

Irish Heritage

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SPECIAL NEWSLETTER

Easter Edition April 2011

Dear Friends,

Firstly we would like to thank all those Friends and guests who attended **Refuge in Rome**, the story of Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty and his Associates, on Friday 8th April 2011 in St James's Church, Spanish Place, London. It was, in the words of Hugh O'Flaherty (nephew of the Monsignor), "*an unmitigated success*". We set out below an extract from some of the reviews and responses we received. We will be posting a more comprehensive list on the website www.irishheritage.co.uk

Secondly, we want to invite you to the next in our series of **Young Musician Programmes**, which is on **Friday 20th May 2011 at 7.30 in The Swiss Church, 79 Endell Street, London WC2H 9DY**. It features **Gareth McLearnon (flute)** and **James Longford (piano)** with a selection of Irish and international music - some of which is on Gareth's excellent CD, "Sounds of Home".

Gareth McLearnon is just back from a Far East Tour where he performed with the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra on the 9th April and in Beijing on the 12th April and gave a flute Masterclass at the Beijing Conservatoire on the 11th April. You can learn a lot more about Gareth on his website (see www.garethmclearnon.com)

James Longford is the principal pianist for the Royal Opera's newly-established Youth Opera Company, and for Whitehall Choir, and has been the principal keyboard player of the groundbreaking orchestra Southbank Sinfonia since their inception almost ten years ago. (see www.jameslongford.com)

Please note the **venue - The Swiss Church**, www.swisschurchlondon.org.uk, which is new to us, and the change of date to **Friday 20th May** – it was originally listed as 17th May on our bookmarks. We are delighted to have the opportunity to visit this fine Church which is an established music venue and has been beautifully refurbished and restored by a leading Swiss architect. The nearest Underground stations are, Holborn, Tottenham Court Rd (Central line only) and Covent Garden, all within 10 minutes walk.

Tickets are £12 (£10 for paid-up members of Irish Heritage), students £5, and include a glass of wine. They can be obtained from Yvonne Kerswell on e-mail irish.heritage1@googlemail.com, or from the undersigned on 01932 222342.

I wish you all a happy Easter

Niall Gallagher
Chairman

Refuge in Rome – extracts from selected reviews and feedback

Michael O’Sullivan (extracts: full review on our website www.irishheritage.co.uk)

The neo-gothic splendour of St James’s Roman Catholic Church in Spanish Place in the heart of Westminster was the setting on Friday night 8th April for Refuge in Rome, a tribute in song and verse in commemoration of the heroic wartime exploits of Monsignor Hugh O’Flaherty.

The event, organised by Irish Heritage, attracted a capacity audience, including church leaders, representatives of several Embassies and members of the Hugh O’Flaherty Memorial Society.

The programme contained over thirty songs, musical extracts and poems, with the individual items skilfully woven together to represent the circumstances and events of O’Flaherty’s extraordinary life. The repertoire reflected O’Flaherty’s passion for music, notably opera and traditional Irish ballads. Thus, a number of popular operatic extracts from Puccini, Dvorak, Bizet and others were interspersed among the mainly Irish orientated pieces. Also included was a selection of ballads by Delia Murphy whose husband, Thomas Kiernan, was wartime Irish plenipotentiary to the Holy See.

The evening proved in all respects a resounding success and a fitting tribute to Monsignor Hugh O’Flaherty, a true patriot, lover of the arts, great humanitarian spirit and above all a generous and warm hearted man.

Press release issued in Killarney by the Hugh O’Flaherty Memorial Society (extracts)

*The beautiful and historic St. James’s Church in Spanish Place in London, was almost at capacity on last Friday night (April 8th) for a truly exceptional concert titled “**Refuge in Rome**” – The story of Monsignor Hugh O’Flaherty and his associates in wartime Rome.*

Music and songs included classical works from Bizet, Rossini, Thomas Moore, Verdi, Dvorak, Romberg, Beethoven and the beautiful Panis Angelicus by Franck. Interwoven throughout were renditions of Ireland’s most famous traditional songs such as Killarney, Galway Bay, The Kerry Dancers, The Spinning Wheel and many more, including the very beautiful ballad of Aghadoe, heard by many of us for the first time.

The scope and quality of the programme was by any measure exceptional and told the story of the Monsignor in a most creative and attention holding way.

Antony Lewis-Crosby (Friend of Irish Heritage)

What a triumph the concert was. It was brilliantly put together and superbly performed. An amazing story. I hope that more of these tributes could be put together.

Cormac Dineen (Grand nephew of Monsignor Hugh O’Flaherty, from Killarney)

The concert in London was excellent, thank you. The musical standard was extremely high. The work you do is so valuable, giving talented Irish musicians such good exposure. I never knew the Irish Heritage organisation existed.

I really enjoyed the pieces from Tosca and Handel’s Silent worship.

Finbarr O’Donovan (Guest attending an Irish Heritage event for first time in 15 years)

We had a wonderful evening’s entertainment. The music was of the highest quality with the artistes’ giving of their best and connecting splendidly with their audience and the narrator was out of this world.

The evening lived up tremendously well to the mission and aims of Irish Heritage - woven around the extraordinary story of Hugh O’Flaherty it showed all present the richness of our people and of our traditions - your organisation could not have done a better job of work - please accept and convey our congratulations and thanks to all concerned.