

# The Nash

Newsletter of "The Friends of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales" June 2007  
Registered Charity No. 1,053,788

## The NYOW and BBCNOW Collaboration

David R Murray, *Director, BBC National Orchestra & Chorus of Wales*



The brass section at St David's Hall

Photo: Alex Skibinski

2007 saw the seventh year of the annual collaboration between the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the National Youth Orchestra of Wales. During that time we have progressed from experimental beginnings in BBC's Llandaff Studio 1 to fully-fledged public performances in St David's Hall. This 50/50 orchestral collaboration between a national youth orchestra and a professional orchestra, where approxi-

mately half of each constituent orchestra are welded together to form a new ensemble, is fairly unique in Europe – the only other example I know is that between the Ulster Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra of Northern Ireland. Professional mentoring for performers and composers is something that the BBC National Orchestra of Wales takes very seriously – we have schemes in place with the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and with the Music Departments

of Cardiff and Bangor universities. Between them these schemes give opportunities for players, conductors and composers to experience work with a professional symphony orchestra.

And that's also the reason for the 50/50 scheme – to give a taste of the professional environment. For young players there seems a huge gap between county, national youth, or college orchestras and the world of the professional symphony orchestra – the aim of this collaboration is to bridge that gap and give young players an idea of professional life and its standards, so that their own playing is re-energized. And it's appropriate for students to hear in this context the very high standards that orchestral principal players can achieve in their roles as soloists – our concert in March featured marvellous performances of the Mozart Clarinet Concerto from Robert Plane, Principal Clarinet of BBCNOW, and of the many violin solos in Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade, played by BBC NOW's Leader, Lesley Hatfield.

But this collaboration is not just there for the student players; there are benefits for us professionals as well – it keeps us in touch with up and coming players, gives us new insights and allows us to make pitch for our industry with the younger generation: something which happens rather infrequently.

I know this collaborative project will develop further and I look forward to our future projects together.

## AGM of the Friends of NYOW

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends was held at the Cayo Arms, Cardiff on the 27th of March 2007. The new committee:

<b>Chairman</b>	John Watkins
<b>Vice Chair</b>	John Roberts
<b>Secretary</b>	Noreen Harris
<b>Treasurer</b>	Alan Grayson-Jones
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Beryl Jones

together with Helena Braithwaite, Beryl James, Vernon Bailey Wood, Brian Buckley, Rosemary de Lloyd and Jeff Lloyd.

We are delighted that Beryl Jones is able to join us. Her skill and knowledge will be invaluable. Her successor, Matthew Jones, told us of the plans for the summer which include a tour to Ischia be-

tween the 28th and 31st of August where a group of 78 members of the orchestra will perform at the Walton Festival. It was agreed that The Friends will contribute £5000 towards the cost of the trip. In May there was to be another event at Speaker's House to generate interest in business sponsorship of NYOW. This has had to be postponed.

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# A Family of Nash Members

Dave and Elinor Hughes (née Phillips), *Horn player and bass player from 1963 to 1969*



1968 bass section with Elinor in the foreground and a younger Bill Graham-White of BBC NOW, and Gareth Wood, composer and long time member of RPO bass section, just behind

**W**e were fortunate to be members of 'The Nash' between 1963-1969. It is not an overstatement to say that this experience, resulting in our love and appreciation of music, informed the rest of our lives.

We both clearly remember looking forward to the courses all year, our school days seeming dull by comparison, with the excitement of the journeys to Swansea and Wrexham, seeing old friends and making new ones. Many of these are still friends forty years later, as can be seen from the photo of our dear friends John Hendy and Eddie Roberts with David

During these years David went on Tchaikovsky's 4<sup>th</sup> Symphony, the part being a mass of 'black' like all the other string parts. She thinks she caught up by the end of the full rehearsal and could play it by the concert tour – just!



John Hendy, Eddie Roberts and Dave as they are now

derful concert in Berlin in 2005.

But more than anything it is the music we remember, the distinguished yet patient and humorous section tutors and Dr Clarence Raybould and Arthur Davison, larger than life in every way! And first rehearsal nerves also; Elinor remembers vividly, as 10<sup>th</sup> bass, her first evening trying to sight-read the Finale of

to study horn at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and Elinor to study music at Cardiff University. When we later began our teaching careers in South Wales we continued to play regularly, moving from overtures, symphonies and suites with NYOW to oratorios and musicals with local amateur operatic compa-



A recent picture of Elinor and Dave with their son Phil

nies, David also playing for television programmes and touring West End shows.

