

The N A S H

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

Without doubt 2004 has been one of the most exciting and successful years in the long history of the NYOW. In addition to the usual UK Tour, the orchestra was invited to participate in the "Young Euro Classic" series of concerts held in Berlin. Equally, without doubt, this would not have been possible without the substantial financial contribution made by The Friends. We contributed more than £6,000, so stand in front of the mirror, take a bow and pat yourself on the back. To help you recover from these contortions, sit down and reflect with satisfaction on the fact that you have helped some of today's young people to experience the joy and sense of achievement that you, or yours, did in the past playing with The Nash. What a thrill for them to carry the flag for Wales at such a prestigious European Festival.

In order to maintain this level of support, which is vital in today's financial climate, it is imperative that we increase our membership. So I urge you to continue with your contributions and redouble your efforts to persuade others to join us.

To commemorate this memorable year, we have put together a special edition of the Newsletter including, thanks to modern digital cameras, colour pictures. I hope you will enjoy reading it.

Chairman John Watkins and his wife Hetty attended the Lampeter concert and took off to Berlin to cover the Tour there. He has written two articles to help us capture the flavour of these two exciting events. He also took the pictures. These articles are included at the end of this newsletter.

On this occasion Orchestra Administrator, Beryl Jones, who has kept us in the picture in the past, has handed her pen to Kathy Phipps, who is on the pastoral staff of the orchestra to tell us about the 2004 course.

Beryl does, however, give us more details of the way in which the NYOW has made good use of the money that we were able to donate.

Ex. Chairman Jeff Lloyd continues steady progress after his illness and is now able to drive again - so be



Rehearsal at Lampeter 2004

warned! I am very grateful to him for contributing a further article in the "Where are they Now" series.

Another contributor is Brian Buckley, a committee member who is very much involved with music among young people in Wales. He is very proud of the achievements of Welsh Youth in the arts and cares that these are given proper recognition. This is very apparent in this letter he wrote and was published in the "Western Mail" on August 24th 2004. He consents to it being included in this newsletter. I suspect most of us would heartily endorse his comments.

Finally, the committee extend their best wishes for the coming year and look forward to further success stories of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales in 2005,

ANDREW O'NEILL

We were very sad to hear of the untimely death of Andrew O'Neill, who has worked with the Administration of the NYOW in recent years. A full appreciation of his work will be included with our next edition.

NYOW 2004 - a pastoral view of the course.

Kathryn Phipps

NYOW 2004 will go down as the year when the staff in the A & E Department at Glangwili Hospital at Carmarthen became very aware of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales as several of our members accompanied by Pastoral staff had to attend during the course for a variety of reasons.

Unfortunately Andrew O'Neill, the Orchestra Manager, had to go into hospital a few days before the course began. Tony Moore who celebrated his 29th year with the Nash this year took over his role at short notice and I was asked to take on Tony's role as Pastoral Co-ordinator. I felt very privileged as this year we had four new members on the Pastoral team and it was great fun guiding them through the jobs of being on duty from 7.30 in the morning to 2.00 the following morning! They rose to the challenge magnificently, especially during the four days when our Administrator, Beryl Jones fell victim to the curse of Glangwili and had to be hospitalised. We all pulled together and under Tony's leadership kept the NYOW ship afloat. Beryl returned having promised the hospital staff that she was going to take it easy -and they believed her!

The Tutorial Staff, who are to be known henceforth as 11 "coaches" at the request of our Conductor, were virtually the same team as last year and included many musicians who played in the Nash when they were younger. Sectionals were the order of the day until our Conductor Owain Arwel Hughes arrived on the fifth day. Immediately one could feel a change in the atmosphere and the magic of the Nash reasserted itself once again.

The social life of the Nash is always enjoyable and this year was no exception. We had a new look Quiz this year and a Twmpath and a Disco. We are fortunate to have the use of the Students Union at University College, Lampeter. It's self-contained and keeps everyone on campus. The Fancy Dress Evening was great fun with quite ingenious costumes appearing on the night. The j judges had a difficult job deciding the winner between a giant bar of Kit Kat with five boys inside and Elgar's taxi with another six members inside! Tutors Dinner is always an enjoyable occasion when the sections sit with their tutor and entertain him/her over dinner. The most enjoyable night for me was Cabaret Night when the students put together an informal entertainment - this year there was jazz, light music and a choir and the Pastoral Staff did a turn. The standard was particularly high this year.

Unfortunately one night one of the cello section suffered a nasty assault when returning from town late

with other orchestra friends. It was completely unprovoked and the last thing one would expect in a town like Lampeter. And yes, you've guessed - it was off to Glangwili again. The young man concerned has made a good recovery - I told him that he wasn't the first NYOW member to be attacked - in the scrap book it is recorded that back in the 50's a member was attacked in Bangor by a teddy boy! I am pleased to report that the assailant was arrested and is to be prosecuted.

MUSICIANS OVERLOOKED

- a letter from Brian Buckley to the Western Mail

Sir: I read your recent informative article entitled "Musical Youth" with great interest. The idea that the National Youth Arts Wales acts as a one-stop for Wales' most talented young people in their pursuit of excellence is exciting and timely.

In the past few days or so, I have been privileged to listen to concert performances by three of these groupings: the National Youth Orchestra of Wales, the National Youth Brass Band of Wales and the National Youth Choir of Wales.

