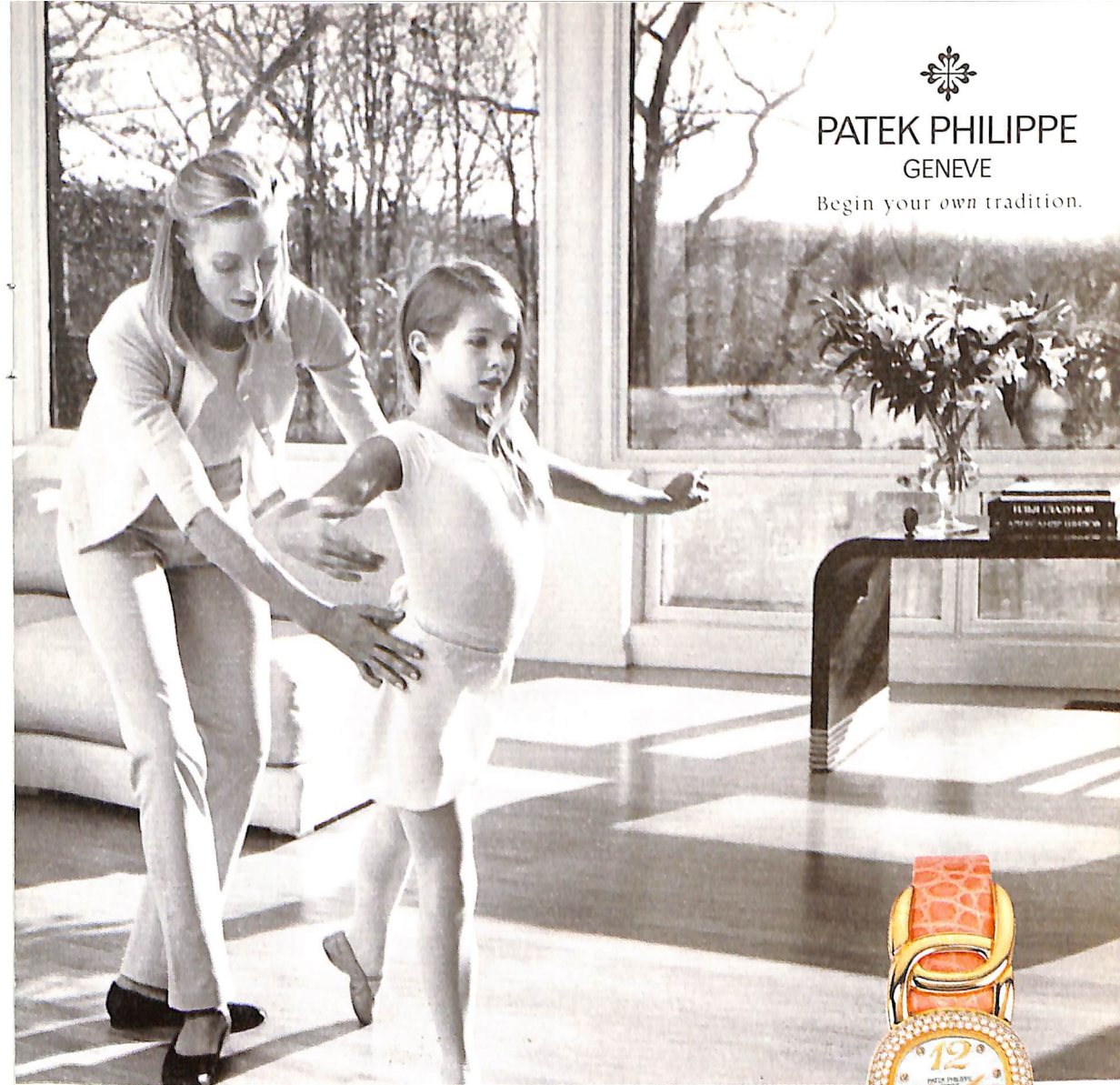
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Performances start at 7.30p.m. Mondays to Saturdays, and 6.30p.m. Sundays. Latecomers have to wait for a suitable pause in the programme before being ushered to their seats. The Verdi Room in the foyer includes a close-circuit television where one may view the performance. The management reserves the right to alter the programme and the performance time of any production.



