

Taliesin Arts Centre (Wales) in co-production with
Le Chien Qui Chante (Quebec) & Companion Star (New York)
and in association with Welsh National Opera

Canolfan y Celfyddydau Taliesin (Cymru) cyd-gynhyrchiad
gyda Le Chien Qui Chante (Quebec) a Companion Star
(Efrog Newydd) ac ar y cyd gydag Opera Cenedlaethol Cymru

UNDER MILK WOOD

an opera

Based on the original play for voices by Dylan Thomas
Composed by **John Metcalf** Text by **Dylan Thomas**

Yn seiliedig ar y ddrama wreiddiol ar gyfer lleisiau
gan Dylan Thomas. Cyfansoddwyd gan **John Metcalf**
Testun gan **Dylan Thomas**

Image: Hywel Harris





INTRODUCTION

from the composer

'Born, like Dylan Thomas, in Swansea and living in West Wales where Under Milk Wood is set, I feel a very familiar instinctive connection with this iconic work. I believe that art, like people, belongs to the particular first, the universal second.'

People I speak to say that Under Milk Wood does reverberate very strongly outside of Wales. Its appeal is to every member of every oddball community whether in Newfoundland, Maine or Brooklyn. In these days of 'globalisation' the Boondocks still exist. This is a piece about those communities – the unheralded corners of the world. That's a thread which runs through the whole piece.

I don't have any doubt that the work we have been doing has the ability to touch, to change, to reach a large new audience without in any way compromising its integrity – by in fact asserting its integrity and its values. I am interested in revisiting some of the spatial, hierarchical, and performance practice preconditions which I believe stand in the way of new opera being more fully connected and responsive to changes in contemporary and world theatre and to cultural development in the broadest sense. Generations raised on MTV embrace the idea that the act of creating music, not just the sound created, is an integral part of performance and yet many new operas go out of their way to hide and neutralize the musicians. New audiences want performance that, to some extent, reflects what they experience – not musicians dressed in the same white ties that audiences stopped wearing a century ago.'

John Metcalf, Composer

CYFLWYNIAD

o'r cyfansoddwr

'Oherwydd fe'm ganed, fel Dylan Thomas, yn Abertawe ac rwy'n byw yng Ngorllewin Cymru lle lleolir Dan Y Wenallt, teimlaf gysylltiad greddfrol cyfarwydd iawn â'r gwaith eiconig hwn. Rwy'n credu bod celf, fel pobl, yn perthyn i'r penodol yn gyntaf, a'r cyffredinol yn ail.'

Mae pobl yn dweud bod Dan Y Wenallt yn adleisio'n gryf iawn y tu allan i Gymru. Mae'n apelio i bob aelod o bob cymuned anghyffredin, boed yn Newfoundland, Maine neu Brooklyn. Yn y dyddiau 'globaleiddio' hyn, mae cymunedau anghysbell yn parhau i fodoli. Mae hwn yn ddarn am y cymunedau hynny - corneli di-glod y byd. Dyna'r llinyn sy'n rhedeg drwy'r darn cyfan.

Nid oes gennyf unrhyw amheuaeth bod gan y gwaith yr ydym wedi bod yn ei wneud y gallu i gyffwrdd, i newid, i gyrraedd cynulleidfa newydd fawr heb beryglu ei uniondeb mewn unrhyw ffordd - mewn gwirionedd, wrth ddatgan ei gyfanrwydd a'i werthoedd. Mae gennyf ddiddordeb mewn ail-ymweld â rhai o'r rhag-amodau yn ymwneud â gofod, hierarchaeth, ac ymarfer perfformiad sydd, yn fy marn i, yn rhwystro opera newydd rhag cael cysylltiad mwy llawn a mwy ymatebol i newidiadau yn y theatr gyfoes a byd-eang ac i ddatblygiad diwylliannol yn yr ystyr ehangaf. Mae cenedlaethau a fagwyd ar MTV yn cofleidio'r syniad bod y weithred o greu cerddoriaeth, nid yn unig y sain sy'n cael ei creu, yn rhan annatod o berfformiad, ac eto mae llawer o operâu newydd yn mynd allan o'u ffordd i guddio a niwtraleiddio'r cerddorion. Mae cynulleidfaoedd newydd eisiau perfformiad sydd, i ryw raddau, yn adlewyrchu'r hyn maent yn ei brofi - nid cerddorion sy'n gwisgo'r un teis gwyn a roddodd cynulleidfaoedd y gorau i'w gwisgo ganrif yn ôl.'

John Metcalf, Cyfansoddwr

'Praise the Lord, we are a musical nation.'

It is not easy to define why Dylan Thomas achieved such an unusually world-wide and lasting fame. His poetry often displays a Celtic intricacy in its construction and can be elusive in its imagery. In his lifetime he seems to have had as many detractors as fans, and not only on account of his disorderly personal life. But he had the most remarkable voice, and an ear for the sound of poetry. He used both to full effect. So familiar did that rich diapason sound become that, in time, it even became the default mode in which to parody poetry reading.

Dylan read his own poems and the poems of others on radio, a medium that, in 1953, had yet to relinquish its ascendancy to television, despite the coronation. He did so with astonishing empathy for a wide range of poetry. My father, Aneurin, produced some of those readings, as well as some of Dylan's radio talks, from the BBC's studios in Alexandra Road, Swansea. Later he and an American academic, Ralph Maud, edited an anthology of the poems Dylan had read, under the title, *The Colour of Saying*, from a line from Dylan's work – 'Once it was the colour of saying...' - that expresses the importance of sound for the poet himself.

The two editors stressed that 'the art of public utterance was still at a premium in the Wales of his boyhood days' – in the pulpit and politics - and that the importance of 'saying' had been alive in Dylan from an early age. They quote Dylan's own description of falling in love with nursery rhymes as a child:

"I had come to love just the words of them, the words alone. What the words stood for, symbolised or meant, was of very secondary importance; what mattered was the sound of them as I heard them for the first time on the lips of the remote and incomprehensible grown-ups who seemed, for some reason, to be living in my world."

It is also clear to anyone listening to *Under Milk Wood* that Dylan had a musical ear for the voices of his own people. That, combined with his intricate craftsmanship, is what has led some to describe the work not just as a 'play for voices' but as a 'fugue for voices'.

So it is wholly appropriate that *Under Milk Wood* should be made into an opera, given musical expression, also that it should have been commissioned by a Swansea-based organisation, the Taliesin Arts Centre, from John Metcalf, a composer born in the town, and one who has made such a mark on contemporary music in Wales. It has been a privilege for Welsh National Opera to assist the process.

'Praise the Lord, we are a musical nation.'