How wonderful to listen to these outstanding young people who have justly gained their "welsh caps" for music. Yet, these ensembles were not privileged to take the stage of the Pavilion at the National Eisteddfod of Wales 2004. How disappointing this must be for the singers and instrumentalists (yes, Wales' best!) to be left out in the cold at Wales' premier shop window for Welsh arts and culture.

On Saturday August 7th, BBC2 televised a Prom concert from the Royal Albert Hall featuring the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, ironically, this orchestra was actually modelled upon the successful National Youth Orchestra of Wales that was founded in the late 1940's.

Now, the whole of the UK and beyond is aware of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, whereas the programme makers of radio and television in Wales seem to be totally disinterested in such home-grown talent. It is sad to reflect that during the 2004 concert tours by all three youth ensembles, microphones and camera crews were conspicuous by their absence. So was vandalism, vulgarity and violence.

Thanks to the Friends

Beryl M Jones

Once again the Friends of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales have provided generous financial support for the orchestra's summer course and concert tour, amounting to £6,950 in total, plus the annual prize of £100.

Over the years, FNYOW have sponsored one piece of repertoire and this year they donated £600 to sponsor Hoddinott's Welsh Dances Suite No. 3, which was included in the repertoire in recognition of the composer's 75th birthday. Since Alun Hoddinott is an ex-member of the NYOW himself, this was an entirely appropriate choice for the Friends to sponsor.

More recently, thanks to the Klose legacy, FNYOW have given conference bags to new NYOW members, and this year £260 was used to purchase additional bags for this purpose.

From its inception, FNYOW has provided bursaries for students in need of financial assistance. This time a total of £1,100 was made available as bursaries to assist 12 students with their course fees. This is the largest number of students to receive bursaries in any given year and clearly reflects the current economic climate. Such support is always greatly appreciated and some quite moving letters of thanks have been received, both on receipt of the bursary in advance of the course, and following the course to express how much the recipients have benefited from their time on the course.

The FNYOW prize for the most promising string player went to Elen Hâf Richards. A native of Neath, Elen is now studying music at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and led the orchestra for the first time this year.

This year's summer course and tour was especially exciting for the orchestra members with the visit to Berlin to participate in the Young Euro Classic Festival. An account of the Berlin experience is found elsewhere in this newsletter, but it is only fitting to formally acknowledge with immense gratitude the generous donation of £5,000 from FNYOW towards the additional costs of taking the orchestra to Berlin. Indeed, the fact that this sum was promised as soon as the funding process commenced proved to be an important factor in encouraging the Welsh Assembly Government to provide additional finance for the trip. Therefore, on behalf of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales, I am delighted to be able to take this opportunity of thanking the FNYOW for their

continued support of the current generation of Wales' most talented young musicians.

John Hendy is yet another distinguished musician to have emerged from the musical "stable" of the former Pontypridd Boys Grammar School where the charismatic music teacher, the late Haydn Davies, turned out so many fine instrumentalists.

John took up the trombone whilst a pupil at the school in the sixties and then proceeded to the Royal Academy of Music where he studied with the legendary Sidney Langston, principal trombonist in the early years of the BBC Symphony Orchestra (he was also a very popular tutor to the NYOW in the sixties). During most of his time at the RAM John was principal trombone of the 1st orchestra and played for Arthur Davidson's Royal Amateur Orchestra together with many of London's leading orchestras.

Unlike many of his colleagues, however, he became disillusioned with the hectic pace of life in the capital and, in 1971, returned to Wales where he pursued a teaching course at Cyncoed College of Higher Education: this was followed by a year as a peripatetic brass teacher to Mid Glamorgan Education Authority. But the lure of the professional orchestral life soon returned and in 1971 John joined the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera where, as sub principal trombone, he has remained to this day.

In his early days as a struggling musician John recalls spending three freezing weeks playing in the band for the famed Billy Smart's Circus on London's Clapham Common! Whilst perhaps not the most aesthetically satisfying episode in his illustrious career, it certainly provided him with much amusement: it also helped to "toughen" him up for the future rigours of life as a professional musician. With two shows per night and three on a Saturday, he developed lips of steel! He also developed a necessary respect for and wariness of certain performing animals in the circus which became enshrined within the following guidelines:

1. Never arrive late as you may have to crawl under an elephant awaiting the big opening number.
2. Never walk behind a camel as they tend to kick! Don't walk in front of the larnas as they will spit at you!
4. Never sit by the "big cats" access run as you are likely to be devoured!
5. Keep your instrument well away from Burma, the lead elephant, as she has a penchant for shiny objects such as trombones!

Since that somewhat inauspicious start, of course, John has gone on to perform with many of the world's

greatest conductors and opera stars: and successive members of Nash brass ensembles have benefited greatly from his vast professional experience during his long tenure, since 1980, as trombone tutor. John, ever possessed with an easy going temperament, has never been impressed with the "pseudo-glamour" of the world of show business and has always "kept his feet firmly on the ground". He lives in the historic and suitably tranquil Old Town of Llantrisant with his wife Lesley, twelve year old daughter Carys and ten year old son James.

On a personal note, I have one complaint to make about John. During a tour with WNO in the seventies it was he who introduced me to the perils of "real ale" - for which I have never been quite able to forgive him!
Jeff Lloyd

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