

# The Nash



Newsletter of the Friends of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales

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[www.fnyow.cymru](http://www.fnyow.cymru)

**June 2025**

## Annual Report from the Chair of the Friends of NYOW, Hywel Jones



Hywel Jones

It continues to be a great privilege and honour for me to act as chairman of the Friends of the Nash. This is my second annual report as chair and, at the very outset, I should like to note my sincere thanks to all members of the committee for their hard work, insights, expertise and their support.

2024 witnessed the continued resurgence of the NYOW following the challenging days of Covid. It was a privilege for me to be able to attend the 'relaxed' concert at the All Nations' Centre, Cardiff on the last day of August 2024. The orchestra was conducted by the esteemed Tianyi Lu. Tianyi is well-known and admired in Wales, having studied for her Master of Music and Orchestral Conducting at RWCMD. Since her time in Cardiff, Tianyi has achieved international recognition, conducting many top orchestras in Britain and abroad. The NYOW members excelled under her guidance in an ambitious programme of music by Niamh O'Donnell, Stravinsky and Prokofiev.



Relaxed Concert in 2024



Easter course

The current financial plight of the Arts in Wales is well documented and regularly reported in the media. A recent report by the Senedd's Culture and Sport Committee urges the Welsh Government to increase funding for culture to levels comparable with other nations. Currently, Wales ranks second lowest among European nations in per capita spending on cultural services. Wales allocates £69.68 per person annually to cultural services, which is below the UK average of £91.12. This contrasts sharply with countries like Iceland and Luxembourg, which spend £691.60 and £500.90 per capita, respectively.

In the current climate, I am very proud to say that the Friends were able to award bursaries and prizes totalling £7,760 in 2024. In March 2024, I was invited to attend the CGIC Easter residential workshops for the orchestra's string players at the Wales Millennium Centre. This was a priceless opportunity for the young players to familiarize themselves with the demands of the music they would tackle on the summer course. I am glad that the same activity has been held again this year

(see below). However, without the financial support of the Friends it would not have been possible to do that. As well as agreeing to provide the financial support that made the Easter residential course viable in 2025 the Friends have agreed to support the proposed 'side by side' project so that members of the Nash can practice and perform alongside members of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Again, without the support of the Friends it would not be possible to realize this important and exciting plan in the autumn.

The purpose of the Friends of the Nash is twofold. Firstly, we exist to raise funds to support the NYOW financially. The Friends also aim to provide a network for past members to keep in touch with both the orchestra and with each other. It is inevitable that during the year we learn of the passing of former members of the NYOW. It was with deep sadness that we heard of the passing of Beryl James, a former Nash member and Friends Committee member, who died in April 2024 and who did more than anyone to chronicle the history of the orchestra. We thank her husband, Howard, and family for their generous donation to the Friends in memory of Beryl.



Beryl James

Beryl's outstanding contribution to the orchestra was the publication in 1995 of the book 'First in the World - The story of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales'. The significance of the book's title must never be forgotten, since the Nash was the VERY FIRST national youth orchestra in the world. The book contains two appendices, the first being a list of the names of the founder members of the first orchestra in 1946 and the second is a list of some 4000 names of members from the early 1950s to 1990. This is a fascinating story of the first half century of what the authors describe as 'the most important development in music in Wales' during that time, that is 'the flowering of instrumental talent'.

As 2026 fast approaches and the OLDEST national youth orchestra in the world prepares to celebrate its 80th anniversary I would like to appeal to all of us Friends to spread the word amongst family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances in order to expand this network of alumni and supporters of the orchestra over the next two years and invite them to become members of our family. Why not simply draw their attention to the website? The website is a repository for old Nash programmes, articles and photos from every one of the orchestra's eight decades. Much of the initial material has been provided from Kathryn Webber's extensive collection and the aim is for past members to continue to contribute.

