



Marion Hall MacFadyen

September 15, 1910 - January 5, 2012

Marion (Hall) MacFadyen

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A concert pianist and for many years on the Faculty of the I U Music School, died on 5 January at Garden Villa in Bloomington. She was 101. Marion was born September 15, 1910 in Greely, Colorado to George and Gertrude (Jones) Hall.

As a child prodigy from rural Colorado she went as a teenager to study at Columbia Music College in Chicago. An enthusiast for the romantic repertoire of the late 19th century, she acquired a formidable technique.

She graduated in time for the Great Depression and like so many classical musicians found work on popular radio stations, dance venues and pop orchestras. An powerful exception was her concertizing with the National Symphony Orchestra, a touring part of the Roosevelt Administration's popular WPA program. Instead of the wealthy patrons of Chicago, Cleveland and New York, the Orchestra played for Steel workers, prison populations and inmates of mental hospitals across the Midwest. These

personal and professional experiences left a lasting impression on her and incubated a deep compassion throughout her life for those kicked, bruised and sometimes destroyed by injustice, poverty and inequality. Like many others though she learned to keep her opinions to herself - the years of McCarthyism

enforced a silence on social issues and controversial opinions.

But these stultifying social pressures were never far away. Two of her close friends were found murdered in the charged violent poverty of post war Chicago. Although she, like a number of other Chicago musicians, was under the protection of a number of wealthy patrons in Chicago, Marion endured a campaign of vilification by a rightwing Chicago Tribune music critic whose other target included Jasha Heifetz, several well known opera singers and chamber musicians. Though prevented by agents fearful of the Tribune critic, from playing big venues, she enthusiastically joined Chicago area chamber groups and formed another herself. Throughout the fifties she taught on the piano faculty of Roosevelt University under the auspices of Rudolf Ganz.

But in the 1970's she reverted to an earlier openness and joined the Grey Panthers and began to support the struggles for liberation and equality that had come to Bloomington. As a life long member of the Musicians Union she won a victory in a dispute with the University with the support of Bloomington trades unions. But much later in life a local religious figure was imprisoned for cheating her and other Bloomington figures of most of their life savings.

Her son an investigative journalist in London, in calls from distant wars and revolutions, remembers her curiosity and enthusiasm when sometimes she would place the phone on the piano and play a challenging phrase. She rejoiced in music and in her students and spoke of them as she would a child of her own.

Marion is survived by her son Gavin MacFadyen of London.

Allen Funeral Home is handling arrangements. Friends can send condolences to www.allenfuneralhome.org

Tribute Wall

ME

“ Dearest Gavin,
I am so so sorry for your loss. I loved your mother and owed her a huge debt of gratitude for her care and concern of me when I left home. She suggested I go see one of her students, Robert Mungerson, and he gave me direction and stability and more. Your Mom was my first encounter with an artist, with a genius, and with the tenderest of mothers. She had so much respect for her son! The last time we had contact, I had sent her a photo I had taken of you when we were 17, and she called to thank me and we visited a bit.
What a blessing she lived long enough to be able to see Matthew's fine work.
I'm a late comer to these computer-machines, and am slowly finding my way on them so I only just found this. Forgive the lateness of this message!
I will light candles for her and for you. Sending love as always,
Melinda

Melinda Dillon - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

DT

“ Dear Mr. MacFadyen, Please know that your dear mother was such an inspiration to my wife, Vicki, who studied with her at IU and then kept in touch over the years and went back to share Rachmaninoff and technique and...and....and... By association, your mother inspired me as well. I did sing for her once or twice. It was a distinct honor.

Her loving and giving spirit was evident in everything she did. Of course, in her teaching and her passion for music, but also in her dealings with people. She fed our souls, she lifted us up out the mundane world and transported us to the heights, she BELIEVED in us, she nurtured us, she moved us, she "shook" us. Even in her 80's and 90's she had the fire of a teenager and the wisdom of the ages and she spread that fire and that wisdom across her living room, throughout her studio and into the world of music and of education. Thank you, thank you for sharing her with all of us music students. We are far richer than you can imagine for having known and worked with Professor Marion Hall.

