

# The Nash

Newsletter of "The Friends of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales" December 2011  
Registered Charity No. 1,053,788

## The 65th Anniversary Ball

The 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Nash was celebrated in style at the Mercure Holland House Hotel in Cardiff on November 18<sup>th</sup>. A large number of former members

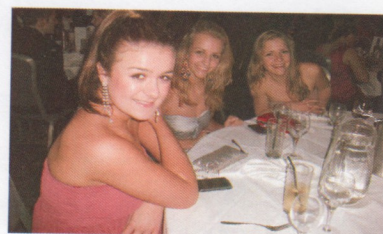


Founder members Mary Dodd (left) and Thesca Thomas.

from across the generations enjoyed an excellent meal, danced the night away and renewed old friendships. Guests included Captain Sir Norman Lloyd Edwards, Chairman of NYOW, two founder members of the Nash, Mary Dodd and Thesca Thomas, and Beryl James, former member and author of a history of the Nash, "First in the World". It was especially pleasing to see so many current members of the orchestra present.

The music was provided by the Phil Dando Big Band. Phil and fellow band members, Dave Hughes and Gruff Harries are also former members of the Nash.

Thanks must go to Matt Jones, Youth Music Manager and his assistant Alex James for their first class organisation of the evening.



From left, Saran Davies, Natalie Evans, Megan Evans.

## NYOW 2011

Matthew Jones

2011 was another very successful year for the NYOW. 115 members across 19 of the 22 Local Authorities attended the residency in Lampeter and spent the first five days preparing the repertoire with our excellent team of tutors.

As always, I was impressed with the standard from that first tutti rehearsal and even more so given the turnover of members this year - over 40 new members made their Nash debuts in 2011. During the evening rehearsal on the 5<sup>th</sup> day, there was a real buzz about the orchestra, as members caught sight of the freshly arrived Maestro, Takuo Yuasa, listening through the semi-closed door to the rehearsal hall.

It was with great pleasure that I formally introduced Maestro Yuasa to the Orchestra the following morning. Takuo's humour and personality came across the instant he stepped onto the podium and removed his ear plugs simply stating - "I have very sensitive ears to loud noises and bad

intonation!" On your toes class of 2011!!

Takuo's appointment had made the impact I hoped it would. He was an instant hit, with the members liking his extremely visual way of explaining what he wanted from them, the amount of detail he went into right from the start and the fact he wouldn't settle for anything less than what he'd asked for. We had a visit from another former



member of the Nash, Hilary Tann, who attended rehearsals of her piece and led a composer workshop with members of the Young Composers of Dyfed. Her input into the rehearsals really solidified the orchestra's understanding of her piece 'From the Feather to the Mountain'. She was able to attend the informal concert in Lampeter before heading back to the States and left extremely pleased with the Orchestra's performance of her piece. The concert tour took us to Wrexham, Gateshead, Manchester and Cardiff with audiences again being wowed by the Orchestra's professionalism and excellent sound. Despite an arduous schedule and a lot of miles travelled, the performance at St David's Hall was the best I have seen from the NYOW since taking over. I was immensely proud of our members and really pleased with the audience reaction - it was a completely deserved standing ovation at the end of the concert.

Contact the Friends of NYOW:

By Post: 71 West Road, Bridgend CF31 4HQ.

Telephone: 01656 658762

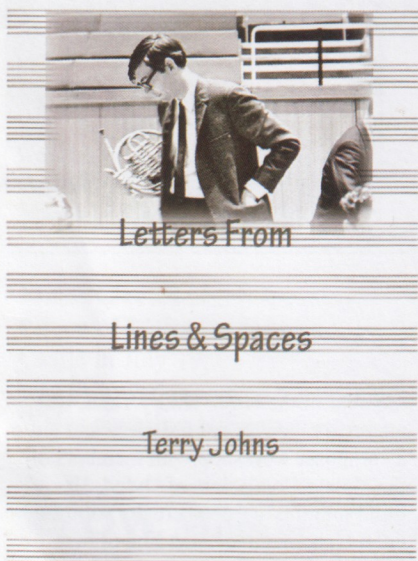
E-mail: [phippskathryn@hotmail.com](mailto:phippskathryn@hotmail.com)

# A Musician's Life through Letters

Letters From Lines & Spaces

by Terry Johns

Those amongst you who were members of the Nash at the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties will have fond memories of Terry Johns, affectionately known as Drac. He was an outstandingly talented young musician and also one of the most amusing and entertaining characters on the courses. Who can forget his impromptu piano variations on "Maggie May" where each variation was played in the style of a composer called out by someone from the audience, or his taking up the bass for the first time at a jam session, by the end of which he was able