I make no apology for repeating in this annual report that a close working relationship between the Friends of the Nash and National Youth Arts Wales, the orchestra's administrators, is crucial to the direction of our work in the future. We have met regularly during the year with Evan Dawson, the NYAW's chief executive and his staff and have developed a good understanding of each other's relative positions. I am confident that this relationship will continue to grow as we work together ever more closely to achieve our ambitions for the NYOW. This will have particular significance as the Nash prepares to celebrate its 80th anniversary in 2026.

**Hywel Jones**

## National Youth Orchestra of Wales 2024

### Report by the Senior Producer and Deputy Chief Executive of NYAW, Matthew Jones



Matthew Jones

After a successful audition period the previous November, the Orchestra was in a healthy state for 2024 with 98 members from across the whole of Wales. The viola section was the only area of slight concern with another smallish section, but even that section saw an increase in membership.

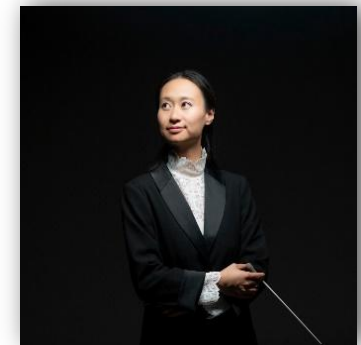
To start the membership year off, we held a “Meet the Nationals” Zoom session designed to introduce members and their parents to National Youth Arts Wales, the Orchestra and the wider music ensemble programme. Whilst it was relevant to all members, it was particularly so for new members and offered the opportunity for them and their parents to meet members of the team and ask any questions they might have had. It was well attended and a lovely way to kick start the year’s activity. The session was recorded for anyone unable to attend.

Following this, we held a two-day rehearsal camp for the string sections of the Orchestra. This has been a mainstay since returning from Covid, but over the last couple of years we’ve concentrated on the strings. They are generally the sections who have most to do within any orchestral programme, but also,

they are the sections that have the greatest range of both age and experience. The rehearsals have enabled members to get a head start on preparing the repertoire for the summer and get an insight into what they need to work on ahead of the residency – they’ve become invaluable elements of the year’s activity.

The summer residency was held once again in Lampeter and we had the usual high calibre of orchestral tutors to work with the Orchestra ahead of the conductor arriving. Tianyi Lu was the conductor for last year, someone whose career I’ve been following since first meeting her at the RWCMD a number of years ago when she was a post graduate conducting student. I had a feeling that she would be a good fit for the Orchestra, and this was confirmed at her first rehearsal session with both the orchestra members and even the tutors singing her praises for her approach, technique and general musicality. It was a great start that continued to grow and the momentum built up to some fantastic concerts. She also ran a lovely, informal Question and Answer session for the members on one of the evenings, talking about her career to date, the music profession and music in general.

Following our usual “dress rehearsal” concert in Lampeter, the Orchestra went on the road first visiting Prichard Jones Hall in Bangor before heading back west for a concert promoted as part of the Fishguard Festival of Music. The third concert of the tour was the



Tianyi Lu

Orchestra's first ever "Relaxed Concert" designed specifically for audiences that might find traditional concerts a barrier. We held it at the All Nations Centre in Cardiff which offered a fully accessible venue with flexible seating and a number of breakout spaces. Tianyi and I had designed the programme specifically with this concert in mind, the programmatic nature of the music and the multi movements within the pieces lending itself to shortening the concert length.



Orchestra members played in branded t-shirts rather than formal concert dress, spent time mingling with audience members pre-concert with one violinist playing his instrument to an entranced baby! The audience consisted of people with disabilities, Alzheimers sufferers and a number of families with young children. There were a number of stories to come out of the concert, including one from the NYAW Chair who was able to enjoy his first ever concert with his autistic adult son.

It was a huge success and both the orchestra members and Tianyi were fantastic in their approach to this concert. We hope it's something we can continue to do in the future.