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THE PERFORMERS



CHARLENE FARRUGIA

CHARLENE FARRUGIA started piano lessons at the age of six under Dolores Amodio Chircop, her only tutor since. She passed all her examinations, grades 1 to 8, of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, obtained the Advanced Diploma with high marks and the ALCM, LLCM and FLCM diplomas with distinction. First prize winner in the EPTA competition in category B and C in 1998 and 1999 respectively, the following year she was awarded the talented and distinguished musician award as a concerto player. In May 2000 she played Mendelssohn's *Concerto no.1* with Malta's National Orchestra under the baton of Jonathan Butcher. She was chosen to represent Malta in an international festival in Philadelphia, and has participated in several concerts in Malta and abroad. Charlene intends to further her piano studies.



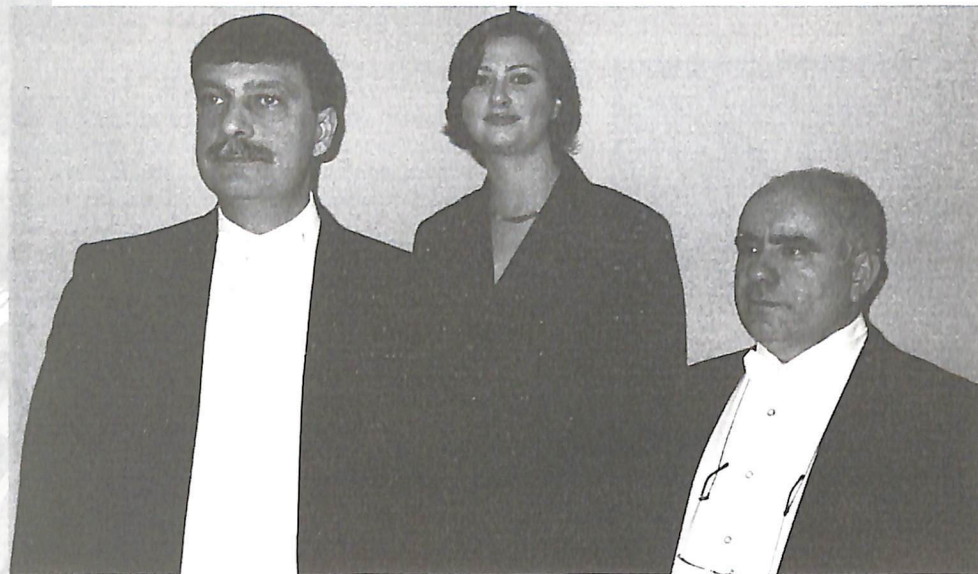
CLAIRE DEBONO

CLAIRE DEBONO (b. Malta 1979), a lyric soprano, began formal singing lessons at the age of sixteen under the tutelage of Antoinette Miggiani and Alice Horne. She pursued a B.A. course in Music and Theatre Studies at the University of Malta, and was awarded a scholarship by the Ian Tomlin Scholarship Trust to follow a BMus (Hons) degree at Napier University in Edinburgh. She is now in her fourth year and is being taught by Joan Busby. Recently she sang for José Carreras on his visit to Edinburgh and is currently singing in Scottish Ballet's latest production. Masterclasses include Jane Manning, Eva Andor, David Roblou, Malcolm Martineau and James Lockhart. Concert appearances include principal roles in *Via Crucis*, *Miserere*, *Façade*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*; and the premiere of Charles Camilleri's opera *Zebra* at the Presidential Palace in Malta.

SIMON THACKER

SIMON THACKER (b. Edinburgh 1979) recently graduated with a first class BMus (Hons) from the Ian Tomlin School of Music at Napier University, where he was taught by Rob MacKillop. He is now studying at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama under the tutelage of Allan Neave. Concert appearances include quintets with the Edinburgh Quartet and the premiere of Kenneth Dempster's *Mary's Lament* for guitar and string orchestra at the Queens Hall, Edinburgh. Masterclasses include Stanley Yates, Paul Gregory and Carlos Bonell. He is also a member of a highly successful guitar duo, with Steven Polwart, which has played at Dudhope Castle, Dundee and Holyrood Palace and participated in masterclasses with the Assad Brothers (Brazil). Claire and Simon recently performed at the Edinburgh Fringe, as first in the Dundee Guitar Festival's *Young Concert Artist Series*, and have been accepted into the *LiveMusicNow!* scheme.

