

A Year in the Arts 2013/14

Tradition and Transformation



Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales



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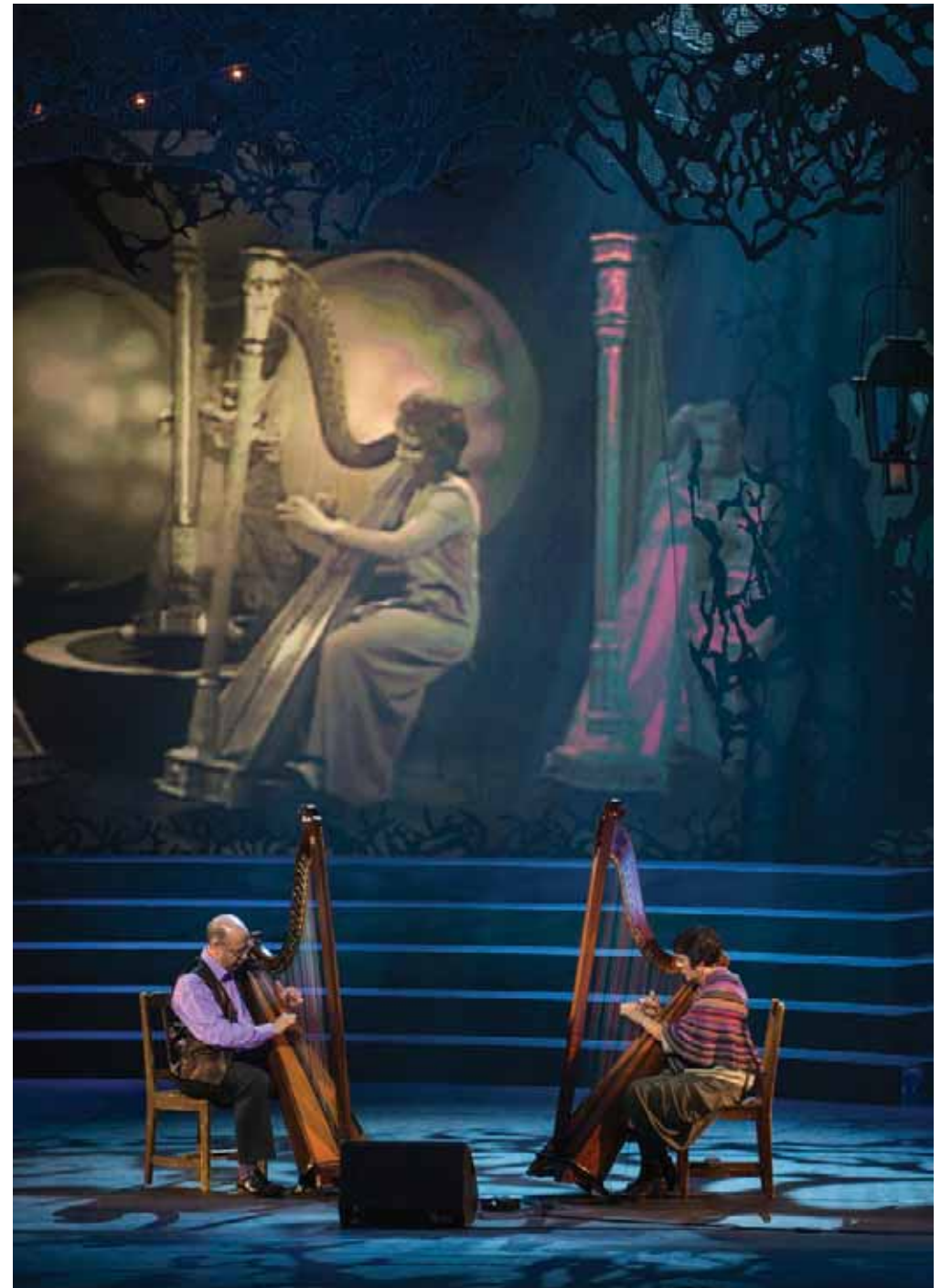


Dylan Live, a bilingual performance tracing Dylan Thomas' trip to New York through jazz, beat poetry, hip-hop, spoken word and film (image: Lleucu Meinir and Literature Wales)

Chair's Foreword

In 2013, in a stunning coup of partnership and planning led by Arts Council of Wales, the world music festival, WOMEX, came to Wales and its opening concert's Artistic Director, Cerys Matthews said this was all about looking forward even as Wales took 'its rightful place among the great traditions of the world'. That seems to me a wonderful summation of where we are in 2013 and 2014. Centenary traditions, such as the celebration of Park and Dare's cultural engagements with its community in the Rhondda, down to the birthday dates of our great writers, R.S and Gwyn Thomas in 2013 and Dylan Thomas in 2014, have allowed us, across art forms and all over Wales, to reflect on achievement and to be creative anew. Never have laurel leaves been worn so jauntily and never have we rested upon them less. What is crystal clear, looking back, is that the arts have always been a transformative experience for Wales and what remains our challenge, looking forward, is to sustain their presence at the centre of our civic life in Wales so that their creativity can be our legacy to the one hundred years yet to come.

Professor Dai Smith
Chair, Arts Council of Wales



Robin Huw Bowen and Rhain Bebb - Triple Harp, WOMEX 13 opening concert (image: Eric Van Nieuwland)