With St David's Hall closed, the summer's final concert was performed at the Brangwyn Hall Swansea on a sunny Sunday afternoon. Whilst it is such a shame that Wales 'national concert hall continues to be closed, the Brangwyn Hall is a great substitute and there was a great audience in attendance.

It was an incredibly satisfying residency and concert tour yet again with Tianyi certainly someone we will work with again.

Thank you so much to the Friends of the Orchestra for their continued support – the £6,000 worth of bursary support offered 17 Orchestra members financial assistance, without which it would have been difficult (impossible) for them to take their places.

## Strings Attached

In a new initiative to offer additional support to string players of grade 4 and above, we've been working collaboratively with music services across Wales to offer our new Strings Attached programme.

In October we held a weekend of rehearsals at the RWCMD for musicians from the South East Wales region (Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff & Vale, Gwent, Merthyr and RCT). Just over 50 musicians attended the weekend with a combination of sectional and tutti rehearsals, led by NYOW tutors and supported by NYOW Peer Mentors (current senior members). We also held an audition Question and Answer session led by me, Adrian Dunn our violin tutor and the peer mentors aimed at giving more information about and breaking down barriers for our audition process. The weekend was rounded off by an



informal sharing attended by families of the participants. A number of those attending went on to successfully audition for the NYOW in the November auditions.

In February we held a similar event for musicians from the Mid and West Wales Region (Carmarthen, Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Pembrokeshire and Powys). Due to the travel logistics, we kept this one to a day with another day planned later in the year. Again, the day was extremely well attended with 56 participants working with our team.

We are talking with the North Wales region about timings for an event in the north which will hopefully take place towards the end of the summer term.

We are also looking to pilot a “add a string to your bow” (working title!) strand which looks at offering violinists of grade 6 and above the opportunity to try out the viola. We’re hoping we might be able to work with partners to offer support to any musicians who might consider auditioning for the NYOW on viola in future years.

This has proven to be a very popular initiative and we have met lots of new string players and forged stronger links with all the music services. Continuing and building on this activity will be one of the funding priorities for NYAW going forward.

## **Auditions 2025**

We had a very successful round of auditions in November with 176 applicants across the whole of Wales. The most pleasing aspect being the positivity coming from the panels that the standard was very high and that there were a number of difficult decisions to be made.

We offered 103 places – the largest orchestra we’ve had since returning from COVID and with the exception of Violas, we are back to full strength string sections with a reserve list for each!

## **NYOW 2025**

With huge thanks to the support of the Friends of NYOW, we were able to hold string rehearsals during the Easter holidays. With increasing costs that are outstripping the small increases we’ve been able to build into budgets, these Easter rehearsals were at real risk of not happening without the commitment of additional support from the Friends. It can’t be overstated how useful these rehearsals are to the string players and so your support is greatly appreciated. The rehearsals were held at the RWMCD on 14th and 15th April.

This year we welcome back Kwamé Ryan, who worked with the Orchestra in 2022, to conduct an all-American programme which includes Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from West Side Story and Gershwin's Porgy and Bess a Symphonic Picture. Kwamé was very popular with members last time around who asked to work with him again as soon as possible, so I'm really pleased we've been able to make this happen.

Our residency will be held in Lampeter as usual, reverting back to its more usual timing of the end of July. We are very pleased to be able to accept invitations from both the Fishguard Festival and the Three Choirs Festival once again this year, with concerts at St Asaph Cathedral in North Wales and the Brangwyn Hall concluding our 4 concert tour.

**Concerts:**

30th July – Pre-Tour Dress rehearsal Concert, Lampeter

31st July – St Davids Cathedral as part of the Fishguard Festival

1st August – afternoon concert at Hereford Cathedral (Three-Choirs Festival)

2nd August – St Asaph Cathedral (afternoon concert)

3rd August – Brangwyn Hall, Swansea (afternoon concert)

**Programme:**

Mason Bates: Attack, Decay, Sustain, Release

Barber: Second Essay for Orchestra

Gershwin: Porgy and Bess, a Symphonic Picture

Bernstein: Symphonic Dances from West Side Story

Wang Jie: America the Beautiful

For more information and to book tickets please click here: [What's On — National Youth Arts Wales](#)

## BBC Collaboration 2025

We are currently working with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales to plan the next iteration of our Side-by-Side Collaborations.