Geraint Talfan Davies
Chairman, Welsh National Opera

Costume design illustrations
courtesy of Simon Banham



METCALF'S "UNDER MILK WOOD"

Mounting a Premiere

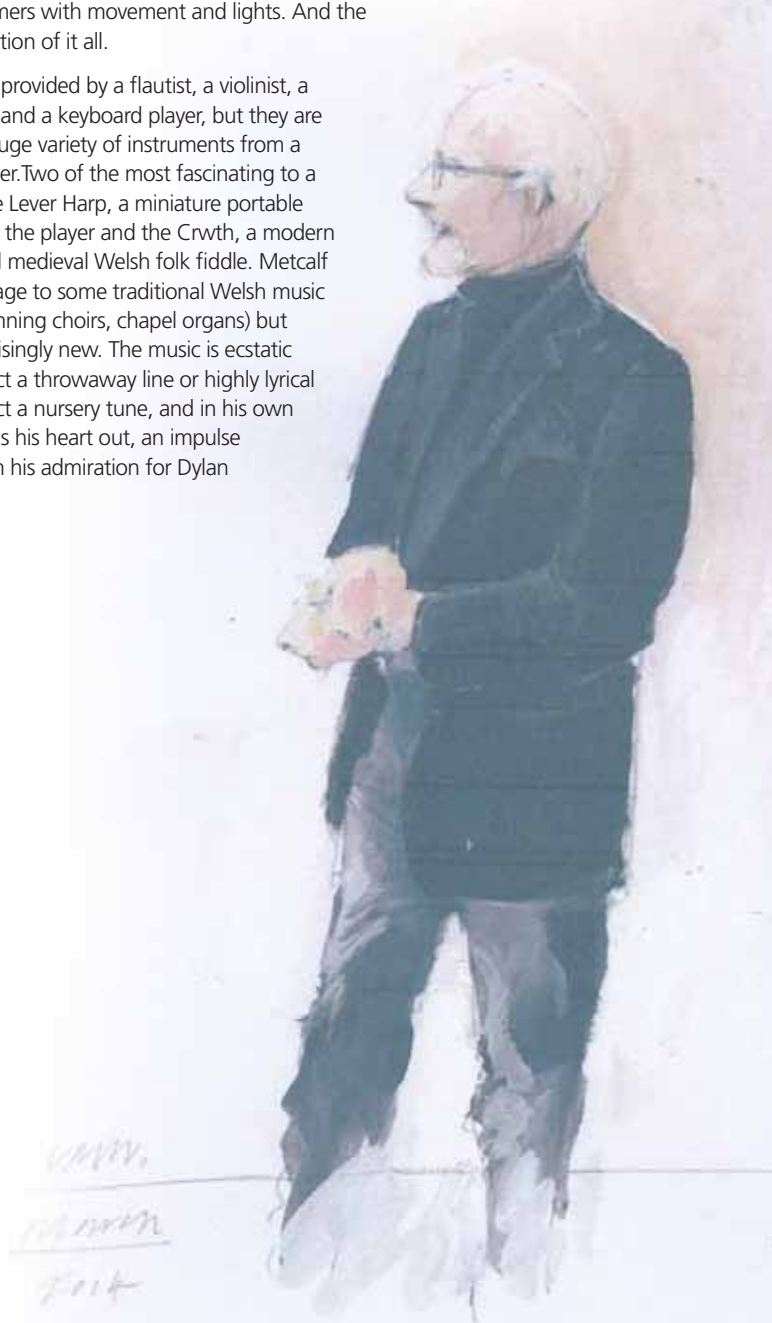
From page to stage for the very first time. What wonderful freedom. It's a licence to let your imagination fly. You'd think. Except that this text is as familiar as the scriptures and most of the audience will have seen it on the stage before. But this isn't Thomas' play, it's Metcalf's translation of it into music. There's a massive difference because the composer has done a very great deal more than setting the songs to music and writing incidental music for the narrations. He has elevated and expanded the play's moods and invented a world in which the sound of a speaking voice would be unwelcome. Quite a feat when the words are those of Dylan Thomas.

It is over fifteen years since John Metcalf turned away from large scale opera and began his series of musical chamber dramas. His idea was to create theatre in which the action spoke directly to the audience without the barrier of an orchestra pit or a conductor. Under Milk Wood is written for eight singers and five instrumentalists all of whom take part in the action of the drama. This means the players need to rehearse almost as much as the singers, who share between them over 30 roles of every vocal type.

Throughout the years of composing the piece Metcalf has kept his focus on the fact that it was originally a radio play, a play for voices. The transformation of the familiar speaking voices into singing ones has been his inspiration, and a perfect vehicle for Metcalf's soaring gift for vocal writing. The score incorporates a prepared, recorded soundscape and translating score to stage has involved combining various elements: the uncompromising and demanding music, the soundscape, the live and visible noises associated with action in a radio play, the dramatic combination of performers with movement and lights. And the conductorless coordination of it all.

The accompaniment is provided by a flautist, a violinist, a harpist, a percussionist and a keyboard player, but they are called upon to play a huge variety of instruments from a bass flute to a rainshaker. Two of the most fascinating to a Welsh audience are the Lever Harp, a miniature portable instrument strapped to the player and the Crwth, a modern copy of the six-stringed medieval Welsh folk fiddle. Metcalf also pays oblique homage to some traditional Welsh music (modal harmonies, hymning choirs, chapel organs) but his style is uncompromisingly new. The music is ecstatic where you might expect a throwaway line or highly lyrical where you might expect a nursery tune, and in his own way the composer sings his heart out, an impulse that stems directly from his admiration for Dylan Thomas' own lyricism.

Wyn Davies
Music Director



CREATIVE TEAM



John Metcalf **Composer**

John Metcalf was born in Swansea, Wales in 1946. A joint UK/Canadian citizen, he is one of the foremost composers working in Wales in today. His composing career has already embraced a large variety of work including six operas, two to commission from Welsh National Opera. His fifth opera Kafka's Chimp was premiered to great acclaim in 1996 in Canada, received its European premiere in Sweden in 1999 and US premiere in Pittsburgh in 2004. His last opera A Chair in Love was premiered at the Taliesin Arts Centre, Swansea in October 2005.

Since the early 1990's a definitive series of orchestral and chamber works have helped to enhance his reputation nationally and internationally. These include Paradise Haunts, Dances from Forgotten Places and Mapping Wales. In December 1999 a collaboration with artist Catrin Webster on Transports was previewed at the Galeria Communale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Rome.

Performances around the world marked John's 60th birthday year in 2006. Highlights included a special concert in Sofia in May, the North American premiere of A Chair in Love in Montreal in June, a performance of Three Mobiles at the World Saxophone congress in Slovenia in July and a special concert by Lontano in London. The BBC marked his anniversary year with a special commission, In Time of Daffodils.

John Metcalf was both an Artistic Director and Associate Artistic Director at the Banff Centre, Canada for a period of nearly ten years and was Artistic Director of the Swansea Festival from 1996 - 2007. He is presently Artistic Director of the awardwinning Vale of Glamorgan Festival. He has led creative music projects in more than one hundred schools throughout Wales, reflecting his belief in an active, participatory role for the composer in society.

He is an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre, an Honorary Fellow of the University of Wales, Lampeter, of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and of University College Cardiff. In September 1995 he received the John Edwards Memorial Award awarded by the Guild for the Promotion of Welsh Music for his services to music in Wales. In 1999 his music was played during the signing, by Her Majesty the Queen, of the Act bringing into being Wales' first elected Assembly for 500 years. His music is recorded on the Lorelt, Sain, Cyfoes and Nimbus labels. Signum Classics recently recorded a disc of orchestral works performed by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales for release in the autumn of 2007.



Keith Turnbull **Stage Director/Dramaturge/Producer**

Keith Turnbull is a director, dramaturge and producer committed to contemporary and new work in both theatre and opera. He was artistic director of the Manitoba Theatre Centre; of Second Stage, Neptune Theatre; and founding artistic director of the NDWT Co. with which he started a First Nations theatre company from which emerged many of Canada's most noted native performers and writers. He is the former Artistic Director/Executive Producer of Banff Theatre Arts. He has taught extensively throughout Canada.

