

The Nash

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Newsletter of "The Friends of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales"
Registered Charity No. 1,053,788

Autumn 2013

Triumphant NYOW Summer Tour of Germany

A report by Gareth Tudor, former NYOW member

We took our annual summer holiday this year in Berlin. This was prompted by the National Youth Orchestra of Wales tour to Germany. We managed to attend two concerts during our stay. A short train journey from the Hauptbahnhof in Berlin took us to the picturesque town of Brandenburg. The first concert was held at the Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul which dates from the 12th century. It seemed as if the whole town's population attended the concert as the cathedral was full. The orchestra played brilliantly and the people of Brandenburg were treated to a vibrant and exciting concert. The standing ovation at the end was well deserved. Our return train carriage to Berlin was full of other families who had gone to support our young musicians and we were all delighted to have been part of such a special occasion.

Our second concert as Nash groupies took place in the beautiful Konzerthaus in Berlin. The magnificent concert hall was a truly stunning venue for the orchestra. Every moment of the evening was special and the standard of musicianship was exceptional throughout the performance. Catrin Finch once again captivated the audience and Joseph Davies was obviously delighted by the enthusiastic reaction of the audience to his composition, Byzantium. The appreciative Berlin audience again gave the orchestra a standing ovation. It was an evening when we were truly proud to be associated with these talented Welsh musicians. We had a remarkable few days and we were thrilled to be part of such a memorable experience.



Performance at the Konzerthaus, Berlin

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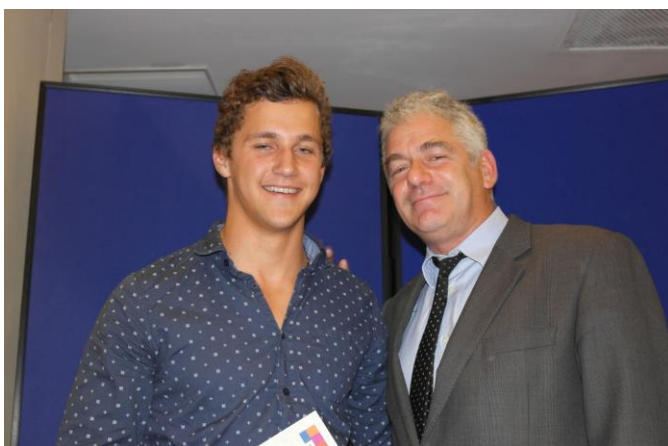
NYOW Leader receives support from a predecessor

former member to offer annual support to a Nash member with the Blaenwr or Leader Award awarded to Bethan Allmand in her first year in this prestigious position. Bethan had already benefitted from a new collaboration with Cardiff Violins who provided her with a Caspar Strnad 1812 violin ready for this summer's residency and tour. Many thanks to Jeff for his support!

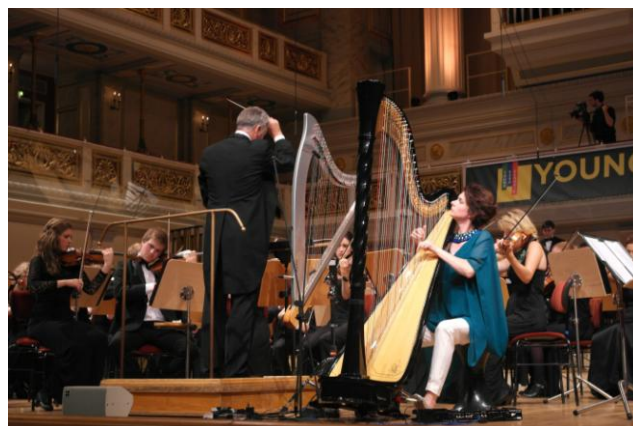


2013 Irwyn Walters Award, donated by the Friends of NYOW,

The winner of the 2013 Irwyn Walters Award, donated by the Friends of NYOW, was Principal Cellist Luke Millard. Luke has been a member of the NYOW since 2008, when he was 14. Since then Luke has grown considerably as a player and in his first year as Principal showed great maturity proving worthy of the award for most promising string player.