The proposed dates are Friday 28th – Sunday 30th November and the brilliant Nil Venditti has been approached to conduct. The weekend of collaborative rehearsal will end with a concert at Hoddinott Hall on the Sunday afternoon.

With increasing pressures on both ours and the BBC's budget, the costs of this project will be split 50:50 rather than being “bank-rolled” by BBC through their education budget as in the past. As this is additional activity, we are asking for additional support from the Friends to help finance this project.

*Matthew Jones*

## Easter Residency



The Friends were absolutely delighted to support the National Youth Orchestra of Wales 'inspiring Easter Residency. Our Chair, Hywel, and Secretary, Denise, had the privilege of attending and were so impressed by the extraordinary passion, exceptional talent and unwavering dedication shown by these remarkable young musicians.

Witnessing their commitment to excellence and love for music was both uplifting and humbling. It is clear that the future of orchestral music in Wales is in very capable hands.

We are incredibly excited to see all their hard work and artistry come to fruition during the upcoming summer tour. If the residency was any indication, audiences are in for a real treat!

## Kwamé Ryan



The NYOW are delighted to welcome back Kwamé Ryan as conductor for the 2025 residential course and concert tour. He last led the NYOW in 2022 and this year he's chosen an all-American programme featuring Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from West Side Story and Gershwin's Porgy and Bess: A Symphonic Picture.

Kwamé Ryan was born in Canada and grew up on the Caribbean island of Trinidad, where he received his early musical education. He completed his studies in the U.K. and Hungary, reading Musicology at Cambridge University.

He held the position of General Music Director of Freiburg Opera between 1999 and 2003, and served as Musical and Artistic Director of the National Orchestra of Bordeaux Aquitaine between 2007 and 2013. As a guest conductor in Germany, he has conducted orchestras such as the Radio Orchestras of Stuttgart and Bavaria, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie and the Konzerthausorchester Berlin. In France, he has worked at Opera de la

Bastille, Opera de Lyon and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

He has worked with numerous orchestras in the U.S.A and the U.K. including the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Dallas, Detroit, Indianapolis, Atlanta, Houston, the Boston Lyric Opera, English National Opera, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Royal Scottish Symphony and the London Philharmonia. He has been a regular guest of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra and in 2021 returned to La Monnaie, Brussels for the world premiere of Kris De Foort's *The Time of our Singing* which won the International Opera Award as World Premiere of the Year. He has recently taken up the post of Music Director of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra.

Kwamé is the recipient of international awards for outstanding work in the field of music education. As well as the NYOW Ryan has served as Musical Director of the National Youth Orchestra of France and as Director of the Academy for the Performing Arts at the University of Trinidad and Tobago.

For more information about Kwamé visit: <https://kwameryan.com>

## Spotlight on current members

### Luke Doyle

Luke is the current leader of the Nash and has held this position since 2023.



Luke leading in a rehearsal in 2024

**Tell us a little about your background: where do you come from? How did you get involved in music in the first place?**

I was born in Pontypool into a family of South Walian descent. All my family support Swansea City and I had a picture of me with Wilfried Bony on my wall until it fell apart! I'm really proud of my Welsh heritage and even though I now study in London it's very important to me. My mum is

a music therapist, and both my parents used to sing and play to me from an early age; I first heard the violin and started taking lessons when a peripatetic teacher from Presteigne played to my small village school in assembly. From then onwards I was fascinated by the four strings and what they could do! I travelled each week to Brecon (about an hour) to take part in the South Powys Youth Music groups and that first ensemble experience was inspiring and essential. I'm also grateful to my first teacher for introducing me to jazz and folk music. To this day jazz is an incredibly important part of my musicality. To relax, I swim and play five-a-side. I'm also an avid film buff.

