



The Association of Jewish Refugees

SERVING HOLOCAUST REFUGEES AND SURVIVORS NATIONWIDE

www.ajr.org.uk

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AJR plaque to honour Sir Rudolf Bing

As part of their 75th anniversary celebrations The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) is delighted to announce that it will be unveiling a special commemorative plaque in honour of Sir Rudolf Bing at Glyndebourne on Wednesday 17 August. Sir Rudolf was General Manager at Glyndebourne between 1936 and 1949.

Following the unveiling, AJR members from across the country will then enjoy a performance of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and a dinner at one of Glyndebourne's famous restaurants.

Born in 1902 in Vienna, Sir Rudolf studied music and art history at the University of Vienna before relocating to Berlin in 1927 where he served as General Manager of opera houses, and later in Darmstadt.

In February 1934, at the request fellow émigré Fritz Busch, Bing negotiated the contracts for European singers to perform at Glyndebourne before arriving there himself in the summer of 1934. He fulfilled the same job a year later when he also worked at the Festival as an assistant producer. The following year, 1936, he took over as General Manager, a job he held until 1939, and took up again in 1945 until he left to become the General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1949.

While living in Berlin, Bing married the Russian ballerina Nina Schelemskaya-Schlesnaya in 1928 and remained together until her death in 1983. In January 1987, he married again, to Carroll Douglass.

Bing became a British subject in 1946, a year before founding the Edinburgh International Festival. He was knighted in 1971 and died in September 1997, aged 95 in New York.

Founded in July 1941, the AJR represents and supports Jewish victims of Nazi oppression who rebuilt their lives in Britain. Alongside our social and welfare services we are committed to perpetuating the legacy of the refugees and are prominent supporters of several leading institutions engaged in Holocaust memorialisation in the UK.

AJR Trustee Frank Harding, said: "It gives us great pleasure to commemorate the life of Sir Rudolf Bing, someone whose accomplishments brought great joy and entertainment to generations of people from around the world. Through his pioneering work at Glyndebourne, and later at Edinburgh, he made an enormous contribution to British culture on which he has left an indelible mark.

Through our plaque scheme we are honouring prominent Jewish émigrés from Nazism who made a significant contribution to their adopted homeland. The plaque honouring Sir Rudolf follows the dedications we have already mounted: to the biochemist and Nobel Prize winner Sir Hans Krebs and to Sir Ludwig Guttmann, who founded the Paralympics, and to the theologian, teacher and rabbi, Dr Leo Baeck. We have also installed a plaque in memory of the Cosmo restaurant in Swiss Cottage, in London, a famous meeting place for the refugees.

We believe that these commemorative plaques will help form a tangible link between the illustrious earlier residents and the local community as well as fascinating residents and visitors. As well as being instructive and informative, they bring the past into the present, and they perpetuate the memory of the person being honoured.”

Gus Christie, Executive Chairman of Glyndebourne, said, “We are delighted to have a plaque honouring Rudi Bing, who along with my grandparents, John Christie and Audrey Mildmay, the conductor, Fritz Busch and director, Carl Ebert, were the founding fathers of Glyndebourne Festival Opera and were responsible for setting the standards, to which we still aspire to today. As my grandfather said, “doing not the best we can do, but the best that can be done anywhere!”

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Notes on the AJR for Editors:

The AJR is the leading national charitable organisation exclusively delivering social, welfare and volunteer services to Jewish victims of Nazi oppression living in Great Britain.

The AJR supports Holocaust education and research projects and initiatives to commemorate the Holocaust.

The AJR has produced the ground-breaking audio-visual testimony archive, *Refugee Voices*. This collection of 150 filmed interviews creates a legacy of the experiences of the refugees and will advance and enhance Holocaust research for future generations. *Refugee Voices* enables Holocaust researchers and scholars to watch up to 450 hours of film and read fully edited and transcribed accounts. For the first time, researchers will also be assisted by time-codes that, together with a summary sheet and key words section, direct users to specific sections of the films. Details are at www.refugeevoices.co.uk

AJR Chief Executive, Michael Newman, is a member of the UK delegation to the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\)](#), which brings together governments and non-governmental organisations to raise awareness of the Holocaust and places political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance, and research