



IDB Cultural Center

Inter-American Development Bank
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Information Bulletin No. 101

ON WITH THE SHOW!

A CELEBRATION OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY AND RESTORATION
OF THE TEATRO COLÓN IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA



¡LA FUNCIÓN CONTINÚA!

CELEBRACIÓN DEL 100mo. ANIVERSARIO Y RESTAURACIÓN
DEL TEATRO COLÓN EN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA



INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK CULTURAL CENTER
CENTRO CULTURAL DEL BANCO INTERAMERICANO DE DESARROLLO

Open from May 21 to August 1, 2008

The Cultural Center of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

announces the opening of

ON WITH THE SHOW! A CELEBRATION OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY AND RESTORATION OF THE TEATRO COLÓN IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Open May 21 to August 1, 2008

The exhibition catalogue will include:

- 1) Art and Politics at The Teatro Colón; 2) Argentina and The Teatro Colón;
- 3) Great Artists and Great Performances at the Teatro Colón, and
Beyond Opera: Some Extraordinary Events at the Teatro Colón;
- 4) The Current Teatro Colón; 5) The Next 100 Years; and
- 6) Master Plan for the Restoration and Technical Upgrading of the Teatro Colón.

The curator of the exhibit is Félix Ángel, IDB Cultural Center Director

The exhibit features objects and photographs documenting
the history and restoration of the Theater.

Washington, D.C., May 13, 2008

An exhibition documenting the history and restoration of the **Teatro Colón** in Buenos Aires – Argentina’s cornerstone of cultural industry, including recent preservation and restoration efforts undertaken on occasion of its centennial on May 25th, 2008; and the financial

participation of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in the entire process will open to the public of Washington D.C., at the gallery of the IDB Cultural Center, on May 21st.

ON WITH THE SHOW! A CELEBRATION OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY AND RESTORATION OF THE TEATRO COLÓN IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA comprises documents and objects related to the one hundred year history of the building, including, for instance, the 1934 baton of Spanish composer and conductor Manuel de Falla (who died in exile in Argentina), and one of the original box chairs of the Theater when was inaugurated in 1908.

The exhibit has been organized by the IDB Cultural Center, in close collaboration with the authorities of the Teatro Colón, specifically its current director, Horacio Sanguinetti, who will be in Washington on the 21st of May, invited by the IDB Cultural Center to present a lecture on the history of the Theater (in Spanish with simultaneous translation), at the IDB Conference Center, at 6:30 p.m.

Luis Alberto Moreno, President of the Inter-American Development Bank has declared that, "The Teatro Colón is one of the most prestigious opera houses in the world. Immediately after its inauguration in 1908, the theater was transformed into a cultural icon for the City of Buenos Aires, attracting the interest of the most demanding world figures in the field of opera and musical performing arts.

"On May 25th of this year, 2008, the Teatro Colón will celebrate its 100th anniversary. The IDB joins this joyful occasion with an exhibition in Washington, D.C. organized by the IDB Cultural Center in collaboration with the Argentine officials in charge of the welfare and restoration of this building.

"The Inter-American Development Bank has been an important partner in this effort of preparing the Theater to actively continue its role as a beacon of Argentine culture for at least another one hundred years, not to mention the economic and social implications a vibrant restored opera house will have for the City of Buenos Aires, both nationally and internationally. To that effect, the IDB has provided significant financing, helping the city authorities attempt and succeed in such an extraordinary undertaking, and many of the results can be seen in this exhibition."

From his part, Horacio Sanguinetti, Director of the Teatro Colón, appointed by the Mayor of the City of Buenos Aires, Mauricio Macri, states that "Argentina has had a passion for opera for a very long time. Classical music has played in Buenos Aires and cities throughout the country since the colonial era. Immigrants from Italy, Germany, and Spain brought with them to the New World their passion for music, with the result that, in 1857, the first Teatro Colón was dedicated exclusively to opera in Buenos Aires. The original theater was demolished just thirty years later and a larger, more modern theater was planned and reestablished in 1908 at a new site in the city."

Overseen by the architects Francisco Tamburini, Víctor Meano, and Jules Dormal, the construction of the new theater took almost two decades from its groundbreaking in 1889.

When it finally opened its doors, it was among the finest theaters in the world. Managed by impresarios who dedicated it to opera, ballet, and symphony concerts, the Colón hosted the greatest artists of the era. Around 1927, the City of Buenos Aires assumed management of the Colón and set up a radio network to broadcast its programs throughout the country.

The Teatro Colón has hosted the most extraordinary artists, each of whom has contributed his or her own style to the theater's greatness.

