

The Nash

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

NYOW ANNUAL AWARDS

The winner of the Irwyn Walters Award in 2012 was Joshua Himsworth. The prize, donated by the Friends of NYOW and judged by the tutorial team during the residency is awarded to the most promising string player each year.



Joshua, 13 from Welshpool plays the Double Bass and was the youngest member of the NYOW last summer.

Other members to receive awards were:

Steffan Morris - The Ffrancon Thomas Award for distinguished contribution to the Orchestra both musically and generally. (*Sponsored by the National Eisteddfod*)

Bethan Allmand – The Haydn Davies Award for the most promising player still at school. (*Provided by Mrs Ann Haydn Davies*)

Grady Hassan – The Goronwy Evans Award for the most promising brass player

Phoebe Williams & Hannah Gray – The Gwynne Edwards Award for the Viola player who is judged to have made the most progress during the summer residency. (*Provided by Mrs Ruth Edwards*)

Llywelyn Jones – The Taliesin Award for the harpist who has contributed the most to the section during the summer residency. (*provided by Kathryn Webber, Anthony Moore and Beryl Jones*)

Pollyanna Furness – The David Harris Award for the most promising cellist still at school (*Provided by Muriel Lewis*)



Adam Bowman & Enlli Parri – The VOICE Award for the most promising woodwind player still at school. (*Sponsored by Voice Cymru, the union for education professionals*)

Rhondda Sinfonietta concert raises more funds for The Friends of The Nash

We had a wonderful concert in the Cyncoed Methodist Church on October 13th. The concert was given in aid of student bursaries for Nash members and for undergrads at Aberystwyth University. The highlight of the evening was a performance of Handel's Harp concerto by Catrin Meek, who is a member of the Nash and also a pupil of Clare Jones. Clare, who is now the Harpist to Prince Charles, was kind enough to lend Catrin her magnificent golden harp, which was beautifully played! A number of the members of the Rhondda Sinfonietta are either present or former members of the Nash, as is Andrew Walters the conductor. Andrew had chosen a varied programme, ranging from Bach to Dvorak to Elgar with a few modern lollipops thrown in. We are all very grateful to the Cardiff branch of the Aber old students who provided a wonderful interval buffet where people could meet and chat. We raised £150 towards Nash bursaries. We very much need more fund raising activities and would welcome any suggestions. Most of all we could have done with a larger audience!! Those who were there greatly appreciated it.

Noreen Harris

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Summer Course 2012 A report by Matthew Jones NYAW



The National Youth Orchestra of Wales in rehearsal at St. David's Cathedral during the 2012 Summer Course

The summer may well have been a wash-out weather-wise, but once again the fine young musicians of Wales gave us plenty to smile about during the NYOW summer residency and concert tour.

An orchestra of 117 including 42 brand new members gathered in Lampeter and immediately got to work on this year's music. And what music it was. Four works, of completely different genre, style and difficulty. A new commission from Judith Bingham bringing with it a contemporary sound world, Beethoven's magnificent Symphony No.5 – a work out for the string players; Ravel's Daphnis & Chloe suite – a work out for the wind players, and Gershwin's American in Paris – a bit of fun for everyone and some great music for our brass players.

As you can imagine, the Orchestra members soaked it up and worked tirelessly with their tutors to get the music up to scratch. There was a real air of excitement and a certain amount of nervousness surrounding Maestro Rizzi's arrival, working with someone of his international stature was a big deal, and each member knew it. However, that nervousness was soon replaced by a real respect and the feeling was mutual. The members found Carlo's rehearsals thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding.

For his part the Maestro was extremely pleased with the way in which the Orchestra responded to his direction, and as a result they developed an understanding that was natural and exciting. It even led Carlo to step off his podium at one stage during an American in Paris rehearsal and let the Orchestra get on with it!

This obvious rapport really bore fruit in the concerts. Members commented on how each performance would be slightly different, how they were kept on their toes and each night Carlo would ask them for a little bit more. They found the whole experience musically fulfilling and Carlo was glowing in his praise. He addressed the audiences in Swansea, Cardiff and St David's, publically showing his pride in being associated with this great orchestra. Audiences were equally enthusiastic, finding the interpretation of Beethoven's Symphony particularly exciting (the very fast tempi) and commenting on the excellent standard of each department of the orchestra.

Once again, the members of the Nash 2012 continued the Orchestra's rich heritage and gave Wales something to be extremely proud of. The only question at the end was, 'how do we top this' – well...watch this space!

John Roberts – a personal appreciation by John Watkins



With the death of my great friend John Roberts the *Friends of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales* have lost a loyal and stalwart supporter. John, who was editor of *The Nash* over the past seven years, died on 14th September at the age of sixty-eight. Both in his role as editor and as a member of the committee he gave unstintingly of his time to promote the work of the Friends and also to maintain the outstanding quality of the newsletter. He would certainly not have begrudged the hours he devoted to these tasks, for nothing gave him greater pleasure than encouraging young people to make music.

Born in York, he moved to South Wales at an early age where he continued to live for most of the rest of his life. He grew up and went to school in Ebbw Vale, later studying mathematics at Brasenose College, Oxford. As an extremely talented youngster he could just as easily have pursued a course of study in the arts or sciences, but although he finally opted for mathematics he was determined that this choice would not stand in the way of playing the violin. He was always the first to confess that his devotion to the latter was at least equal to his commitment to the former! The fact that he became leader of the University Chamber Orchestra is ample testimony to his eminence as a performer, and he often recalled with great relish his involvement in numerous chamber music groups while at Oxford. In 1959 he attended his first NYOW course and remained a member of the orchestra for the next four years.

