

VALE OF GLAMORGAN FESTIVAL

22 – 28 SEPTEMBER 2023

£3 suggested programme donation



We want to keep programming wonderful events and supporting the most extraordinary composers, but we can only do this with your help.

Vale of Glamorgan Festival is a registered charity (no.519044)

Welcome!



"This is the Festival that enables the audience to experience tomorrow's classics today. To get a sense of where music is going, rather than where it has been." John Metcalf, Artistic Director

A very warm welcome to the 2023 Vale of Glamorgan Festival. Founded in 1969 by composer John Metcalf, the Festival is at the forefront of contemporary music promotion in Wales.

Now in our 54th year, we have an established reputation for bringing together an international line-up of composers, artists and ensembles and introducing audiences to music from the four corners of the globe.

Peter Reynolds Composers Studio

The support and nurture of emerging talent has always been at the forefront of the Festival's objectives. Directed by contemporary South African composer Robert Fokkens, The Peter Reynolds Composers Studio returns for 2023 to provide vital experiences for developing musicians.

Audiences will witness new music-making in action as the six young Composers of this year's Studio work with professional musicians in two creative masterclasses at Cardiff University Concert Hall.

Our 2023 cohort is Sam Buttler, Georgia Denham, Charlotte Glyn-Woods, Aliyah Ramatally, Zoe Sones & Efe Yuksel.

ROBERT FOKKENS PRCS Course Director

Robert Fokkens' music is performed and broadcast internationally, published by Composers Edition and Tetractys Publishing, and recorded on Nimbus, Métier, Herald, Naxos and other labels.

Robert's music works across boundaries of style, using techniques and materials learned from many musical worlds, creating music of twisted cycles and microtonal inflections described as 'hilarious', 'sad [and] strange... express[ing] more than anything else' (Times). Recently, his opera Bhekizizwe was premiered on the BBC Wales 'Gŵyl 2021' online festival and toured in Wales (2022), his violin/cello duo Pier Music was premiered at the Penarth Chamber Music Festival by David Adams and Alice Neary, followed by further performances, and the European premiere of Mzantsi Nights was performed and broadcast in Germany by Ensemble Modern (2023).

Robert is Reader in Composition and directs the Contemporary Music Group at Cardiff University, and is an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

Peter Reynolds Composers Studio Cardiff University Concert Hall

Huw Watkins & Mark Fewer
Sunday 24 September, from 2pm

Apply for PRCS 2024

Join our email list to find out when applications open for next year's Peter Reynolds Composers Studio:



Join our
email list

FUNDERS

The Festival is funded by:



The Festival is also made possible through generous collaborators:

- Cardiff University School of Music
- Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

We would like to thank our Festival Patrons and Friends for their generosity:

- Simon and Sian Heilbron (Festival Patrons)
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- David and Val Leron
- Ken Griffin
- Suzie Morel
- Peter Bamfield
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- Geoffrey Hosking
- Mal Rowson
- Lynne Plummer
- Andrew Malin
- Michael Trickey
- Mark Hevesi
- G Howells
- Bill & Rita Hales
- Paul & Jane Motte

We would also like to give our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has made a donation to the Festival.

TREDEGAR TOWN BAND

22 SEPTEMBER, 8PM
MEMO ARTS CENTRE, BARRY

David John Roche	The Vow VoGF Commission & World Premiere	20'
Gavin Higgins (arr.)	Ar Lan y Môr	5'
Benjamin Wallace	4 Marches About Nothing in Particular VoGF Commission & World Premiere	15'
	I. Curtain Call II. The Voidcast Elegy III. Sir Garrington's Marvelous Homegrown Doots IV. Profana Profunda	
Interval		
Bramwell Tovey	Nine Daies Wonder	20'

The Vow (2023) VoGF Commission & World Premiere

The Vow is a blasting, fast, and determined piece of music for brass band. I think many people feel an obligation to their place of origin – an unspoken support for certain histories and cultures. I feel this too. The rock music, the monumental chords, and the folk tunes you hear in The Vow are drawn from the music I grew up around in Tredegar. The Vow is a celebration of these musical cultures – it is a solemn promise to remember them, to take pride in where I'm from.

© David John Roche

Ar Lan y Môr (2022)

Gavin Higgins' wrote this new arrangement of Ar Lan y Môr for the encore of Prom 30 in 2022. Tredegar Town Band and BBC National Orchestra of Wales premiered his Concerto Grosso for brass band and orchestra, then gave an encore of his gently sentimental arrangement of the popular, traditional Welsh folk song.

