

The Nash

Newsletter of "The Friends of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales" June 2009
Registered Charity No. 1,053,788

Summer Course 2009 Matthew Jones, Youth Music Manager

This year's National Youth Orchestra of Wales will be held at University of Wales, Lampeter from 28th July to 5th August with a concert tour following on from the 6th to the 11th August. The Orchestra - which numbers 116 this year - will perform Arwel Hughes' Prelude for Orchestra, music from Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake Ballet Suite and Mahler's Symphony No.1. The 'Nash' has debut performances at two



halls this year, the first at the Adrian Boult Hall in Birmingham and the second at the impressive Sage Gateshead concert hall. We hope to build upon the encouraging audience at last year's concert in Birmingham Town Hall with a view to Birmingham becoming a regular fixture in the NYOW summer calendar. We are also joining forces with the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland who perform at The Sage a few days before us; in order to maximise audience numbers and therefore create a fantastic experience for both ensembles we are working together on a joint marketing campaign and offering a joint ticket offer in a unique and encouraging partnership. Whilst in Gateshead we will work with the venue's education department on a joint rehearsal with their 'Young Strings Initiative'; the young players, who age between 9 and 13 will sit alongside members of NYOW in a rehearsal led by our Conductor, Owain Ar-

wel Hughes CBE. It will be a great opportunity for our members to mentor and inspire younger players in a project not dissimilar to our own collaboration with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

As well as these exciting concerts the NYOW will also be performing at Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Prichard-Jones Hall Bangor, St David's Hall Cardiff as well as a second invitational appearance at the Three Choirs Festival in Hereford Cathedral. For more details regarding dates and times of the concerts please see the enclosed postcard, and please pass the information on to your friends!

As always members of the 'Friends of the NYOW' can apply for a free ticket to any of the Orchestra's Welsh concerts - we will be writing to you shortly to tell you exactly how you can go about ordering that ticket as well as any extras you may require. I hope to see as many of you at the concerts as possible!

Annual General Meeting

At this year's Annual General Meeting of the Friends, held on 20th of April there were changes amongst the officers. John Watkins and John Roberts stood down as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively and in their place Kathryn Webber and Muriel Lewis were elected. Noreen Harris remains as Secretary, Allan Grayson-Jones as Treasurer, and Beryl Jones as Membership Secretary. The other committee members are Brian Buckley, Helena Braithwaite, Beryl James, Gareth Tudor, Jeff Lloyd, John Watkins and John Roberts. The Friends owe a great debt of gratitude to John Watkins for his enormous contribution to their work. **See page 4 for pen portraits of the officers**

Friends Contribution to this Year's Course

There is no tour this year, so the Friends' contribution to the orchestra for the summer course will be our usual basic support: bursaries, music bags, the Friends' prize £100 and the hire of orchestral parts. This year we shall be awarding seven bursaries, amounting to £740. These usually provide half the course fee; however this year two of them will be for the full amount. Bags will be provided for the thirty two new members of the or-

chestra at a cost of £255. The cost of hiring the parts for Mahler's 1st Symphony will be £1358.



Steffan Morris, principal cello (3rd from left), presenting music bags to the new members of his section

Contact the Friends of NYOW:

By Post: 71 West Road, Bridgend CF31 4HQ.
Telephone: 01656 658762 E-mail: phippskathryn@hotmail.com

John Hendy holds the record!



John Hendy presents Gareth Robinson with the infamous "Tickling Stick" on the 2008 course. This tradition in the trombone section goes back many years – the stick is presented to the player who tells the best joke during the course.

This year sees John Hendy achieve a 35 year old association with the Nash. He was a member of the Nash from 1966 – 1969 and has been a tutor from 1979 to the present day.

John started to learn the trombone at Pontypridd Boys Grammar School where the late Haydn Davies was the inspirational music teacher. He has fond memories of playing in the school orchestra and the military band. Haydn was an RAF reservist so the military band also served as the ATC 557 Squadron band.

John attended East Glam orchestra on Saturday mornings and was soon off to Omore as a member of the Glamorgan Youth Orchestra. Like so many others he lived for the courses and it was a natural process to audition for the Nash which he joined in 1966.