THE PERFORMERS



TRIO VERSATIL MUSIK

Versatil Musik embraces various, versatile and professional musicians who excel in their disciplines by concerts in quartets, trios and duos. They have performed various classical compositions of chamber music as well as repertoires of multi classical compositions by baroque, contemporary and modern composers. Nadia R. DeBono, a well-known classical musician, leads *Versatil Musik*. Indeed, today's trio include Nadia R. DeBono on Violin, Guido Mamo on Viola and Mario Psaila on Cello.

NADIA R. DEBONO commenced her music studies at the age of five through the Trinity College of Music and The Royal Schools of Music of London. In 1995 and 1996 she was selected by the *Orchestre des Jeunes de la Méditerranée* to participate in two workshops of six weeks duration each, where she formed part of a 120 strong international orchestra on a tour of European and Mediterranean countries. She performed her first solo violin concert in 1997. In 1999 she was guest violinist with the Michail Jora Philharmonic Orchestra of Bacau, Romania. In August that same year Nadia participated in the Aberdeen International Youth Festival, Scotland, with the Issa Ensemble. In November 1999 she formed part of a String Quartet representing Malta in Genoa, Italy, during the *IX Incontro Internazionale dei Conservatori di Musica del Mediterraneo*. Whilst she continues with her music studies, she is currently engaged as Sub-Principal First Violins with the Malta National Orchestra.

GUIDO MAMO started his musical career in 1969 as part-time violinist with the Manoel Theatre Orchestra, becoming a full-time member in 1971. From 1976 to 1997 he occupied the post of Principal Violinist with the said orchestra. He teaches violin and viola at the Johan Strauss School of Music in Malta. He is currently engaged as Sub-Principal Viola with the Malta National Orchestra.

MARIO PSAILA started lessons aged seven. In 1980 he attended a scholarship at the Conservatorio Sta. Cecilia in Rome, where he studied under Prof. Luca Signorini. From 1977 to 1992 he was Sub-Principal Cellist of the Manoel Theatre Orchestra. He is currently engaged as Sub-Principal Cellist with the Malta National Orchestra.

THE PROGRAMME

CHARLENE FARRUGIA,

pianist

Camille Saint-Saëns	<i>Etudes nos.1, 4, 6, op.111</i>
Frederic Chopin	<i>Scherzo no.1, op.120</i>
Sergei Prokofiev	<i>Sonata no.3, op.28</i>
Franz Liszt	<i>Hungarian Rhapsody no.6</i>

CLAIRE DEBONO & SIMON THACKER,

song-guitar duo

Heitor Villa-Lobos	<i>Aria from Bachianas Brasileiras no.5</i>
Joaquín Rodrigo	<i>Coplas del pastor Enamorado</i>
Jayme Ovalle	<i>Azulão</i>
Valdemar Henrique	<i>Boi-Bumbá</i>
Manuel Ponce	<i>Campo</i>
Manuel de Falla	<i>Siete Canciones populares Españolas</i>

VERSATIL MUSIK

Nadia R. DeBono (violin), Guido Mamo (viola), Mario Psaila (cello)

Ludwig van Beethoven *String Trio in C minor, Op.9 no.3*

1. Allegro con spirito
2. Adagio con espressione
3. Scherzo. Allegro molto e vivace
4. Finale. Presto

PROGRAMME NOTES

The French composer **Camille Saint-Saëns** (1835-1921) showed his natural musical endowments at a very early age, earning fame with his orchestral symphonic music, particularly the four symphonic poems composed under the influence of Liszt, who took great interest in his career. Though his early symphonic music was modelled on Mozart, Beethoven and Mendelssohn, his later works show a distinctly French character: a good-natured charm and a touch of delicately assumed triviality combined with a remarkable technical fluency. *The Études nos. 1, 4 and 6*, from a set of six (opus 111) are not very well known. The first has a toccata-like technique which is kept throughout the piece; the fourth is a graceful étude, and the turbulent sixth is a simply brilliant virtuoso work which, despite its title, has nothing to do with the traditional toccata. Along among French composers of his generation, Saint-Saëns enjoyed a European reputation both as composer and performer, and his long career marked the re-emergence in France of an interest in instrumental music after a century of almost exclusive concern with opera.