Sincerely, Thomas King, IU, class of 1970

Dr. Thomas King - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

VI

“ I was so saddened to hear of the death of my beloved teacher, Marion Hall. When I went to IU in 1968 to study piano, the piano committee put me on performance probation because of my background from an emotionally abusive piano teacher who had destroyed my technique. No one at IU would agree to teach me because I had too many "problems." I heard several students in the lounge talking about Marion Hall. "She can help anyone's technique." I went to see her and begged her to teach me. She agreed to do so, even though she was only paid for 12 students and was already over her limit. She believed in me and my talent. She changed my life and my technique. Many years later, I wrote a book called, "Playing the Piano Naturally," and listed her in the acknowledgements. I sent her a copy of the book and she immediately wanted 6 more for the students she was teaching (she was 92). I was able to visit her and play for her, so that she could see how her belief in me had born fruit. Because of what she taught me and the difference she made in my life, I have been able to change the lives of other pianists whose technique has been destroyed by abusive teachers. I loved her and owe her SO much. I can't pay it back. I can only pay it forward.
Dr. Vicki King, Coordinator of Piano Studies, Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN

Vicki King - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

WI

“ I studied with Marion, whom I always called Miss Hall, during the early seventies. She was an incredible inspiration to me and helped me immensely as a person and pianist. She was one of people who are seminal in one's life. I will always remembered her as one of the personal pillars in my life and will miss her dearly.

William Capone - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

KA

“ Dear Mr. MacFadyen, Please accept our condolence on the passing of your mother, Marion Hall MacFadyen from the Friday Musicale, Bloomington, Indiana. At the beginning of our monthly meeting on January 13, Yvonne Reinier presented a biography and appreciation of your mother. She was beloved of many of our members. We wish you comfort and blessings at this time. Sincerely, Kathleen Mickel, recording secretary for the Friday Musicale Board and membership, president Cynthia Hrabak

Kathleen Mickel - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

A(

“ I studied privately with Miss Hall from 1981-1990. She helped me tear away layers of stage fright and untied the knots in my hands and arms and psyche - residue of prior teachers. I also appreciate the stories she shared with me, and continue to be inspired by her every day as I practice.

Ann O'Bryan (Cockerham) - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

JO

“ I remember being at Grandma Werner's one day when we were talking about family members. Aunt Marion's name came up and Grandma thrilled in telling me about her being a concert pianist. I never met my Aunt Marion, and I would have loved to have done so. She was one of those exceptional people that only come along once in a lifetime. My condolences to Cousin Gavin, know that your mom lived a full and rewarding life and "did it her way."

Joyce Petty - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

RO

“ I doubt you remember me as we met only once when you visited. Marion spoke often about her admiration for you. I lost track of her she moved over by campus. The last time I spoke to her was when she had some remodeling done by the family member of the one who swindled her. I confirmed her suspicions about the quality of the work. I had no idea that she was swindled, but since he preyed on family and friends I can see that happening. She was also victim to the guy who built the lake house. I did a lot of remedial work on that house. I came to know her through a student who worked for me. I don't recall if you were here for her husband's memorial at the Union, but Marion had me take the leftover food to another of her students who was a friend of both of ours. In fact he lived in the apartment in the lake house and did chores. I used to go to the union and play chess with her husband after he moved to the Union. Mostly, she gave me work to help me financially and because she trusted me to do things for her. I actually feel so bad because she lived at Garden Villa. I live on the same road and only a half mile further. I went by several times daily. About, seven years ago I bought the factory (Otis Elevator) across the street from the Villa. As you might surmise I have been successful in my construction and apartment business. I have a picture your mother took of me to this day. I just want to say that she was a friend to me and I will never forget her or the Calico cat she gave me. I never understood why she was so very good to me, but she was.....feel free to respond, or if there is still anything I can do please let me know.....