4 Marches About Nothing in Particular (2023) VoGF Commission & World Premiere

As the title states, none of these marches are about anything in particular. But they did all make themselves known to me during very mundane and banal tasks such as picking up groceries, showering, walking to work, reading on the subway, etc. And as each piece took on a character of its own, I realised that they were all about something after all – nothing! They're not lacking in subject; their subject is about the Absence of a Subject.

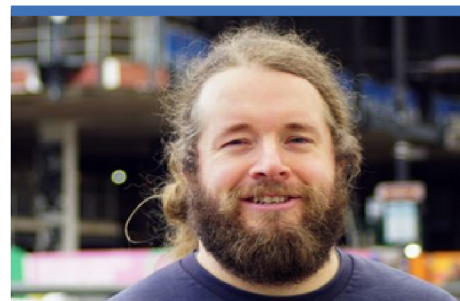
Curtain Call is the playoff music for the finale of a non-existent sitcom from the 80s in all its schmaltzy glory. The Voidcast Elegy is my take on a funereal march, except the funeral was forgotten and no one is in the coffin. The third movement takes the form of a Sousa-like march and the title depicts a huxter or a snake oil salesman who's prized product is, quite literally, nothing.

The last movement is more vague and rather represents what I think is the stupidest thing I've ever written. Years ago this single-note melody with the phattest groove popped into my head. It's stuck with me for years, this profane thing that has no right to be this catchy. So I dressed it with all the trappings of a serious work. I put on the robes, performed the rites, and prayed at the altar of G natural. The counterpoint is precise. The rhythms are sharp. I give myself completely to this most profound profanity, the never-ending G.

© Ben Wallace

Nine Daies Wonder (2007)

Throughout his career conducting around the globe, Bramwell Tovey often returned to his brass band roots. Nine Daies Wonder is a musical depiction of Will Kemp's 100-mile Morris dancing journey from London to Norwich in 1600. We're thrilled to welcome the violinist Mark Fewer who gave the UK premiere of Bramwell Tovey's work at the RNCM Brass Band Festival in 2009.



DAVID JOHN ROCHE

In tandem with a consistent string of international performances and commissions, David John Roche's compositions have been broadcast, televised, and written about internationally to millions of people (Rai5, Tellebelluno, S4C, NHK, BBC Radio 3, BBC Introducing, London Evening Standard, and many others). He is currently completing commissions for the Tanglewood Music Centre, Tokyo Opera City Cultural Foundation, and the Vale of Glamorgan Festival (Tredegar Town Band). He is also undertaking research and production work with Meta Arts and Wales Arts Review. Compositions have been broadcast, televised, and written about internationally to millions of people (Rai5, Tellebelluno, S4C, NHK, BBC Radio 3, BBC Introducing, London Evening Standard, and many others). He is currently completing commissions for the Tanglewood Music Centre, Tokyo Opera City Cultural Foundation, and the Vale of Glamorgan Festival (Tredegar Town Band). He is also undertaking research and production work with Meta Arts and Wales Arts Review.



BEN WALLACE

Described as "Brilliant, humorous, and rhythmically complex," (Tacoma Symphony Blog) Ben Wallace is a composer, percussionist, and keyboard player hailing from Albuquerque, New Mexico. Ben's music spans a wide range of styles from chamber and orchestral, to disco and samba, and occasionally into the video game remix world. He has worked with organizations such as Musical Theatre Southwest, The Amadeus Chamber Orchestra, Grand Band, and Music & Cocktails, hearing his works performed in New York, Tacoma, Utah, New Mexico, New Haven, San Francisco, Switzerland, and Beijing. He is a founding member of DiscoCactus, a VGM remix band, and INVISIBLE ANATOMY, an ensemble of hybrid composer/performers. He received his Bachelor of Music from the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati in both Composition and Percussion, studying primarily with Allen Otte and Joel Hoffman. He then received his Masters of Music from the Yale School of Music in Composition, where he studied with David Lang, Chris Theofanidis, Martin Bresnick, and Aaron Kernis. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in composition at the Yale School of Music.

Our opening concert marks the culmination of a new collaboration with Tredegar Town Band.

Supported by the Arts Council of Wales and Tŷ Cerdd, the process aims to seek out hidden, ignored or missed Welsh music-making talent, from both traditional and non-traditional musical backgrounds, with the goal of creating new music for the world-famous brass band.

