

Dear All

I can't believe we are in October already, but as the evenings draw in we have two things to entertain you. Firstly some information about the Wigmore Hall New Autumn Series that I have been asked pass on to you and then a light-hearted Mumble from the Mumbler.

Best wishes

Anne

Wigmore Hall New Autumn Series

The Wigmore Hall, London has published its New Autumn Series of 100 live streamed concerts between now and December, in front of a socially-distanced audience. Friends might be interested to have details of the performances of artists in the W H programme who were booked for Gower 2020 and now we are pleased to know are planning to be with us in our 2021 Festival. Concerts are free to view on – the Wigmore Hall website although donations will be much appreciated. Artists include:

1. The Elias Quartet on Tuesday 6th October at 7.30pm and Wednesday 7th October at 1pm. On Monday 23rd November at 1pm they are performing with Robert Plane, clarinet, who also plans to join them in Gower next year.
2. Pavel Kolesnikov on Monday 26th October at 7.30pm
3. Sholto Kynoch on Monday 19th October at 1pm, who accompanies Neal Davies in 2021.

Among others in the New Autumn Series are artists who have appeared in Gower at recent Festivals including our Patron Llyr Williams on Monday 5th October at 1pm, (playing Schumann, Brahms, Liszt and Chopin) and pianist Leon McCawley on Saturday 10th October at 7.30pm. Several chamber groups will also be familiar names to us.

A feast of music awaits for your enjoyment!

Hello and welcome to an extra “Mumbling” for the merry month of October. I’m planning to “Mumble” in November and December as well.

Goodness knows we need a bit of cheering up and so I’ll start with some favourite quotes compiled by Box-Office staff from all over the UK. Let me know if you have heard of any or which one is your favourite. I think mine is 14.

- 1) What time does the 8 o'clock show start?
- 2) Can I have seats facing the stage please?
- 3) Sorry we only have singles left madam. OK - do you have two of them together?
- 4) What time is the matinee? 2.30 Is that 2.30pm?
- 5) I'm sorry but we only have restricted view tickets left. What does that mean? It means that you won't be able to see everything. Oh, at what point will we have to leave?
- 6) To the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park; Is the theatre air-conditioned?
- 7) During the run of *Noises Off* one patron walked out shortly after the start demanding a refund because they hadn't paid to "watch a rehearsal".
- 8) A lady who walked out half way through the first act of *Madame de Sade* (with Judi Dench) demanding a refund. She thought she'd bought tickets for Madame Tussauds.
- 9) How much is a complimentary ticket?
- 10) (At *Chicago*) "What's it about?" "I don't know but I think it's set in New York"
- 11) "What's on this evening?" "*Giselle*" "She's ill? What's the matter with her?"
- 12) "Would I be allowed to bring a spare pair of shoes as the ones I'll be wearing will be painful by the end of the night."
- 13) (At *Jesus Christ Superstar*) "Well, I didn't expect it to end like that"
- 14) Is the Ballet in Welsh?
- 15) (At *The Railway Children*) "We've just bought this kitten from Harrods, we're fine to just take him in in his box, yes?"

Being brutally honest (would you expect anything but?!?), the one thing I haven't missed this year through not having the Gower Festival, is sitting on hard pews. I'm sure that the older I get the harder they are. So, I thought I'll find out more about pews and it turns out that there's no evidence of Churches having seating of any kind until about the 15th or 16th centuries. During ancient Christian worship, parishioners could stand, kneel, or even mill about if they wanted to because there was a lot of activity - kneeling and recitation and it climaxed with the congregation coming forward for communion.

Seating in churches didn't really become a thing until parishioners started to wish they were sitting down - and so, the pew was born.

When pews began to gain in popularity however, they were very different to those we sit in and suffer today. In some Churches, particularly in England, box pews were popular. They featured four walls - often shoulder-height or higher - along with doors, windows, curtains, kneelers, tables, and sometimes even fireplaces. These "super pews" were frequently custom-built, bought and paid for by the congregation's wealthiest families,

some of whom held actual deeds to them and frequently passed them down to their children.

Eventually, most parishes did away with their box pews, replacing them with the wooden benches we know today.

Now - here's a video I've found that I hope will make you smile. You may remember that a few years ago, we had a cabaret evening as part of the Gower Festival. We had a lovely dinner at the Dylan Thomas Centre and then were entertained by the inimitable Rainer Hersch and his Orchestra. It was great fun and I am a huge fan of his. Take a look at this...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjeQtbKFIHc&list=RDuEyBws6Fnw0&index=14>

We should have been enjoying performances of Beethoven's work this year - more than any other. I'm sure we'll make up for it. With that thought in mind, I'm going to leave you with this account I've found of the premier performance of his momentous Ninth Symphony - which makes bitter sweet reading.....

“At seven in the evening of May 7th 1824, Beethoven mounts the rostrum of the Theater am Kärntnertor. He is wearing a green coat because he does not own a black one. The royal family are out of town, along with much of the nobility but musicians and the remaining aristocracy surge to the hall, aware of the momentousness of a new Beethoven symphony. Some are borne from their deathbeds on stretchers. It is truly a once-in-a-lifetime occasion. Beethoven himself conducted - that is, he stood in front of a conductor’s stand and threw himself back and forth like a madman. One moment he stretched to his full height, at the next he crouched down to the floor, he flailed about with his hands and feet as though he wanted to play all the instruments and sing all the chorus parts. The second movement is interrupted by wild applause. Beethoven is oblivious. At the end, the soprano plucks his sleeve and points to the clapping, cheering, foot-stamping audience.”

Until November then.....