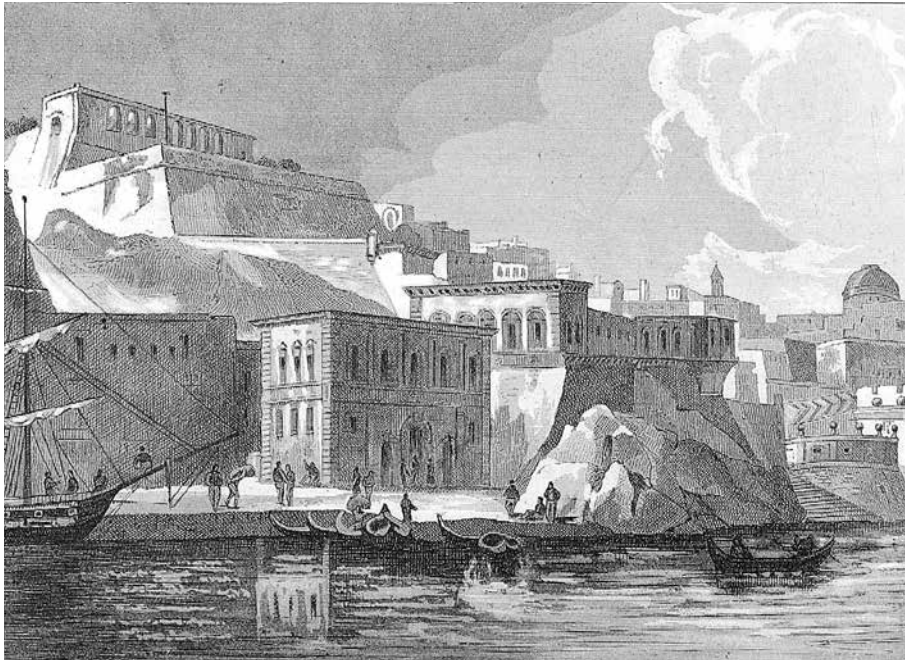




Valletta Baroque Festival

Music & art in the heart of the Mediterranean



Valletta, steel engraving c. 1850.

17–23 January 2023 (MJ 605)

7 days • £3,180

(including tickets to 8 performances)

Lecturer: Prof. Andrew Hopkins FSA

Baroque music in one of the most complete and compact of Baroque cities.

The concerts alternate with visits to Malta's principal architectural and archaeological sites, led by an architectural historian.

The 2023 festival extends to surrounding towns including the ancient capital of Mdina.

Among the artists: Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Ghislieri Choir & Consort, Capella Cracoviensis, Combattimento, Steven Devine, Trevor Eliot Bowes, Claudia Patacca.

Malta is a highly apposite setting for the performance of Baroque music. During this period the island was ruled by the Knights of Malta or Knights Hospitaller, Valletta was completely rebuilt and the knights themselves were vigorous patrons of the arts, including music and architecture.

One of Europe's oldest working theatres is the Teatru Manoel, built in 1731 at the behest of the Grand Master of the order, Fra António

Manoel de Vilhena. With only 600 seats, the theatre is a masterpiece of carpentry, with three tiers of wooden boxes, gilded and painted, and a trompe-l'oeil ceiling. Opera companies visited Malta regularly, performing works by Hasse, Piccinni and Galuppi. Other buildings which host concerts during the festival include the Collegiate Church of the Immaculate Conception (1732), abundantly rich with superb works of art, the National Library (1776) and the Cathedral Museum in Mdina, a magnificent palace of 1733.

Valletta's beautiful position on one of the world's greatest natural harbours, and the fine buildings that still dominate the city, make it a splendid location for a week-long stay. Our itinerary balances the concerts with visits and excursions led by our architectural historian to some of the great sites of the Maltese archipelago.

Itinerary

Day 1: Valletta. Fly at c. 11.30am (Air Malta) from London Heathrow. Drive to Valletta, a peninsula flanked by fine natural harbours and once the most strongly fortified city in Christendom. Lecture followed by dinner.

