

From E.B. White's *Here is New York*, 1949

Another hot night I stop off at the band concert in the Mall in Central Park. The people seated on the benches fanned out in front of the band shell are attentive, appreciative. In the trees the night wind sings, bringing leaves to life, endowing them with speech; the electric lights illuminate the green branches from the under side, translating them into a new language. On a bench directly in front of me, a boy sits with his arm around his girl; they are proud of each other and are swathed in music. The cornetist steps forward for a solo, begins, "Drink to me only with thine eyes. . ." In the wide, warm night the horn is startlingly pure and magical. Then from the North River another horn solo begins—the

"Queen Mary" announcing her intentions. She is not on key; she is a half tone off. The trumpeter in the bandstand never flinches. The horns quarrel savagely, but no one minds having the intimation of travel injected into the pledge of love. "I leave," sobs Mary. "And I will pledge with mine," sighs the trumpeter. Along the asphalt paths strollers pass to and fro; they behave considerably, respecting the musical atmosphere. Popsicles are moving well. In the warm grass beyond the fence, forms wriggle in the shadows, and the skirts of girls approaching on the Mall are ballooned by the breeze, and their bare shoulders catch the lamplight. "Drink to me only with thine eyes." It is a magical occasion, and it's all free.

Have you ever been to a free concert at The Naumburg Bandshell in Central Park? If you haven't, you should plan to go before the summer is over. It's one of most unique experiences New York has to offer.

The Naumburg Bandshell is one of New York City's great cultural icons. It has entertained generations of New Yorkers with an incredible variety of performances. Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin and The Grateful Dead have all performed on the stage. Martin Luther King once stood there and John Lennon was eulogized from that very spot.

The bandshell was donated by philanthropist--and classical music lover extraordinaire - Elkan Naumburg. In 1905, Mr. Naumburg had begun a series of free, classical concerts in Central Park known as the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts. When it was completed in 1923, the bandshell became the series' new home. Thanks to the generosity, dedication and hard work of Elkan Naumburg's descendants, all of whom have also been unbelievably committed to classical music, the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts series is celebrating its 105th anniversary this year. And, yes, the performances take place in the bandshell. Though the bandshell continues to feature other kinds of performances, the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts are the centerpiece of the season.

As has been the case with many of New York's iconic structures--Carnegie Hall and Grand Central Station to name two--there was a time when the bandshell was facing the wrecking ball. Fortunately, the tide turned and the bandshell was saved. But, concern continues about its future.

-from a piece by Midge Woolsey written in 2010. Originally published along with her interview of Christopher London on WQXR.org

<<http://www.wqxr.org/articles/wqxr-features/2010/jul/16/naumburg-bandshell-new-york-icon/>><http://www.wqxr.org/articles/wqxr-features/2010/jul/16/naumburg-bandshell-new-york-icon/>

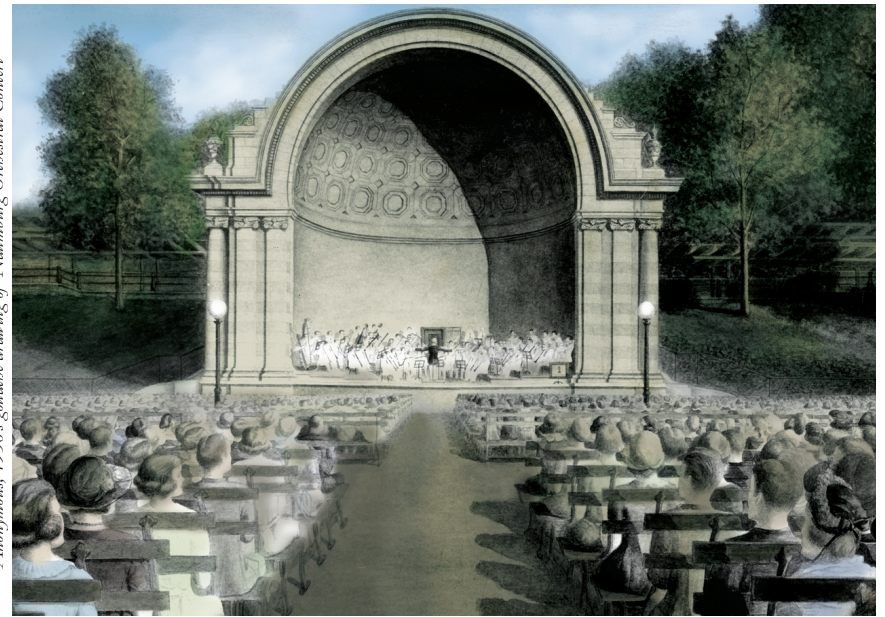
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Anonymous, 1930's gouache drawing of Naumburg Orchestral Concert