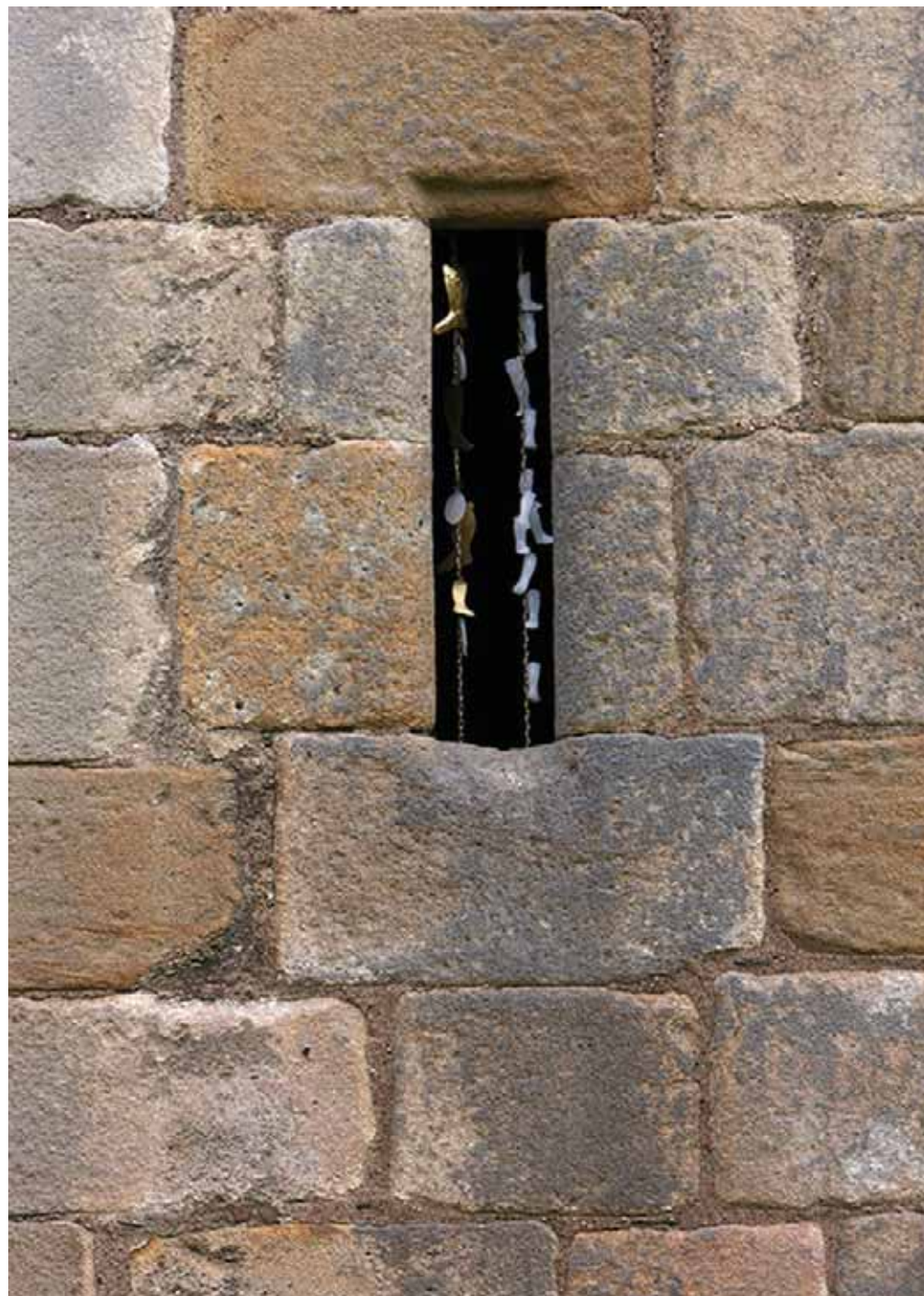
Chief Executive's Foreword

Anniversaries, whether of our great writers or iconic buildings, provide important opportunities for reflection and reappraisal. But as we (rightly) celebrate these special occasions, it's important that we don't lose sight of the many examples of the extraordinary and exceptional taking place across Wales day in, day out.

Audiences in Wales are increasingly expecting – and getting – the very best. In the pages that follow we highlight some examples – projects as diverse as Lucy Harvey's residence at Valle Crucis Abbey and Rhian Edward's triumph at the 2013 Wales Book of the Year with her debut poetry collection; our Horizons | Gorwelion partnership with BBC Cymru Wales promoting new musical talent and Theatr Genedlaethol's utterly memorable site specific staging of the Saunders Lewis classic *Blodeuwedd*.

What these and many other projects share is a sense of vision and reinvention – a determination to reach out and touch us in ways that entertain, inspire and affect us. Because at their best, this is what the arts do: they reveal new insights and understanding, and guide us towards new dimensions of experience. And if we feel better in ourselves for those moments of joy and fulfilment that the arts can provide, then so much the better. When so many aspects of everyday life can feel hollow and superficial, it doesn't hurt to be reminded that the authentic expression of ideas and emotions has a value and meaning that matters. Something to remember, perhaps, in the anniversaries to come.

Nick Capaldi
Chief Executive, Arts Council of Wales



A month long international photography festival launches in Wales

"We see Diffusion as a celebration of photography and the photographic image, in all its forms. Whether created, published, exhibited, collected or distributed in a physical or virtual way, the photograph has the power to inspire and provoke reaction, to reflect our own experience and that of society evolving around us."

(David Drake, Director, Ffotogallery)

Wales secures opening concert for WOMEX 13 Cardiff

Cerys Matthews announced as Artistic Director for spectacular celebration of Welsh culture and music.

"This is not just about looking back; it is also about looking forward but with a reverence to the roots of music from Wales. I've long celebrated these traditions through my own music, writing and broadcasting work, but when the opportunity arose to create a stage performance with the aim of placing Wales in its rightful place among the great traditions of the world, I jumped at the chance."

(Cerys Matthews)



Top: Diffusion 2013 - The Valleys Re-Presented at the Tramshed (image: Dimitra Kountiou)
Above: Diffusion 2013 - Cardiff city centre (image: Daniel Florea)



Georgia Ruth with the Land of Song Band, WOMEX 13 opening concert (image: Eric van Nieuwland)

Culture Vulture Wales

In a difficult economic climate, it's good to know that people in Wales are still finding the time and money to attend arts events across the country. Now more than ever, as demonstrated in this year's Wales' and Children's Omnibus Surveys, we are seeing that the arts really matter to the Welsh public.

"We're delighted that more people than ever before in Wales are choosing to enjoy and take part in the arts. Surrounded though we are by gloomy news about the economy, it's good to be reminded that people value the arts and recognise their essential contribution to our quality of life."

(Nick Capaldi, Chief Executive, Arts Council of Wales)

Arts Council of Wales and BBC Cymru Wales come together to announce an unique collaboration – our Public Value Partnership

"This partnership sets the stage for our future relationship, ensuring that the skills, knowledge and passion of both organisations can come together to benefit existing and new audiences across Wales. Together, we want to explore how we ensure that the arts in Wales can really flourish in a digital space."