In a truly person-specific process, six composers from a range of musical backgrounds have been provided with the space and support to improve their craft and express themselves through their music.

Award-winning young composer David John Roche, who was born and raised in Tredegar, has been mentoring the music-makers throughout the process:

"I would never have learned to play or read music without the free education I received from Tredegar Town Band as a child."

Ian Porthouse
Musical Director

Mark Fewer
Solo Violin

Pre-performance Talk at 7pm
with Steph Power



TREDEGAR TOWN BAND

Tredegar Town Band has earned a worldwide reputation for artistic innovation and excellence.

"No other brass band can do what Tredegar can do. Their musical versatility is incredible. I've never worked with a group of musicians with such passion, drive and commitment to excel and also with an insatiable appetite to innovative and encompass new ideas. They are simply fantastic." Pride Film Director, Matthew Warchus

The origins of Tredegar Town Band can be traced back to 1849, although it wasn't until 1876 following victory at the Welsh National Eisteddfod that they were formally constituted. History shows that early contesting victories were sporadic, although they did compete extensively – from local competitions to the famous Crystal Palace in London.

However, over the last 40 years they have become one of the world's elite performers – as well as multiple winners of major competitions; claiming the British Open title in 2010 and again in 2013.

Voted 4Barses 'Band of the Year' with MD Ian Porthouse 'Conductor of the Year' in 2010, they continue to represent the town that bears their name with pride.

This was literally so with the 2014 BAFTA Award-winning film, 'Pride' where they provided a major part of the musical score and made a cameo appearance.

Further significant artistic achievements include providing the accompanying score, by composer Gavin Higgins, to Rambert's critically acclaimed production, 'Dark Arteries', which was subsequently shortlisted for a prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society Award.

In contrast, in 2015 they also became the first band to perform in concert at the famous Old Vic Theatre in London alongside songwriter Tim Minchin, and auditioned for the ITV show 'Britain's Got Talent'.

However, the band continues to enhance its reputation for innovative artistic collaborations – performing at the 'Changing Britain' retrospective at the Southbank in London, whilst their 'Dark Arteries' recording was awarded 2015 'CD of the Year' from every leading brass band publication – a feat repeated in 2016 with the critically acclaimed 'War Memorials' release.

2016 saw further success – winning both the televised Band Cymru title and becoming Champion Band of Wales for the eleventh time. In May, 2017 they came 5th at the European Championship in Ostende.



IAN PORTHOUSE

With Ian Porthouse in the role of Musical Director since 2007, Tredegar Town Band have progressed to be one of the world's leading ensembles.

Hailing from a musical family in the heart of Cumbria, Ian Porthouse began his musical career aged 9 with the Flimby Saxhorn Silver Band; he went on to become principal cornet and founder member of the Cumbria Youth Brass Band. He is regarded as one of the brass band movement's leading conductors, educators, performers and teachers. He holds the position of Head of Brass Band Studies at Birmingham Conservatoire, Musical Director of the National Youth Brass Band of Scotland, and was awarded the Illes Medal in 2020 for his services to brass bands.



MARK FEWER

Violinist Mark Fewer leads a multi-disciplined life in music. Violin soloist, chamber musician, orchestral leader, artistic director, conductor, arranger, teacher, jazz violinist, recording artist and occasional radio host, he has performed worldwide to great critical acclaim. Described as "intrepid" (The Globe and Mail), "genre-bending" (National Post), "profound" (The WholeNote), and "freaky good" (The Gazette), he has performed around the world in halls such as Carnegie, Wigmore and Salle Pleyel, and is equally at home in recital venues such as Bartok House (Budapest) to Le Poisson Rouge (NYC) to The Forum (Taipei). As a soloist, he has performed with the symphonies of Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Quebec, San Francisco and Melbourne, as well as groups such as the Fodens-Richardson Brass Band (UK), the Zapp Quartet (Amsterdam), and the McGill Percussion Ensemble. As a conductor he has directed I Musici de Montreal, l'Orchestre Symphonique de Laval, the Newfoundland Sinfonia, Guelph Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, the McGill Baroque Orchestra and the choir Capella Antica.

Mark Fewer has been Artistic Director of the SweetWater Music Festival for 16 years, and in 2019 was appointed as the new Artistic Director of Stratford Summer Music. He is currently Associate Professor of Violin and the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto. He is a Juno and Prix Opus winner.

FURTHER LISTENING

Do you like what you hear?