NAUMBURG ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

106TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON OF FREE CONCERTS FOR THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK

PRESENTS

THE KNIGHTS

ERIC JACOBSEN
CONDUCTOR

MIDGE WOOLSEY
HOST

7:30 PM MONDAY JUNE 20, 2011

The Historic Naumburg Bandshell on the Concert Ground of Central Park

Please visit WWW.NAUMBURGCONCERTS.ORG for more information on our series.

Our concerts this season are Tuesdays, July 26, 2011
& August 9, 2011, and Monday, August 22, 2011

In celebration of 106 years of
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World Premiere
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Morton Feldman (1926-1987)
MADAME PRESS DIED LAST WEEK AT 90

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN C MINOR, OP. 67 (1804-08)

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Scherzo Allegro
- IV. Allegro

From the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts

FREE CLASSICAL MUSIC, A SERVICE IN HARMONY WITH OUR COMMUNITY

DEAR FRIENDS:

We hope you enjoy tonight's musical performance presented by the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts and will enjoy the other concerts this season.

The Naumburg Orchestral Concerts has a 106-year tradition of providing free outdoor classical music concerts to New Yorkers. This was the vision of my great-grandfather, who founded the series in 1905, and of my great-uncle, who endowed it in 1959.

Our long term goal is to expand our program to have more full orchestral concerts each season. To do so we need to increase our endowment. Your increased donation will help us to increase that endowment.

We invite you to become a patron of the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts, a non-profit 501(c)3 located in Manhattan and managed by a board of trustees. All contributions are fully tax-deductible and will be used towards the direct costs of presenting the concerts—musicians' honoraria, park fees, chair rentals, printing and promotion or to increase our endowment.

Your gift will help to ensure that we can continue what has become a delightful musical tradition in the beautiful setting of Central Park. Please contribute what you can – all gifts, great or small, will be enormously appreciated and help us raise money from other funders.

Your help now will insure that 2011 is a great year and that 2012 is an even better year. Thank you for your interest and support.

Sincerely Yours,



Christopher W. London
President

NAUMBURG ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS
c/o C. W. LONDON 300 CENTRAL PARK WEST, 18 H NEW YORK, N.Y. 10024-1513

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The Knights are an orchestra of friends from a broad spectrum of the New York music world and who are deeply committed to creating original, engaging musical experiences for their audiences. Led by an open-minded spirit of camaraderie and exploration, The Knights seek to engage with contemporary culture through vibrant performances that encompass their roots in the Classical tradition and their passion for musical discovery. Under conductor Eric Jacobsen, The Knights perform in a wide spectrum of concert venues, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Tonic, the Brooklyn Lyceum, Le Poisson Rouge, Celebrate Brooklyn, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Central Park, Mass MoCA, and the Whitney Museum. Their expanding presence on the music festival scene includes invitations to perform at the Ravinia Festival, the Stillwater Music Festival in Minnesota, and at the Caramoor Festival's Fall Gala with Yo-Yo Ma



Lisa Bielawa: "Tempelhof Etude is the first musical chapter of a project that will culminate in Tempelhof Broadcast, a 60-minute piece for 600+ musicians on the tarmac of the former Tempelhof Airport in Berlin. This site, famous for its role in the Berlin Airlift in 1948-49, is currently open to the public, unaltered, but in 2013 it will begin to evolve into a new role in the life of the city. On several days in September 2012, we will turn the runways into a vast musical canvas, as professional, amateur and student musicians execute a spatialized symphony. The massive event will begin in the center of the field and disperse outwards. One of the big challenges for me is to find ways to make a dynamic piece without players needing to have written

parts. In this Etude, I begin to explore some of the ways that musical material can unfold according to simply-defined "tasks" – ways to make musical experiences unfold organically, according to mnemonics, rules and games. "Tempelhof Etude" was commissioned for The Knights by Susan Bloom and Eddie Jacobsen."