The outstanding artists of the Italian, Spanish, Russian, and German schools of opera—among them Caruso, Ruffo, Chaliapin, De Luca, Johnson, Barrientos, Martinelli, Bori, Alda, Muzio, Fleta, Pinza, Thill, Vallin, Gigli, Alda, and Melchior—sang on its stage. Diaghilev, Nijinsky, Karsavina, Fokine, and Balanchine danced. Concerts featured the works of Strauss, Stravinsky, Copland, Respighi, and Manuel de Falla. Soloists such as Casals, Menuhin, Stern, Ricci, Kreisler, Segovia, Arrau, Brailovski, Cortot, Rubinstein, and Backhaus were led by conductors Toscanini, Serafín, Mancinelli, Ormandy, Furtwängler, Busch, Kleiber (fleeing Nazi barbarism), Bernstein, Böhm, Schippers, Prête, Leinsdorf, Leitner, Molinari-Pradelli, Previtali, Bartoletti, and Baudo, among many other prominent artists who were frequent guests at the Colón.

During World War II, American singers made frequent visits. It was here that Leonard Warren reached the pinnacle of his career. Later would come Callas, Tebaldi, Tagliavini, Del Monaco, Di Stefano, Rossi-Lemeni, Victoria de los Ángeles, Tucker, Vinay, Stevens, Flagstad, Sills, MacNeil, Gedda, Hines, Milnes, Domingo, Montserrat Caballé, King, Pavarotti, Kraus, and Carreras. At the same time, a constellation of great Argentine artists was coming into its own at the Colón, with stars such as Delia Rigal, Hina Spani, Carlos Guichandut, Carlos Cossutta, Ángel Mattiello, Renato Sassola, and, in recent years, José Cura, Dario Volonté and Marcelo Álvarez. Argentine composers Juan José Castro and Alberto Ginastera went on from the Colón to achieve fame throughout the world.

Through national and international crises, the Colón has fought to preserve its prestige and status as an essential expression of Argentine culture, maintaining an Experimentation Center, a Chamber Opera, an Institute of Artistic Training, two professional orchestras and one academic ensemble, an adult chorus, a children's chorus, and outstanding technical departments (costumes, sets, sound, visual archives), while serving as a source of expertise for nearly sixty Italian-school theaters scattered throughout the Southern Cone.

In recent years the theater had been in need of major repairs. That is why a main component of the exhibit is a summary of the MASTER PLAN Teatro Colón.

In 2000 the City of Buenos Aires created the Cultural Heritage Office in order to “design the policies and guide the actions of the city government aimed at promoting, saving, preserving, and modernizing its cultural heritage.” The preparation of a Master Plan made it possible to optimize the use of public resources to define strategies and prioritize activities, and identify the actors who would be responsible for directing these activities. Actions from the Teatro Colón Master Plan are financed by the Treasury of the City of Buenos Aires, and with Funds from the

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), through a loan extended to the City in 1999, governed by IDB Loan Agreement No. N° 1107.

The exhibit is accompanied by a full-color 84-page bilingual catalogue containing the history of the building; the role it has played in Argentina's social, economic and political life; the profiles of many world-class stars; and the aspirations for the next 100 years. It also contains a summary of the MASTER PLAN Teatro Colón to which the IDB has made considerable contributions.

Selection of works in the exhibition



Headdress, 1981

From the opera *Romeo and Juliet*
black and green velvet with golden embroidery
with pearl and other decorations
13 3/4 x 9 13/16 x 9 13/16 inches
35 x 25 x 25 cm

Photo: Courtesy of the Museum of the Teatro Colón



Theatre Box Armchair, 1908

frame: built in wood and turned columns with bronze
decorations; upholstered: cotton tapestry (*guanabara*), jute
filling, copper springs, and strings to secure springs;
sack cloth: hand made using animal hair, linen, and golden
studs; and iron arm support with artistic design.
23 5/8 x 23 5/8 x 47 1/4 inches
60 x 60 x 120 cm

Photo: Courtesy of the Museum of the Teatro Colón



Teatro Colón in 1912
photograph

Photo: Courtesy of the Archives
of the Teatro Colón



Interior View From the Stage
photograph

Photo: Courtesy of the Archives
of the Teatro Colón

Exhibition

The exhibition will run from May 21 to August 1, 2008. A full-color brochure in English and Spanish will be available to the public. Photographs of the artworks on exhibit are available upon request. For photographs, please call (202) 623-1213.

The Art Gallery is open five days a week, Monday through Friday, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., free of charge.

For group tours of ten or more (in English and Spanish) and for additional information about the IDB Cultural Center and its programs, please call (202) 623-3774.

Lecture



Argentine director of the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, will discuss the history of renovation of South America's most famous opera house in its centennial year; also part of the Cultural Center's upcoming exhibition "On with the Show! Celebration of the 100th Anniversary and Restoration of the Teatro Colón." The lecture will be held in Spanish with interpretation to English. This event has been organized in collaboration with the Embassy of Argentina.

Wednesday, May 21, 2008, at 6:30 p.m. at the EVI Conference Center, located at 1330 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20577. For more information call 202 623 3558.

The IDB Cultural Center is located at 1300 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. The nearest Metro station is Metro Center (13th Street exit). All the events are free of charge.

The Cultural Center home page is located at: www.iadb.org/cultural

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