Our son Phil, a percussionist, has been a NYOW member for four years and is now a student at Trinity College of Music. Whether young people go on to study music at a university or conservatoire, or pursue other disciplines, we hope that as many of them as possible will experience the joy that comes from making music with this wonderful orchestra.

## NYOW and BBCNOW at St. David's Hall, Cardiff

John Roberts

**A**gain this spring the annual collaboration between NYOW and BBCNOW took place, culminating in a concert at St David's Hall, Cardiff on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March. The programme was beautifully balanced, opening with Shostakovich's *Festive Overture*. The music's energetic exuberance was given full rein in this exciting performance. I was sitting close enough to see how much support and encouragement was being given by the professionals to the young players. One memorable moment was a thumbs-up given to an NYOW percussionist by his BBCNOW colleague after a particularly fine snare drum solo in the overture. Mozart's Clarinet Concerto was played exquisitely by Robert Plane, principal clarinet of BBCNOW. NYOW were given a rest for this and what an education they got. Conductor Grant Llewellyn and BBCNOW perfectly matched Robert Plane's selflessly intelligent reading of the work, which was played on a Bassett Clarinet, allowing wonderfully rich lower notes to be heard in some of the passage-work.

Before the joint forces began the second half Grant Llewellyn spoke with affection of his

time in the Nash and of how much he, BBCNOW and NYOW had gained from the short course and it was clear, looking at the faces of the orchestra, that enjoyment was the uppermost emotion felt by all of them. *Scheherazade*, Rimsky-Korsakov's suite based on *The Thousand and One Nights*, formed the second half of the programme. It gives an orchestra every opportunity to show its mettle and on this occasion the result was remarkable. The tone was set by BBCNOW's leader Lesley Hatfield's stunning playing of the violin solo in the first movement. What an example for all the young string players. Grant Llewellyn got a totally committed and controlled performance from his players. It was a wonderful evening!



Photo: Alex Skibinski

# A Rich Musical Life Remembered

Ken George, *principal flute 1954 to 1957, concerto soloist in 1960*

It's all such a long time ago, yet the memories are still as strong as ever. The six years I spent playing with the orchestra were among the happiest of my life. I wanted nothing more than to play the flute, all day and every day. There were no commitments - accommodation and meals were provided, and my Mum had packed my pyjamas and the toothpaste (always a brand-new tube, heaven knows why) - so we could devote our attention solely to collective music-making. Paradise!

I joined the orchestra in 1952, when there was still the occasional 'stiffener' from the RAM to fill one or two of the principal positions (Clarence Raybould taught conducting at the Academy, so he was able to hand-pick his key players). I became first flute in 1954, and remained in that privileged seat until the Holland trip in 1957, including the Edinburgh Festival in 1955. I was reminded of that wonderful occasion last summer - over fifty years later - when my wife and I attended a concert at the Usher Hall in which our younger son was playing, with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra under Sir Charles Mackerras. My mind went back to the 'New World' symphony, and a very favourable review in the 'Guardian' by the critic Neville Cardus.

My first course was at Llandrindod Wells, in the grand old Pump House Hotel which, alas, is no more. I remember too the Training Colleges (as they then were) at Bangor and Swansea. In those days our afternoons were free, so we went on the Boating Lake in Llandrindod or rowed across the Menai Strait from Bangor. Friendship was immediate and easy - I don't recall any rivalry or antagonism. We were just a carefree bunch of young people, happy to share the incredible experience of living and playing together, temporarily suspended from real life. Even when I returned to tutor the flute section in the 1960s I was still floating on a cloud of unreality.

Because we had known the magic of youth



Ken George playing at a recent concert in London.

orchestras (my wife Pamela and I had met in the flute section of the 'Glam' in 1955) it was only natural that when we eventually had children ourselves we would want them to enjoy the same experience, which in due course they did. Sally (cello), Richard (violin) and Christopher (violin) all played in the Ealing Youth Orchestra, and subsequently the

boys joined the NYO of Great Britain, Christopher going on to the European Youth Orchestra. After studying at the RAM, both of our sons went into the profession, Richard becoming a member of the English Chamber Orchestra, Christopher a member of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, and now Leader of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. He also leads the Quince quartet, which has just made its highly successful debut at the Wigmore Hall.