Lisa Bielawa has been active in New York musical life since 1990. She is Co-Founder of the MATA Festival, Vocalist of the Philip Glass Ensemble, 2009-10 Rome Prize winner in Musical Composition, and was Composer-in-Residence of the Boston Modern Orchestra Project from 2006-2009. Her work Chance Encounter has been performed in transient public spaces worldwide. Ms. Bielawa's discography includes A Handful of World (Tzadik 8039); In medias res (BMOP/sound 0017), a double-disc set of Ms. Bielawa's solo and orchestral works; and Chance Encounter (Orange Mountain Music 7004).

Midge Woolsey has proudly served the tristate community as a broadcaster for over 30 years. Since joining WQXR in 1993, she has been the Weekend Music host and more recently the Weekday Evening host. As a host on public television's flagship station Thirteen/WNET she has introduced such specials as Andrea Bocelli's Emmy nominated Statue of Liberty Concert, The Three Tenors with James Levine live from Paris, and the landmark twenty-four hour event, PBS Millennium 2000. She has also hosted numerous fundraising events, including Josh Groban in Concert and Pavarotti in Central Park.



Behind the scenes, Woolsey worked with Jac Venza on Great Performances, the award-winning PBS series of international music, dance and drama programs. She also served as production executive for award-winning producer David Grubin, working with him on several acclaimed historical documentaries for the PBS series American Experience and on the poetry series The Language of Life with Bill Moyers. Woolsey has degrees in theater and music, and has served as a director, performer and choreographer in more than 100 productions with various regional opera and musical theater companies.

Music Pavilion



In 1859 Jacob Wrey Mould, an amateur musician and the architect who designed many of the original structures in Central Park, persuaded his wealthy friends to pay for free band concerts at a temporary bandstand in the Ramble, and he arranged their musical programs. The first concert, on July 13, included the Festival March from *Tannhäuser*, Mendelssohn's song, "I would that my Love," selections from *La Traviata* and Strauss's *Sorgenbrecher Waltz*. In the summer of 1860 concerts were transferred to the Mall, and *The New York Herald* reported that the September 22 concert attracted "at least five thousand persons gathered around the performers, while outside of these were stationed an immense number of carriages... filled with the beauty and fashion of New York." The overwhelming popularity of the concerts prompted Central Park's board to finance them and to build a permanent Music Pavilion on the west side of the Mall near the Terrace. Mould designed the elaborately painted and brightly gilded Moorish-style wooden and cast-iron structure, completed in 1862. The Parks Department razed the Music Pavilion in 1923.

The Naumburg Bandshell, a gift of Elkan Naumburg to 'the City of New York and its Music Lovers', replaced in purpose the former structure. Though the Naumburg Bandshell opened on September 29th 1923, the Art Commission of New York had approved of the change in 1912 and the design of the Bandshell in 1916. 'On the Mall', composed by Edwin F. Goldman in 1923, to honor Elkan Naumburg, was premiered that September afternoon, conducted by Franz Kaltenborn. Astonishingly, during that summer, 959 concerts were presented on the Concert Ground, over 400 of which were underwritten by the Parks Department. It was a popular place, providing a well-liked activity.

