

PALERMO ART FESTIVAL

9 - 16 JANUARY 1977

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PROMOTED JOINTLY BY *THE CONNOISSEUR*, LONDON
AND *DU MAGAZINE*, ZURICH

The Palermo Art Festival was inaugurated in 1976 by the President of the Sicilian Assembly, as an annual event which aims to emphasize the significance of Sicily as one of the main cradles of Western Civilisation. It is now, therefore, already in its second year, and by virtue of the artistic and historical importance of the monuments on which it is based, promises to become one of the major events of its kind. Although primarily dedicated to the visual arts, with special emphasis on the great wealth of superb Byzantine mosaics in the cathedrals and other churches from the Norman period, the Palermo Art Festival also strives to encourage the revival of the Sicilian Puppet Theatre, and to bring back to life the fantastic world of the Baroque, by means of such dazzling events as the reception at Palazzo Gangi.

Sunday, 9 January

Late afternoon arrival at Palermo, for seven nights at the Villa Igia, or the Jolly Hotel, according to choice. Registration and dinner at the hotel.

Monday, 10 January

Festival opens. Official welcome in the morning at the Royal Palace (Palazzo dei Normanni) by the President of the Sicilian Assembly, followed by visit to the former apartments of King Roger II and the Palatine Chapel. Both are most splendidly decorated with mosaics from the first half of the 12th century, which are among the greatest achievements of Byzantine art.

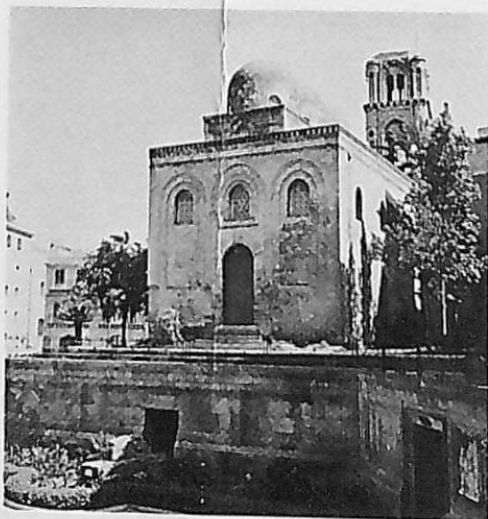
Visit in the afternoon to the Norman churches of San Giovanni degli Eremiti, one of the most suggestive examples of Sicilian-Norman architecture, showing strong Islamic influence, and the Martorana, with some of the most beautiful Byzantine mosaics in Palermo. The latter is also known under the name of "Santa Maria dell' Ammiraglio", having been erected in 1143 by George of Antioch, Admiral of the Fleet to Roger II.

Special reception in the evening by Their

Excellencies The Prince and Princess of San Vincenzo, at Palazzo Gangi, one of the most beautiful late-Baroque buildings in Palermo. The reception will be preceded by an introductory lecture to Norman art history by Professor Peter Lasko, Director of the Courtauld Institute of Art.



Palermo. Palazzo Steri, or Chiaromonte, built in 1307. In the early 17th century it became the seat of the terrible Court of the Inquisition.



Palermo. The Norman church of St. Cataldo, with, in the background, the bell-tower of the Martorana. It was founded in 1154, in the reign of William I.

Tuesday, 11 January

Special visit in the morning to Monreale Cathedral, situated on the slopes of Mount Caputo, just outside Palermo. It was founded by King William II in 1174 and ranks as one of the most important monuments of the Middle Ages. The mosaics of the Cathedral, depicting the stories of the Old and New Testaments, are particularly impressive, and so are the Benedictine Cloisters, where both Western and Byzantine styles were skillfully used to create an impression of great harmony.

Participants will also have time to visit the Belvedere Gardens, behind the Cloisters, from where a spectacular view can be had over the Conca d'Oro, once the hunting reserve of the Norman Kings.