(Rhodri Talfan Davies, Director, BBC Cymru Wales)



Top: Figurative Creations workshop, *To This I Put My Name* by Claire Curneen, Mission Gallery (image: Emma Cartwright)
Above: Open House, NoFit State (image: Jas Sansi)



BBC National Orchestra of Wales at Venue Cymru (image: Betina Skovbro)

Brand new research fund to stimulate digital innovation in Welsh arts and culture

A new collaboration with NESTA opens up a £400,000 fund to help projects harness digital technologies. A variety of innovative projects will be invested in to explore new ways of connecting with wider audiences and of building new markets and opportunities.

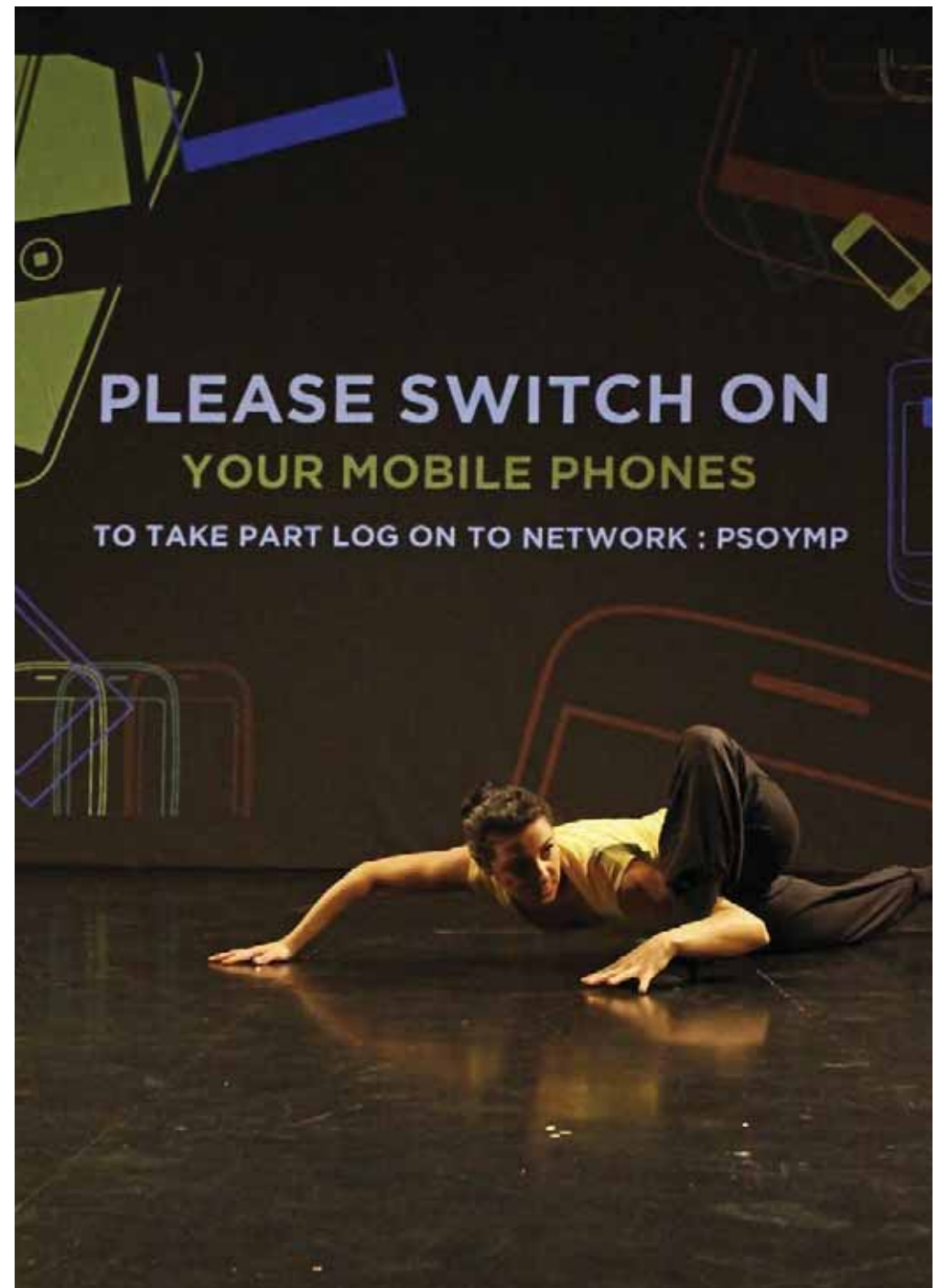
"This funding allows us to explore with partners the potential of integrating modern technology in an established arts environment. This is an age of great transition - we have to embrace and take benefit out of this."

(Gwyn Jones, Oriol Plas Glyn-y-Weddw)

Bedwyr Williams looks to the stars as The Starry Messenger takes Venice by storm at the 55th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

"The exhibition is fantastic, mesmerizing, confusing and inspiring. If you are able to go and see it, you should definitely do so. It is a chuck of marble, glinting in the "risotto, terrazzo" cosmos that is the Venice Biennale. It does Wales proud, without resorting to Welshness to do so."

(A-N)



Please Switch On Your Mobile Phones, TaikaBox (image: John Collingswood)



A Starry Messenger, Bedwyr Williams, Wales in Venice 2013 (images: Anna Arca)

There is a revolution happening

The fourteenth International Ceramics Festival in Aberystwyth showcases the exceptional skills of world-renowned makers. As well as exhibiting work of the highest quality, the Festival provides a forum for makers to debate and examine the theory and ideas that underpin their practice.

"I love the challenge of quick, intuitive drawing without unnecessary detail. As the festival is in Wales, I have decided to focus my attention on the much loved Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas."

(Czech artist, Jitka Palmer)

Jamie Barton wins BBC Singer of the World

"I'm thrilled, on top of the world and completely exhausted all at the same time. I think this will be sinking in for quite a while. I feel like the luckiest girl in the world."



Jitka Palmer, International Ceramics Festival, Aberystwyth Arts Centre (images: Glenn Edwards)



Jamie Barton, BBC Singer of the World (image: BBC Wales/Brian Tarr)

Discover a hidden gem at Valle Crucis Abbey

This summer the elegant ruins of Valle Crucis Abbey will be studded with intriguing small scale sculptures thanks to artist in residence, Lucy Harvey. Part of the Arts Council's partnership programme, the residency is one example of projects under development with heritage body Cadw.

