



VALLETTA INTERNATIONAL
BAROQUE FESTIVAL 2017

TEATRU MANOEL
MALTA

BACH'S LUTE SUITES

Bibliotheca (National Library)
Friday, 27th January 2017

www.vallettabaroquefestival.com.mt





FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to underwrite and support this beautiful winter festival. Now in its fifth edition, the Valletta International Baroque Festival has taken its place in the season calendar of not only local baroque aficionados but of an ever-growing number of followers from overseas.

It is the unique Maltese setting that makes the Valletta International Baroque Festival so special. Organized by the Teatru Manoel, august and serene in its 1731 splendour and voted one of the top 15 most beautiful theatres in the world by CNN, the festival's main venue is the Teatru Manoel but also incorporates palaces, churches and auberges that were built during and around the baroque period in our history. It is this stylistically homogenous element of our proud capital city that renders anything held in it so appealing.

With Valletta 18 on the horizon, not to mention the EU Presidency in 2017, having an established music festival in January makes perfect sense. Music performed by top musicians from all over Europe and a number of Maltese players too, notably the special ensemble purposely set up for the festival: VIBE, the Valletta International Baroque Ensemble, is enhanced by the work of musicologists who this year have given the spotlight to Maltese composer Girolamo Abos on the occasion of the Tercentenary of his birth.

This year's festival promises to be even more spectacular than the last and as Minister for Culture, I am delighted to be directly associated with such a successful venture.

The Hon. Dr. Owen Bonnici

Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government





ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

I am very pleased to be introducing the fifth edition of the Valletta International Baroque Festival which since its inception in 2013 has leapt from strength to strength attracting an international audience happy to spend a week or two in the inimitable atmosphere of Valletta, our tiny capital city. An international audience is attracted by a commensurately internationally recognised galaxy of star performers; household names within the baroque world as well as without.

This festival, like the previous ones, incorporates an eclectic variety of music including pianistic transcriptions and 20th Century orchestral music inspired by the baroque idiom. This year the festival kicks off simultaneously with Malta's presidency of the European Union. We are marking this momentous event with a performance of Marc Antoine Charpentier's famous *Te Deum* at St John's Co Cathedral; the opening bars of which have for decades been synonymous with the union.