I first met John over fifty years ago when we were members of the Monmouthshire Youth Orchestra, although we did not become close friends until several years later. After university we both returned to the Gwent valleys and played together in a number of ad hoc orchestras, often accompanying local choral societies. But soon we were to become firm friends and founder members of the Gwent Chamber Orchestra which John led from the outset. Under our conductor David Gedge - then organist and choirmaster at Brecon Cathedral - we embarked on a life-time of shared music-making which lasted right up to this summer. Among my most enduring memories are the performances of Bach's St. Matthew Passion in which John's superb playing of the violin obbligato solo in the aria "Erbarne Dich" never failed to move me.

In 1975 John was appointed head of mathematics at Ebbw Vale Comprehensive School where he taught until his retirement. Throughout his career he was an inspiration to pupils in his own subject, but he was just as keen a supporter of musical activities both in the schools where he taught and also in the local communities. He took part in productions of musicals with particular enthusiasm, and many former pupils are indebted to him for awakening and fostering a love of music and theatre.

Above all John loved chamber music, and since his retirement this was a passion he was able to indulge to the full. His musicality and technical command were most impressive, and the beauty of the tone he drew from his violin was often reminiscent of that other great quartet leader - Norbert Brainin. I had the great good fortune to play string quartets with John as first violin, and our exploration of the repertoire ranged from Haydn and Mozart to Shostakovich and Ravel. The other two members of our quartet - Paul Jenkins, viola and Stephen David, cello - are also former members of the NYOW which demonstrates to me that our early music-making experi-

ences have provided us with a life-long source of enjoyment and satisfaction. Our debt to John as leader is incalculable, and his company as a musician and friend is a privilege we shall always treasure.

John's wide circle of friends will remember him for his legendary hospitality and generosity. He and his wife Judith shared their passion for good wine and food with the many friends who visited them at home in Ebbw Vale. His skills in the culinary arts - with a distinct predilection for Italian dishes! - were also most impressive. I have enjoyed many an excellent dish of pasta proudly prepared and presented by John. As a regular visitor to Italy over many years he delighted in the art, language, food and wine of that country. But perhaps one of the greatest joys for him was walking in the Apennines. I never quite knew how he rated that experience in comparison with his walks along the Pembrokeshire coastal path or in the mountains nearer home - all I can be sure of is that his love of the natural world was never in doubt.

John will be remembered for his good humour and positive outlook on life. He enriched the lives of all those who knew him.

He is survived by Judith and their daughter Hannah.

The Friends are extremely grateful to Judith and Hannah, whose wish it was that donations from friends and family be divided equally between the I.T. Unit at Nevill Hall Hospital, Abergavenny and The Friends of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales.

Consequently a sum of £1500 has now been received by The Friends. A decision on how this is to be used will be announced in our next newsletter.

Gareth Walters 1928-2012



Gareth Walters (second from left) at the unveiling of a memorial plaque to his father Irwyn Walters at Ammanford Miners' Theatre, November 2006

Gareth Walters, composer, gifted teacher, Associated Board Examiner, BBC Producer and concert organiser died on May 31st in Kingston Surrey. He was the only son of Margaret and Irwyn Walters. Irwyn was the founder of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales and Gareth was the timpanist in that orchestra when they gave their first concert at the Rolls Hall, Monmouth in 1946. He continued to play in the orchestra for several years. The conductor was Sir Clarence Raybould.

Gareth was born in Islington, London where his father was teaching at Owen's School. There was a very strong Welsh community in the parish of Willesden where his father became the organist at Willesden Green Presbyterian Church. In 1929 the family moved to Stafford when Irwyn was appointed Music Master at King Edward VI Grammar School. They remained there for seven years but Irwyn kept in close contact with Wales where he was engaged as an occasional music inspector and lecturer.

When Irwyn was appointed the first full-time HMI for music in Wales in 1936 the family returned to the Principality. They chose to live in Swansea, only sixteen miles from Irwyn's birth place, Ammanford. Gareth first attended Brynmill Elementary School, then moved to Dynevor Grammar School. His piano teacher in Swansea was Mrs. Margaret Wells, a local music personality.

Whilst at Dynevor Grammar School Gareth began to compose. He was encouraged by Benjamin Britten who was a family friend and who stayed with the Walters when he was involved in local concerts. On finishing school in 1947 he began his two year statutory National Service in the Medical Corps. He then went to study piano and composition at the Royal Academy of Music. After graduating he was awarded a Patron's Scholarship at the Paris Conservatoire where he studied composition with Jean Rivier and musical aesthetics with Olivier Messiaen. From Paris he travelled to Italy to study at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena with Francesco Lavagnino. Whilst in Italy he was offered a teaching post in the Junior Exhibitioner section at the Royal Academy of Music and returned to London.

In 1956, he joined the BBC as a producer in their music department and held both of these appointments until retirement. He also continued to compose and organise concerts in central London, the Vera Smart Trust concert series in Swansea and the Gower Festival.

In 1969 he married Glenys Jones who shared his love of music. When he retired from the BBC in 1988 he continued his work as an examiner for the Associated Board, as a concert organiser and as a composer.

Throughout his life Gareth Walters was an inspiration to many successful musicians. He also influenced the lives of many people through his love of music and is remembered for his modesty and generosity in helping others.

Beryl James



The National Youth Orchestra of Wales, Llandrindod Wells, 1961