Day 2: Valletta. A morning walk introduces

the city. Survey the massive fortifications protecting the landward approach and view the Grand Harbour from the ramparts. Midday concert in the National Library: *Sarah Spiteri and Pablo Zapico: Music from the Court of Versailles for Baroque Viola and Theorbo.* Some free time and dinner before the concert at Teatru Manoel: *Gabetta Consort and Valer Barna-Sabadus (counter-tenor): works by Handel and Vivaldi.*

Day 3: Paola, Tarxien, Birkirkara. In Paola, the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the only prehistoric underground burial site in the world. The Tarxien Temples site is the most complex in Malta and would have been the most decorative. It was rediscovered by accident in 1902 and is the source of outstanding carved reliefs and statues. Free afternoon. The evening concert is in Birkirkara at the Collegiate Basilica of St Helen: *Ghislieri Choir & Consort, Giulio Prandi (director): Mozart in Milan.*

Day 4: Valletta, Cospicua. Begin in the Co-Cathedral of St John, one of the most interesting of Baroque buildings with lavish carved wall decoration, ceiling paintings, magnificent tombs and two paintings by Caravaggio. A private tour of the Casa Rocca Piccola follows, a 16th-century palazzo owned by the Marquis de Piro, providing insight to the Maltese nobility of the last 400 years. Some free time before the late afternoon and evening concerts in Cospicua. At Santa Tereza ta' Ġesù: *Valletta Baroque Ensemble, Kor Malta: Buxtehude, Membra Jesu Nostrri.* Dinner between the concerts. At the Church of the Immaculate Conception: *Capella Cracoviensis: Biber's Rosary Sonatas.*

Day 5: Birgu. Cross the Grand Harbour by ferry to the old fortified city of Birgu (Vittoriosa). The walk through the historic centre includes Fort St Angelo, the oldest on Malta, with British as well as Knights' period connections, the Knights' own area – the Collachio – and the Auberge d'Angleterre (exterior). Return to Valletta by ferry with time to rest. Early dinner before the evening performance at the Teatru Manoel: *Aci, Galatea & Polifemo (Handel), Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Trevor Eliot Bowes (Polifemo).*

Day 6: Mdina, Valletta. Mdina, Malta's ancient capital and centre of the local aristocracy, is an unspoilt citadel of great beauty, with medieval walls and grand palazzi. 11.00am recital in the

Valletta Baroque Festival continued

Baroque palace that now houses the Cathedral Museum: *Steven Devine: Rameau's Divine Keyboard*. Visit Palazzo Falson, a 13th-century private residence and now a house museum. Return to Valletta for some free time before the early evening concert at the Teatru Manoel: *Combattimento, Claudia Patacca (soprano): Lust and Love Lost*. Dinner follows the performance.

Day 7: Valletta. Morning visit to the National Museum of Art, installed in the Auberge d'Italie. The flight to London Heathrow arrives c. 7.30pm.

outside the city gates. Harbour view rooms are available for a supplement. *Rooms for solo travellers are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? The programme of visits involve walks of up to 30 minutes. Valletta is relatively hilly and streets are roughly paved. You will need to be comfortable with everyday walking and stair climbing. Average distance by coach per day: 7 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 20 participants.

Lecturer

Professor Andrew Hopkins. An internationally recognised authority on architecture and cities, as well as museum collections and their buildings. He was previously Assistant Director of the British School at Rome. Part of Andrew's PhD at the Courtauld Institute was awarded the Essay Medal by the Society of Architectural Historians, GB. Numerous fellowships include Harvard University's Villa I Tatti in Florence, the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, the Getty Center, Los Angeles and St John's College, Cambridge. Among his many publications are *Italian Architecture from Michelangelo to Borromini*, Thames & Hudson, 2002 (World of Art) and *Baldassare Longhena and Venetian Baroque Architecture*, Yale University Press, 2012.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £3,180 or £2,970 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £3,510 or £3,300 without flights. **Supplement per person for a harbour view, two sharing:** £220; single occupancy: £420.

Included: flights (economy class) with Air Malta (aircraft: Airbus 320neo); private coach; travel by ferry as indicated in the itinerary; accommodation as below; breakfasts and 5 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips and taxes; the services of the lecturer, tour manager and local guide.

Music: first category concert tickets to 8 concerts, costing c.£270.

Accommodation. Hotel Phoenicia, Valletta (phoeniciamalta.com): a 5-star hotel in Valletta, recently refurbished and furnished with style and character, the best in Valletta and just