**What does being the leader of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales mean to you, and how did you feel when you were first chosen to be leader?**

Being the leader of NYOW is a fantastic honour. I'm deeply proud. It is something that has already given me the richest and most powerful individual and collaborative experiences and memories. I auditioned two days before my seventeenth birthday and then got to lead the strings in a rehearsal on my birthday. I didn't need cake!

**How will you prepare—mentally and musically—for leading the orchestra during the tour?**

I always immerse myself in music and listen avidly; before the tour I'll listen to many different recordings of the pieces and do lots of practice! I also have a great orchestral mentor from BBC NOW - introduced to me by NYOW online during lockdown- who will give me some pointers and advice.

**Which piece of music are you most looking forward to performing?**

It's an amazing programme this year. It's all really exciting; if I had to say, the Bernstein is just so full of energy and joy, so that edges it by the tiniest of margins.

**Who is your favourite composer and what is your favourite piece of music?**

I am passionate about Stravinsky, Shostakovich and Prokofiev - and playing the orchestral repertoire and writing programme notes for Nash in the past two years has only intensified my fervour. I'd love to perform Stravinsky's violin concerto one day! Listening to Oistrakh playing Beethoven's violin concerto was a defining moment for me too. I listened to it as I travelled to Brecon for my weekly lessons. And Mahler 5 was my first Nash experience when I was 12. And then there's jazz... Nardis (Miles Davis) has so many different layers to it.

**Is there a particular moment during a concert or rehearsal that has been particularly memorable?**

So many! But playing Strauss's Four Last Songs, with those incredible violin solos he wrote, under the baton of Maestro Carlo Rizzi and with Elizabeth Llewelyn as the soloist gave me an opportunity and experience that I'll carry with me always. I'm profoundly grateful for it.

**What would you say to a young musician hoping to join the orchestra one day—any tips or lessons you've learned along the way?**

Keep listening, keep practising, keep believing and stay true to your own musical ideals. It's worth all the hard work.

**What are your ambitions for the future?**

I would love to one day lead a top orchestra; playing jazz with my own voice and identity is vital too.

## Gwydion Rhys

Gwydion has been a member of the cello section in the Nash since 2018. He has also been called on to play piano when required by the programme.



Gwydion at the piano in Bangor in 2024

**Tell us a little about your background: where do you come from? How did you get involved in music in the first place?**

I come from the village of Rachub in North Wales. My first musical education came in lessons on both piano and cello, later taking in lessons in both composition and conducting as well. Other interests of mine include going to concerts and plays, as well as score-studying.

**What does being a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales mean to you, and how did you feel when you were first awarded a place in the orchestra?**

Being a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales has been one of the greatest joys of my musical life. To be able to play alongside and socialise with one's fellow musicians while learning such great repertoire is an honour and a pleasure which I have never and will never take for granted. My then-15-year-old self was very excited when I was first awarded a place in the orchestra in 2018, albeit slightly daunted by the intensity of the rehearsals and repertoire that year (including Bernstein's Chichester Psalms and Mahler's Symphony No. 5).

**How will you prepare—mentally and musically—for this year's course?**

Ahead of this year's course, I will prepare myself musically by practising the music in detail. As for mental preparation, I will listen to the music with the full score in front of me, in order to gain a more rounded context of the music as a whole.

**Which piece of music are you most looking forward to performing?**

If I had to pick, I guess I'm looking forward to performing the Bernstein the most? One aspect of the piece I admire very much, besides from its brilliantly memorable material, is its title's use of the word symphonic. This gives the music an overarching narrative which mirrors that of the stage musical on which it is based – as a composer, I find this aspect fascinating.

