

Josef Locke

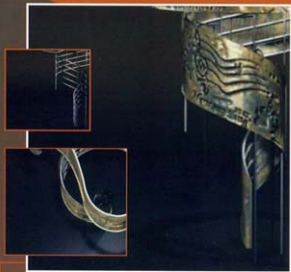
Commemoration Monument

Project Initiator: Michael Sheerin

Monument Designer: Terry Quigley

Sculptor: Maurice Harron

The monument is built in two parts: the underlying structure is made from stainless steel which is crafted into the opening bar of music from Josef's 'Hear my Song'. The outer skin, which wraps around this, is created from bronze and depicts some of the highlights from his life.



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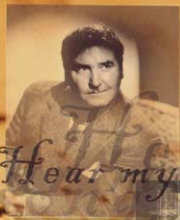
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Josef Locke

Commemoration Monument



Hear my song



Officially unveiled
on Tuesday 22nd March 2005,
by John Hume and
Phil Coulter.

Josef Locke 1917 - 1999.



Josef Locke: born Joseph McLaughlin, on March 23 in 1917 in Derry, Northern Ireland. He sang in local churches in the Bogside as a child. He became a local celebrity in the 40s and toured the UK variety circuit. He went on to play 19 seasons at the popular northern seaside resort of Blackpool.

The renowned Irish tenor John McCormack urged him to find a theatrical agent. So Josef contacted band-leader/impresario Jack Hylton. Hylton had booked Josef into the Victoria Palace, but found it difficult to fit his real name onto the bill, so shortened it to Josef Locke. Two years later, Josef was signed by Lew and Leslie Grade, who steered the singer to real stardom.

He made his first radio broadcast in 1949 on the popular Happydrome, and subsequently appeared on TV programmes such as Rooftop Rendezvous, Top of the Town, All-star Bill and The Frankie Howlerd Show.

EMI Records signed him to Columbia label in 1947, and his first releases were the two Italian songs Santa Lucia and Come back to Sorrento. In 1947 Josef released Hear my song, Violetta, which became forever associated with him. He also made a number of films, including Holidays with Pay for Mancunian films. Josef retired in Co.Kildare, emerging for the occasional charity concert.

In 1992 the Peter Chelsom film Hear My Song was released, a fantasy based on the exuberant notion of Locke returning from Irish exile to complete an old love affair and save a Liverpool-based Irish nightclub from ruin. Josef was flown to London for the première, attended by Princess Diana, and became the celebrity on This is Your Life. During the spring of 1992 his music got into the top 10 album charts with Hear My Song.

Despite his sad death on Friday, October 15 1999, after a lifetime of spreading joy he will live on through his music and the monument we propose to build for him.

Played 19 seasons
in Blackpool.

Received a gold
disk from EMI
for Hear My Song

The home
where Joseph
was born

Josef Locke
October 15th 1999



Carnegie Hall



Joseph McLaughlin
March 23rd 1917



A large spray
of lilies topped
Josef's coffin

He was the son of a
butcher and cattle dealer