Explore the music of the many composers featured in this year's Festival:



TODAY'S NEW MUSIC TOMORROW'S CLASSICS

Our mission is to proactively support and celebrate diverse and talented music makers at any age, at all levels of musical experience and from all backgrounds. This includes:

- seeding partnerships in communities under-served by creative opportunities to date
- providing technical training to emerging professional Welsh musicians to support their career development
- developing pan-Wales musical networks, collaboration, and skill sharing
- providing performance sharing platforms for inspirational music makers
- developing ambitious high-quality programming to help support gaps in music development and presentation in Wales
- a commitment to inclusivity best practice and implementation of these principles across our programming, commissioning and staffing
- supporting freelance creators across Wales and the world – employing, enhancing, and connecting their skills



Join our email list

MARK FEWER + HUW WATKINS

23 SEPTEMBER, 7.30PM
ALL SAINTS CHURCH, PENARTH

SOLO VIOLIN

Selection from 'The New Caprices' and short pieces up to 3' long commissioned by Mark Fewer from a variety of composers 20'

SOLO PIANO

Lynne Plowman Lullaby for lanto for Solo Piano 5'

Huw Watkins Four Inventions for Solo Piano 5'

Huw Watkins Sarabande for Solo Piano 5'

Interval

VIOLIN & PIANO

Sarah Lianne Lewis Until the thread breaks 13'

Huw Watkins Elegy 12'

Steph Power Dreamtides 10'

Huw Watkins
Solo Piano

Mark Fewer
Solo Violin

Pre-performance Talk at 6.30pm
with Rian Evans

Lullaby for lanto (2007)

Lullaby for lanto was commissioned by the Presteigne Festival of Music and the Arts and was premiered by Gretel Dowdeswell at the Presteigne Festival in August 2007. I had intended to complete the commission just before the birth of my son, but he arrived three weeks early, so I ended up writing the piece in the first few weeks of his life, while he was sleeping...

It was recorded by Joanna Lam on my album, The Beachcomber, released by Prima Facie Records in 2021.

© Lynne Plowman

Four Inventions for Solo Piano (2009)

Four Inventions evolved from Huw Watkins' conversations with writer Rhett Griffiths, who commissioned the work about his poem 'The Sibling Solution'. Each of the inventions deals with an aspect of the "siblingness" of things with the titles Declamatory, Hesitant, Breathless and Serene.

Sarabande for Solo Piano (2014)

Sarabande was written for the pianist Piotr Anderszewski in 2014. The five-minute long piece explores the characteristic triple time rhythm of this baroque dance form which originated in 16th-century Central America.

Until the thread breaks for Violin and Piano (2019)

Until the thread breaks takes its title from a phrase Beethoven wrote in his Heiligenstadt Testament, a letter he wrote to his brothers in 1802 around the same time as he composed his Violin Sonata No.7 in C Minor (Op.30, No.2):

"Ah, it seemed to me impossible to leave the world until I had brought forth all that I felt was within me. So I endured this wretched existence – truly wretched for so susceptible a body, which can be thrown by a sudden change from the best condition to the very worst. – Patience, they say, is what I must now choose for my guide, and I have done so – I hope my determination will remain firm to endure until it pleases the inexorable Parcae to break the thread." Ludwig van Beethoven, Heiligenstadt Testament (6th October 1802)

Whilst he never sent the letter to his brothers, there are other letters that he did write and send to close friends in 1801-1802, in which he agonises over his hearing loss.

Until the thread breaks explores the emotional attachment we have to something that we often – particularly as musicians – take for granted. Over the course of the last few minutes of the piece, the violin line stretches increasingly higher in pitch, playing harmonics, which – given their position on the string, position of audience, and how an audience member's own hearing health may be, may or may not be clearly heard by all. This is purposeful. There is a sadness in the loss of being able to listen to something so high, so fragile, so beautiful. Through the piece, as the violin slowly climbs its way up in pitch, the piano serves as the answering human frustration of knowing there are limitations to our existence.

Until the thread breaks was commissioned by Rhyl Music Club, for Mary Hofman and Richard Ormrod, on behalf of Gwyneth Peters and generously supported by the Colwinston Charitable Trust. It was premiered on 9 January 2019 at Rhyl Town Hall, Wales.

