

Dear Bettina, Ruth, Lynn, and Jenny,

Dear Jill, Emma, Luke, and Thomas,

Dear friends and companions,

Today, the curtain rises once again on a stage play in which Donald McIntyre, as so often in his life, plays the leading role. Once again, he is the centre of attention.

But this is not just about the famous opera singer Sir Donald McIntyre, the charismatic man who was at home on stages all over the world, but above all about the family man, friend, teacher, and mentor Don, as most people called him. Don had an incredibly impressive presence that some found almost intimidating, and at the same time a wonderful warmth that filled every room. Everyone felt comfortable in his company.

Anyone who knew Don personally knows that he always had a cheerful and contented hum on his lips. Music was his life. If you were waiting for him somewhere, you could hear him from afar; you just had to follow the hum.

Don had a wonderful sense of humour. And he could laugh at himself beautifully. Despite all his fame, he remained an extremely modest person. For example, it was only through our mutual English friends that I learned that Don had been knighted. I was always surprised at how amazed he himself was to have had such a distinguished career. Don was very balanced and at peace with himself. One of his special qualities was that he could accept others as they were, without wanting to change them.

However, he also had his principles, which he enforced rigorously in his family and professional life. Certain things were very important to him, both privately and professionally: healthy eating, plenty of exercise, and mental balance. Woe betide anyone who failed to meet these high standards. The otherwise good-natured Don could get surprisingly unpleasant whenever I dared to go after **his** dessert as well, when invited.

And he was honest—**mercilessly** honest. If he thought that one of his loved ones or singing students needed to lose weight, he would say so without mincing words. This caused him to lose a few students.

Bettina recalls: *To my horror, he tried to keep fit by jogging up and down the marble stairs in our apartment building in Munich every day **in his socks**. He was well over 80 when I finally convinced him to stop doing that. He loved cycling. Unfortunately, in his later years, he often had bad falls because he couldn't get up to speed quickly enough on inclines.*

*Don was always cheerful, optimistic, and warm toward others. When you look at private photos of him, you see that mischievous smile (even when he tried to look grim or serious). And then there was that **twinkle** in his eyes. His enthusiasm knew no bounds, and his exclamation "**fantaaaastic**" has achieved cult status in my family. Don often had a little joke up his sleeve."*

Don was incredibly meticulous when preparing for a role: he asked Bettina to provide the exact translation of every single word, regardless of sentence structure, idiomatic expressions, etc. Bettina was not very happy about this, as she is a translator. But that's how he was. He wanted to grasp the exact meaning of every single word so that he could incorporate it into his interpretation of the aria.

And yet, as meticulous and conscientious as Don was in his roles, he was uncomplicated and unconventional in his private life. Their mutual friend Mary remembers the day she first met Don. *"We were having lunch with a group of people in a pub across from the stage entrance at Covent*

Garden. Don looked at my plate and said, 'Are you leaving your peas?' I said yes, so he scooped them up and ate them. I had only met him for the first time less than an hour earlier."

Mary also remembers that a friend of Don's sang at the opera house in Munich and got them tickets for the performance. *"The three of us had seats in the stalls, and Don said he would watch the performance from the side stage. To our great surprise, just before the opera began, a head suddenly pops through the curtain—and it was Don, who wanted to see where we were sitting!"*

Don lived for art and music. He was a singer through and through—not only on stage. Even in his private life, while out walking, in a restaurant, or relaxing on the couch, he would suddenly break into gestures: his face would take on a special expression, his eyes would widen, his arms would rise, and you could see him slipping into a role in his mind. He felt inside himself how he wanted to portray this character. Bettina could then only reassure those present that everything was okay.

In later years, Don made it a personal mission to pass on his knowledge and technique to young vocal students. He would sometimes invite young music students to his farm in England and give them free singing lessons. They were able to stay there and, in return, were expected to help out with farm work and household chores. Later, students also stayed for a few weeks in the shared apartment in Munich. In gratitude, they cooked for the two of them or carried out repairs around the house. When Don sang himself, the neighbours upstairs sometimes knocked loudly on the ceiling. Fortunately, they soon moved out.

At this point, I would like to let Bettina speak for herself once again:

"We met in Bayreuth in 1977 and remained friends for many years. In 2014, we got married on Rose Island in Starnberg. Life with Don was always exciting. We went on wonderful trips together, especially to New Zealand and Italy, where we enjoyed carefree days with our Sicilian friends in Sicily. Don loved lying in the sun—I will never forget his blissful smile when sunbathing. We also enjoyed hiking in the mountains, going on bike tours, swimming, and enjoying fantastic opera evenings together, especially in Bayreuth at the dress rehearsals for the festival.

I owe him many unforgettable moments and interesting encounters. But most importantly, he was also my best friend and soulmate.

Thank you, Don, for your love, your care, the fun, the joy, and all the happiness you brought into my life.

Later on, we will hear short musical interludes sung by Don himself. We will conclude with a Welsh lullaby that he particularly loved and often sang – performed today by his New Zealand friend and former student Martin Snell.

His son-in-law Paul, his friend David Rees, with whom he wrote his book "The only way is up," and the preacher Holger, who knew Don well, will then share biographical details, anecdotes, and reflections about Don with us. His grandsons Luke and Thomas have also written a very personal poem about their grandfather, which they will recite.

We remember a personality who brought joy to so many people with his music and his amiable nature.

A man who quietly departed from this life.

Don often used to say, "I've got the sea in my blood." Yes, the waters of his New Zealand homeland flowed through his veins, the homeland he had longed for in the end. That is why he will return

home—to his favourite beach, where his ashes will be scattered in the presence of his family and friends.

Last year, Don was sometimes surprised when he saw himself on videos. He would say, “Why am I there? I'm here.” This statement touched me deeply because it is so simple and so true. I am not there, I am not gone, but I am here among you, in your hearts.

With this in mind, I would like to close with a quote from E.T.A. Hoffmann that I like to quote: “Where language ends, music begins.”