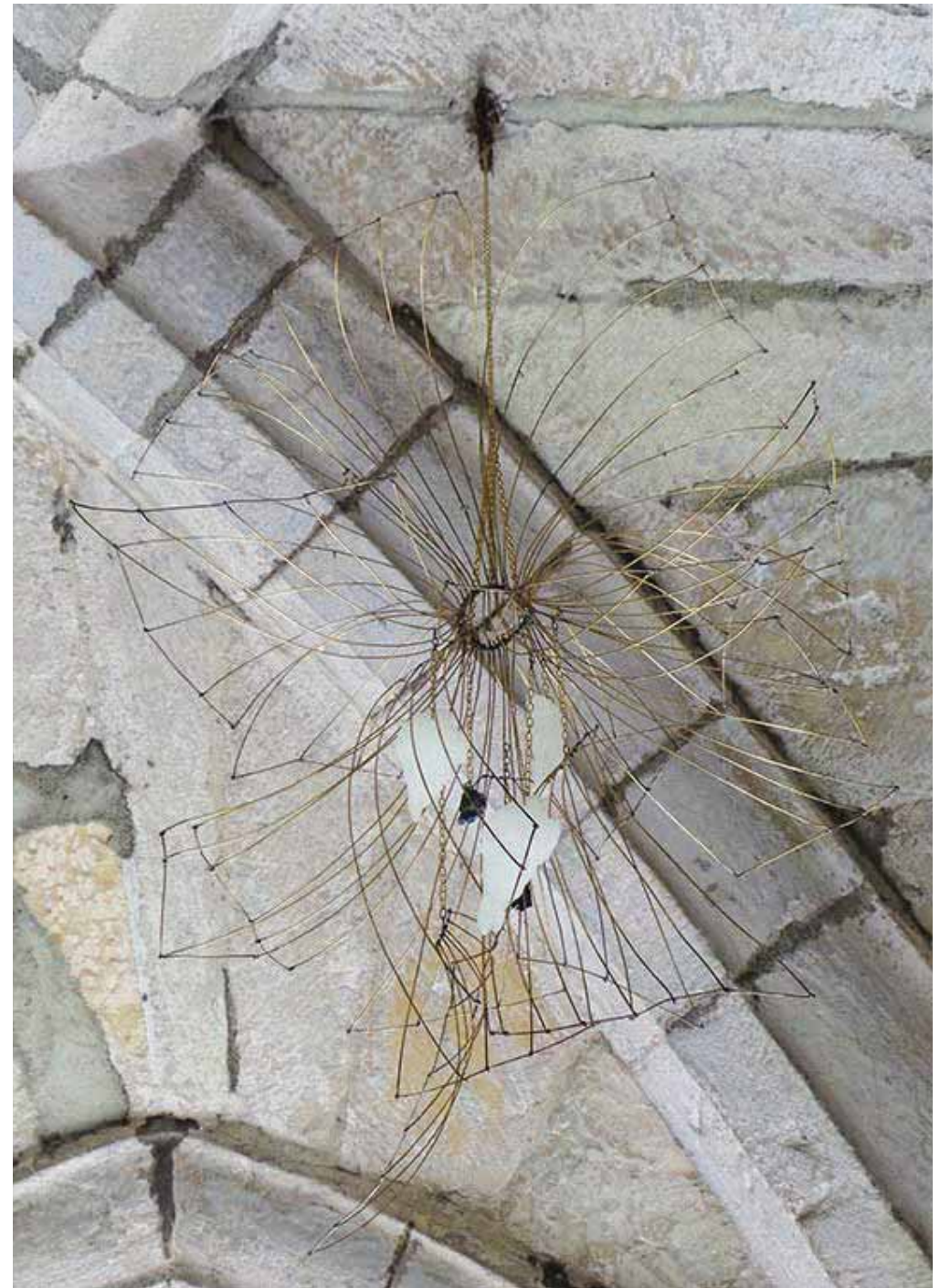
"Valle Crucis is such an inspirational site and I wanted to make artworks with an element of surprise. The pieces use lots of different materials which respond to the kind of things that would have been around during the Abbey's working life, and of course, my own interpretation too."

(Lucy Harvey)

Rhian Edward's debut poetry collection is named Wales Book of the Year 2013

"We were unanimous in our choice of Wales Book of the Year and are proud to give the award to Rhian Edwards for Clueless Dogs. This is a collection of poems that remains truly accessible while not compromising on quality. Its readability is stunning and we are sure that we will read much more of Rhian's work in future."

(Ffion Hague, Chair of the English language judging panel)



Lucy Harvey, Artist in Residence – Valle Crucis Abbey



Rhian Edwards, Wales Book of the Year 2013 (image: Lleucu Meinir)

Brecon Jazz Festival 2013

Brecon Jazz is one of the most important festivals on Wales' cultural calendar. For a long weekend each summer Brecon reverberates to the sounds of some of the world's most exciting jazz musicians.

"We thought the Brecon Jazz Festival 2013 was absolutely SUPERB. We will definitely be returning in 2014 & determined to go to more concerts & possibly stay in Brecon. We thought that this year's festival was one of the best that we have attended. The Fringe augmented the atmosphere and Jools Holland was the perfect finale. Thank you to everyone who worked for so long and so hard. Really looking forward to next year."