John remembers the conductor at that time, Arthur Davison as full of energy and totally devoted to the orchestra and its members. He will never forget playing 1st trombone in Brahms 1st symphony and the tricky entry in the last movement "it went OK but was very scary when I was so young!" John attended the Royal Academy of Music from 1967 to 1971. He loved the college and the music but was less enthusiastic about living in London. At college John played in the 1st orchestra

and was also involved in brass ensembles, opera and outside gigs. Contemporaries at the time included James Watson, Mick Thompson, John Smith (of the MU) and Gareth Wood.

A year's teacher training at Cyncoed led to a probationer year as a peripatetic teacher in Mid Glamorgan, but John's first love was playing so in 1973 he left teaching to join the Welsh National Opera Orchestra where he has remained. John is one of the three longest serving orchestra members.

Asked for his favourite performances over the years his outstanding memory is "Die Frau Ohne Schatten" by Richard Strauss. Close second comes "The Ring Cycle" which was a fantastic experience. WNO Orchestra remains the only orchestra to perform the entire cycle in a week using the same players – apparently most companies use 2 sets of players because it is so strenuous. Harold Nash, who had been a member of the Nash himself, was the trombone tutor when John played in the orchestra. Harold played in the Covent Garden Opera Orchestra and in 1979 Arthur Davison asked John to share tutoring on the Nash with Harold. When Harold bowed out successive trombone players have been fortunate to have John as their tutor. John has given up part of his holiday allocation every year for the Nash and says that he was

fortunate that when he married Lesley she understood that it was a part of his life and never raised any objections. Some of John's section went onto play professionally including Roger Argente who plays with the LPO and Andrew Cresci who plays with the Bournemouth. Matthew Downes is working with the management team at Covent Garden Opera House.

Asked for his favourite Nash memory John says it is putting the world to rights with his great friends and fellow tutors Keith Whitmore, Glyn Parfitt and the late John Bass. And the outstanding orchestra highlights – 2006, when Owain Arwel Hughes conducted the Nash at Hereford Cathedral as part of the Three Choirs Festival. It was the first time that a National Youth Orchestra had played at the Festival and the first time that Mahler 5 had been performed there. The cathedral was packed, the performance outstanding and the audience re-action overwhelming. Two other highlights - Berlin in 2004 and the Glasgow Youth Orchestra Festival in 2000.

Asked to sum up his 35 years with the Nash in a few words John said "the friends I've made and the happy times that I've had".

Long may they continue John!

The Free Ticket Scheme

You may or may not be aware that as a member of the Friends of NYOW you are entitled to one free ticket to a concert at any venue apart from Hereford Cathedral, where the orchestra has been invited to perform by the Three Choirs Festival. To obtain your ticket fill in the form that has been enclosed, return it to:

Alex James
NYOW
WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Llandaff
CARDIFF
CF5 2YX

Your tickets should then be collected from the box office at your chosen venue. It would be most useful if you could put your email address on the form so that your order can be acknowledged.

Watch the NYOW at work!

The NYOW will be hosting an open rehearsal on Monday 3rd August for all Friends. The rehearsal will be a chance to see the orchestra at work under the direction of Principal Conductor Owain Arwel Hughes CBE, as they prepare for their concert tour. The rehearsal will start at 3pm, but please come and join us at Lampeter University for a Cream Tea Reception from 14.15. If you would like to join us, please contact Alex James in the NYOW office on 029 2026 5197 or alex.james@nyow.co.uk by Wednesday 29th July for catering purposes.

The Rhondda Symphonietta

A fund raising concert in aid of the Friends of NYOW

Rhondda Symphonietta was formed seven years ago by Jeff Lloyd. When asked about how the orchestra came to be founded this is what he had to say. "The origins of the Sinfonietta date back to 2000 when Noreen Harris asked if I could get a small group of players together for a concert to be held in Cardiff in aid of Aberystwyth Former Students. As it became an annual fixture I thought we might extend it to embrace other charities/good causes etc. Consequently, we now perform 3 or 4 concerts per year usually drawing our soloists from within the band itself. I have been able to 'cherry-pick' the players enabling the band to put on a concert following just the one rehearsal on the day.