The cover of Terry Johns's book

to play a solo spot. This was in 1959 when he was fifteen! People who were on later courses will never forget his hilarious wrestling matches with another horn player, Alun "Bronco" Francis. He has had a very distinguished career in both classical and popular music, playing for many years in the LSO, working with conductors such as Britten, Stokowski and Bernstein; and doing session work and recordings with the likes of Paul McCartney, Barbara Streisand and Tony Bennett. He has also worked in films. Terry has produced an utterly fascinating book, *Letters from Lines and Spaces*, in which this amazing career can be traced through letters he has written dating from his first weeks at the Royal Academy of Music in 1963 to this year. The recipients range from his parents and teachers to many friends and colleagues in the music world.

The conductor John Wilson, recently famed for the MGM Prom of 2009 and similar Proms this year and last, says of the book:

"Andre Previn once pointed out that there are, say, ten great orchestras in the world and each contains, on average, eighty or so musicians. By that calculation, about 800 orchestral players are responsible for producing all of the truly great orchestral music that happens on the ENTIRE planet. For over four decades, Terry Johns was one of them - and during a time when the music business was littered with what we affectionately call 'characters'. It's often lamented that there aren't as many of them around now as there used to be; and as a conductor I



Terry as he is now

suppose I'm grateful that orchestras are a bit better behaved these days - but I revelled in reading tales of the 'old days' and how musicians then, as now, had to survive by their wits. That said, this wonderful book is by no means just a bunch of musicians' funny stories; here is a collection of insightful and thought-provoking letters from a richly-intelligent human being and master musician, much-loved by his colleagues the world over. I'm proud to be one of them."

For those who knew him in NYOW this is a fascinating insight into how some you have known his developed. For anyone else it is a remarkable insight into the life of a highly intelligent, greatly respected musician. The book is available in hardback from [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) or in a Kindle edition from Amazon

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## The Nash gets technical!

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In 2011, the NYOW entered the digital age with a new Facebook page and an online Blog. Using Facebook to interact with current and potential Nash members as well as engage with former members and audiences, has proved very popular. Our

Blog gave the class of 2011 an opportunity to share their experiences whilst on course in diary format.

We are always looking for new entries and so if any Friends have any 'Nash' memories that they would like to share, we would be

very happy to receive an email or letter which we can then transfer onto the Blog in your name. For examples of the entries so far, you can visit our Blog at [nationallyorchestravales@blogspot.com](mailto:nationallyorchestravales@blogspot.com).

# Two Generations of Nash Members Eulanwy and Iona Davies



**Eulanwy Davies** (née Jones) followed a career in music after graduating from Aberystwyth. She headed the Music Departments in Newtown High School and Ysgol Dinas Brân, Llangollen, and later taught the cello peripatetically before being appointed Music Administrator, and later Music Director of the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod, a festival which she has now served for 34 years, her immense contribution recently having been recognised by her being made a Life Vice-President of this prestigious institution as well as a member of the Gorsedd of Bards of the National Eisteddfod.

Her daughter **Iona**, having completed her musical education at York University and the Royal Academy, has pursued a successful career as a free-lance Baroque violinist, based in London, but travelling extensively, both in the United Kingdom and abroad, with such ensembles as the Academy of Ancient Music, the London Baroque Soloists and the English Concert, as well as performing in Glyndebourne with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and at L'Opéra Comique in Paris with the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique.

**H**aving longed to play the cello since I heard a cellist in an ENSA concert during the war, I had to wait until 1955 and the arrival at Aberaeron of an inspiring music teacher, Dewi Henry, who immediately set up lessons and a cello for me. I loved it, and despite having no proper orchestral experience in Cardiganshire (then an instrumental desert) I found myself in the Nash in 1957, quaking with fear and heading for the back row of the cellos, which were brilliantly led by Helena Davies, (now Braithwaite). I was catapulted, in the first rehearsal, into the opening of César

Franck's D Minor Symphony. Never had I been surrounded by such a welter of sound (oh those brass players!) and it took me a while to become accustomed to it.

But what a glorious experience those courses were, and how grateful I am to have been part of this wonderful organisation. Many years later, I was able to share with our daughter Iona her thrill of belonging to the Nash. Recently I attended their concert in Wrexham, and experienced once again the enthusiasm, skill and exhilaration of a memorable performance

by The National Youth Orchestra of Wales. Hir oes i'r Nash!