Robert Shaw - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

KE

“ Dear Gavin,

My thoughts are with you as I remember your remarkable mother. She was such an incredible piano teacher that I think if I had been any kind of sentient primate she could have gotten music out of me. I was very fortunate to find her and I will always use the gifts she gave me in my own playing and teaching.

Her approach also involved the time away from the bench, trying to awaken her students to new possibilities, whether it be by incorporating Feldenkrais Movement, Alexander Technique, or whatever. It was not that she herself taught these things but she suggested them to her students to help create an opening for their musical progress. She was a devout pragmatist, and a quiet radical, in the original sense. That is, she went for the root of the problem, and worked from there whether it was piano technique or something else. And with piano technique she was both supremely patient and articulate in the most minute detail. She was fascinated with it and this infected us.

In this regard she was a teacher head and shoulders above some of her colleagues who, by virtue of their performing careers, were adept mostly at attracting students. She saw no student as unable to be helped and she put this into action again and again.

That she was also a radical in her worldview was a result merely of looking at the root cause of other problems. She was always getting pleas for funds from various causes that she supported, organizations working on a shoestring around the world. She never gave up on them either.

I will miss her and I send you warm regards. Your mother's was a life well-lived.

Kevin Walsh

Kevin Walsh - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

LE

“ Marion was one of the greatest influences in my life. Her positive outlook, her pride in her son's and students' achievements. She had information about piano technique that could change people's playing.

I last visited her about 8 or 10 years ago, when she was beginning to lose her memory. She could still give me a piano lesson though! I know that she helped hundreds of students reach a higher level.

I wish that I had seen her in Nov. when I was back in Bloomington, but I had no idea that she was still among us.

Lea Schmidt-Rogers - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

DM

“ What I remember most about Marion Hall Macfadyen is the love and concern with which she taught and also the fact that she really had something profound to teach. She knew everything about the piano and the nature of music. I studied with her with for years. Some things she tried to teach me came easily, others less so. But when I finally understood I remember her deep satisfaction and pleasure. This was a very real, palpable pleasure. Very pure. As a teacher myself, I always remember this. And of course every time I touch a piano I think of her and the rich warm tone she produced when she played. A prodigy who appeared with the Denver Symphony in her teens, Marion was an original with her own way of interpreting and teaching music. Her students were very lucky to have known her. She was the real deal.

David Michael Hertz - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

PA

“ I loved Aunt Marion and wish I could have spent more time with her. One of the best memories I have of her is when I went to Bloomington and spent a few days with her with my nephew Jason. She played one of the Grand Pianos she had in her living room. It was incredible, beautiful, an experience few will ever experience. The sound, the depth, the emotion. Wonderful! I wish I had such a passion for one thing in my life! I am amazed she lived so long. As a child when she visited us, (my mom in San Diego) she just never seemed to feel good. God, you have to love that right side of the brain. Bless you Aunt Marion. Say hi to Mom!

Patty Franson - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

DE

“ Gavin, you are very much in my thoughts as I remember Marion vividly this week. I have a tape of her faculty concert at Indiana in 1980 with 2 Brahms Piano Quartets, which I'm having converted to CD. Happy to send you one if you'd like.

Dennis Malone - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

DI

“ Dear Mr. Macfadyen,

I send my sincerest condolences on the passing of your mother, Marion Hall. I studied with her at Indiana and know that she is responsible for my being a professional pianist and teacher. I had the great fortune of visiting her while she was still living in her apartment in Bloomington in 2001. She was so excited by new things she was discovering at the piano and made me sit down and try things right there! I will never forget her enthusiasm for music and her tremendous curiosity for the technique of playing the piano, as well as her extreme devotion to her students. I feel very honored to have been under her tutelage and have had her as my teacher.

Sincerely,

*Diane Birr
Professor of Piano
Ithaca College*

Diane Birr - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM

SS

“ Aunt Marion was a wonderful and fascinating woman. I thought I knew her but from her obituary, I learned many things. I didn't know of her compassion for the downtrodden although it doesn't surprise me. My mother adored her and felt she was the most talented person in the world. She will be missed.

Sherrill Swanson - March 22, 2013 at 08:18 AM