

Anna Pavlova & Ivy House

Pavlova 2012

100 years ago, in 1912, Anna Pavlova bought a house in London, known as Ivy House. Current residents, the London Jewish Cultural Centre, are celebrating the centenary of the great ballerina making London her home with a week of celebrations from 17th June–24th June.

Anna Pavlova became a household name after her brilliant success in the Palace Theatre in 1910. For this first London season Pavlova stayed at the Hyde Park Hotel, but soon wishing for a garden of her own, she rented a small house in Golders Green. The following season she began to search for somewhere more permanent. Her companion Victor Dandré recalled, 'we did not have to look for long, for nearly opposite to where we were living, was a house with a large, neglected garden to be let or sold. The stone wall round the house and a part of one of the walls of the house itself were overgrown with ancient ivy, whence the name of the house - Ivy House.' Pavlova rented Ivy House for the summer of 1911 and then the following year bought it. According to the estate agents Ivy House had once been tenanted by the painter J.M.W Turner. This was an added attraction to Pavlova, as she relished the idea that a previous 'artist' had lived there. Pavlova had



Anna Pavlova with Jack in the garden at Ivy House, Hampstead, mid-1920s. Photo: Lafayette

her furniture and artwork shipped from St Petersburg and began to make Ivy House her London home. 'So it was in England, after much searching and disappointment, that at last I found what I felt to be the ideal place. In all the world, I feel, there cannot be another home of peace and contentment.'

To mark the occasion Pavlova threw a spectacular garden party in the grounds of her new home. Over four hundred guests, including London's social elite, were invited. It was reported in the society columns as 'a delightful affair' and 'the best of the season'.

Pavlova converted the large balconied hall into a studio and it was here that she personally

trained a small group of little English girls. One of these girls recalled many years later the first time she visited Ivy House, 'everything seemed so cool, white and shady... there were big vases of flowers, and perfume everywhere'. Several of these little girls went on to join Pavlova's company. When war broke out in 1914 Pavlova and her company left Europe for the Americas and did not return to London or Ivy House till 1919.

On her return Pavlova's love for Ivy House and its gardens increased and she cherished the brief time she could spend there between tours.

'I soon found...that England was my spiritual home. There only

could I find absolute rest, quiet, somewhere I might retreat from the rush and turmoil, somewhere I and my swans could be alone.'

The garden at Ivy House became Pavlova's refuge, it was here that she kept an aviary of exotic birds brought back from her travels as well as pigeons, flamingos and her beloved swans. Pavlova will always be associated with the swan and kept several in the grounds of the house. They would come to her call and surrender to her petting and affection, her favourite was named Jack.

Not only did Ivy House become the great dancer's home and retreat from the endless months of touring but it was also the artistic hub of the Pavlova Company. It was here that prospective members were auditioned, rehearsals taken, tours finalised, costumes made and sets and props stored in the cellars that ran under the house.

Ivy House remained a consistent feature in Pavlova's life amongst an untiring schedule of tours and performances.

'Each time she had to leave her home on one of her prolonged world tours, she would go into every room and say good-bye to her favourite household objects, then out in the garden to say good-bye to her birds and flowers...she never failed to observe this ritual.'

Ivy House and its contents were auctioned after the ballerina's premature death in 1931.

Since that time the house has gone through a number of reincarnations: as an annexe to the Manor House Hospital, as the new Speech and Drama department of the Royal College of Music and Middlesex Polytechnic and, most recently, as the home of the London Jewish Cultural Centre, an independent, inclusive educational charity.

Anna Pavlova left a cultural legacy in Ivy House, which the London Jewish Cultural Centre aims to preserve and enhance. Their Ivy House Music & Dance programme has brought stars from the worlds of classical music and dance back to perform in this iconic building. This summer they will

celebrate the centenary of Pavlova establishing her home in Ivy House with special contributions from the ballet world.

The London Jewish Cultural Centre looks forward to welcoming you to Ivy House for Pavlova 2012.



Anna Pavlova in the tutu (after a design by Prince Schervachidze) worn in her pas de deux, London, 1910. Photo: Foulsham and Bamfield

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Ivy House, 2006
Photo: Will Curtis

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Part of the
London Jewish Cultural Centre's
Ivy House Music & Dance programme

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For further information & to book online visit www.ljcc.org.uk or call 020 8457 5000

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