© Sarah Lianne-Lewis

Elegy (2022)

My Elegy begins gently, with a violin melody slowly unfolding above quiet piano figuration. The character starts to change when a sustained low bass line is heard in the piano, the music now gradually building to the first of several impassioned climaxes that punctuate the piece. The music ends at the very top of the piano after the violinists ethereal harmonics have faded to nothing. Elegy was commissioned by Gethin Williams in memory of his violinist wife Eileen.

© Huw Watkins

Dreamtides for Violin and Piano (2020)

Dreamtides is essentially very simple. It was written at a time of transition and uncertainty in my life, when sitting at my keyboard provided an important opportunity to draw breath. It's in one continuous movement comprising three clear sections: slow, somewhat faster, slow.

My aim was to explore movement and stillness of a type experienced in dreams, where the two can exist simultaneously without paradox. The resultant, ambiguous feelings ebb and flow in the meeting of violin and piano, without ever quite surfacing or coalescing. Rhythmically asymmetric, the two parts slide above and below each other in broad phrases, coming together most directly in the more animated middle section before returning to the opening, sometimes gently dissonant material.

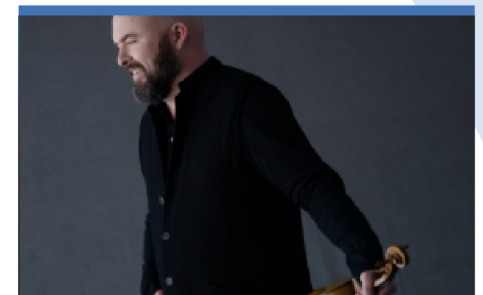
The work was premiered at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in 2000 by members of the PM Ensemble thanks to my dear friend, the composer Peter Reynolds (1958-2016). It remains dedicated to his memory and I'm delighted that it continues to touch audiences today.

© Steph Power 2023



HUW WATKINS

"His music is impressively direct and fluid, with his characteristically clear writing having a direct and consistent musical impact..."



MARK FEWER

"As well as being an expert concert soloist and orchestra leader, Mark Fewer is a superb chamber musician. His performances with Huw Watkins will highlight this..."



...continue
reading on
our blog

SINFONIA CYMRU

27 SEPTEMBER, 7.30PM
PENARTH PIER PAVILLION

Caroline Shaw	Thousandth Orange	10'
Augusta Read Thomas	Silent Moon	8'
	I. Still: Soulful and	
	II. Resonant	
	III. Energetic: Majestic and Dramatic	
	Suspended: Lyrical and Chant-like —	
	"When twofold silence was the song of love."	
Lera Auerbach	Trio No. 1	12'
Interval		
Gabriela Lena Frank	Tres Homenjaes: Compadrazgo	18'
	I. Scherzo para Sipan	
	II. Adagio para Amantani	
	III. T'inku	

Maria Ismini Anastasiadou
Violin

Georgina MacDonell Finlayson
Violin

Isobel Neary-Adams
Viola

Abby Lorimier
Cello

XinRu Chen
Piano

Pre-performance Talk at 6.30pm
with Augusta Read-Thomas

A MORE PERFECT UNION: CONTEMPORARY MUSIC BY AMERICAN WOMEN

Sinfonia Cymru is a dynamic and contemporary under 30's Welsh orchestra made up of some of the best professional musicians from Wales and the world.

Priding itself on providing young musicians with invaluable support and opportunities to grow, Sinfonia Cymru creates ground-breaking musical experiences in new environments to ensure quality

music is accessible to everyone in Wales.

Their 'Curate' series gives their talented musicians the opportunity to put together and perform a programme related to something they're passionate about. In the past they've covered everything from wellbeing to feminism or celebrating LGBTQIA+ music and more.

Tonight's programme, as part of the Vale of Glamorgan Festival, has been curated by their fantastic American cellist Abby Lorimier, who'll be exploring her American identity through music written by female composers living and working in the USA today.

Thousandth Orange (2018)

Thousandth Orange begins with a very simple 4-chord progression. Nothing fancy. Nothing extravagant. Just something quite beautiful and everyday, that is enjoyed and loved and consumed and forgotten. Something you've probably heard before, in a pop song or a music theory class. While considering my love of Brahms' piano quartets and my memory of playing them—and more generally how our memories of beloved music evolve over time—I began thinking about the history of still-life paintings. Those bowls of fruit we see framed in museums—sort of lovely and banal, at first glance, but then richer when considered in the long story of humans painting things that they see, over and over and over again. There's a reason that Van Gogh painted those vases of sunflowers again and again, or Caravaggio his fruit. Maybe after the tenth, or the hundredth, or the thousandth time one paints, or looks at, or eats, an orange (or plays a simple cadential figure), it is just as beautiful as the first time. There is still more to see and to hear and to love. More angles reveal themselves—more perspectives and corners and stories, more understanding—more appreciation of something that most would consider unremarkable. *Thousandth Orange* is about these tiny oblique revelations that time's filter can open up in a musical memory. The title also suggests a thousand different shades of the color orange, or the image of a thousand oranges, or perhaps a thousand ways of looking at an orange.