**Who is your favourite composer and what is your favourite piece of music?**

At the moment, one of my favourite composers is Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924), and one of my favourite works of his is his Stabat Mater, Op. 96 (1906). This is a fabulously written and tremendously dramatic choral and orchestral work which, in my humble opinion, remains criminally underperformed.

**Is there a particular moment during a concert or rehearsal that has been particularly memorable?**

I've found myself frequently brought to tears by our rehearsals of different music, whether it was the countertenor solo in the second of Bernstein's Chichester Psalms, the dramatic climaxes of Korngold's Violin Concerto, or the horn and violin solos in Richard Strauss's Four Last Songs.

**What would you say to a young musician hoping to join the orchestra one day—any tips or lessons you've learned along the way?**

Don't worry about being nervous, whether it's about the prospect of meeting and playing alongside fellow musicians, or the sheer scale of the repertoire you'll be undertaking. The experience may be challenging initially, but it's well worth the effort put in!

**What are your ambitions for the future?**

My primary ambitions for the future are to compose and conduct professionally – albeit not at the expense of my performance abilities!

## Remembering Terry Johns

We were very sad to hear that Terry Johns died in February this year at the age of 80. Terry aka “Drac” was a fine horn player originally from Hirwaun in the Cynon valley. He was a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales from 1959 to 1962 and studied at the Royal Academy of Music on a Glamorganshire scholarship. He went on to play with several London orchestras including the RPO and LSO and was also well known as a performer of jazz and as a session musician. He is sadly missed by all who knew him.

We are grateful to David Hughes for sharing his memories of his friend with us.

### My Memories of Terry Johns – “Drac”

I was a member of the Nash from 1963 to 1966. Drac had left the year before I joined. It would have been so much fun if we had been there at the same time. All my early encounters with him were before that time on courses with the Glamorgan Youth Orchestra (The Glam) which I joined in 1961 at the age of 14.

The horns rehearsed in the boys’ shower block. We all sat on a long narrow wooden bench in a long narrow room, sitting about a foot (max) from the wall. It was extremely loud with the sound bouncing off the wall behind us. Not the best arrangement for the only brass instrument that points backwards!

When I arrived outside the showers on the first day for the sectional rehearsal there was no one else there. I was beginning to wonder if I was in the right place when after a few minutes I heard voices and saw coming towards me a line of boys, chatting away. As they got nearer, the first one said “*Hey boys, we’ve got a new one*”. It was Drac. He was the only person I recognised because I had seen him once before playing in a concert in Porthcawl. “What’s your name?” said Drac. “David Hughes”, I replied. “And where are you from?” “Porthcawl”. “Oh - Porthcawl, that’s posh. Boys - this is Dave - from Porthcawl. Come in and sit by me Little Dave”. I was Little Dave from then on. The welcome I had from Drac on my first day shaped my life. He most certainly took me under his wing.

Drac was the greatest influence in my musical life. I had never before heard the horn played like he could play. For at least 3 courses I sat next to him as 5th horn (bumper). I was not really up to it but it was a wonderful experience. At that time Drac played on a single F horn and there were occasions in the music when some notes that he was required to play were not available on his instrument due to its harmonic structure. When this happened he would swap his instrument with another player who had a double horn - just for a few bars maybe - and then give it back. Seamless!

Drac often got into trouble with his harmless antics during rehearsals and was frequently sent out of the room by the conductor Russell Sheppard. I remember a rehearsal when the course was held at Barry Training College. We were rehearsing Saint-Saëns 2nd Piano concerto - Arnold Draper was the soloist - and Drac decided that there should be a *Liberace* moment during the cadenza. He had found a Wee Willie Winkie candle holder - complete with candle - somewhere in the college and decided to put it on the grand piano - candle lit - at the appropriate time. It took a few moments for the conductor to realise what was happening. In a rage he stopped the rehearsal and shouted "Who is responsible for this?" Slowly Drac put his hand up. "Terence Johns - you buffoon - get out. We'll all be razed in our beds!" Of course much hilarity then ensued from the rest of the orchestra.