**I** was accepted into the Nash in 1984 when I was 16 years of age, a thrilling prospect. My school holidays had been taken up with Clwyd and North Wales Orchestra courses for some years by then, but getting on to the Nash course was something else. I clearly remember nervously putting my violin on the back desk of the Firsts (this was how the seating was done then) and being in awe of those players further up the section. The programme that year included "Night on a Bare Mountain" and Sibelius' 2<sup>nd</sup> Sym-

phony. Well, musically it was great of course, but my abiding memories are of the friendships I made, some of which I still keep up with now.

I am now a professional violinist, and have travelled the world playing concerts. In some ways it seems that I didn't really choose this profession, it chose me, and I sometimes have the feeling that the life I lead is a continuation of my time on youth orchestra courses, although it can be difficult to replicate the passion and enthusiasm of a group of teenagers playing and

living together! I thank the Nash for setting the bar so high!



## Matthew Jones runs the Cardiff Half Marathon



kind of long distance running (apart from

**A**s some of you may know, I ran the Cardiff Half Marathon in October in aid of the NYOW. It's the first time I've attempted any

school cross country!) and so didn't really know what to expect. I managed to run the 13.1 miles in 2 hours and 1 second, and without suffering any major aches, pains or blisters, so was very pleased. I was overwhelmed by the support I received and would like to thank everyone who sponsored me. The grand total of money raised was £1218.13 including Gift Aid, all of which will go into sustaining the work of the Nash! Thank you very much!

## Fundraising Lunch

The Friends of NYOW will be holding a Lunch on Friday, March 30th at Cardiff Golf Club, Cyncoed, Cardiff to raise funds for the orchestra.

Further details will be sent out nearer the date

## From the Archives

### 1969 the Investiture of the Prince of Wales

Continuing our look at how the newspapers have reported on the Nash throughout the last 65 years. In this edition we reach 1969, Investiture Year.



Lynn Thomas presenting the Prince of Wales with an LP of NYOW, watched by conductor, Arthur Davison and Sir Lincoln Hallinan, Lord Mayor of Cardiff at the time.

Prince Charles was invested as Prince of Wales at Caernarvon Castle in July 1969. The ceremony was followed by a four day tour of Wales covering 500 miles and in-

volving forty functions. The culmination was a concert at the New Theatre in Cardiff given by NYOW, recognition for the orchestra and also of the young prince's interest in classical music, at that time he played the 'cello. Hundreds of people waited in Greyfriars Rd to catch a glimpse of him and the Western Mail reported that "he entered the Royal Box to a tremendous ovation and the stirring strains of the Walton/Sargent *Fanfare for a Special Occasion*." A. J Sicluna reported that "he had rarely heard the orchestra play better than at this concert". The programme included Berlioz's *Carnaval Romain Overture* "during which the Prince tapped out a steady beat with his right hand". John Cullis, principal cellist with the orchestra (who went on to have a distinguished career as an orchestral musician and who is currently 'cello tutor with the Nash) played Faure's *Elegie* for 'Cello and Orchestra "with rare control, providing a tone of deep richness". Alun Hoddinott com-

posed his *Second Suite of Welsh Dances* especially for the orchestra and the concert, his third composition for them. There were "fluent and extrovert performances" of *Night on a Bare Mountain* and the *Firebird Suite*. During the interval Prince Charles was presented with a specially bound copy of the orchestra's record that they had made on the Music for Pleasure label. Lynn Thomas from Felinfoel, a percussionist with the orchestra was chosen to make the presentation as she had been with the Nash from the age of twelve, nine years in total. The prince thanked her in Welsh.



Cartoon in the Western Mail

## NYOW Members' Feedback on working with Takuo Yuasa

"Takuo Yuasa was a fantastic conductor, lovely man, great sense of humour and brought us to a high standard. Was a fantastic opportunity to work with him - what a privilege"

"I thought the conductor was brilliant. He brought humour to the rehearsals but also worked us hard to perfect things, which was good."

"Absolutely fantastic. So musical and an absolute pleasure to work with. The orchestra loved working with him, without exception. Would love to have him back."

"Amazing! Brilliant man, great conductor and sense of humour."

"Fantastic. He treated us like a professional orchestra and this prompted us to behave in a professional manner and produce some great concerts. He

was really funny and kept rehearsals and concerts exciting."

"The conductor was brilliant. The only conductor I've worked with that has involved himself musically and socially



with all the orchestra - and he was very funny!"

"Maestro Yuasa was excellent - he brought a very fresh presence to the orchestra, which really inspired all members both old and new."

"He was completely inspirational. He was a perfectionist and brought out of the orchestra such passion. He made us want to work and took the orchestra to new heights with the Prokofiev. I'm sure I'm not the only one who still regularly listens to the repertoire we played."

"From the first minute of the first rehearsal I instantly warmed to him, making me and everyone else enjoy rehearsals. I loved how passionate he was, and he really wanted the best for him and us."