The Naumburg Bandshell design has historic precedents for its shape in the Pantheon of Rome, or even more closely, in the Imperial Russian pleasure park's pavilion at Gatchina Palace by Vincenzo Brenna—his 'Eagle Pavilion' of the 1790's, and also in the later work of the architect F.G.P. Poccianti, particularly his 'Cisternone' at Livorno of 1829-42. It has historic precedents for its function in the outdoor theatres and pavilions of Versailles, for example, or the temples and 'eye-catchers' found in the park-like gardens of British country houses such as Stourhead and Stowe. The use of European park architecture as a model for what to insert in Central Park was in keeping with Olmsted's design sources and methods of nearly 60 years earlier. The Naumburg Bandshell was set into the Manhattan schist hillside, which nestles it, to prevent views being blocked across the Mall and Concert Ground which caused an earlier proposal of Carrère & Hastings to be found wanting by city and park officials. Thoughtfully, the design also stands centered between the two projecting pergola viewing points and it admirably reflects the architect William G. Tachau's own Ecole des Beaux-Arts classicist and historicist training. The result was Central Park's only Neo-Classical building.

The Mall, Central Park

SATURDAY, MAY 23, 1874

The double rows of American Elms, planted fourteen years earlier, create a green tunnel. Sunlight filters through the canopy of new leaves and throws dappled patterns of light and shade on the gravel walk. It is a beautiful day, the Mall is crowded: ladies in voluminous skirts and colorful hats; Irish nurses in bonnets and white aprons, pushing baby carriages; gentlemen in frock coats and top hats; a few young clerks in stylish broadcloth suits; the children in a variety of dress, miniature versions of their parents. It is a decorous crowd; tomorrow—Sunday—is when working people have a holiday and attendance will be even larger.

At the north end of the Mall, on the west side, is the bandstand. Mould has pulled out all the stops for this design. The raised platform is covered by a Moorish-style cupola, dark blue and covered with gilt stars. It is topped by a sculpture of a lyre. The roof is supported by crimson cast-iron columns. The bandstand is unoccupied—the Saturday—afternoon concerts start next month. The annual summer series is so popular—**up to forty-five thousand people attend**—that the park board has provided extra seating and has taken the unprecedented step of allowing listeners to sit on the grass. Not everyone admires these free concerts. "The barriers and hedges of society for the time being are let down," sniffs the *Times*, "unfortunately also a few of its decencies are forgotten."

The barriers of society are not altogether absent. Across the Mall from the bandstand is a broad concourse where the wealthy park their carriages and, separated from the lower orders by a long wisteria arbor, listen to the music in comfortable isolation. Beside the concourse stands a large one-story building with a swooping tiled roof and deep overhanging eaves. Originally the Ladies Refreshment Stand, it has recently been converted into a restaurant called the Casino.

{ An excerpt from Witold Rybczynski—*A Clearing in the Distance*, pp.317-18 in which a letter of Frederick Law Olmsted—a principal designer of Central Park is quoted. }

The Future of the Bandshell and its Concerts

A 1993 court decision guaranteed that the bandshell would remain. What it did not do was insure the maintenance and improvement of the facility. The Parks Department completed repairing the roof of the Naumburg Bandshell in 2005. No other restoration of the building is planned at present.

The structure lacks two graceful pairs of decorative urns at either side of the half-domed structure and a suspended cast bronze light within its ceiling. It also needs the paint removed from the coffered ceiling, its stonework repaired, the losses replaced, the doors restored, the gilded donor inscription returned and the backstage renovated and fitted with working bathrooms once again. Naumburg Orchestral Concerts hopes the Central Park Conservancy and the Parks Department will restore the Naumburg Bandshell and with it the Concert Ground's role, dating to the 19th century, as a place of great beauty and tranquility in which to enjoy musical concerts in Central Park.

But given the many demands on funds in NYC it may be too much to hope for. And there is little doubt that it could benefit from lighting, sound, and electrical improvements. To that end we are considering a large capital campaign to repair the Bandshell and enlarge the endowment of Naumburg Orchestral Concerts so we can improve and expand our concert schedule. We would like your opinions, help, contributions, and suggestions. Please see one of us at a concert or write NAUMBURG ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS c/o C.W. LONDON 300 CENTRAL PARK WEST, 18 H NEWYORK, N.Y. 10024-1513