© Caroline Shaw

Silent Moon (2006)

Silent Moon is a reference to the break in the stillness of winter that is indicative of a gathering of energy. Like the silence before the storm, the Silent Moon offers an opportunity to cleanse the past so that we might better shift our attentions to future growth.

This concept is often depicted through certain double-visaged gods and goddesses such as Janus, who looks simultaneously backward at the past and forward to the future.

A silent moon exists in the deep silence of winter earth after the solstice celebration heralding the birth of energy and the return of ever lengthening daylight.

This is a time for stillness.

The quality of this moons' energy is vivid.

Silent Moon was commissioned by, and is dedicated with admiration and gratitude to, Almita and Roland Vamos. The music goes full-cycle, coming back to its exact starting point, as if we hear one orbit.

© Augusta Read-Thomas

Trio No. 1 (1992/1996)

In 1991, at the age of seventeen, during a concert tour in America, six months before the fall of the Soviet Union, I decided to defect. The following year (1992), when the first two movements of this trio were written, was perhaps the most difficult of my life. I was alone, and did not know whether I would ever see my family again. Many of the works of that period were not completed until a few years later; this trio is one of them. The last movement, *Presto*, was written 4 years later, in 1996.

The first movement (*Prelude*) is marked *misterioso*. The melodic line is angular, the rhythm even, repeatedly interrupted by accents and syncopations, and the musical movement is essentially polyphonic. The *Andante* that follows is the emotional centre of the work. It is a lyrical and tragic dialogue between violin and cello, with piano providing a sustained harmonic pedal. The entire structure of this Trio is like a big crescendo that builds towards the end. Crescendo is not meant in the dynamic sense, but rather as a build-up of the gravity of the material: the first movement is a short *Scherzo*, the second an emotionally-charged *Andante*, and the third, *Presto*, a *toccata* with its climatic modulation to C major. This last movement required great virtuosity from all players. The musical material has an obsessive quality for long passages, whilst the middle section seems deathly quiet in comparison. The main themes of the first and second movements are worked into the *Toccata*. In the climax of the third movement, all the main themes of the Trio are brought together.

© Lera Auerbach

Tres Homenjaes: Compadrazgo (2007)

The word *compadrazgo* refers to a quintessentially Latin American idea. It signifies a special kind of camaraderie such as the bond between godparent and godchild or

the friendliness between neighbours who might borrow sugar from one another. I find that this spirit is also essential to chamber music in all styles and genres as players depend on one another to bring their performance to life. In honor of compadrazgo, I've composed three tributes (tres homenajes) that are all inspired by Latin American idioms yet explore different ways in which the players relate to one another. They are:

I. Scherzo para Sipan: This fleet movement is in homage to the windy northern plains of Peru made famous by the discovery of an ancient Moche royal tomb for El Senor de Sipan (Lord of Sipan).

II. Adagio para Amantani: The extended slow movement is in homage to the island of Amantani that I visited in the summer of 2006. Situated in the middle of Lake Titicaca between Peru and Bolivia, the island is both beautiful and barren, and its inhabitants absolutely depend on their relationships of compadrazgo in order to survive the cold and arid climate.

III. T'inku: This aggressive and dissonancy finale is inspired by the oddly violent form of compadrazgo where people from two different communities ritualistically engage in a fight. Stemming from pre-Colombian beliefs where young men fought to the death, sacrificing themselves so that their villages

would receive a good harvest or a season free from illness, the combative spirit of the 't'inku' actually results in people coming together for a common good. Throughout all three movements, melodic and rhythmic motifs from Peru and Bolivia abound.

© Gabriela Lena Frank



SINFONIA CYMRU

The UK's leading under 30s orchestra. A new generation of live music.

The best bit? We bring this new generation of live music to you. Remarkable musical experiences, designed and delivered by the best young musicians, for audiences in Wales and beyond.

Our mission is to develop these exceptional young musicians and give them the opportunity to truly launch their careers. In

doing this, we bring awe-inspiring live music and an unflinching atmosphere to people in unexpected settings.