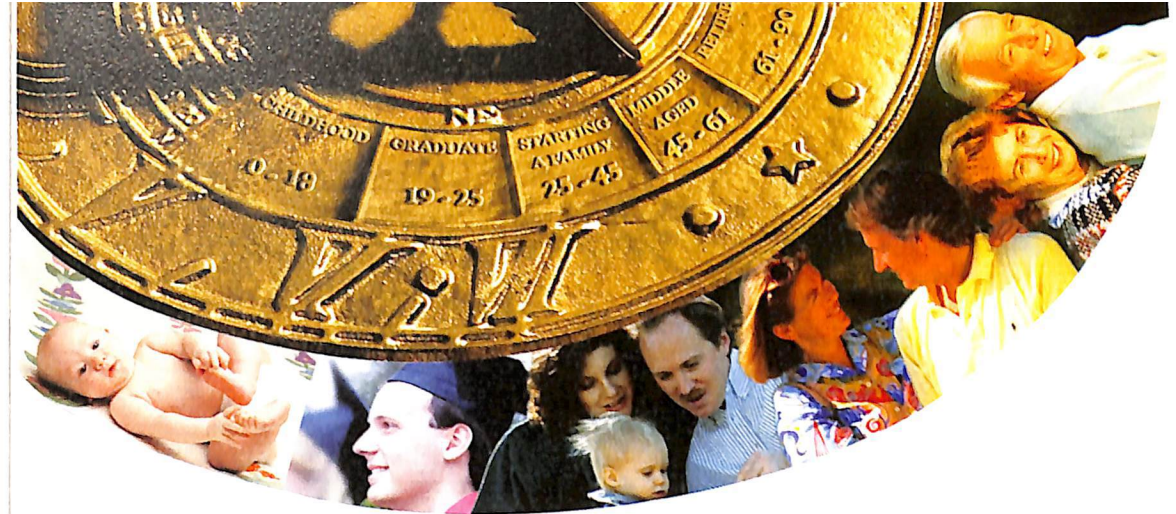
The Scherzos of **Frederic Chopin** (1810-1849) are of his own creation: they have little if any resemblance to those of Beethoven and Mendelssohn. Whether in earnest or in serious jest, Chopin picked on a title which is widely misleading when the content is considered. The First Scherzo is a fair model: a few bars of introduction, a trio, a short working-out section, a skilful return to the opening theme, and an elaborate coda. Chopin gives it dignity and a classic massiveness. The interior is romantic and modern, personal, but the façade shows gleaming minarets, the strangely built shapes of the Orient. This B minor scherzo has the acid note of sorrow and revolt, yet the complex figuration never wavers. The first pages are filled with wrathful sounds, with much tossing of hands. A climax mounts to a fine frenzy until the lyric intermezzo in B is reached. Can anything be more bewitching than the episode in C sharp minor merging into E major, with the overflow at the close? However the shrillest of dissonances soon heralds that peace does not live long...

Historically the nine piano sonatas of **Sergei Prokofiev** (1891-1953) may be divided into four groups. The first four (respectively in F minor, D minor, A minor and C minor) date from the years 1909-17 and at least three of them evolved from Prokofiev's youthful efforts in this form, written during his Conservatory days. Among the most popular of all his sonatas is No. 3, written in 1917 on the previous notes of 1907 when it was already presented in an evening of contemporary music before the Revolution. It is proof of the classical side of Prokofiev: a sonata condensed in one long movement in accordance with the form already used by Scriabin. The first theme consists of a vast section of breaking thirds in the execution of the two hands; the second, simple and sweet, is one of Prokofiev's most beautiful, its cue from the second subject passage bringing back the theme of the beginning. It concludes in a throbbing coda and thus follows the pattern of fast-slow-fast-slow-fast.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was one of the most celebrated pianists of the 19th century and one of its most innovative composers, having shown immense musical gifts as a child. The *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, his best-known piano solo works, were based on his first visit to Hungary since his boyhood, in 1839-40. It is based on urban popular music rather than the folk music of his native Hungary, even if it was his renewed interest in the music of the gypsies that laid their foundation. Liszt was one of the great altruists in the history of music; he performed the large piano works of Schumann and Chopin when they were physically unable to do so, and provided opportunities for Berlioz, Wagner and Saint-Saëns to have their music performed. His piano writing incorporates both the orchestral side of Beethoven and the delicate pianistic effects of Chopin. He was a distinguished piano teacher, with pupils from all over Europe and the United States. Though many of his works contain passages of bombast or sentimentality, his innovations in harmony, musical form, and writing for the piano make him one of the most important and influential composers of the 19th century.



Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) was the commanding figure in Brazilian music in the 20th century. Almost entirely self-taught, he was incredibly prolific and his music spans the whole gamut of genres. For him Bach's music possessed a truly universal spirit, and in his series of eight *Bachianas Brasileiras* he combined this spirit with the deep-rooted beauty of the Brazilian folk tradition. *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5*, originally scored for voice and eight cellos, was later arranged by the composer himself for voice and guitar. It remains his most popular and enduring work.



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PROGRAMME NOTES

Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999) lost his sight as a result of an epidemic of diphtheria at the age of three, an event that undoubtedly led him towards music, later studying many years in Paris. His most famous composition, *Concierto de Aranjuez* for guitar and orchestra, is regarded as a true classic, but has often obscured the full range of his work. *Coplas* is one of a significant body of work Rodrigo composed for guitar and voice. It is particularly notable for the broad range of textures employed: after the brooding guitar introduction comes a declamatory passage of solo voice, before the two are united. A central section where a flurry of strident semiquavers in the voice contrasts with the simple chordal accompaniment leads to a beautiful *tranquillo a dolce* passage and a final echo of the opening.

Both **Jayme Ovalle** and **Valdemar Henrique** demonstrate strong Afro-Brazilian influences. Ovalle made special studies of Afro-Brazilian music and *Azulão* strongly reflects these folk elements. The lyrics are directed to a bluebird, asking it to fly to the singer's beloved to tell her that life without her is worthless. Henrique's *Boi-Bumbá* or '*Bumba meu boi*' is the closing number of a Brazilian celebration called *Reisados*, which depicts the Epiphany. Although it has a Biblical subject, it is of pagan origin and deals with the glorification of the sacred ox. The dance-song, also found in Cuba, is danced by participants in a circle, accompanied by drums and the clapping of hands.

Manuel M. Ponce (1882-1948) was a Mexican whose music incorporated elements of his native folk music, European structures and an often French-leaning harmonic vocabulary. He was very prolific, contributing many and varied works to the guitar repertoire, including sonatas, sets of variations and a guitar concerto. *Sonatina Meridional* is one of his most Spanish influenced works. The first movement, titled *Campo* (Countryside) has a rustic rhythmic feel. The overtly Spanish characteristics, most notably in the reliance on progressions derived from the Phrygian mode (the white notes of the piano beginning on E) and passages of pizzicato (where the strings are dampened as they are played by the plucking hand) are balanced by frequent references to a *Jorilla* or Mexican nursery rhyme.

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946) was the foremost Spanish composer of the 20th century. Although highly influenced by French composers, particularly Debussy, these *Canciones* are a very concentrated manifestation of his Spanish roots. Written between 1907-14 for piano and voice during his stay in Paris, they are intensely imaginative recreations of the music of his birthplace. The seven 'canciones' are: 1 *El Páno Morino*, 2 *Seguidilla Murciana*, 3 *Asturiana*, 4 *Jota*, 5 *Nana*, 6 *Canción*, 7 *Polo*. Thus they range from the gypsy *cante jondo* Flamenco of *Polo* to the light major key Andalusian folk song *Canción* to the slow, sad lament that is *Asturiana*, originating from the Asturias in the north. As the original piano part so obviously imitates the guitar, the national instrument of Spain, these songs work particularly well arranged for guitar.



The music of the German composer **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827) reflects the tempestuousness and sincerity of his own nature. His increasing deafness forced him to abandon public performance and devote himself wholly to composition. He worked with difficulty and revised his work tirelessly. The most important of his string trios are the three probably composed in 1796-98 and published in Vienna by Johann Traeg as Op. 9.

The third of the Op. 9 trios, in C minor, is the most remarkable of the set, its stern key full of associations with other instances of its use by Beethoven. The powerful *Allegro* is rich in thematic ideas (both the first and the second subjects incorporate three quite distinct elements) all of which are put to good use during the course of the movement. The most important single motif is the ominous four-note descent of the very beginning, while the most memorable is perhaps the swaying, Schubertian theme accompanied by reiterated semiquavers on the viola that concludes the first subject. The slow movement, a noble sonata-form *Adagio* in C major, is notable for its ornate writing for all three instruments, especially in the impassioned development and the substantially varied recapitulation, and its rich string textures. The angular Scherzo has a melodious trio in C major and is followed by a vigorous sonata-form *Finale* full of tarantella-like triplets, which may possibly have been Beethoven's first draft of the finale of the *Pathétique* Sonata.

