

Q : You are Swiss, born in Luzern, can you tell us what originally brought you to London and how did you discover the Swiss Church.

A : Cut a long story short, with 4 years of age I was dragged to the ballet school of Bice Scheitlin in Luzern and by 11 years of age I knew I wanted to be a ballet dancer against the will of my dear parents. It was then when I was 16 years of age the reverent Rumpf at that time from the Lukas Kirche begged my parents to let me go and follow my dreams!

Under great protest, my parents let me go to Zurich and join the ballet under the direction of Nicolas Beriozoff at that time father of Svetlana Beriosova, former Ballerina at the Royal Ballet. I started to love the Russian ballet and started to dream going to Russia. However, politically during the period of the iron curtain my father did not sign the necessary documentations. I therefore went to Germany, Koln, Berlin and Leipzig and really did not like the German modern ballet. Back in Zurich I was on stage with Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev and I remembered how beautifully they danced and so I decided to follow my instinct and come to London with 19 years of age all by myself. The next chapter could fill a book! Yes at the end of Margot's life I became a personal friend.

Cut an other story short after my late husband Simon Richard Gordon, passed through tragic circumstances back in 1981 and I was left fending for my son Matthew (at the time 1 year 4 months old). I was given for a short time some financial help from the Musician Benevolent fund, as my late husband was a pianist and conductor. Then I was passed on to the Swiss Benevolent Fund and I was in the incredible, kind care of dear Margrit Lyster.

After Margrit sadly left, dear Petra Kehr came into my life and we formed an artistic friendship. I think poor Petra got the worst Years in my life, exhausted and ready to die I was merely some flesh without any view of life! And then, just like a miracle, dear Petra invited me to the coffee mornings at the Swiss Church.

I got to know some people and, to the greatest joy, I found Margrit again who attended some weeks. Then, I was introduced to the lovely Reverend Carla Maurer. That completed my journey to the Swiss Church! I am not religious but I am a great believer, God has looked after me and always will, amen.

Q : You are an artist, musician, dancer, and educator. Can you tell us more about what Ruth Gordon does aside from the Swiss Church?

A : During my blackest period, which lasted almost 6 years, my son tried his hardest to find me something to do and I rejected every suggestion. I one day came to the realization by myself sitting on the sofa that there would be only 2 possibilities. One I could go to the phone and call for a coffin to be brought to my flat and I could sit in it and wait for death, or I could pull myself together and do something with the rest of my life! It took me one week of contemplating when I decided it could take months for me to die and just sitting in a coffin was not desirable. So cut a long story short I found a family with 2 children from Ghana who wanted piano lessons. I was very reluctant to do so as I was years out of practice. I finally agreed to give it a try without any payments. Well both children blossomed and loved coming to me but unfortunately the family decided to go back to Ghana. However before they left they gave my details to another family from Ghana. And so they came with 3 children. Their children progressed and did very well with ABRSM exams and over the past 3 years I increased my students to 60 peoples. I have some lovely stories of students with special needs. One in particular who is now 18. I helped to get his GCSE in music and he now does A levels in music. I now realise that there is such a need to help. With me volunteering not only gives many talented children a chance to explore music to the finest but equally gives me a purpose of existence! I also volunteer Mon, Tue and Thu for Age Exchange in Blackheath speaking to people with dementia and the ones are terminally ill with cancer. Another challenge but I do enjoy making them laugh and forgetting their challenges for a short time, it is very rewarding.

Q : Over the years you have been organising an amazing fundraising Gala event at the Swiss Church, a stage performance which features dance, music and opera singing. Can you tell us a little more about it? How did you come up with the idea and who are the participants in your project.

A : During the first lock down I was watching a lot of TV. It made my blood boil to see how much coverage the football got and then all the walking and running of 'famous people' raising money for one thing or another. And where was anything said about the poor artists, surely not a thing of the past?! Pure anger and frustration gave me the idea, why could not art raise funds? I knew we would never go on TV, but some how it can be done I said to myself. I spoke to dear Carla Maurer, I am sure she thought I was mad at the time, but was kind enough to offer me the church. Then I was talking to some friends in the ballet and music world for some advice and help and all I got out of it was my beautiful ballerina and a less accomplished singer with a great pianist. Dancers were no longer available as the ones not engaged in the big companies were forced to engage in other work like males became lorry drivers! So we went ahead with one singer, pianist and dancer. Unfortunately I had to ask the first singer to leave however my fabulous pianist Ricardo helped me to find our present singer who has a god given voice and a clarinettist and a violinist. I found a lovely harpist and drummer. My dear Eleonora (ballerina) found me 3 more female dancers and one out of the 3 found me 3 more female dancers. I found for Eleonora the male dancer and he

found one more male dancer and now I have 3 more male dancers in reserve. This is how one grows slowly all word of mouth. I managed to show how much I know and can teach them. Luckily I worked with great people in the music and in dance they all passed on a wealth of knowledge to me. Sadly I am in no position to offer my artists a contract. They all work or study and are incredibly loyal to me and whenever I have 'cooked up' a project they are right behind me. I am the most blessed human on this earth penny less but with a wealth of knowledge!

Q : You have been extremely generous with your time by organising the Gala, would you like to share with us what part of the project drives you the most?

A : Simple answer Art and Artists! Unfortunately now and in the past art has and is to a large degree political. To me politic is ugly and evil created by man. I love to create beauty and hope.

Q : What is next for you? We've heard your Gala project is growing and touring in London, can you tell us more?

A : Again slowly Organisations come forth and asking for our input artistically and financially. We as a company are only too happy to perform and help. I always come back to the bible, Jesus was able to help and teach with no money, why can't I?

Q : Each time I see you, you are very positive, and enthusiastic and seem to lift the spirit of everyone you encounter, can you let us in on your secret?

A : The answer is simple I am in God's merciful hands and I learned happiness with having nothing!