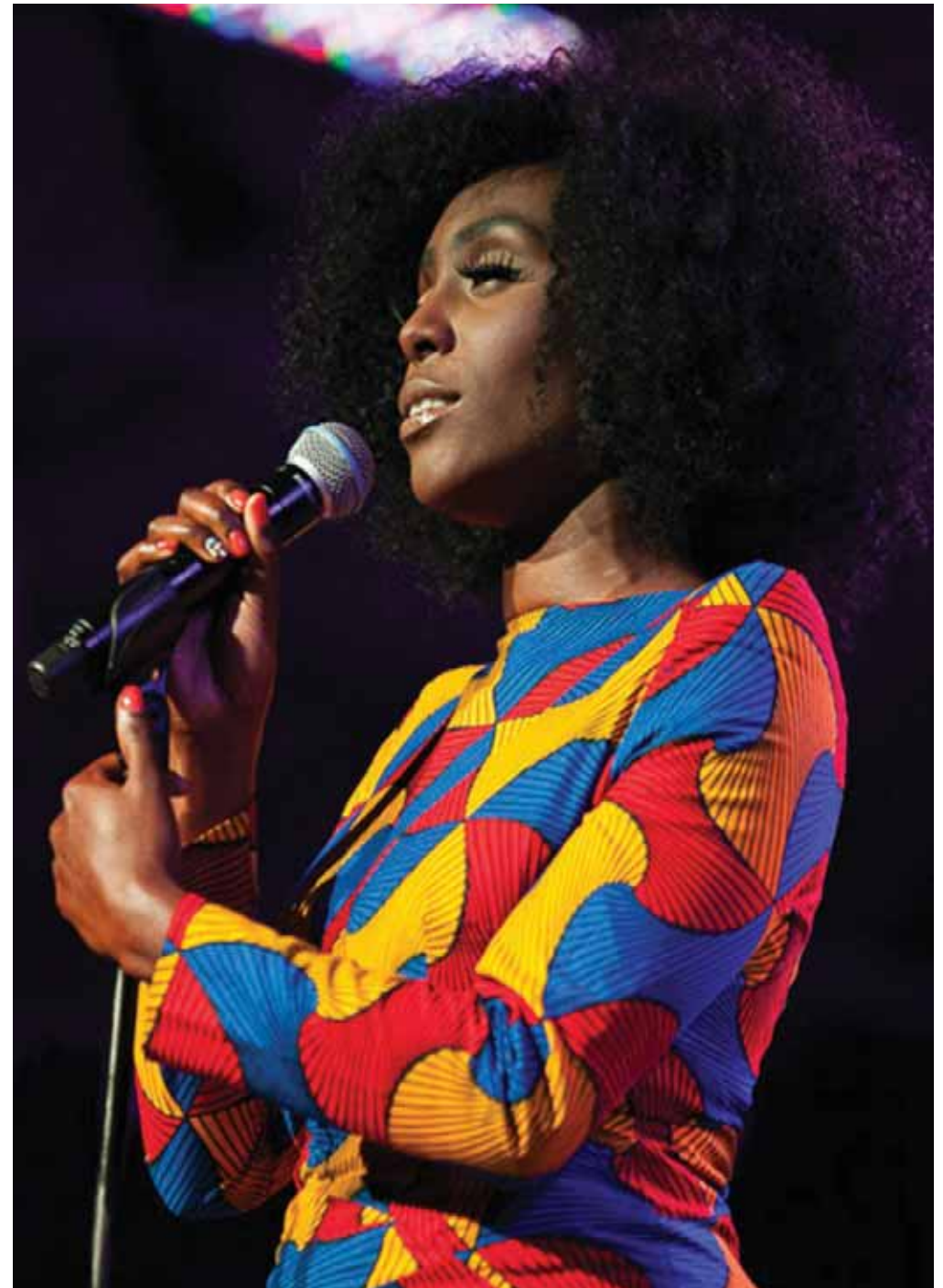
(Festival goer)

Edinburgh Fringe Festival gets a taste of Wales

Working with the British Council, the Wales in Edinburgh banner has come to represent an important new project delivered by Arts Council of Wales with its international division, Wales Arts International. Showcasing some of the best of Wales' creative practitioners this is an important market place for Welsh work to be seen, enjoyed and booked!

"It's the best festival in the world for reaching international promoters and audiences so it's a perfect opportunity for Wales' performing arts companies to be profiled within the festival."

(Harry McIver, Project Manager)



Laura Mvula, Brecon Jazz Festival (image: Brian Payne)



Wales in Edinburgh 2013

Top left clockwise: *My Name is Sue* - Dafydd James and Company, *Who's Afraid of Rachel Roberts* - Torch Theatre, *My Bloody Ballard* - Gagglebabble and Theatr Iolo (image: Kirsten McEternan), *L.O.V.E.* - Volcano Theatre

Using the arts to improve education

A new report on improving ways for the arts and education sectors to work together in Wales was launched by Professor Dai Smith, Chair, Arts Council of Wales. The review, commissioned by the Welsh Government, is the first to look in depth at the inter-relationship between the arts and education sectors in Wales.

"The arts are everywhere making up a big part of our lives. If there were no arts we would all still be cavemen."

(A 9 year old participant in the Arts in Education Review)

Stephen Fry makes digital debut in new Welsh National Opera production

Benjamin Britten's *Paul Bunyan* was given a stunning production by WNO Youth Opera. Performed on the main stage of the Wales Millennium Centre in August 2013 it featured more than 100 singers, orchestral players, technical students, costume makers, dressers, wig makers and make up students all aged between 16 and 25. Among the cast were Only Boys Aloud as The Lumberjack Chorus and Stephen Fry as the voice and projected face of Paul Bunyan. The production marked the centenary of Benjamin Britten's birth last year in 2013 and was shortlisted in the Opera category of the South Bank Sky Arts Awards.



Top: Myth Makers, Powys Primary Schools © Arts Connection - Cyswllt Celf
Above: Ffotogallery's animation workshop, Stanwell School, Penarth



Paul Bunyan, WNO Youth Opera (image: Catherine Ashmore)

International Dance Platform comes to Cardiff

Dance artists from Wales, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Canada descend on Cardiff's Chapter for a two-week artists residency which forms one aspect of the Coreo Cymru and Chapter-led European dance programme Dance Roads Open Process.

"This is a very exciting time for us alongside our partners and artists to make new contacts and build stronger relationships with our counterparts in Europe. I look forward to welcoming everybody to taste what Chapter has to offer and providing a platform for new working relationships to be formed."

(Carole Blade, Creative Producer, Coreo Cymru)



Top: Andrea Gallo Rosso, Italy
Above: Jasper van Luijck choreography, the Netherlands (image: Rob Baar)



Sarah Bronsard, Canada (image: Luma R. Briec)

Sinfonia Cymru Curate

Last year, the Curate project helped to influence the programming of the orchestra's annual recitals and summer series. It also explored new ground in styles of concert presentation with the flagship UnButtoned events at Chapter Arts Centre.

"Sometimes our ideas are pretty wild and out there so it is nice Sinfonia Cymru listens to what the players and young musicians today want to perform and what they want to provide for audiences."

(Jonathan Davies, Member of Curate)

Black History Month Wales

Year on year, Black History Month is proving to be one of Wales' most engaging, lively and welcoming events. It serves both as an educational project and an entertaining celebration of work inspired by the fusion of African and Caribbean heritage in Wales.