Three months after my stroke Huw Gareth Williams, then conductor of RSO, asked if I felt up to conducting just one short item, whilst he would look after the bulk of the programme. In the rehearsal, after I'd rehearsed my item, Stu Telling and Brian Clarke sidled over to me with the encouraging words "We've decided that your conducting is just as bad now as it was before your ruddy stroke - so we may as well stick with you!". With such an encourag-

ing endorsement as that how could I fail eh?!"

In September every year, Jeff chooses the repertoire for the coming year and holds a day long rehearsal for his players to familiarise themselves with the music.

The orchestra gives three concerts a year and the proceeds are donated to charity. Friends of NYOW were fortunate to receive a generous donation of £415 from the proceeds of a concert given by the Symphonietta at Bethany Chapel in Rhiwbina, Cardiff on the 7th of February 2009. The concert was very well attended and the members of the audience were delighted with the performances of soloists Elin Adams in Cimarosa's oboe concerto and Jo Parkhurst in Bach's A minor Violin Concerto. The rest of the programme contained many delights: a Mozart Divertimento for Strings, Grieg's Holberg Suite, Britten's Simple Symphony and the Elegy and Finale from the Serenade for Strings by Tchaikovsky. The audience demanded an encore and got one: "Spring" from Grieg's Two Elegiac Melodies. Jeff conducted most of the programme but the Cimarosa and Britten were conducted by Andrew Walters.



Jeff Lloyd with soloists Jo Parkhurst and Elin Adams

Meet Your Committee for 2009/2010

CHAIRMAN

Kathryn Webber

Kathryn's association with NYOW spans five decades although she says she doesn't feel that old! In the 60's she was a member of the orchestra, in the 70's a young house-mistress and from the late 80's until 2008 a member of the pastoral staff. She was sad to retire, but is looking forward to supporting the Nash in a different way as Chairman of the Friends. Kathryn is a retired teacher of children with a visual impairment and currently enjoys a part time job running the Braille Transcription Unit at Parc Prison in Bridgend.

VICE CHAIRMAN

Muriel Lewis

Muriel was a member of NYOW in the early 50's as a 'cello player. Her name was Muriel Evans and she was one of the lucky ones to play at the Edinburgh Festival. She married David Harris, another Nash 'cello player in 1958 and they were inseparable. They both attended college in London and moved back to Cardiff in 1960. Unfortunately David was killed in a car accident in 1962. Muriel continued her teaching career and became

a Headteacher in 1968, remarrying in the same year. Muriel has been retired for many years enjoying golf, bowls, music and travelling.

SECRETARY

Noreen Harris

After the Nash and University at Aber Noreen and her geologist husband went to Edinburgh and spent summers in the Highlands. In 1971 Tony moved to Liverpool University and the family moved too! After 30 years there they came back to South Wales. Through all these moves Noreen was lucky to play for excellent orchestras and distinguished conductors like Simon Rattle, Charles Groves and Guy Woolfenden. She has had a lifetime of enjoyment playing in orchestras and is now a member of the Rhondda Symphony Orchestra. Noreen would encourage all young people to learn an instrument for the pleasure and inspiration which lasts longer than most others!

TREASURER

Allan Grayson Jones

Allan was a member of NYOW in the late 50's as a horn player and then worked for a bank for nearly 20 years.

With technology emerging Allan joined a national communications company as Sales Director a position he still holds with retirement pending at the end of the year. Allan still plays the horn with the Cardiff Philharmonic Orchestra which has raised nearly £20,000 for the Friends from concerts in the Millennium Centre with Karl Jenkins and two weeks ago in Tenby with support from Chevron which now also gives financial assistance to NYOW.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Beryl Jones

For sixteen years prior to retirement in 2006 Beryl was the full-time Orchestra Administrator for the NYOW. This brought her into contact with hundreds of members of the NYOW family, past and present. During Beryl's first year in post, the Friends of NYOW was established and subsequently, she served on the committee in an ex-officio capacity to provide a link between the orchestra and the Friends. Over the years this proved to be a fruitful partnership, and it left Beryl well placed to take on the role of Membership Secretary when she retired



The committee of the Friends of NYOW at a recent meeting

From left: Beryl James, Kathryn Webber, Noreen Harris, Beryl Jones, John Watkins, Helena Braithwaite, Muriel Lewis, Jeff Lloyd, Gareth Tudor, John Roberts. Missing are Allan Grayson-Jones and Brian Buckley.