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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Queen’s Hall Auditorium to be Named in Honour of Renowned Local Pianist, Winifred Atwell**

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts and Queen’s Hall are proud to announce that the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has agreed to name the Queen’s Hall Auditorium in honour of renowned local pianist, Winifred Atwell.

The late Winifred Atwell was a pioneer of the 1950’s who, as an instrumentalist and artiste, worked on the global stage across multiple genres, combining classical music with “*boogie woogie*” and “*rag time*” creating chart topping singles and selling over twenty (20) million records.

Born in Tunapuna, Trinidad, in 1915, Winifred Atwell also known as Una Winifred Atwell and internationally known as Winifred Atwell or “The Amazing Miss A” was a classically trained pianist, popular “*rag time*” musician and best-selling artiste of her time. Her passion for the piano began at a very young age and she achieved considerable popularity locally, playing for British and American servicemen at the Air Force base in Trinidad.

Atwell went onto New York to study piano technique with the celebrated classical pianist, Alexander Borovsky. In 1946 she moved to Britain where, determined to become a concert pianist, she studied at the Royal Academy of Music. Atwell’s breakthrough came in 1948 at a charity concert at the London Casino (Prince Edward) Theatre. There, she captivated the audience with her rag time music and took several curtain calls. In 1951, she signed a contract with Decca Records, and the following year she appeared in the first Royal Variety Performance for the new British monarch, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Atwell closed her act with ‘*Britannia Rag*’, a number she had composed specially for the occasion, and which reached Number Five in the pop charts.

By 1954, Atwell became the first recording-artist from Britain to have three (3) hits selling one million records: ‘*Black and White Rag*’ (1952), ‘*Let’s Have a Party*’ (1953), and ‘*Let’s Have Another Party*’ (1954). Between 1952 and 1960 she had no less than eleven (11) top ten hits and at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century she was recognised as the most successful female instrumentalist ever to have featured in the British pop charts. Through her musical legacy, Winifred Atwell is considered an intellectual, musical extraordinaire and producer for her works and the Steelpan music recordings “*Ivory and Steel*” during an era when women were not recognized as having any association with the Steelpan.

The Queen’s Hall has hosted Visual and Performing Arts productions for over six (6) decades. It was at this very performance space in the late 1960s that Winifred Atwell collaborated with the “*Pan Am Jet North Stars Steel Orchestra*” and produced the “*Ivory and Steel*” album. In 1969, she was awarded Trinidad and Tobago’s national award, the Hummingbird Medal Gold, for her achievements in music.

Winifred Atwell died in Sydney on February 27, 1983.

The Prime Minister, Dr. The Honourable Keith Christopher Rowley, has publicly called for more education on our national heroes including Winifred Atwell. Accordingly, in furtherance of this drive and to celebrate this historic moment in time, Queen's Hall will be hosting a Naming Ceremony and Concert to honour Ms. Atwell.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts and Queen's Hall view this *“as another proud moment for Trinidad and Tobago as we honour a cultural icon who contributed to the musical legacy of our country on an international scale. We take this opportunity to salute Ms. Atwell and promote the work of our National Icons by doing so in a tangible way. The Auditorium, bearing Winifred Atwell's name, will stand as a living homage to her artistry and a celebration of our national heritage. This recognition solidifies her place in our cultural landscape and honours the woman whose music continues to bring joy, hope, and pride to our hearts. It is a reminder to all, that greatness can come from our shores, and that the legacy of Winifred Atwell will forever be a part of our artistic story.”*



**Winifred Atwell (1915-1983)  
Trinidadian-Born Pianist**

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