Black History Month, Wales Millennium Centre (image: John Collingswood)

New music scheme to offer the brightest Welsh talent a chance to shine

Horizons | Gorwelion - jointly funded by BBC Cymru Wales and Arts Council of Wales across the next two years - supports enterprising artists and bands. Whether they are working in Welsh or English, the emphasis is on innovation and musical potential as we hope to identify the musical stars of the future.

"There's a huge passion for supporting Welsh music of all shapes and sizes across BBC Radio Cymru and BBC Radio Wales and this fund will take this passion to a new level."

(Bethan Elfyn, BBC Radio Wales)

National Youth Orchestra of Wales on tour to Germany

Well known in its home country, the National Youth Orchestra of Wales has been on the round showcasing the best of Wales' young musical talent.

"Utterly inspiring performance."

(Evening Herald)

"These young Welsh players possess dedication, technical superiority and attention to detail."

(Berliner Morgenpost)



Horizons | Gorwelion
Top: Tafwyl Above: Dinefwr Literature Festival (images: courtesy of BBC Cymru Wales)



National Youth Orchestra of Wales, Konzerthaus, Berlin (image: courtesy of National Youth Arts Wales)

WOMEX 13 Cardiff – an outstanding success for Wales

WOMEX, one of the world's largest cultural trade fairs, is acknowledged as the most international hub of all professional music meetings worldwide. An annual meeting point for the world music community, WOMEX is an important market place to showcase and promote talent.

WOMEX 13 facts and figures

2,250 delegates and 1,260 companies from 90 countries.

800 concert and festival bookers, tour promoters and venues.

560 labels, publishers and distributors.

680 booking agents, 560 managers and 270 producers.

300 national and international journalists, including
130 radio broadcasters.

A bustling Trade Fair with 590 exhibiting companies from
50 countries at 250 stands.

More than 60 Showcase acts with more than 300 artists from
over 40 countries on 7 stages.



Top: Nomfusi (South Africa), WOMEX 13 (image: Eric Van Nieuwland)
Above: Les Tambours de Brazza (Republic of Congo), WOMEX 13 (image: Yannis Psathas)



Jambinai (South Korea), WOMEX 13 (image: Jacob Crawford)

Hijinx Theatre's flagship Unity Festival

The festival, now in its sixth year, plays host to acts featuring both disabled and non-disabled performers. It showcases professional and community programmes of theatre, dance, music, family shows, comedy and audience participation workshops, opening up the arts to a wide audience while reflecting the diverse society in which we live.

Pontio theatre named after opera star in Bangor

The new Pontio building in Bangor University is to be named Theatr Bryn Terfel in honour of the Pant Glas born and internationally renowned singer.

"Bryn has an international reputation in the arts, and he has already expressed his strong interest in and support for Pontio.

We are grateful to all those who have made suggestions and written to us regarding the name of the theatre, and we will now be considering ways in which the contribution of other individuals can be recognised."

(Prof John Hughes, Vice-Chancellor, Bangor University)



Bryn Terfel visits new Pontio theatre (image courtesy of Pontio)



Harder Better Faster Stronger, Hijinx Theatre & Frantic Assembly, Unity Festival 2013 (image: Malwina Matusiewicz)

Theatr na nÓg is Asia bound!

Neath based Theatr na nÓg prepares to leave the green grass of home to perform its one-man show, *You Should ask Wallace*, at the Science Centre in Singapore, the British High Commissioners Residence at the end of November funded by Wales Arts International.

Music students gain valuable experience from Y Gwyll/Hinterland

S4C's dark and brooding detective series kept audiences riveted to their TV screens. However, behind the scenes this innovative production provided opportunities for young students to explore how professional TV production works.

"We wanted to work with the College to share our experiences and expertise with the students. The idea of holding the workshops was a way for us to interact with the students, not only to tell them what we as programme makers are looking for in a music score, but also to give constructive and encouraging feedback on their work."

(Ed Talfan, Producer, Y Gwyll/Hinterland)





Celebrating Dylan Thomas 100

As one of Wales' most iconic poets, the life and works of Dylan Thomas are celebrated with the launch of a major international year-long festival, Dylan Thomas 100.

Pontio Roll out Hidden Corners Music Residency for a Second Year

Versatile musician Manon Llwyd spends one month sharing the day-to-day lives of the residents of two Bangor care and nursing homes, Plas Hedd and Brynllifon, – many of whose residents suffer from dementia. The project, part of Pontio's arts programme, aims to reach out to new audiences and take artistic experiences out in to the community in a meaningful way.

"This work is an important part of arts and dementia research spearheaded by Pontio – and the arts programme. We want to ensure that intensive residencies such as this become a central part of Pontio's relationship with the community."

(Elen ap Robert, Artistic Director, Pontio)



Dylan Thomas tour, Laugharne (image: Literature Wales)



Turning love affairs into long lasting relationships as Collectorplan celebrates 30 years

It's 30 years since the Arts Council of Wales launched its Collectorplan scheme. Three decades on, Collectorplan is still helping the public to purchase works from galleries with an interest-free loan.

What do you think of the idea of Collectorplan?

"It underlines the Arts Council's continued commitment to the development of the cultural life of this nation and allows art lovers the ability to collect art which they might not normally be able to fund through savings or a personal loan."