But we cannot do this alone. Experience a fresh approach to live music with Sinfonia Cymru and become a part of our incredible community.

Sinfonia Cymru is not your average orchestra. We like to do things differently. Sticking to the rule book and following the crowd? It simply isn't for us. For a start, all our players are under 30. Many of them take the helm and lead our projects, dancing between classical and modern styles, exploring their creativity and challenging norms.

We put some of the most talented, professional musicians in the UK on the stage they deserve, so that they can build their careers and develop their musicianship. In return, they bring a special spark to their music-making, creating performances bursting with energy, excitement and power. This is music the way it's meant to be experienced.

Sometimes we're traditional in our approach to concerts – you'll find us performing everything from small string ensembles to extraordinary full symphony works. On the other hand, we love pushing musical boundaries with intimate musical performances in a range of dynamic styles – jazz, soul-funk, world music and much more.

CELLO OCTET AMSTERDAM

28 SEPTEMBER, 12PM
GLANFA STAGE, WALES
MILLENNIUM CENTRE

Joep Beving	Hanging D	5'
Philip Glass	Symphony for Eight	10'
David Dramm (arr.)	Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Cello Band	5'

A free performance on Wales Millennium Centre's Glanfa Stage is the perfect lunchtime treat – join us!

Hanging D (2016)

In the Dutch composer and pianist's own words:

"A little over a year ago I wrote a piece of music that has been very dear to me ever since. I like minimalism and stripping things down to the essence. Which has resulted in some introvert, simple and contemplative piano compositions (so I have been told :). 'Hanging D' is the antidote to my self inflicted stillness. I love the stillness as it has tempered my anxieties. But sometimes it just feels great to scream, make noise, create bigger waves. For without noise, silence

doesn't exist. For without thunder, blue skies will become unbearable." Joep Beving, 2017

Symphony for Eight (2002)

The North American Philip Glass, physicist and philosopher, studied at the conservatoire to become a flute player and had a short successful career as a boxer, before he decided to focus on composing, taught by Vincent Persichetti in New York and Nadia Boulanger in Paris.

He travelled through North Africa and India, learned to play the tabla, and worked closely with the sitar virtuoso Ravi Shankar. The new musical style that Glass was evolving gave him a unique position as a composer in contemporary classical music. His works, often dubbed as "minimalism", are based on musical elements with repetitive structures.

The repetitions create patterns which evolve into a musical development that becomes a melody.

When Philip Glass heard the Octet play the third movement of his symphony no. 3, he was so impressed that he promised to write an original piece for them. But it soon became clear that this would take some time given the composer's busy schedule. The Octet's then musical director Elias Arizcuren suggested an evening-long program, a musical guide to his works. The composer gave the Octet "carte blanche" to dive into his music and these compositions are brought together on the album "Glass Reflections", released in 2002. Symphony for Eight is one of the old time favourites of the cellists of the Cello Octet Amsterdam and her audience. Since it was first recorded in 2002 it has grown into a whole new interpretation. A composition filled

with the composers' typical pulsating style, music full of drive and drama. The music builds up phrase by phrase, in which Glass keeps on adding new material until it reaches the high point before it builds down towards a sudden stop.

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Cello Band (2020)

The Beatles defied all the laws of pop music In 1967 with Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. The Beatles went wild with unprecedented recording experiments on their concept album, because they knew they were never going to perform it live. Cello Octet Amsterdam dares to play an instrumental live version of – for many – the best pop album of all time.

FURTHER LISTENING

Explore the music of the many composers featured in this year's Festival:



CELLO OCTET AMSTERDAM

28 SEPTEMBER, 7.30PM
ROYAL WELSH COLLEGE OF
MUSIC & DRAMA

*This concert is dedicated
to the memory of our late
President and long serving
chair, David Lincoln
Williams BEM*

Kate Moore	Sad Melody 1	5'
Kinan Azmeh	Vol de Nuit: Sunrise, Rebellion, Soil, Hymn of the Nightfall	30'
Interval		
Sofia Gubaidulina	Mirage – The Dancing Sun	13'
John Metcalf	Hallelujah	5'
Arvo Pärt	Silouan's Song	6'
Theo Loevendie	Two Mediterranean Dances: Zeybek Iberica	4' 6'

WEST OF THE MOON

In this program, the cello octet goes far beyond the dark, melancholic textures that are so characteristic of lower strings instruments: in these works, the cellos are light and dancelike.