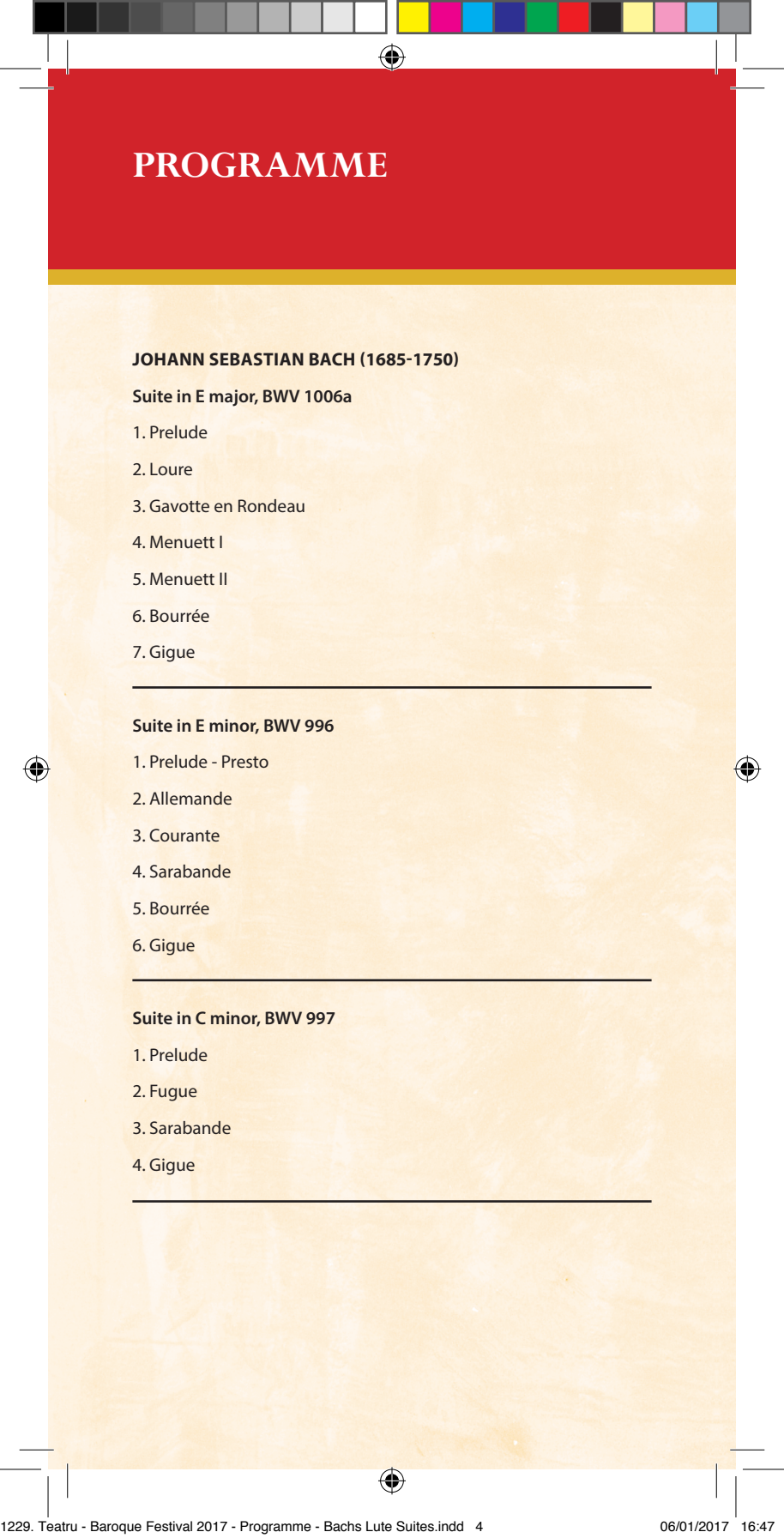
Two weeks of gorgeous music that elicits visions of periwigged grandmasters, swashbuckling knights and ladies in the latest fashions from Naples and Palermo plying the gridiron streets of Valletta in calesses and sedan chairs dodging traders from the East, watersellers, herds of goats and sellers of karawett in a harmonious cacophony of sound that sadly has been obliterated by the revving of car engines and the hooting of car horns. For two weeks the tinkle of the harpsichord, the reverberations of the theorbo and the sonorities of the Viola da Gamba will surely conjure up the unique atmosphere of Valletta's Age of Elegance.

Kenneth Zammit Tabona

Artistic Director

Valletta International Baroque Festival 2017





PROGRAMME

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Suite in E major, BWV 1006a

- 1. Prelude
- 2. Loure
- 3. Gavotte en Rondeau
- 4. Menuett I
- 5. Menuett II
- 6. Bourrée
- 7. Gigue

Suite in E minor, BWV 996

- 1. Prelude - Presto
- 2. Allemande
- 3. Courante
- 4. Sarabande
- 5. Bourrée
- 6. Gigue

Suite in C minor, BWV 997

- 1. Prelude
- 2. Fugue
- 3. Sarabande
- 4. Gigue



PROGRAMME NOTES

Johann Sebastian S. Bach left four suites and several miscellaneous pieces for the lute, now played on the guitar. The lute was one of the most popular baroque instruments, but Bach did not know much about the techniques of lute playing and worked out his pieces at the keyboard. Recent scholarship of 18th Century-style keyboards have made it probable that Bach wrote the music for, and maybe at, the lute-harpsichord (also called Lautenwerk). The inventory of Bach's possessions at the time of his death reveals that he owned three harpsichords, one lute, a spinet as well as two lute-harpsichords.

We don't know much about the lute-harpsichord. Over a period of some three centuries there are plenty of references to gut-stringed instruments that resemble the harpsichord and imitate the delicate soft timbre of the lute (including its lower-sounding variants, the theorbo and chitarrone or archlute) or the harp, but little concrete information. Not a single such instrument has survived, nor is any contemporary depiction known apart from a rough engraving of the early 16th century. Fewer than ten lute-harpsichord makers are known, and there are reasonably detailed descriptions of instruments made by only two or three of them. Nonetheless, the instrument is mentioned fairly frequently in music books of the early 17th to the mid-18th century.

