



Inez Karlsson (Prizewinner – Cello)
(Photo: Peter McCluskie)

The Suburb's Hidden Musical Gem

ROSEMARY COOK

The Suburb can be justifiably proud of its support for the Festival of Music, Speech and Drama needs and deserves more recognition. The music festival – President: Robert Max – takes place each year, mostly in the Free Church, and usually between mid-March and mid-May.

The Festival nurtures emerging musical talent by providing performance opportunities at all levels and to all ages. Classes are grouped by either age or standard. In 2023 there were over 700 entries

to piano, string, singing, harp, chamber music, recorder, woodwind, and brass classes.

Everyone receives a certificate and feedback from an eminent adjudicator. Class winners receive medals and may receive cash prizes or vouchers from one of the Festival's sponsors. Audiences are welcome, particularly to the elite competitions for conservatoire-level students.

If you missed the Festival in 2023, you can find out more from northlondonfestival.org.uk or enquiriesnlf@outlook.com – even better, it's easy to sign up to receive the newsletter.

MUSIC AT FELLOWSHIP HOUSE: Messiaen's 'Quartet For The End Of Time'

ANDREW BOTTERILL

On 15 January 1941 Olivier Messiaen put on the first public performance of his 'Quartet For The End Of Time'. No ordinary World Premiere this. Deep in Germany on the Polish border, Görlitz at that time was known for Stalag VIII-A, the vast POW camp for Poles and other allied troops. Messiaen had been taken prisoner at the fall of France the previous year and composed the piece for piano, violin, cello and clarinet – supposedly the only musical instruments which could be found in the camp.

The Commandant authorised the performance which took place before German officers, guards and several hundred inmates, most of whom had no previous experience of chamber music. One can only imagine the mix and strength of emotions as the quartet played. Captors and captives.

82 years later, the piece was the mainstay of a spring evening concert at Fellowship House on 30 April, played to perfection by the talented young professionals of the Echo Ensemble. An emotional evening, the music haunting and beautiful, the harsh brickwork backdrop in the hall seemingly lending a further level of evocative power.

Messiaen happily survived. He was released in May 1941 and returned to Paris becoming Professor of Harmony at the Paris Conservatoire until his retirement in 1978. He died in 1992.



Photo: Andrew Botterill



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