

KINGSWAY HALL HOTEL

COVENT GARDEN

KINGSWAY HALL HISTORY

The Kingsway Hall Hotel was previously the Kingsway Hall Methodist Church, erected in 1912 as the worshipping centre of the West London Mission.

Built for Evangelical purposes, it was considered to have the finest acoustics in London for recording orchestral and choral repertory. Kingsway Hall soon became the most sought after recording venue for orchestral music in England, due to its central location and excellent acoustics.



Philharmonic Orchestra & Chorus. 1962.

Directly below Kingsway Hall is the main line of the Underground Piccadilly Line which caused continual rumbling, interrupting recordings. This is quite famously known as the 'Kingsway rumble'.

The London Symphony Orchestra made 421 recordings there between 1926 and the building's demolition in 1984, and the London Philharmonic made 280 recordings.

EMI began recording in 1925 and continued to make regular use of Kingsway Hall after construction of their own recording studio at Abbey Road Studios. Decca Records began using Kingsway Hall in 1944 introducing their famous Full Frequency Range Recording system. It would become one of the three most used Decca recording locations.

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Kingsway Hall was the first to capture the voice of Luciano Pavarotti, in a 1964 EP entitled *Favourite Italian Arias* that contained two by Puccini and three by Verdi, including the highly popular 'La Donna È Mobile'.



Pavarotti warming up for a take at Kingsway Hall.



Much of the cast of *Turandot* being recorded at Kingsway Hall, August 1972, with the choir behind. Left to right: Nicolai Ghiuro, Luciano Pavarotti, Montserrat Caballé, Joan Sutherland, Tom Krause.

The last final recording was made with Deutsch Grammophon: Giacomo Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, which finished taping on January 5th 1984.

In 1998 the site was purchased and redeveloped into the 4 star deluxe hotel and is today owned and operated by Shiva Hotels UK.

Here are some recordings you may recognise made at Kingsway Hall:

- Great Tone Poems (1969)
- The Impressionists (1970)
- Gustav Holst: The Planets (1970)
- Charles Ives: Symphony (1072)
- The Fantasy Film World of Bernard Herrmann (1973)
- Citizen Kane - The Classic Film Scores of Bernard Herrmann (1974, conducted by Gerhardt)
- Music from the Great Shakespearean Films (1974)
- The Mysterious Film World of Bernard Herrmann (1975)
- Great British Film Music (1975)