Much as I would dearly love to have played the flute professionally, French gradually took pride of place. After my first degree at Cardiff (where my wife also did French) I went on to do a Masters, then a doctorate which I did in Paris, at the Sorbonne. In 1964 I began lecturing at the LSE's Department of Language Studies, moving after almost thirty years to the University of Buckingham and briefly to Oxford University before retirement. As well as teaching, I did a lot of research into the contemporary French language, including 'argot', writing books and articles and speaking at conferences in the UK and abroad. However I have not yet stopped playing the flute! With Chelsea Opera Group, the Salomon orchestra and a host of other ensembles I have played in well over a thousand concerts, many of them with distinguished soloists, under conductors such as Colin Davis, Andrew Davis, Simon Rattle, Roger Norrington, John Eliot Gardiner, Mark Elder and many more. So I've had a kind of split personality over the past forty years or so: I've been 'Ken the flute' and 'Ken the French', depending on the situation. To be more precise, I used to summarize my life as 'the three Fs': family, French and flute (to which, in retirement, I've had to add a fourth, namely fertilizer - I have an allotment).

I just can't imagine life without music. Not simply because I love playing the flute, especially in an orchestra, but because music is

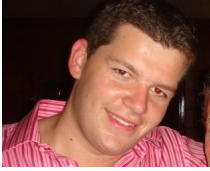


Ken George playing Mozart's Concerto for Flute and Harp with Jean Thomas at the Brangwyn Hall, Swansea in 1960. Jeff Lloyd is leading and Clarence Raybould conducts

a fundamental need in life, necessary for both personal and social well-being.

I agree with what Menuhin once wrote: 'Whenever people are making music together, at that time they are better human beings', and I would add, the world is a better place for it. Our son Richard also directs a string group at Harrow Young Musicians, who put on an annual Extravaganza at the Albert Hall. The sight of some 600 young people making music together - orchestras, wind bands, steel bands, choirs, etc. - never fails to raise the spirits and to restore one's faith in the youth of this country. If only our policy-makers and 'social architects' would attend such events they would see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears what a natural therapy music is, as indeed it has always been. That amateur music societies, even national institutions, should have to go cap-in-hand to non-governmental sources of funding is frankly scandalous, and an indictment of the current regime. We, the participants, know how important live music-making is to the collective health of our society. You only have to look at the faces of performers and audiences alike, all of whom are sharing in the same uplifting experience. When will they, the so-called facilitators, recognize the obvious?

I am more grateful than I can say to whoever it was on the Glamorgan Education Committee who had the brilliant idea of sending instruments, unsolicited, to local schools ('my' flute arrived out of the blue at Neath Grammar in 1950), also to the Welsh Joint Education Committee for administering the orchestra, and especially to Clarence Raybould who introduced us to Brahms 1 and 2, Dvorak 7 and so many other great works which remain indelibly imprinted on my musical memory. Finally, I shall be eternally grateful to the humorists in the orchestra: I heard enough jokes and witticisms in those few years to last me a lifetime.



# Memories of the Nash

David Hnyda, *recently retired principal bass*

I remember turning up to the WJEC offices for my first ever Nash audition – plywood bass in hand – absolutely terrified. As usual, pieces were secure, but scales were far from it and I was relying on the right ones coming up. Luckily they did and I was off on my first Nash course as 9<sup>th</sup> Double Bass. Little did I know then I was embarking on an adventure that would see me gain knowledge, experience and technique – and that was just in the bar!!

I turned up to Lampeter nervous and apprehensive but I was soon taken in by a group of older boys – Ciaran, Gould, Iestyn, Keatley & Shep – they looked after me all course and made sure that I got into plenty of trouble! One of the highlights of that course was the fancy dress. After a great deal of thought we decided to go as 6 dodgems, so we headed into Lampeter to buy the materials to make the most lavish fancy dress I'd ever seen. Every year since then we've risen to the challenge of trying to better the last year's fancy dress, and have had a giant Kitkat, a Romanian cara-

van – known as "Da Vor Shack" – and after 4 years we finally won the competition with a giant 8ft by 4ft wooden birthday cake.