Afternoon visit to the Ethnographic Museum, in the Parco della Favorita, at the foot of Mount Pellegrino, for a special exhibition of panels from 19th and 20th century Sicilian carts, beautifully painted by local craftsmen with themes from the Middle Ages. The exhibition is being mounted in the Chinese Pavilion, which was built for King Ferdinand III and Queen Marie-Caroline of Bourbon in 1799. Lord Nelson also stayed here, with Lady Hamilton.

A traditional Sicilian Puppet Show will follow in the evening, with introduction by Professor Antonio Pasqualino.

Wednesday, 12 January

Lecture in the morning by Mr. Kenneth Jenkins, Keeper of Coins and Medals at the British Museum. This will be followed by a private visit to the National Gallery of Sicily, housed in the late-Gothic Palazzo Abatellis. The famous 15th-century marble bust of Eleonora of Aragon, by Laurana, and the "Annunziata", by Antonello da Messina, are among the Gallery's most important exhibits.

There will next be a drive to Cefalù, on Sicily's northern coast, at approximately 65 kilometres to the east of Palermo, for visit to the Norman Cathedral. The Cathedral, founded by King Roger II in 1131, is

famous for its Byzantine mosaics, and in particular the impressive figure of Christ Pantocrator, on the vault of the apse, which, by virtue of its great beauty and sensitivity, is regarded by many experts as the greatest of all Byzantine mosaics.

Special concert in the evening by the Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, in the beautiful Baroque Church of the Santissimo Salvatore. The programme will be based on the music by the 17th-century Sicilian composer, Alessandro Scarlatti.

Thursday, 13 January

Morning visit to the Baroque Oratories of Santa Cita and San Domenico, for a detailed examination of the magnificent stucco-decorations by the 18th-century Sicilian artist, Giacomo Serpotta. The visit will be preceded by a lecture on Serpotta, in English, by Professor Giovanni Caradente, who has recently published a book on the subject.

Visit in the afternoon to the National Archaeological Museum, where participants will be met by the Director, Professor Vincenzo Tusa. Special emphasis will be given to the world-famous collection of metopes from Selinunte, on the ground floor of the museum, and to that of the equally important Greek ceramics on the second floor, also mainly from Selinunte.

Organ recital in the evening, in the suggestive setting of Monreale Cathedral.

Friday, 14 January

Whole day excursion to the archaeological site of Selinunte, at a distance of approximately 110 kilometres from Palermo, with a large Acropolis and several reconstructed temples of great magnitude, which offer the best possible insight into the life of one of the major Greek colonies of the 5th century B.C. The highly evocative character of the site is greatly enhanced by its remoteness, as well as the beauty of the location it occupies overlooking the Mediterranean, on the southern coast of Sicily. The colony was first destroyed by the Carthagians in 409 B.C., and later suffered extensive damage from an earthquake and ensuing tidal wave, which are supposed to have taken place during the Byzantine period. There will also be a visit to the site of the former stone quarries of Campobello, known as the Cave di Cusa, where the inhabitants of Selinunte obtained most of their building material. Here signs can still be detected, of how the massive boulders were cut from the rock and prepared for construction.

Late-afternoon return to Palermo, followed by evening at leisure.

Saturday, 15 January

Whole day excursion into the awe-inspiring mountains of Central Sicily, to Enna, the former mediaeval stronghold of Emperor Frederick II that lies over 940 metres above sea level, at approximately 120 kilometres

from Palermo. The city also played a prominent part under the Romans, and became the main fortress of the Byzantines at the time of the Arab invasion.

At Enna, a visit will be paid to both the Alessi Museum, for a *special exhibition of Greek and Roman coins*, and to the impressive Castello di Lombardia, one of



Monreale. A section of the Norman Cloister. Most of its capitals are beautifully decorated with scenes from the Old and New Testaments.



Palermo. The Romanesque facade of the church of St. Francis of Assisi, with its richly decorated portal. One of the chapels is by Francesco Laurana.

the most famous mediaeval castles in Sicily, with breathtakingly beautiful views over the surrounding countryside.

Opera performance in the evening, by the company of the Teatro Massimo.

Sunday, 16 January

Depart from Palermo in the morning.

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