Programme editor: Victor Fenech

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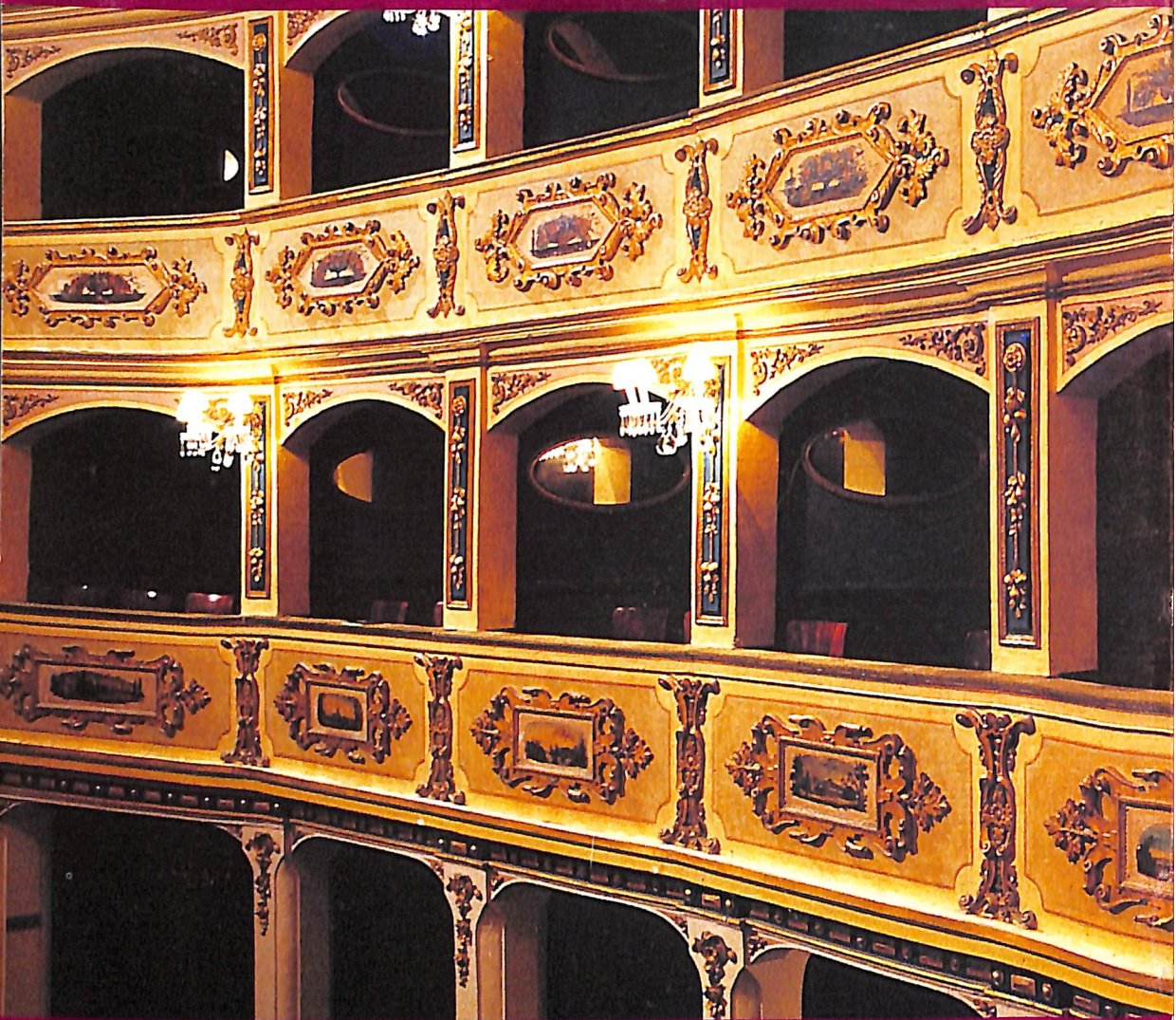


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