In my second year on the Nash, the orchestra went to Berlin and performed Elgar's Symphony No. 1 in the Konzerthaus. The orchestra played superbly and the performance was greeted with a standing ovation by a full house. I have never come off any stage with a buzz like I had that night, and this was truly one of my proudest moments on the Nash.

Last year the Nash celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> birthday and I was privileged to be chosen to lead the bass section. It was a very busy year, but one that it was amazing to be a part of comprising of a performance in the Senedd, recording Elgar's Symphony No. 2, performing for the first time ever in the Welsh Proms, being the first youth orchestra ever to perform at the Three Choirs Festival, and finally, performing in the Speakers quarters at the Houses of Parliament.

From the moment I started my first course the most important thing that the Nash has given me is friendship. When you live in

each others' pockets for two weeks, working together, eating together, travelling together and even sleeping together you develop truly special friendships, and even though you only see each other once a year, friendships made on the Nash will stay with me for life. As soon as that first course finished, I could not wait to get home and begin practicing just to ensure that I could see those friends again next summer. I even made sure my scales were up to scratch!!!

Over the last 5 years the Nash has come to mean a lot to me. It's given me a chance to play the best music around at an extremely high standard. It's given me the chance to be trained by some of the best musicians in the U.K. It's given me the chance to play in places I would never have played otherwise. Above all of this when I think back on the Nash, I'll be thinking of the friends I made, big and small, young and old, students and staff. And what an amazing time we had playing for the finest youth orchestra in the world!

## Matthew Jones, Youth Music Manager

Matthew Jones joins 'The Nash' as NYOW Youth Music Manager, a new role created following Beryl Jones' recent retirement as NYOW Administrator. Matthew is ably supported by Kathryn Sinker in the new role of NYOW/Youth Music Administrative Assistant. Born and brought up in Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan Matthew has always been actively involved in the music scene of both Cardiff and Wales, though as a chorister not an instrumentalist, with the Cardiff County and Vale of Glamorgan Youth Choir and the National Youth Choir of Wales. Matthew received a BA(Hons) in Music at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in 1999 before undertaking a Post-graduate Diploma in Arts Management, again at the RWCMD. After graduating he established the chamber choir Cytgan which involved friends from the National Youth Choir of Wales and was formed to raise money towards the NYCW's summer tour to Budapest and Vienna. Despite its members becoming embroiled in the worlds of work and families, Cytgan is still going strong and regularly performs concerts across Wales. After gaining work experience with the Vale of Glamorgan Festival of Music, Matthew joined the BBC National Orchestra of Wales as administration assistant and, in January 2004, became the Assistant Orchestra Manager. Whilst with the BBC, Matthew gained considerable experience in orchestral and

concert management and toured with the orchestra to Germany (twice), Amsterdam and most recently the USA. Matthew is thoroughly enjoying his work with the National Youth Orchestra of Wales and is looking forward to his first summer course (returning to Lampeter for the first time in 10 years - he was on the other side of business then) and what will be a very spe-

cial concert at Lady William Walton's estate on the Italian Island of Ischia where the NYOW has the special honour of playing the final concert in the island's summer concert series. He hopes that as many of the Friends of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales are able to make one of this summer's concerts and would love to meet as many of you as possible.

### Important Dates for your Diaries

<b>NYOW course dates:</b>	1st August - 10th August
<b>Course venue:</b>	University of Wales, Lampeter
<b>Concert details:</b>	
7th August:	Pre-tour concert - Lampeter at 12.30
8th August:	Prichard Jones Hall, Bangor University at 19.30
9th August:	Aberystwyth Arts Centre at 19.30
10th August:	St David's Hall, Cardiff at 19.30
<b>Ticket Prices:</b>	
	£10 & £8 (concessions)
<b>Ischia Tour:</b>	
	28th -31st August
<b>Concert:</b>	
	30th August: La Mortella at 21.00.
<b>Programme:</b>	
<i>Elgar:</i>	In the South, (Alassio)
<i>Jenkins:</i>	Tangollen (not in Ischia)
<i>Walton:</i>	Symphony No.1