He has directed over eighty plays in theatres across Canada and has directed opera/music theatre for Cultural Industries (Toronto), Music Theatre Wales, Peteå Chamber Opera (Sweden), Taliesin Arts Centre (Wales), Vale of Glamorgan Festival (Wales), UK in NY Festival (New York) and Vancouver Opera. For Banff Theatre Arts, he directed works by Aperghis, Maxwell Davies, Finnessy, Kagel, Menotti, Stravinsky, Weill, and Zimmermann; produced works by Antheil, Berg, Birtwistle, Daugherty, Henze, Nyman and Vivier; and directed the world premieres of A Chair in Love (Metcalf), Boiler Room Suite (Doolittle), Ubu (Toovey), Kafka's Chimp (Metcalf) and Zürich:1916 (Butterfield). In Montreal he recently directed José Evangelista's Exercices d'Opera and Isabelle Panneton's L'Arche. Keith Turnbull is Canada's most experienced producer and director of contemporary opera.

CREATIVE TEAM



Wyn Davies
Music Director
(Light Tenor)

Organ Morgan/Others & Ensemble/piano synthesiser.

Wyn Davies was appointed Director of Music for New Zealand Opera in 2005. After graduating in music from Christ Church, Oxford, he became a repetiteur and Staff Conductor at Welsh National Opera. He has conducted a wide repertoire ranging from Monteverdi's The Coronation of Poppea to Janacek's The Cunning Little Vixen (WNO/Scottish Opera), through Mozart and Rossini at ENO, to Gershwin and Puccini operas at Opera North. He has collaborated with John Metcalf on several of his operas, including the most recent A Chair in Love. He spent two seasons as assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera, New York and undertook two winter seasons for the Banff Centre for the Performing Arts in Canada which included the award-winning production of Weill's Threepenny Opera in Toronto. He has been conducting in New Zealand for thirteen years and other recent international engagements include the Bregenz Festival, La Cenerentola for Opera Queensland and a New Year's concert at the Teatro di Pisa. Wyn also has a career in cabaret, having appeared in festivals from Edinburgh to Salisbury. Two albums of Just Wyn recordings have been released.



Paula Danckert
Foley Director

Paula Danckert is a dramaturg, producer of live radio and performance, Foley artist and teacher. For five years she worked as Company Dramaturg and Artistic Associate at Canada's National Arts Centre. Before joining the NAC, Paula was the Artistic & Executive Director of Playwrights' Workshop Montreal in Quebec. In Halifax, Nova Scotia she was President of Playwrights' Atlantic Resource Centre, and a drama producer at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. She was also Associate Producer for Live Art Productions: New Dance Series, Foley artist for Salter Street Films, and host of Artspeak on CKDU- FM. She has been the Associate Dramaturg at The New Play Centre in Vancouver, at Banff's Playwrights' Colony and at The Stratford Shakespeare Festival. Paula graduated from Canada's National Theatre School where she has taught for many years.



Simon Banham
Stage & Costume Design

Simon is a founder member of Quarantine, (www.qtine.com) and is responsible for all their productions. In 2005 Quarantine were awarded the 'Art 05' prize for outstanding achievements in the arts.

Two of his designs: Ion, (Opera National du Rhin) and Rantsoen, (Quarantine and Victoria Theatre Company) were chosen for presentation at the inaugural World Stage Design 2005 exhibition. For WSD 2009 he was invited to exhibit For You (Music Theatre Wales), Grace (Quarantine) and Rebekka (Norwegian National Opera). He has a long working relationship with Music Theatre Wales most recently Greek which was awarded Outstanding Achievement in Opera 2011, at the Theatre Awards UK.

He recently designed Coriolanus the second collaboration with Mike Pearson and Mike Brookes for National Theatre Wales; his first collaboration, a production of The Persians, was awarded the Best Design 2010 award by the TMA.

His work has been part of a Gold medal winning British entry at the Prague Quadrennial.

Since 1999 Simon has taught at Aberystwyth University where he is a Senior Lecturer in Scenography and Theatre Design.



Michael Beer
Sound Design

Mike started his career at the Sherman Theatre Cardiff in the late 80's. Since then he has toured Theatre and Corporate events Worldwide with many companies, including DV8 Physical Theatre, Diversions Dance, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Act Productions, Theatre Clwyd, Clarion Productions, Imagination, Wildworks and The National Museum and Galleries of Wales.

Mike's designs include: Coasting, Treasure Island, Peter Pan and The Boy Who Cried Wolf (Bristol Old Vic), Branches, Coriolan/us, In Water I'm Weightless, The Radicalisation of Bradley, A Provincial Life, The Passion, The Persians, and Love Steals Us From Loneliness, (National Theatre Wales), Tir Sir Gar and Deffro'r Gwanwyn (Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru), The BFG (Fieri Angel), Great Expectations (Aberystwyth Arts Centre), Say It with Flowers, Desire Lines, The Borrowers and Merlin (The Sherman Theatre Company), The Firework Maker's Daughter and Danny the Champion of the World (Birmingham Stage Company), Single Spies, Legal Fictions, Happy Days, Love and Marriage, The Gingerbread Man, Where there's a Will, The Importance of Being Earnest (The Theatre Royal Bath).

Much of Mike's work for the last 6 years has been with Stage Sound Services, working as Sound Designer and Project Manager on theatre and corporate events.



John Bishop
Lighting Design

John is an award-winning Lighting Designer who has created original lighting designs for more than 185 major productions including: Tannhäuser, Le Roi Arthus (Strasbourg), Marriage of Figaro (Warsaw); Der Ring des Nibelungen, Der Fliegende Holländer (Oslo); Tristan und Isolde, Don Juan (Aarhus); Peter Grimes, Le Revenant (Madrid); Don Giovanni (São Paulo); A Chair in Love (Swansea & Montreal); Demon Juice (ROH, Covent Garden); Ernani (English National Opera); La Traviata, West Side Story (Welsh National Opera); Albert Herring (Opera North); Hänsel und Gretel (Belfast); Vanessa, Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria (Royal Northern College of Music); Swan Lake, The Nutcracker, Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Romeo and Juliet, Snow White, Peter and the Wolf, Carnival of the Animals (Kiev Classical Ballet); Little Red Riding Hood, The Three Little Pigs (Ballet Cymru); the rock opera Demones (Athens); The Woman in Black (Dubai); Brand, The Vortex, The Private Room (London); numerous productions for Opera Zuid (Maastricht) and for the Buxton Opera Festival (UK).

John created the lighting design for the World Premiere, and subsequent tours, of John Metcalf's acclaimed opera A Chair in Love at Taliesin, Swansea.

Future productions include: La Gazetta (RCM), Hänsel und Gretel (Frankfurt), The Cunning Peasant (Guildhall School of Music and Drama).



Ethan Forde
Projection Design

Ethan Forde graduated from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in July 2012. Since then he has been working as a freelance sound and video designer on a variety of shows. Ethan also works with the production team at Stage Sound Services who provide sound and video equipment for some of the most high profile theatre shows in the UK.