J.S. Bach's connection with and interest in the lute-harpsichord was considerable. He clearly liked the combination of softness with strength which these instruments are capable of producing, and he is known to have drawn up his own specifications for such an instrument to be built for him by Hildebrandt. In an annotation to Jakob Adlung's *"Musica mechanica organoedi"* (Berlin, 1768), Johann Friedrich Agricola described a lute-harpsichord that belonged to Bach: "The editor of these notes remembers having seen and heard a *"Lautenclavicymbel"* in Leipzig in about 1740, designed by Mr. Johann Sebastian Bach and made by Mr. Zacharias Hildebrand, which was smaller in size than a normal harpsichord but in all other respects similar. It had two choirs of gut strings, and a so-called little octave of brass strings. It is true that in its normal setting (that is, when only one stop was drawn) it sounded more like a theorbo than a lute. But if one drew the lute-stop (such as is found on a harpsichord) together with the cornet stop, one could almost deceive professional lutenists."

In the 18th century the lute was gradually replaced by the guitar. Initially the Spanish used the guitar particularly for playing their dances and made it fashionable in France, Italy and finally in the rest of Europe. In the 19th and 20th century many lute works were transcribed for the guitar, among them Bach's lute suites.



BIOGRAPHY



JOHANNA BEISTEINER

Johanna Beisteiner, born in Austria, is among the internationally most renowned and innovative classical guitarists. She regularly performs as a soloist, is invited to festivals and gives chamber music concerts. In addition, she plays guitar concertos with various orchestras such as the Budapest and Sochi Symphony Orchestra, the Graz Chamber Philharmonic and the Budapest

Strings Chamber Orchestra under the direction of well-known conductors such as Béla Drahos, Achim Holub or Oleg Soldatov.

Johanna Beisteiner's artistic activity is not limited to the presentation of standard works, but also includes the expansion of the repertoire for classical guitar by collaborating with contemporary composers and creating her own compositions.

At only sixteen years of age, Johanna Beisteiner became a student at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. After her graduation in 1999, she undertook her first tours abroad. Inter alia, she performed several times at the Teatro della Concordia (Italy), the Dom Actyora (Yekaterinburg, Russia) and at events for the revitalization of the Berlin Hohenschönhausen Castle. Moreover, Johanna Beisteiner appeared in numerous world premieres of works by Robert Gulya and Eduard Shafrensky. She inspired Gulya to a guitar concerto as well as several other compositions with various instrumentations. For the label Gramy Records several recordings with classical and contemporary repertoire emerged. Parallely to her first artistic projects, she completed a Doctoral me in 2005.

In addition to her emphasis on classical projects, Johanna Beisteiner gained experience in the field of popular music by recording soundtracks for movies and accompanying literary events such as Farkas discovers America. The guitarist dedicates herself also to dance and singing. From 2005 to 2008 she learned Argentine Tango with Rafael Ramirez, who appeared with her in the Tango video clip The Milonguero and the Muse to music by Robert Gulya. In 2016 Johanna Beisteiner created the event programme Facetas de Tango together with her Argentine dance partner Jorge Talquenca and the actor Mathias Kahler-Polagnoli. In this programme Johanna performs as guitarist, dancer and singer.





BIOGRAPHY



Johanna Beisteiner plays on a classical Spanish concert guitar made by the Madrid master Paulino Bernabé. Besides her concert activity, she gives master classes.

Awards:

- * 2008: Crystal trophy 200 Years Teatro della Concordia (Italy)
 - * 2011: Honorary Membership in the Association Hohenschönhausen Castle in Berlin (Germany)
 - * 2016: Premio Teatro della Concordia for Don Quixote Fantasy on themes from a ballet by Minkus
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BIBLIOTHECA NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MALTA

The National Library of Malta, often known as the Bibliotheca, is a reference library in Old Treasury Street, Valletta and is housed in a white stone eighteenth-century building with a pillared portico.

It was founded in 1766 during the reign of Grandmaster of Emmanuel de Rohan. For a time it was known as the Bibliotheca Tanseana in honour of Louis Guérin de Tencin, whose collections formed the nucleus of the library. It became a legal deposit library in 1925, and from 1936 was known as the Royal Malta Library. The name was changed to National Library of Malta in 1976.

Please note that this concert venue is only accessed by a long staircase.



