

LIVE FROM LINCOLN CENTER

May 3, 2007, 8:00 p.m. on PBS

A Lincoln Center Special:

A Gala Night At Alice Tully Hall

"Goodnight, Irene", as recorded by the folk group, The Weavers, was one of the great hits in the Pop world of the 1950s. On Thursday, May 3, on PBS, Live From Lincoln Center will say "Goodnight, Alice". On that evening we'll present highlights from a gala concert marking the closing, for 18 months, of Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, during which time the Hall will undergo extensive renovations.

Opened in 1969, 1,100-seat Alice Tully Hall has since then been the scene of thousands of extraordinary musical events. It has also been the home of Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Society and Film Society, as well as the auditorium where many of our Live From Lincoln Center presentations have originated.

Who was Miss Alice Tully, whose name has adorned this grand house of music? She was born in 1902, in Corning, New York, the granddaughter of William Houghton who founded the Corning Glass Works. A musician, after studies in Paris she sang as a mezzo-soprano and then shifted to soprano. She made her debut in 1927 with the Padeloup Orchestra, and in 1933 she sang in "Cavalleria Rusticana" in New York. During the next couple of decades her nearly 6-foot tall frame was an unmistakably familiar sight at all the major musical events in New York City.

It was in 1958, when she inherited the estate of her grandfather, that she began to stake out her role as one of the City's most revered citizens. By the time of her death, in December, 1993 at the age of 91, she had donated millions of dollars to the major arts institutions in New York. Her cousin, Arthur Houghton, Jr., one of the founders of Lincoln Center, suggested that what was needed was an intimate chamber music hall. Inspired by Houghton's suggestion, Alice Tully became the principal benefactor in the construction of the new hall that has been described as "one of the country's most storied venues."

In later years, Alice Tully served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and as a Board member of the New York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera and the Juilliard School. For her contributions to the City's cultural life she was awarded the prized Handel Medallion of New York in 1970. And several composers dedicated works to her, among them William Schuman, Gian-Carlo Menotti and Gian Francesco Malipiero.

A star-studded cast has been assembled for the gala marking the temporary closing of Alice Tully Hall; among them are David Robertson and the Juilliard

Orchestra; members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in an excerpt from Mendelssohn's Octet; Kelli O'Hara; Wynton Marsalis; Laurie Anderson and Philip Glass. Looking ahead to the future masters of musical performance, Saeka Matsuyama, a young violin student at Juilliard, will play the Finale of Mozart's A Major Violin Concerto, the one known as the "Turkish" Concerto. Master of Ceremonies for the evening will be the former anchor of NBC's Nightly News, Tom Brokaw.

David Robertson, Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, was seen on one of our Live From Lincoln Center programs conducting the New York Philharmonic a couple of years ago. He is one of the fastest-rising conductors on the world scene and was recently described in the New York Times as the conductor who invariably brings with him the most stimulating and provocative programs to be heard here. He will lead the Juilliard Orchestra in music from Leonard Bernstein's "West Side Story", the composer's 1957 masterpiece whose setting is in the tenement district that was torn down to make way for the building of Lincoln Center.

Along with the music the gala will feature film clips from Lincoln Center's past, as well as footage showcasing the "New" Alice Tully Hall when it re-opens in the fall of 2008, the start of Lincoln Center's 50th anniversary season.

"A Lincoln Center Special: A Gala Night at Alice Tully Hall" promises to be very special indeed. So mark your calendars for Thursday evening, May 3---and a reminder that not all PBS stations carry Live From Lincoln Center at the same time, so please check your local station for the exact date and time of the telecast in your area.

Enjoy!

Martin Bookspan