His design credits include: Jackie The Musical - Video Designer (Gardyne Theatre, Dundee). Dead Born Grow - Sound and Video Designer (Frantic Assembly and National Youth Theatre of Wales). Y Storm – Sound and Video Designer, Gwlad yr Addewid - Video Programmer - (Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru). Dick Whittington, Aladdin - Sound Designer (Aberystwyth Arts Centre). Wallace, The Ghost of Morfa Colliery – Sound and Video Designer (Theatr Na n'Óg). Resonance At The Still Point Of Change - Video Designer (Royal Festival Hall, London).

As production engineer - From Here To Eternity - Production Video Engineer (Shaftsbury Theatre, London), Let it Be - UK Tour - Production Video Engineer (Manchester, Torquay), Ghost The Musical - UK Tour - Production Video Engineer (Various).

SCENE LIST

There are, in total, 29 short scenes in the opera. Only Dylan Thomas' text from *Under Milk Wood* is used with some cuts and re-ordering, though broadly speaking the sequence of the original is followed.

The numbering of the Scenes reflects at times the process of composition. For example a late decision to place Scene 8b earlier led to its renumbering as Scene 7a - 3.

The (musical) letters relating to each scene indicate the pedal/drone notes on which the music of that scene or group of scenes is based. The movement through the twelve chromatic steps mirrors the passing of time over 24 hours. The piece is performed without a break. We eventually return to the opening C.

C

SCENE 1A

It is Spring

SCENE 1B

Only your eyes

SCENE 1C

Time passes

SCENE 1D

The big seas of their dreams

SCENE 1E

Night of the Drowned

C SHARP

SCENE 2A

Dreams of Miss Price and Mr. Edwards

SCENE 2B

Dreams of the Ogmore-Pritchards

D

SCENE 3A

Everybody dreams

SCENE 3B

The dawn inches up

E FLAT

SCENE 4

Rev. Eli Jenkins' Morning Service

E

SCENE 5A

The Owens' late night supper

SCENE 5B

Mr. Pugh takes up the morning tea

SCENE 5C

Lily Smalls makes tea

F

SCENE 6

The Post

F SHARP

SCENE 7A-1

By the pump

SCENE 7A-2

Polly Garter's Aria

SCENE 7A-3

I'm a martyr to music

SCENE 7B

Johnnie Crack and Flossie Snail

G

SCENE 8

Gossamer and Sinbad

G SHARP

SCENE 9

Afternoon with Polly Garter

A

SCENE 10A

Knock twice, Jack

SCENE 10B

Dusk showers slowly down

SCENE 10C

Two shambling phantoms

B FLAT

SCENE 11

Rev. Jenkins' Sunset Poem

B

SCENE 12A

The Sailors' Arms

SCENE 12B

Mr Waldo's Song

SCENE 12C

The dead come out in their Sunday best

C

SCENE 13A

In the cold earth

SCENE 13B

This one Spring day

CREATIVE TEAM

COMPOSER

John Metcalf

DIRECTOR

Keith Turnbull

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Wyn Davies

FOLEY DIRECTOR

Paula Danckert

DESIGN

Simon Banham

SOUND DESIGN

Michael Beer

LIGHTING DESIGN

John Bishop

PROJECTION DESIGN

Ethan Forde

PRODUCERS

FOR TALIESIN

Sybil Crouch

Stella Patrick

FOR LE CHIEN QUI CHANTE

Keith Turnbull

FOR COMPANION STAR INC

Michael Douglas

Jones

SINGERS

Elizabeth Donovan

(Soprano)

Helen-Jane Howells

(Soprano)

Gweneth-Ann Jeffers

(Soprano)

Paul Carey Jones

(Baritone)

Michael Douglas

Jones

(Bass/Baritone)

Karina Lucas

(Mezzo)

Richard Morris

(Baritone)

Eamonn Mulhall

(Tenor)

Cwm Glas Primary

School Choir

(Children's Choir Recording)

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Parmela Attariwala

(Viola/Violin/Crwth)

Wyn Davies

(Organ/Piano)

Deian Rowlands

(Concert harp/Clarsach)

Jose Zalba Smith

(Flutes)

Paul Stoneman

(Percussion)

PRODUCTION TEAM

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Ceri James

COMPANY STAGE MANAGER

Richard Balshaw

DEPUTY STAGE MANAGER

Victoria Eames

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Claire Roberts

PRODUCTION BUILD

Andrew Knight

Wyn Fellowes

WARDROBE

Danial Thatcher

ASSISTANT TO THE MUSIC

DIRECTOR

Nicola Rose

ASSISTANT TO THE

COMPOSER **Tom Green**

SOUND OPERATOR

James Marsh

PRODUCTION ELECTRICIAN

Alex Russell

TAP DANCE TUITION

Kylie Ann Smith

PRESS RELATIONS

The Corner Shop

MARKETING

Taliesin Arts Centre

EDUCATION CO-ORDINATOR

Derek Coble



*Michael
Captain Cat
the
corp?*

OUR SINGERS



Elizabeth Donovan (Soprano)

Miss Myfanwy Price/Polly Garter/Mrs Butcher Beynon/Mrs Floyd/Others & Ensemble

Elizabeth was the 2002 Welsh Singer of the Year and represented Wales in BBC Cardiff Singer of the World 2003. She finished her studies at the National Opera Studio in London having previously studied at the Royal Northern College of Music.

Winning several awards whilst at college, Elizabeth was the first recipient of the Maidment Scholarship from Musicians' Benevolent Fund, a Miriam Licete Award, a Sybill Tutton Award, The Countess of Munster Award and was a Sir Peter Moores Foundation Scholar. Further accolades include a prizewinner at the 2006 Concours International de Chant de Toulouse and prizewinner at the 2007 Veronica Dunne International Singing Competition.

A former Welsh National Opera Associate Artist, roles for the company included Flowermaiden Parsifal, Erste dame Die Zauberflöte, Micaela (Cover) Carmen, Echo Ariadne auf Naxos, Berta Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Valencienne (Cover) The Merry Widow, Barbarina, Susanna (Cover) Le Nozze di Figaro & Zerlina Don Giovanni.

Other opera appearances have included Hero Beatrice & Benedict, Marzelline Fidelio, Konstanze Die Entführung aus dem Serail for Welsh National Opera; Pamina Die Zauberflöte, Fiordiligi Così fan tutte, Donna Anna Don Giovanni & Ortlinde Die Walküre for Longborough Festival Opera; Norina Don Pasquale for Diva Opera, Constanza The Seraglio for English Touring Opera and Clorinda La Cenerentola for Scottish Opera Go Round.

Concert highlights have included Oriana Amadigi at the Edingburgh Festival with the Northern Sinfonia; BBC Proms debut singing Brigitta Iolante for WNO; Mozart's Requiem at the Welsh Proms, St. David's Hall; Britten's Spring Symphony at the Chester Festival with the RLPO; Leila Les pêcheurs des perles for Chelsea Opera Group at the Queen Elizabeth Hall; Elijah, Mozart's C Minor Mass and Haydn's Nelson Mass at the Fishguard International Festival; Beethoven Folksong Arrangements in Seville; WNO Royal Gala at Buckingham Palace.

Elizabeth has given recitals at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, broadcast live by Radio France, and at the Fishguard International Festival and National Museum of Wales, broadcast live on BBC Radio 3. Recordings include Songs of the Cotten Grass by Hilary Tann for Deux-Elles; Sine Nomine Herbert Howells for Classico; the London Welsh Festival of Male Voices at the Royal Albert Hall recorded on DVD for SAIN.