This year's soloist, Catrin Finch, in performance at the Konzerthaus, Berlin



John Roberts Remembered

Following the passing of John Roberts last year, former member, committed Friend and great supporter of the NYOW, a bursary fund has been established in his name using money received from donations given at John's funeral. The fund will provide one member of the Orchestra with a full bursary towards the cost of the summer residency; it will be awarded annually to someone who without this help would not be able to take their place. John strongly believed that the role of the Friends should be to provide this kind of support to members in need of financial assistance. With the generous donation received, his legacy will continue to make a difference for a long time to come. Heartfelt thanks go to Judith and Hannah for their support in the establishing of the John Roberts Bursary Fund.



Annual NYOW Award Winners



Ffrancon Thomas Award; Daniel Evans & Richard Cartlidge (Distinguished contribution to the Orchestra)

Haydn Davies Award; Jack Sewter (Most promising player still at school)

Goronwy Evans Award; Gwyn Owen (Most promising brass player)

Gwynne Edwards Award; Elin Parry (The viola player who made most progress), provided by Mrs Ruth Edwards

Taliesen Award; Manon Browning (Harpist who contributed most to the section), provided by Kathryn Webber & Tony Moore

Irwyn Walters Award; Luke Millard (Most promising string player), provided by Friends of NYOW

David Harris Award; Awen Blandford (Most promising cellist still at school), provided by Muriel Lewis

Welsh Livery Guild Award; Dewi Jones (awarded through application and interview)

Voice Award; Dafydd Tudor (Most promising wind player still in school), provided by VOICE Cymru

Blaenwr Award; Bethan Allmand (In support of the NYOW Leader), provided by Jeff Lloyd

Dan Evans in action at the
Konzerthaus, Berlin



Never has Welsh music been so well represented as with this summer's programme. The Orchestra showcased the work of two exciting young Welsh composers; Joseph Davies and international harpist Catrin Finch. Both pieces represented completely different challenges for the Orchestra, but both pieces were very well received by members and audiences alike.

The Orchestra's Welsh concerts at St Davids Cathedral, Venue Cymru Llandudno and St David's Hall were all very well attended with audiences thoroughly enjoying the variety of the programme as well as the excellent playing. For Grant the opportunity to return to his home county of Pembrokeshire conducting his old Orchestra at the Fishguard Festival was a particular highlight.

The morning after the concert in Cardiff the Orchestra left for Germany, a tour of 4 concerts, but first a 2 day coach journey with a stopover in Antwerp.

The Konzerthaus however was the Orchestra's (and my personal) highlight.



NYOW Summer Residency & Concert

A Report by Matthew Jones - NYAW Manager (Youth Music)

This summer 'The Nash' welcomed back an old friend to conduct the Orchestra. Grant Llewellyn, a cellist with the NYOW between 1972 and 1979, has previously conducted collaborations between the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the Nash, but this summer found himself in front of all 115 members for the first time.

There was an immediate rapport; Grant remembers his time in the Nash very fondly and feels passionately about what the Orchestra offered him in terms of his early music education and how important an institution it is. His obvious affinity with the members meant rehearsals were relaxed and enjoyable without ever losing sight of the fact that this year the Orchestra would be representing Wales at the highest level at home and abroad.

The venues were eclectic to say the least; Brandenburg Dom – reminiscent of St Davids Cathedral in terms of space, acoustic and history; Altenburg Castle – an outdoor concert with a challenging stage (particularly in the rain), Hubertusberg Castle – the stunning stately home dubbed the Versailles of Germany, and the magnificent Konzerthaus in Berlin.

The venue was incredible and being part of such a large international festival (the Young Euro Classic) was an opportunity for the NYOW members to show what a first class Orchestra it is. There was rapturous applause and multiple ovations. The stunning encore of Ar Lan y Mor, arranged by Gareth Glyn was beautiful, as was the spontaneous rendition of Calon Lan, led by our Brass Section. Who says Orchestras can't sing!

Nash 2013 ended with another 2 day coach trip home, but with plenty of excellent memories. One memory though that will stick with me for a long time is of NYOW members huddled together in the middle of the stage of our final concert. Halfway through the second piece of the (outdoor) concert the skies opened and thunder and lightning rumbled around the castle grounds. The concert eventually had to be abandoned but not before the Brass section brought out their detet repertoire giving the audience something to enjoy whilst we waited to see what the weather would do. A disappointing, but memorable end to an excellent tour.

Thanks must go to another former member, Edwina Hart AM and the Welsh Government; without their support the tour of Germany would have been impossible. Many thanks also to the Friends and especially the committee for their continued good work in supporting the Orchestra and its members in the form of bursaries. In more ways than one this summer, the NYOW gave Wales something to be extremely proud of.