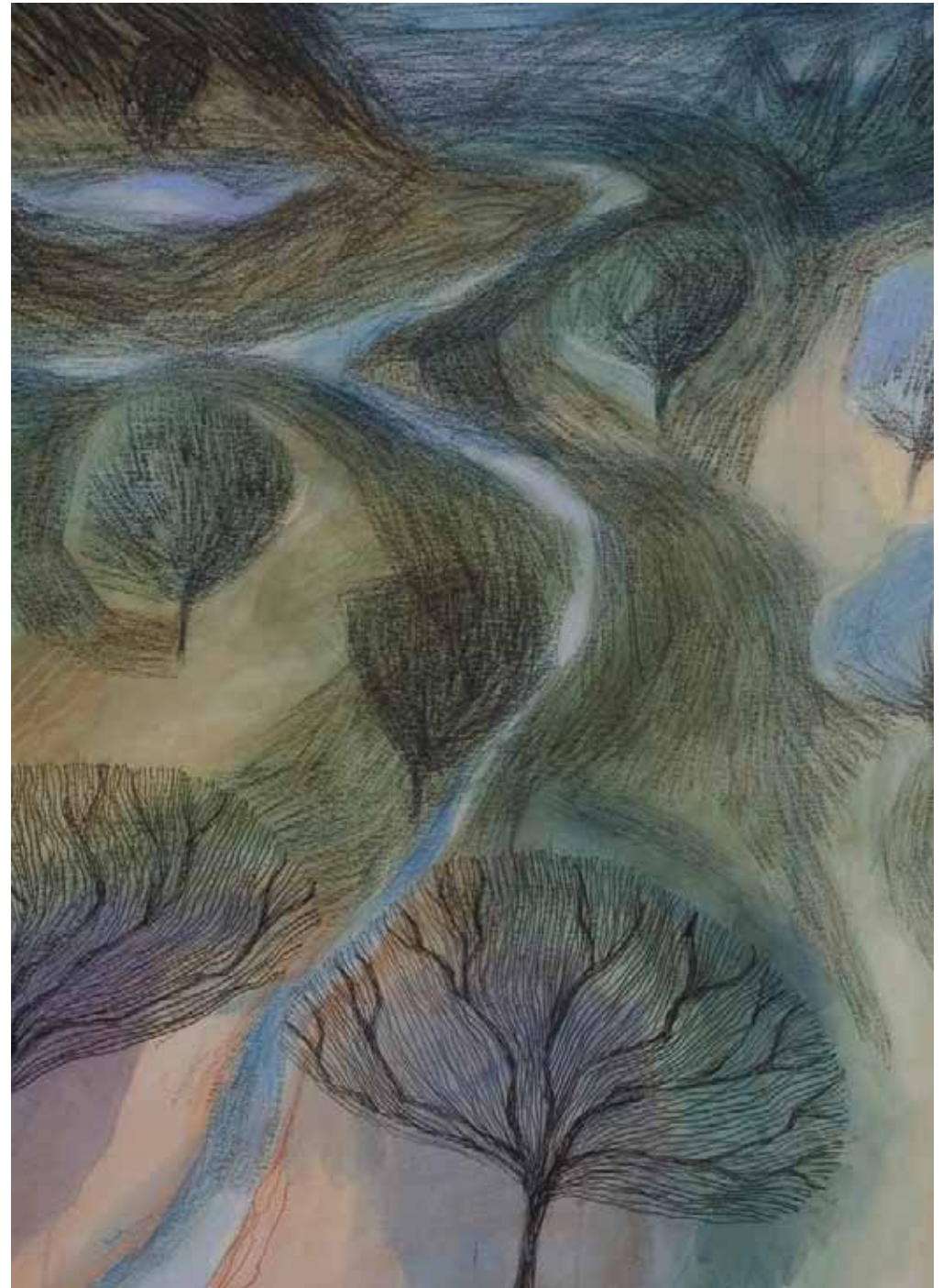
(Gregory Oxenham, Cardiff)

"It's an excellent idea; it gives people from all walks of life and different backgrounds a chance to own a piece of art that they can love and nurture for the rest of their lives when they live on a budget, like I do."

(Will Peters, Wrexham)

"As a result of this scheme I've been able to build a collection of more than 50 original works. On average I have paid less per month for my paintings than the cost of a meal for two but still have them to inspire and cheer my spirit."

(Alan Holland, Cardiff)



Argoed 1 (Arcadia 1) Eleri Mills - Ruthin Craft Centre



Top left clockwise: *Big Surf, Big Sky, Whitesands*, Tim Fudge - Albany Gallery, Suzie Horan - Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre, *Observer II*, Elfyn Jones - Ffin y Parc Gallery, Lowri Davies - Y lle Celf, National Eisteddfod (image: Torril Brancher), Virginia Graham - Mission Gallery

NoFit State's Four Elms

Four Elms becomes the spiritual home of the circus which prides itself on innovation and creativity in the industry. It will also have the honour of being Wales' first space dedicated to circus skills training.

"For me this is an amazing regeneration project. I love the fact that it is actually going to belong to people and not just a private firm. Making something really beautiful from a building that has been so neglected. It's an ambitious project but then circus is about risk and adventure."

(Zoe Munn, Development Officer, Four Elms)

A first for Mid Wales Opera and Welsh College of Music and Drama

Fresh on the heels of their successful 2013 national tour of Albert Herring, Mid Wales Opera, in partnership with the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, now turn their immeasurable talents to something entirely different but equally entertaining – George Frideric Handel's operatic gem - *Acis & Galatea*.



Four Elms, NoFit State. Funding partners include Big Lottery, Cardiff County Council, Welsh Government, Foyle Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Moondance Foundation, Admiral, Resource Efficiency Wales, Millennium Stadium Trust, The People and Businesses of Cardiff



Acis & Galatea, Mid Wales Opera. A co-production with the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama with Brecon Baroque (image: Robert Workman)

Clwyd Theatr Cymru's Under Milk Wood

Director Terry Hands and a fine ensemble company of Welsh actors at Clwyd Theatr Cymru take Dylan Thomas' masterpiece and bring it to life with power and tenderness.

"It is an evening of sheer delight, and Dylan Thomas himself, born in 1914, who died too young to see Under Milk Wood performed as he wanted it, would have been proud to see it done justice now in his homeland's theatres."