Helen-Jane Howells (Soprano)

Gossamer Beynon/Lily Smalls/Mrs Pugh/Others & Ensemble

Having started her musical career in the jazz world, British soprano Helen-Jane Howells trained at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and the Royal College of Music where she was the recipient of the John Warner Competition, the Russell Sheppard Vocal Scholarship, the Simon Fletcher Award as well as support from the Richard Carne and Josephine Baker Trusts and the Samling Foundation. She was winner of the 2010 Patricia Routledge English Song Competition and continues her studies with Jennifer Smith.

Helen-Jane has sung Eve The Fairy Queen for Glyndebourne Festival Opera and at the Opéra Comique and Brooklyn Academy of Music with Les Arts Florissants and William Christie, Amore L'Incoronazione di Poppea for Glyndebourne on Tour, Dido & Aeneas at The Bath Festival, Vasco Mendonça's Ping for Music Theatre Wales and Tom Smail's Soon at the Tête-à-Tête Festival.

On the concert platform she has performed Bach with the OAE/John Butt, Messiah with the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra/Nicholas Kraemer, Messiah in Spain, the St Matthew Passion in Lausanne and Wrocław and The Fairy Queen in Beaune all with The Gabrieli Consort/Paul McCreech, also with McCreech, Amore in Gluck Orphée et Euridyce with the Spanish National Orchestra; She has sung Bach Cantatas and Magnificat with the Academy of Ancient Music/Richard Egarr and Beethoven Mass in C at the Worcester Three Choirs Festival. Other engagements have included the St Matthew Passion with The Bach Choir/David Hill and a staged version with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment/Suzi Digby. Amongst recent projects are Messiah with Kraemer and the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, King Arthur with Ensemble La Fenice/Jean Tubéry as well as Bach with La Nuova Musica/David Bates.

A busy recitalist, her recent appearances include a programme with Christopher Glynn at the Ryedale Festival, Purcell songs and duets at the Opera de Dijon and Britten and contemporary works with Huw Watkins at the Presteigne Festival. Helen-Jane has recorded Handel and Vivaldi with La Nuova Musica for Harmonia Mundi USA and Joseph Phibbs' The Canticle of the Rose with The Navarra Quartet for NMC.

Her plans include The Fairy Queen for Bury Court Opera, as well as Charpentier and Mozart with Florilegium/David Hill, Purcell with Ensemble La Fenice/Tubéry, Bach with Kraemer in Kristiansand, on tour with The Gabrieli Consort/McCreech and Prom Praise at the Royal Albert Hall.



Gweneth-Ann Jeffers (Soprano)

Mrs Ogmores-Pritchard/Mrs Organ Morgan/Bessie Bighead/Mae Rose-Cottage/Others & Ensemble

Gweneth-Ann Jeffers trained at the University of Exeter, Goldsmith's College and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. During her training she received the Maggie Teyte, Ian Fleming and Sybil Tutton Awards. She was a Vilar Young Artist at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and in 2001 represented England at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition.

Operatic engagements include Aida for Theater Bremen, Oper Kiel, Finnish National Opera, Macedonian Opera, Opera Poznań and Oldenburgisches Staatstheater; Senta Der fliegende Holländer at London's Barbican Hall with London Lyric Opera; Leonora La forza del destino for Oper Köln and Chelsea Opera Group; Leonora Il trovatore for Welsh National Opera; Amelia in Un ballo in maschera & Margherita/Helena in Boito's Mefistofele for Theater Erfurt; Tosca at the Teatro Nacional de São Carlos; Guttrune Götterdämmerung at the BBC Proms under Donald Runnicles; Santuzza Cavalleria Rusticana & title roles in La Gioconda and La Wally for Opera Holland Park; Bess Porgy and Bess for the Basel Chamber Orchestra and Macedonian Philharmonic; Ariadne Ariadne auf Naxos with the Orchestre de Picardie and appearances at the Royal Opera Covent Garden in Elektra, Daphne and The Cunning Little Vixen.

Her varied concert and recital engagements include the Verdi Requiem in Truro Cathedral; Ein deutsches Requiem and Strauss Four Last Songs in Canterbury Cathedral; a Michael Berkeley programme with the Endymion Ensemble; Zemlinsky Der König Kaudales in Gran Canaria; Dvořák Stabat Mater in Madrid; Tippett A Child of Our Time with the NDR Hannover, the CBSO and Göteborgs Symfoniker under Robin Ticciati; Britten War Requiem in Warsaw; and Mahler Das klagende Lied in Rome and at the BBC Proms; the European premiere of Elliott Carter Of Rewaking and Vaughan Williams Third Symphony both with the CBSO. She sang Poulenc Gloria for the Three Choirs Festival and Schoenberg Gurrelieder with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra under Markus Stenz and also in Japan.

Gweneth-Ann is widely known for her critically acclaimed interpretations of Messiaen's song cycles Harawi performed at the Cheltenham Festival & Wigmore Hall and Poèmes pour Mi performed with the Gürzenich Orchester Köln and the Tonhalle Orchester Zürich. She also performed Harawi as part of the Southbank Centre's composer centenary celebrations 'From the Canyons to the Stars' and at the 2008 BBC Proms.

Highlights of the current season include Schoenberg's Gurrelieder with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería in Mexico, Sieglinde in Act 1 of Die Walküre and Wesendonck Lieder at the Internationales Kammermusikfestival Nürnberg and covering Lady Macbeth Macbeth for Opera North and Abigaille Nabucco for Welsh National Opera.



Paul Carey Jones (Baritone)

Dancing Williams/Mr Pritchard/Mr Pugh/Mr Floyd/Sinbad Sailors/Willy Nilly/Fisherman/Others & Ensemble

Paul Carey Jones was born in Cardiff and studied at The Queen's College Oxford, The Royal Academy of Music and the National Opera Studio, where he was the recipient of the National Eisteddfod of Wales' W. Towy Roberts Scholarship. In May 2013 he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and he was joint winner of the 2013 Wagner Society Singing Competition.

His operatic work includes principal roles for companies including Northern Ireland Opera, Scottish Opera, Wexford Festival Opera, Teatro Rossini di Lugo and Teatro Comunale di Bologna. Highlights of the 2013 season included his début for Welsh National Opera as Doctor Schön in David Pountney's new production of Alban Berg's Lulu; the title role in Verdi's Macbeth for Northern Ireland Opera; the title role of Benjamin Britten's Noye's Fludde in the work's Chinese première at the Beijing Music Festival, and again at the MISA Festival in Shanghai; and the release of his new album of contemporary British song, Songs Now, with the pianist Ian Ryan.

He has given the world premières of many works, including Richard Elfyn Jones' In David's Land and Stephen McNeff's Cities of Dreams, as well as songs and song cycles by Sadie Harrison, Emily Hall, Peter Reynolds, Mike Parkin, David Power, David Lancaster, Dick Blackford, Tom Armstrong and Jonathan Owen Clark.

As a recitalist he has worked regularly in collaboration with the award-winning pianist Llyr Williams for nearly fifteen years; their début album Enaid – Songs of the Soul was recently released to critical acclaim. Paul's other recent recordings include Michael Daugherty's Jackie O on DVD, and Edward German's Tom Jones for Naxos.

