

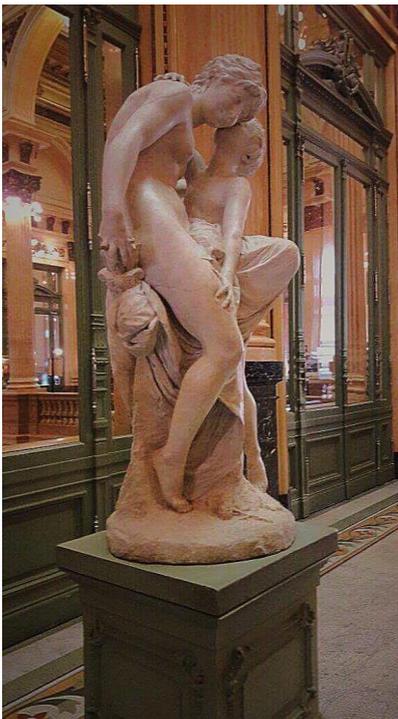
## **The Colon Theatre**

Mrs Luz García Tuñón, 3<sup>rd</sup> 5th

On Wednesday, June 8<sup>th</sup> we took a guided tour of the Colon Theatre. It was a really interesting and fun experience. When we first entered the theatre, we went to the main hall, and in a corner we saw a lot of costumes. That was where we met our guide. His name was Mariano, and he told us that all those costumes had been made at the theatre, in the workshops that are underground. We were told a little bit about the story of the theatre: when it was first built, it was near Plaza de Mayo, but it closed because all of the buildings in that area were related to politics. After that, it was built in its present location, on Libertad Street, and it was named after Christopher Columbus on the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of America.

Next, we went on to the main hall, where the stairs lead to the auditorium. These stairs metaphorically represent a bridge from the real world to the spiritual world of the arts. In the old times, the main hall was the place where people socialised. According to our guide, the “a play of glances” took place, where everybody looked at each other to see what the others were wearing and who they were talking to. A lot of the architects that worked in the construction of the theatre were European, so the structures were made from a lot of different materials that European immigrants were able to recognise when visiting the theatre.

Then, we moved on to the first floor. We were able to see a lot of busts of different composers in the ceilings and instruments around them. We also saw a sculpture of Cupid whispering to a woman in her ear. Some fingers were missing from one of the figures, and our guide told us that they had found them but had not glued them back on the sculpture because it was believed that doing that would make the piece of art two pieces instead of one and therefore it would lose its soul.



After that, we visited the Golden Hall, and we saw a lot of furniture. We learned it was another place that was meant for people to socialise and play the “play of glances”, an opportunity to prove other people that one was from the elite. The design of this Hall was inspired in the palace of Versailles and the Opera Theatre in Paris, and it has really heavy and expensive chandeliers.



Then, we went into the Auditorium and they were rehearsing for that night’s show so we were able to watch a little bit of the rehearsal. Our guide told us that the auditorium can hold up to 2800 people. There are 7 levels: the first three are the boxes, the 4<sup>th</sup>, called ‘Cazuela’, was for women; the 5<sup>th</sup>, called ‘Tertulia’, was for men, the 6<sup>th</sup> was the gallery and the 7<sup>th</sup> was called ‘Paraíso’, because it’s the closest to heaven. It was also vulgarly called ‘Gallinero’, because it was the cheapest one, so the immigrants would watch the plays from there and, since most of them were Italian, like most operas, they were able to understand what was going on and they cheered if they liked what was happening or threw things at the stage if they didn’t. The boxes that were closest to the stage were meant for the President, because there were no newspapers or TV at that time so the President wanted to be seen by the

people. There are also boxes that were specially meant for widows, because they couldn't be seen for a while after their husbands' deaths. These boxes were close to the floor and they had black fences, so the people inside weren't able to watch the play, they could only listen.



We also learned that the stage is very big, and there's a pit where the orchestra is settled. This pit can be moved up or down depending on the show being an opera or a concert. There is also a very big chandelier and above it there's a corridor that can hold about 50 people, that is generally used to create an effect of heavenly sound.

The Colon Theatre is very important. It is one of the best theatres in the world because of its great acoustic that requires no microphones for the actors or the musicians. The acoustic is very good because of the horseshoe shape of the auditorium and because some of the materials used to build it absorb sound while others reflect it, striking a balance.

We really enjoyed this visit to the Colon Theatre and we hope we'll be able to visit a lot more important places in our city during the rest of our secondary school years.



By Helena Duek