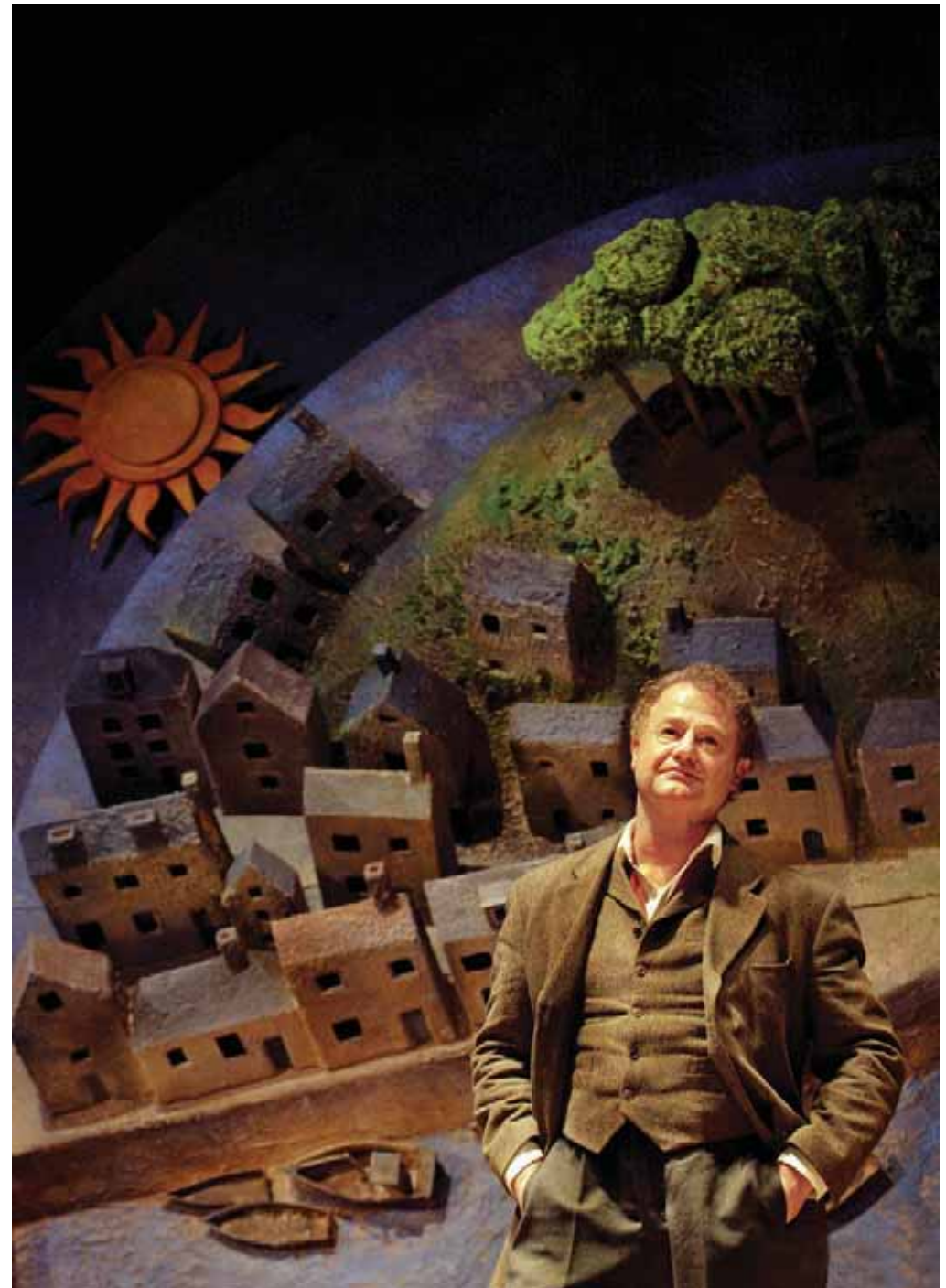
(Karen Price, Arts Editor, Western Mail)

Creative Wales Awards 2013/14

Creative Wales Awards recognise the very best talent and potential of individual Welsh artists. 14 professional artists from across the arts disciplines received a Creative Wales Award from Arts Council of Wales in 2013/14.

"Arts Council of Wales believes in risk taking and nothing is more exciting than to invest in the creativity of those individuals who make the art that delights and challenges us as a dynamic society."

(Dai Smith, Chair, Arts Council of Wales)



Under Milk Wood, Clwyd Theatr Cymru (image: Catherine Ashmore)

Classic Blodeuwedd revived by Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru

When Arwel Gruffydd revealed he would be staging a new version of the Saunders Lewis classic *Blodeuwedd* on a hill in Trawsfynydd, North Wales, it certainly sounded like a challenge, especially when you have to rely on the unpredictable British climate. But the Artistic Director of Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru pulled it off in spectacular style and it was recently named Best Welsh Language Production at the Theatre Critics of Wales Awards.

Claire Curneen – To This I Put My Name

“The essence of this new body of work is the almost intangible depth of expression that Curneen now embodies in her figures. Hidden in a recess off the apse is a bound porcelain figure that has been reverentially suspended. I look up at the motionless form and marvel at the quiet eloquence that Curneen infuses in her work. She is a master, of the ceramic medium and of distilling human experience.”

(Ceri Jones, Fieldwork)



Blodeuwedd, Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru (image: Geraint Thomas)



To This I Put My Name, Claire Curneen (images: courtesy of Ruthin Craft Centre)

Inspire...our strategy for Creativity and the Arts in Wales

"Challenging times call for determined action. It's more important than ever we continue to promote – with courage, imagination and optimism – what at the heart sustains, invigorates and enriches our lives."

Arts Council of Wales sets out a strategy which aims to build a place where our best talents are revealed, nurtured and shared.

The first ever St David Awards

The awards celebrate and recognise the extraordinary achievements of people in Wales and are presented in nine different categories and the winner of the St David Award for Culture is Cerys Matthews, a successful Welsh singer/songwriter and radio broadcaster, for her promotion of Welsh music.

"I am just so honoured to be among the people that have been represented tonight and have been nominated for this special award. I am so proud that Wales has her own awards now and to be part of them in their inaugural year is going to be something I will remember. But really I think there are so many people who work tirelessly and without thanks in Wales and if we can just reach a few of them with these awards then that will be fantastic. It really is a total honour."

(Cerys Matthews)



Dawns Ysbrydion/Ghost Dance 09.02.63 - Eddie Ladd (image: Warren Orchard)



Cerys Matthews, St David Award for Culture (image: Rhys Frampton)

Night Out's Young Promoter's Scheme continues to touch the lives of young people

"I think the project has influenced me because...I want to do more things for the people where I live."

(Young Promoter, Abertysswg Primary School)

"We did something for our community. I thought I was shy but I am less shy now after talking to lots of people."

(Young Promoter, Phillipstown Primary School)

"It has made me more confident and I liked making people happy."

(Young Promoter, New Inn Primary School)

Park and Dare centenary: 'Cultural heart' hits 100 years

"The Park and Dare Theatre is such a part of the story of Wales - people working together to create something world class. It is a tribute to their vision and hard work that 100 years on, it is still going strong."

(Mal Pope, musician and presenter)





Flights of Fancy, Park and Dare Theatre Centenary project (image: Roy Campbell/Moore)



Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales

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