VALLETTA INTERNATIONAL BAROQUE FESTIVAL 2017

Friday 27th January – 7.30pm
The Salon (Museum of Archaeology)
A PIACERE

Saturday 28th January – 12.30pm
St. Paul's Cathedral
PURCELL'S OPERATIC ARIAS

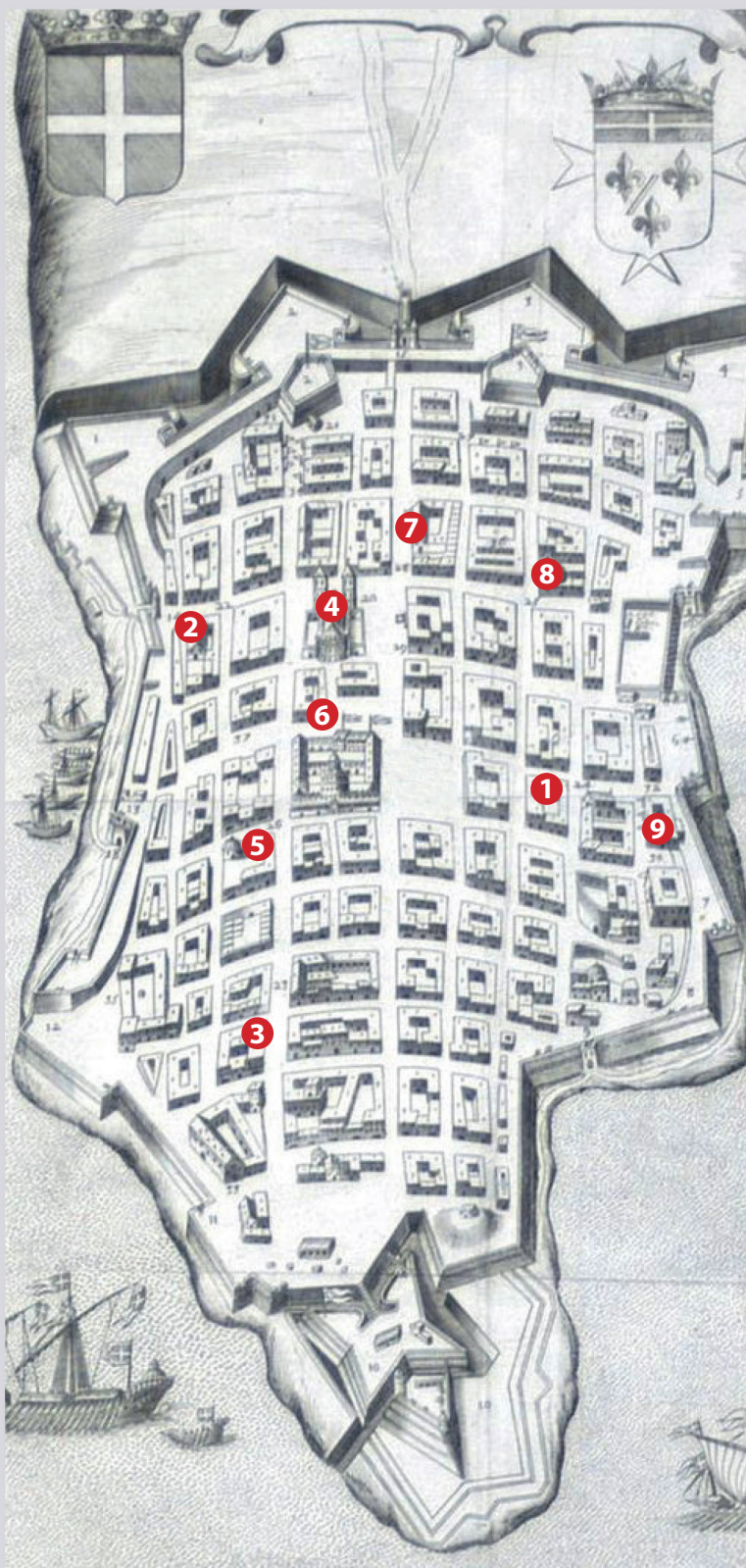
Saturday 28th January – 7.30pm
Teatru Manoel
MUSIC FIT FOR A KING

Baroque Festival Bookings

For all bookings and further information:
www.vallettabaroquefestival.com.mt
www.teatrumanoel.com.mt
+356 2124 6389
bookings@teatrumanoel.com.mt

All information is correct at the time of printing
however this could be subject to change.
Please check the Theatre's website for updates
www.teatrumanoel.com.mt





VENUES

1. Teatru Manoel

Built in 1732 by Grand Master Manoel de Vilhena, Teatru Manoel is one of the oldest working theatres in Europe and is today Malta's National Theatre.