OUR SINGERS



Michael Douglas Jones (Bass-Baritone)

Captain Cat/Others & Ensemble

Michael is the founder and director of Companion Star, a co-producer of tonight's production of *Under Milk Wood*. Rooted and trained in the classical singing tradition, Michael began his career at New York City Opera debuting as the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*. He sang Puccini and Verdi roles throughout North America from New York to Alaska and Canada. He is a singing artist with 25 years of experience in creating and collaborating on new works for the stage and maintains an active performing and teaching career. Much of the new work of his career was at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta, Canada where he trained in alternative voice techniques, physical movement and improvisation and experimentation. The years of experimental work at the Banff Centre became his career focus and that work is the foundation for Companion Star. *Under Milk Wood* is Michael's 4th collaboration with John Metcalf and Keith Turnbull and his 2nd collaboration with Taliesin Arts Centre.

Michael won a Jessie award for "outstanding performance by an actor in a leading role" for his creation of the Marquis in *120 Songs for the Marquis de Sade* (Hannan) in the world premiere co-produced by Modern Baroque Opera and Vancouver New Music. He has a Doctor of Musical Arts from SUNY-Stony Brook and is a graduate of the Shepherd School of Music of Rice University in Houston, Texas and Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC.

Originally from Hawaii, he grew up in North Carolina. He now resides in New York on Long Island where he includes gardening and raising chickens among his activities.



Karina Lucas (Mezzo Soprano)

Rosie Probert/Mrs Cherry Owen/Mrs Willy Nilly/Mrs Utah Watkins/Others & Ensemble

Karina is from London and is of Spanish and English parentage. She studied at the National Opera Studio and the RNCM where her studies were supported by the Peter Moores Foundation and Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

Karina has performed major roles in three of Jonathan Dove Opera's: the role of Flora (*The Enchanted Pig*) at the Linbury Studio Theatre, ROH and at the New Victory Theatre, New York; the title role (*The Adventures of Pinocchio*) for Opera North and Sara (*Tobias and the Angel*) for the Young Vic/Opera Group of which a disc has been released on Chandos. Other roles include *Third Lady* (*Die Zauberflöte*) for Opera North; *Witch* (*Macbeth*) for Scottish Opera *Go Round*; *Dorabella* (*Così fan tutte*), *Kitchen Boy* and *3rd Nymph* (*Rusalka*), *Leila* (*Iolanthe*), *Maddalena* (*Rigoletto*), *Wowkle* (*La Fanciulla del West*) and *Smeraldina* (*The Love of Three Oranges*) for Grange Park Opera. She recently performed the role of *Mrs Noye* in Britten's *Noyes Fludde* at Southwark Cathedral.

As a Park Lane Group Young Artist, Karina made her debut at the Purcell Room in January 2007 with duo partner Simon Lane, since when she has given recitals at the Brighton Festival, Leeds Lieder Festival, Ripon Cathedral, St. John's Smith Square, St. James's Piccadilly, Oundle International Festival and been invited to perform at the Wigmore Hall. They released their first disc 'From the Old World to the New', in collaboration with violist Rebecca Jones, at the end of 2011 on the Sonimage label. Last year Karina presented a special recital in tribute to Kathleen Ferrier to mark the centenary of her birth at St. John's Smith Square, Oxford Lieder Spring Series as well as music societies in Abbotsholme, Hoddesdon and Clitheroe.

Other concert performances include works by Nicola Le Fanu, Judith Weir and Anthony Powers with the contemporary music group Okeanos (Gloucester Three Choirs Festival, Bmic The Cutting edge, Guildhall and Cardiff University); Young Artist recitals (Aix-en-Provence Summer Festival) and Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* (Wigmore Hall).



Richard Morris (Baritone)

*Tom-Fred/Mr Waldol/Mr Ogmores/Cherry Owen/
Mr Utah Watkins/Inspector of Cruelty/
Others & Ensemble*

Richard Morris comes from South Wales. After a sports scholarship to Millfield School he studied singing at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Banff in Canada. Leonard Bernstein chose him for the role of Celebrant in his "Mass" for the Opera Company of Boston. A role he has repeated all over Europe, the Barbican and South bank in London. As well as Bernstein he has worked with many of the world's leading composers, Stephen Sondheim, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Sir Maxwell Davies, John Casken, John Metcalf, Gavin Briars and Dominic Muldowney.

Directors he has worked with include Sir Peter Hall, Sir Trevor Nunn, Richard Jones, Bill Brydon. Di Trevis Companies in the UK include Scottish Opera, Opera North, WNO in Vancouver and the Royal Opera House 2. Abroad Opera de Toulouse, Opera Nancy, Les bouffes du Nord, Filharmonie Brno, The Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra and The Simon Bolivar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela. Festivals in the UK include Fishguard, Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Almeida and Newbury. He was Enjolras in the West End hit Les Miserables. Roles in opera include Macbeth, Figaro, Don Giovanni, The Toreador, Papageno, Malatesta He has been a company member of the Royal National Theatre, Orchestras include National Orchestra of Wales, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, BBC Symphony and Concert Orchestras, Liverpool Philharmonic, Age of Enlightenment, City of London Sinfonia and The Royal Northern Sinfonia. He has made many CD's one of which won a Grammy, has recorded for Radios 2 3 and 4. TV includes, The Royal Variety show, The South Bank Show and was The Nazi Singer in the film Snow and The Warrior in the film War Oratorio for Channel 4.

Future engagements include Gavin Briars' Anyone Can See I Love You in Vancouver.



Eamonn Mulhall (Tenor)

*Mr Mog Edwards/Rev. Eli Jenkins/
Others & Ensemble*

Irish tenor Eamonn Mulhall, trained at the Royal College of Music and the National Opera Studio in London.

His operatic engagements include the world première of James MacMillan's Clemency (ROH Linbury, Covent Garden; Scottish Opera at the Edinburgh International Festival), the eponymous role in Dorian Gray (Slovak National Opera), Sailor Tristan und Isolde (Dublin), Prince Safir in Offenbach's Barbe bleue (Grange Park Opera), staged Messiah, After Dido and Count Almaviva The Barber of Seville (English National Opera), Jacquino in Fidelio and Soldier in Ullmann's Der Kaiser von Atlantis (Opera Theatre Company) as well as Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni (Orchestra of St Cecilia), Massimo in Ezio (London Händel Festival), Aumônier in Poulenc's Les Dialogues des carmélites (RCM) and understudying Bajazet in Händel's Tamerlano (Scottish Opera), Lamplighter in Weinberg's The Portrait (Opera North) and Belmonte in Die Entführung aus dem Serail and Ferrando in Così fan tutte (Welsh National Opera).

A frequent soloist in concert, Eamonn has sung with many of Britain and Ireland's eminent choral societies. Highlights include Messiah at the Royal Albert Hall, Puccini's Messa di Gloria with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and

appearances with the Irish Baroque Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Ulster Orchestra, the Irish Chamber Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra.

His repertoire spans from Bach's Matthäus-Passion, through Mendelssohn's Elijah to Britten's St. Nicholas.

Future engagements include Mariotte's Salomé at the Wexford Festival, The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny for Sky Arts TV, Handel's Acis & Galatea for Mid Wales Opera and a return to the RTÉ Concert Orchestra. He has broadcast live on BBC Radio3 and RTÉ Lyric fm.



