



The Myra Hess Concerts

By Rosemary Nightingale

The pandemic that forced Noontime Concerts to cancel live performances early last year is a reminder of how classical music played an important role in sustaining Londoners during the darkest days of WWII. By September 2, 1939 both a literal and cultural blackout imposed by the government had closed London's theaters, galleries, cinemas and concert halls, in part to avoid mass casualties from anticipated bombing raids. The National Gallery's famous masterpieces had been moved to distant locations across the country, leaving its galleries stripped and desolate.

It was at this point that Myra Hess, the famous pianist, came up with the brilliant idea of arranging a weekly concert in the now empty Gallery. The first concert was organized in just five weeks with Myra Hess herself performing.

"In case the whole thing is a flop!" she declared. She thought maybe fifty of her friends might show up in support, but shortly before the doors opened the line of eager concertgoers numbered close to a thousand and stretched around Trafalgar Square. The Gallery was only licensed for an audience of 200, but an estimated 700-800 people attended that first concert.

Buoyed by the enthusiastic response, the concerts eventually expanded to five days a week and continued throughout the war. There was no advanced booking, musicians were paid a flat five guineas, and when the available 500 chairs were filled, a similar number simply stood or sat on the floor.

Who were these people who were hungrier for music than for lunch? According to Gallery Director, Sir Kenneth Clark, they were "Young and old, smart and shabby, Tommies in uniform with their tin hats strapped on, old ladies with ear trumpets, music students, civil servants, office boys, busy public men, all sorts."

"The moment when Myra Hess played the opening bars of Beethoven's Appassionato will always remain for me one of the great experiences of my life," Clark later said. "It was an assurance that all our sufferings were not in vain."

Noontime Concerts is a descendant of the Dame Myra Hess Concerts.

For additional information and historical photos visit:

www.nationalgallery.org.uk/about-us/history/the-myra-hess-concerts and www.noontimeconcerts.org/About

Concert at Clarion

By Rosemary Nightingale

Noontime devotees who gathered to hear pianist Carl Blake, and violinist Barbara Riccardi, in performance at Clarion Performing Arts Center in Chinatown on July 3rd, were hoping the concert heralded the imminent reopening of Noontime's weekly concerts. The intimate setting allowed Carl to interact with the audience, providing commentary on the selections he had chosen to play and fascinating details of some of the lesser-



Currently the Musical Director for the Church for the Fellowship of all People, Carl also serves on Noontime's Board of Directors. He and Barbara, the first violinist of the Temescal Quartet, regularly collaborate and both generously gave of their time and talent to support Noontime's goal of reopening in the not too distant future. Clara Hsu, Executive Director of Clarion Performing Arts Center and also a member of Noontime's Board, was instrumental in planning the performance.

The concert was a resounding success; the audience left feeling uplifted and anticipating the return of Noontime's Tuesday concerts in the not too distant future. Sadly, new restrictions due to the upsurge of the Delta variant have required plans to be reassessed.

<https://noontimeconcerts.org/concerts/barbara-riccardi-violin-and-carl-blake-piano/>

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- *A Concert at Clarion*
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Our Mission is Music New Live Stream Performances

By Rosemary Nightingale

While we eagerly await the return of live audiences at our weekly concerts, our professional audio/visual team has been hard at work creating the high-quality live-streaming of new concerts for your musical enjoyment. Simply go to our website, www.noontimeconcerts.org to access the latest recordings, as well as archived concerts you may have missed. Better still, if you haven't already done so, sign up to receive news and a direct link to the latest recording.

A Blue Note for Noontime Concerts



Kevin McGlynn 6/26/1945-10/1/2021

By Robin Wirthlin

Kevin McGlynn was one of those rare individuals who truly lived his life to the fullest. He was passionate about his Irish heritage, his family and friends, his history and life in the Bay Area, his work as production manager for Noontime Concerts, and his faith.

Noontime Concerts has thrived for so many years in large part because of Kevin's commitment to and love for what we do each week. He started working for Noontime Concerts in the mid-1990s with Noontime's founder, Alexandra Ivanoff. Through many changes and iterations during 26 years Kevin's spirit and enthusiasm were the flames that kept Noontime's musical fires burning. He will be deeply missed by the many musicians who have performed on the series, the audience members whom he easily befriended over the years, and all of us who were blessed to know him.

Noontime Concerts has established the *Kevin McGlynn Musicians' Fund* in his memory. All contributions will help to pay for our talented musicians who play each week.

Noontime Concerts is a 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organization
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www.noontimeconcerts.org