2. Ta' Ġiezu Church, St. John's Street

The church of the Friars Minor was designed by Girolamo Cassar and built on land granted to them in 1571. Numerous grandmasters contributed lavishly towards the embellishment of the church which now hosts various works of art including the impressive Miraculous Crucifix and the 1600 titular painting of the Visitation of Our Lady to St Elizabeth by Sicilian artist Antonio Catalano.

3. St. Nicholas (All Souls) Church, Merchants Street

This church was built in 1569 by the Greek Catholics as their Byzantine Rite parish church. In 1639 Parish Priest, Papas Giovanni Metaxi, conceded its use to the Sodality of the Holy Souls which re-built the church. In fact the church is commonly known by this name nowadays.

4. St. John's Co-Cathedral

The Oratory – St John's Co-Cathedral, St. John's Square

St John's Co-Cathedral was built by the Knights of St John between 1573 and 1578 as their new Conventual church for the new city. Each of its chapels corresponds to each of the eight Langues of the Order. The floor consists of four hundred ornate marble gravestones over the graves of the knights who died in Malta. The Oratory of St John's Co-cathedral, accessible from the church's right nave, houses two of the masterpieces that Caravaggio painted during his sojourn in Malta. Works for the construction of the oratory were initiated in 1602 by Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt, who wanted the Order to have a place devoted to investiture ceremonies and official meetings of the Knights. Directly connected to the Order's Church, it was therefore a very important location, as all the most solemn events in the life of the Order would take place here.

5. The Jesuits' Church, Merchants Street

Built on architect Francesco Bonamici's plan as the church of the old University of Malta between 1592 and 1600, this edifice is considered as one of the finest baroque examples. The titular picture is Mattia Preti's 'Liberation of St. Peter'.

6. Bibliotheca (National Library of Malta)

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7. The Salon (Museum of Archaeology), Republic Street

The Museum of Archaeology is housed in the Auberge de Provence which was designed and built by Girolamo Cassar in 1574. This palace was the mansion of the French Knights of Provence. During British Rule this building was known as the Union Club and was then the hub of Malta's Social life

8. St. Augustine Church, Old Bakery Street

St. Augustine's Church is one of the churches built during the creation of the new city of Valletta. The Foundation stone was laid in 1571 according to the plan of Girolamo Cassar - architect of the Knights of St. John. The church was rebuilt in 1765 according to a plan of Giuseppe Bonici.

9. St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Independence Square

Commissioned by the Dowager Queen Adelaide and built on the site of the Auberge d'Allemagne (the conventual home of the German Knights), the cathedral was designed by William Scamp. Its spire rising over 60 metres is now one of Valletta's major landmarks.

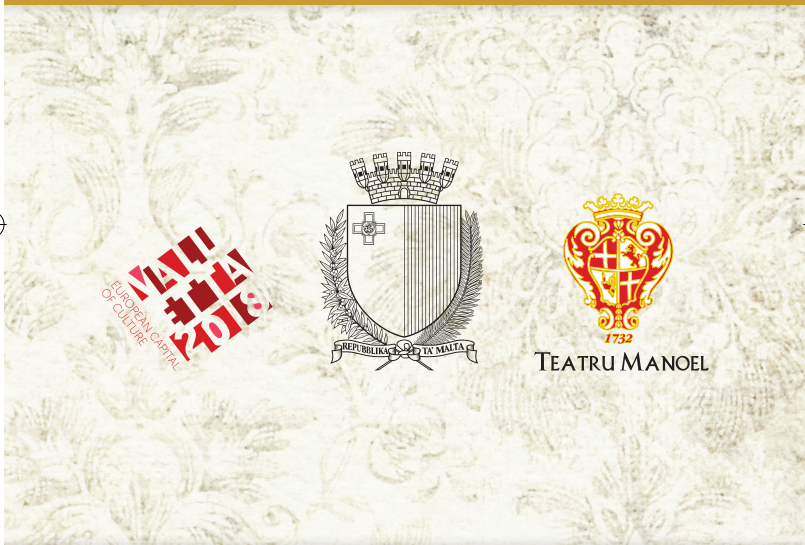


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13th to 27th January 2018

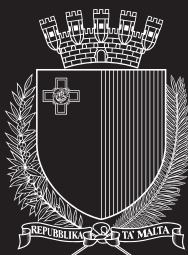




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Le MERIDIEN



The Festival is also being staged in collaboration
with the following partners:



THE ST JOHN'S CO-CATHEDRAL
FOUNDATION