OUR INSTRUMENTALISTS



Parmela Attariwala

Viola/Violin/Crwth

Described as “one of Canada’s most original and compelling artists”, Toronto-based violinist/violist Parmela Attariwala is known for her genre-bending music and performance. She has toured and recorded with an array of musicians including Carla Bley, James Campbell, Anthony Braxton, Ernst Reijseger, John Taylor, and tabla players Ravi Nairmpally and Shawn Mativetsky. She is an ardent improviser and proponent of improvisational pedagogy as a tool for cross-genre musical communication. Parmela has also worked extensively – as composer, musician and movement artist – with choreographers whose backgrounds range from contact to butoh to bharata-natyam. Choreographer Gitanjali Kolanad, in particular, has developed a bharata-natyam and kalaripayat movement vocabulary that allows Parmela to simultaneously dance and play the violin, resulting in unique multi-sensory works of art.

Parmela undertook formal music training at Indiana University and the Konservatorium in Berne, Switzerland. She pursued a Masters in Ethnomusicology at SOAS (University of London) and recently completed a Ph.D. at the University of Toronto.

Parmela has released three critically-acclaimed recordings of her own Attar Project, an avant-garde take on east meets west that combines Parmela’s own compositions for small ensembles with commissioned works for violin and tabla.



Deian Rowlands

Concert Harp/Lever Harp

Welsh harpist Deian Rowlands studied at Wells Cathedral School with Ann Griffiths, followed by the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Manon Morris, Bryn Lewis and David Watkins. During his studies, he was awarded scholarships by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust, the Arts Council of Wales, the Craxton Memorial Fund, the Leverhulme Trust, S4C, the Peggy and Maldwyn Hughes Scholarship, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama Orchestral and Ensemble Award 2002, and won the Open Instrumental Blue Ribbon at the 2002 National Eisteddfod of Wales.

Deian has performed as a soloist and chamber musician all over the UK as well as in France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the USA. He made his Wigmore Hall debut in 2002 with Ravel’s ‘Introduction and Allegro.’

Deian was a member of the Live Music Now! recital scheme with flautist Nicki Phillips. Performances included a concert at Windsor Castle with violinist Maxim Vengarov in the presence of HRH the Prince of Wales, and a performance of Mozart’s flute and harp concerto with the London Chamber Orchestra and the New World Ensemble at Criccieth Festival. They performed at many of the UK’s leading festivals including Chichester, Cambridge, Criccieth, Fishguard, St David’s and North Wales International Festival. As a duo, they made their BBC Proms debut in 2004. Performances have also been given to the Very Reverend Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury. In 2006 they were invited by HRH the Prince of Wales to entertain the Royal Family on the occasion of the Queen’s 80th Birthday at Kew Palace.

Deian regularly performs as guest principal harpist with UK and European orchestras, including the BBC Symphony, BBC Concert, Royal Liverpool and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras. He has performed in every major concert hall in the UK as well as touring the majority of Europe, Asia, The Far East, Central and North America. Artists worked with include Bryn Terfel, Nigel Kennedy, Smokey Robinson, Tim Minchin, The Streets and McFly.

In the recording studio, Deian has worked on soundtracks for the BBC’s productions of The Paradise, Wallander, Frozen Planet, BBC Radio 2 Jingles as well as commercials for McDonalds and B&Q. He was a featured artist on Joby Talbot’s ‘Tide Harmonic’ album, and has recorded a CD of meditative music for harp with composer Mike Roberts.

An enthusiastic performer of new works, he has commissioned and premiered works by John Metcalf, Ben Ellin, Eric Crees and Kieron Galliard.

Deian’s Lyon & Healy harp was bought with the kind financial assistance of the Countess of Munster Musical Trust. He lives in west London with his wife and two lively sons, Frankie and Dylan.



Jose Zalba Smith

Flutes

Born in 1984, in Havana, Cuba, Jose studied flute and piano at the Alejandro G. Caturla and later at Amadeo Roldan Conservatory. His flute professors at this time were Erasmo Lopez and Floraimed Fernandez, both members of the National Symphony Orchestra, Ballet and Opera Orchestras. During this period of study, he received Second Prize in Amadeo Roldan's National Flute Competition (1997) and First Prize from the National Union of Artists and Writers of Cuba in their Woodwind Competition in 2001, performing with the National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jorge Lopez Marin. After auditioning in London, England, Jose was offered places at the Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music, Trinity College of Music and Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the latter offered a full scholarship for the Bachelor of Music Degree which Jose accepted and commenced in 2003. After completion of this degree in 2007, Jose was kindly supported by the Society of Knights of the Round Table and the Innholders' Company to continue his studies at the Guildhall School of Music, in the Masters Programme (Orchestral Training). During his time at Guildhall, with Philippa Davies as his main professor, Jose enjoyed training under other eminent players such as Sharon Williams, Ian Clarke, Sarah Newbold and Sam Coles.

Jose has performed in festivals such as Glasgow Cathedral Music Recital Series (2006), Seville Music Festival, Spain (2006), Belgrade Music Festival, Serbia (2007), Winchester Music Festival (2008), Frome Young Musicians Recital Series (2008), and Paxos International Chamber Music Festival, Greece (2008). Jose was accepted as a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Spain (2006-2007), as an extra player for the National Welsh Opera (2007-present), member of the Southbank Sinfonia (2009), the London Philharmonic Orchestra as a Foyle Future First Scheme. He also performs regularly with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales as Principal/Sub-Principal.

Jose is a very keen Latin player and delivers Cuban music workshops to top music colleges in the UK as well as international summer schools. His Cuban band "Tradicional Cubano" is increasingly in demand.



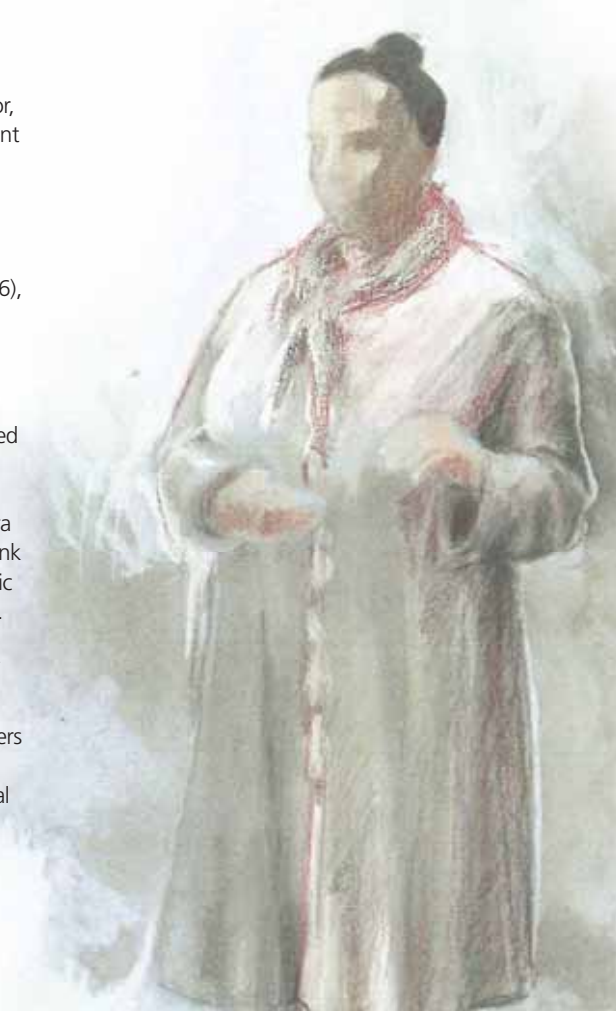
Paul Stoneman

Percussion

Paul grew up in Newport, South Wales and took an interest in music from an early age, taking up the Violin at six and then Drums and Percussion at ten. Through school Paul was a keen supporter of his local music service and went on to represent his county in the National Youth Orchestra, Wind Orchestra, Brass Band and Jazz Orchestra of Wales.

