

Celebrating Larry Adler's Centenary

Legendary performer, Larry Adler (Lawrence Cecil Adler), was born on the 10th February 1914 in Baltimore USA. He was widely acknowledged as one of the world's most skilled harmonica players. Composers such as Ralph Vaughan Williams, Malcolm Arnold, Darius Milhaud and Arthur Benjamin composed works for him. George and Ira Gershwin were two of his closest friends.

During the later stage of his career he was known for his collaborations on *The Glory of Gershwin*, a CD produced by Sir George Martin in celebration of Larry's 80th birthday. Many popular musicians took part including: Sting, Sir Elton John, Kate Bush, and Jon Bon Jovi.

Quote from Sir George Martin:

"Of course Larry was a compulsive name-dropper but he really did know the greatest of people and for me it was wonderful to work with such a legend".

Larry gave the harmonica a place on the concert platform for the first time, his name being synonymous with the instrument. Having run away from home at 13, he rose to stardom on the stage and in film. Larry became one of the biggest names in the United States until accused of Communist leanings by Joseph McCarthy (on a list including many other famous names) and this caused him to be blacklisted and unable to continue working in the country. Fortunately, he was made welcome in Britain which became his new home and from where he was able to perform all over the world, eventually returning for occasional visits to his homeland.

In millennium year, Larry Adler was included on a list of 100 most famous people of the past century.

Quotes from Sting:

"... having reached some level of luminosity myself, I felt confident enough to place a call with Larry's management and ask him to help me out on a song I had just composed. The song was called 'Shape of My Heart' and I wanted the sound of a chromatic harmonica to grace its middle section. Why not contact the best in the business; the name synonymous with the mastery of that difficult and demanding instrument, Larry Adler himself".

"... Larry had agreed to perform at Carnegie Hall for The Rainforest Foundation's benefit concert, with a full orchestra, playing Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue. An almost unbelievable feat, except I was there in the wings, open mouthed like the rest of the audience".

There is no question that Larry Adler had a lasting influence on music and instrumentalists. Many Hohner harmonicas carry the name, *Larry Adler Professional* and he did more for this instrument than any other player in history.

In celebration of his extraordinary life, photographer Gary Italiaander, who was a personal friend, will soon release a book called *'Reflections' – A Tribute to Larry Adler*. It will include previously unseen portraits as well as many memories shared by his partner Gloria Leighton, his family, friends and luminaries. These include: Sir George Martin, Sting, Sir Michael Parkinson, Itzhak Perlman and more.

There will also soon be the release of a superb CD, unlike any other recording he ever made - a live performance recorded during his 1997 Australian tour.

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