I remember arriving on one course to see Drac joining the double bass section. I soon discovered that due to injury he would not be able to play his horn that week but he didn't want to miss the course. Drac sometimes played double bass in a dance band that worked in the pubs/clubs in Aberdare. On this occasion, as the band played, Drac noticed that some men were 'having a go' at the tenor saxophone player at the front of the band. As things escalated he left his bass and climbed through the band to go to the man's aid. Things did not go well and Drac ended up in a brawl where several of his front teeth were knocked out. Intensive treatment followed before he could play the horn again.

In 1966 I started studying at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Drac had left the Royal Academy of Music the year before and was working with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra as 3rd horn. After a few months he sold me his Alexander 103 double horn for £100. I remember being very pleased to think that this is the horn he had played on his first film session in 1966 - *The Blue Max*. He played on many more including *Superman*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Oliver*, *Goodbye Mr. Chips* and *The Star Wars Trilogy*. By then he had joined the London Symphony Orchestra. He was 1st horn for *Return of the Jedi*. His soaring solos can be heard clearly on the soundtrack of the film.

There was an occasion when Drac and trumpeter John Wallace were chatting at the end of a concert. A friend of Drac's came to speak to him. Drac introduced his friend to John: "This is John - he played the trumpet at Charles and Diana's wedding". John replied: "That's nothing! Drac played the horn at Darth Vader's funeral!"

Over the next few years we would meet from time to time at concerts and he gave me a couple of free lessons at his home in Wimbledon. I wish he had been my teacher throughout my studies.

When I returned to Wales in 1971, Drac and I lost touch for a while apart from the occasional phone call. The next time I saw him was in 2005 when he was playing with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms - *Ein Heldenleben*.

The following year, he and his wife Karin flew from Edinburgh to attend the 10th Anniversary Concert of the Four Counties Youth Orchestra (The Glam) at Cardiff City Hall. On the programme was a piece he had composed for solo trumpet and wind band: *I Wyddel (For an Irishman)*. It was originally written for Mark O'Keefe, the then principal trumpet with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. For our concert in Cardiff the soloist

was 19-year-old Huw Morgan from Bridgend, brass winner and concerto finalist in the BBC Young Musician of the Year, 2006. I was very pleased to conduct the piece. Three “home grown” musicians produced by youth music in South Wales!



Dave and Drac at the Glam reunion concert in 2015

Drac was a great supporter of amateur and youth music. He wrote *Fanfare for Youth* especially for the Glam Reunion concert held at St David’s Hall in 2015. He travelled from Edinburgh to conduct the work himself. After that we kept in contact via Zoom etc. but that was the last time I saw him face to face.

Following the news that he had sadly passed away, I received the following message from Drac’s wife, Karin: “Drac was taken into hospital on Sunday 9th February with pneumonia which did not respond to any of the antibiotics. He had never really recovered from Covid, which he had contracted 3 years ago and was just too weak to fight it. Life will be so empty for me without him but I have been amazed and grateful for all the wonderful memories friends and colleagues have shared. Thank you so much for getting in touch”.

It was a very sad day when I heard the news that Drac had passed away. He was great fun to be with and I feel proud to say that this gentle, unassuming musical genius was my friend.

**David Hughes**

## Stay Connected with the Friends of NYOW!



Don't forget to follow us on Instagram: [@nyowfriends](#)! We share a mix of treasured archive photos and behind-the-scenes snapshots from recent events – a wonderful celebration of the past and present of the Friends and the NYOW.

We are always keen to add to our growing collection. If you have any photos or memories from your time with the Nash that you would be happy for us to share, please send them to Hannah Roberts at [hannahrobwales@icloud.com](mailto:hannahrobwales@icloud.com) – we'd love to hear from you!

And of course, don't forget to visit our website: <https://fnyow.cymru/>