In 2009 Paul gained a place at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama studying Timpani and Percussion with Steven Barnard and Chris Stock. Paul played for many of the colleges ensembles, including the symphony orchestra and in July 2013 graduated from the RWCMD with a First Class Honours and was awarded the Eirwen Thomas Scholarship. Whilst at college Paul also worked with a number of local professional orchestras including Sinfonia Cymru, British Sinfonietta and the Orchestra of the Welsh National Opera.

Paul is currently continuing his studies at the Royal Academy of Music with Neil Percy and Simon Carrington thanks to generous support from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust, the Welsh Arts Council and the Ryan Davies Memorial Fund.



DYLAN AND OPERA

Listen. It is wholly appropriate that Under Milk Wood should be given operatic treatment. Dylan Thomas worked on his 'play for voices' from 1948, but the years of its completion and first performance in October 1953 also saw the beginnings of the Welsh poet's unfulfilled collaboration with the Russian emigre and leading modernist composer Igor Stravinsky. When Thomas died in New York in November 1953 he was, according to Stravinsky, 'on the first leg of his journey to my home in California, and we were both looking forward to getting better acquainted personally and working on the idea of an opera'. Thomas had met Stravinsky in Boston the previous May, and following that meeting discussed his ideas for a libretto with the organiser of his US tours, the poet John Malcolm Brinnin:

"They would do a 'recreation of the world' - an opera about the only man and woman alive on earth. These creatures might be visitors from outer space who, by some cosmic mischance, find themselves on an earth recently devastated and silenced by global warfare; or they might be earthlings who somehow have survived an atomic miscalculation. In either case, they would re-experience the whole awakening life of aboriginal man. They would make a new cosmogony. Confronted with a tree pushing its way upward out of radio-active dust, they would have to name it, and learn its uses, and then proceed to find names and a definition for everything in earth. The landscape would be fantastic - everything shaped and colored by the dreams of primitive man - and even the rocks and trees would sing."

It is by now commonplace to describe modernism as a response to a crisis of representation or a crisis of language; a crisis that took on a revived immediacy following the atrocities of the Second World War. Thomas's libretto seems to enact a scene where language is re-constructed anew.

The opera was never written, but Stravinsky completed a composition 'In Memoriam Dylan Thomas' a year after Thomas's death. The piece is scored for four trombones, string quartet, and tenor voice, and is written in the serial style which Stravinsky began to experiment with in later life. The opening and closing instrumental passages were described as 'dirge-canons' and they frame the central portion in which the tenor sings Thomas's poem 'Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night' accompanied by just the strings. The trombone is perhaps the most basic of brass instruments due to its reliance on varying the length of the tubing rather than on valves to achieve different pitches, and may thus be seen to represent the primitivist dimension in the works of both Thomas and Stravinsky. The string quartet on the other hand, associated in particular with Haydn and Beethoven, represents the Western classical tradition. Stravinsky's composition may in this sense be considered a meditation on Thomas's reception in the United States; the writer of taut, complex, lyrics of formal and psychological complexity represented in the strings, is informed by the brooding, disturbing presence of the subversive, primitivist, Celtic, druidic Thomas in the trombones.

If Stravinsky's 'In Memoriam' suggests that Thomas's influence expanded beyond poetry, his Under Milk Wood may itself have drawn on musical inspiration. The years 1952 - 53 saw a major revival of George Gershwin's opera Porgy and Bess (which had premiered in New York in 1935). The revival's London premiere took place on October 9, 1952 at the Stoll Theatre where it remained until February 10, 1953 when it embarked on a brief US State-Department funded European Tour before moving on to Broadway's Ziegfeld Theatre from March 1953. Originally conceived by George Gershwin as an 'American folk opera', Porgy and Bess is based on a DuBose Heyward novel and deals with African American life in Charleston, South Carolina. Dylan Thomas's Jack Black, Mr Waldo, Gwennie, Thomas the Death, Butcher Beynon, Dai Bread and so on and on in Under Milk Wood have their equivalents in the vast cast of characters in Porgy and Bess, including Peter the Honey Man, Nelson the Crab Man, Strawberry Woman and Jasbo Brown. Both works also contain similar peripheral characters: sailors, a policeman, an undertaker and so on. Is there more than purely linguistic coincidence in the fact that blind Captain Cat hears the goings on in Cockle Row, while the crippled Porgy lives on Catfish Row? If anyone has evidence that Thomas attended a performance of Gershwin's opera I'd like to hear from you. In the meantime enjoy tonight's performance of a bible-black 'Welsh folk opera'.

Professor Daniel G. Williams
Department of English,
Swansea University





ON TOP OF MAYHILL: AN EDUCATION PROJECT

Swansea has a long tradition of both valuing the place of the Arts in Education for all its children and providing innovative opportunities across all age ranges, that has produced work of a high quality and supported learning across the curriculum.

As part of Taliesin Arts Centre's education programme, running in parallel to the rehearsals and performance of John Metcalf's *Under Milk Wood: An Opera*, Seaview, Cwmglas & Blaen y Maes Primary Schools were invited to choose a class to create their own sound-scapes of words and music that gave their impressions of their own areas today. Not so much *Under Milk Wood* as *On Top Of Mayhill* or *At The Front Of The Field - Blaen y maes*.

Talking through and editing their thoughts about their local streets with theatre director Derek Cobley, each class produced their own short "play for voices". The children then worked with soprano Elizabeth Donovan to transform their words with music and sound effects. This devising process, involving the whole class, including several with special educational needs, produced a piece with images that will turn their words into a short video sequence to be shown in the foyer at the opera's premiere.

This education project has received funding from the City & County of Swansea and Colwinston Charitable Trust.

THE PRODUCERS WISH TO THANK:

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We would also like to thank the following people and organisations that have helped us on this extraordinary journey:

Geraint Talfan Davies, Rhian Hutchings, David Alston, Lucy Stout, Rob Holt, Catrin Brace, The City & County of Swansea, Colwinston Charitable Trust, Cwm Glas Primary School, Dorothy Singh and the Kodály Society of Wales, Emyr Lewis, The Music Station, Derek Cobley, Owen Gunnell, Sarah Bennington, Matthew Jones, Andrew Sparling, Nikki Thomas, Jeff Towns, Fairyhill, EV-EVENTS, Stage Sound Services, Celtic Prop Hire, Åsa Malmsten, David Flinn, Jewsons, Cardiff Institute for the Blind, Wild Creations, Sasha Dobbs, British Council Canada, Quebec Ministry of Culture and RWCMD workshop.



TOUR DATES / DYDDIADAU TAITH

April 2014 / Ebrill

- 3-5 Taliesin Arts Centre, Swansea
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