Sad Melody 1 (2020)

The Australian/Dutch composer Kate Moore (1979) unleashes grand emotional soundscapes with minimal means that slowly shift with hypnotic effect. The natural world serves as a significant source of inspiration for Moore. In her compositions, pure music theory collides with graceful organic forms to create music that alludes to minimal music but also to the muscular, rock-like dynamics of Louis Andriessen. In recent years, interest in Kate's music has significantly increased both nationally and internationally. In 2021, she won the prestigious Matthijs Vermeulen Prize. Kate composed Sad Melody 1 specifically for the octet production "Instant Loneliness," that explores themes of isolation and loneliness.

Vol de Nuit: Sunrise, Rebellion, Soil, Hymn of the Nightfall (2021)

Kinan Azmeh (1976) is known for his collaboration with cellist Yo-Yo Ma, both on

his OpusKlassik award-winning album "Uneven Sky" and as a member of Ma's Silk Road Ensemble. For Azmeh, music is a place to transcend conflicts and cultural differences. His music features influences of Arab folklore but above all, is focussed on storytelling. Kinan Azmeh experiences the overwhelming power of music during nocturnal, long-distance flights. During these journeys, it is the music of others that he listens to in order to feel a sense of home. This piece is an ode to those artists – a composition in which traditional melodies, percussion, and improvisation are given space.

Kinan Azmeh writes about Vol de nuit:

"I have been fascinated by the sound of a cello collective ever since my first exposure as a child to a live performance of Heitor Villa-Lobos' Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5 in Damascus. So needless to say how excited I was when Cello Octet Amsterdam approached me about writing a new piece for them, as I have been a great fan of theirs for years.

Vol de Nuit is not an adaptation of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's wonderful novel, nor is it a dedication to that lovely bar with the same name in downtown New York. I have always romanticized flying, especially cross continental night flights from New York to Amsterdam. The whole experience starting with the evening taxi ride from my apartment in Brooklyn to JFK airport all the way to the morning train ride from Schiphol to Amsterdam Centraal. In some strange way, music experienced in that metal capsule always felt more urgent, powerful and primal and it allowed me to feel empowered and at home in transit. This piece is somehow autobiographical but more so it is a dedication to endless numbers of artists whose music accompanied me during these flights where the concept of home becomes ever expansive. I hope you will enjoy the ride."

Mirage – The Dancing Sun (2002)

Sofia Gubaidulina (1931) completed her education at the Kazan Conservatory in 1954 and continued her compositional studies in Moscow with Nikolai Pejko. In the years that followed, her musical output was subject to constant repression by the authorities of the Soviet regime. During the 1980's Gidon Kremer's complete devotion to performances of her violin concerto, "Offertorium" helped her quickly gain recognition in the West and in 1992, she immigrated to Germany where she has lived since. Although Sofia Gubaidulina is widely considered a Russian composer, Asian influences stemming from her Tatar heritage are also clearly audible in her work. In "Mirage," Gubaidulina creates a sparkling interplay of dancing light and shadow, which feels like a mirage in our everyday perception of sound.

Hallelujah (2020)

This is an extended setting of a single word – "Hallelujah". Meaning literally "God be praised," it is, among other things, an expression of rejoicing and thanksgiving. As such, most settings of the word are lively and celebratory. This piece is the second of these rather than the first. It is certainly celebratory and also gentle in the manner of a lullaby, a

quality accentuated by the rocking motion of thirds and sixths. The piece is in eight parts SSAATTBB) and is built on a series of pedal notes spanning chromatically the minor third from G to B flat, commencing on the B flat. The principal challenge of the work is long, (sustained breath akin to the musical qualities brought to the fore by the use of the technique of circular breathing.

H is for Hallelujah and also for Helena. I was thrilled to be invited by Cardiff Ardwyn Singers to undertake the commission for a concert celebrating the life of Helena Braithwaite MBE, educator, conductor and amateur, and offer the piece in thanks for the life and work of a remarkable and much-loved colleague and friend. The original date for the premiere was December 5th 2020 at Llandaff Cathedral, Wales but the worldwide health emergency intervened and it was re-scheduled for St Davids Hall, the National Concert Hall of Wales for June 25th 2022.

© John Metcalf

Silouan's Song (1991)

The Estonian composer Arvo Pärt (1935) began writing music with religious themes in the late 1960s, defying the official atheism of the Soviet Union. For an eight year period following this, Pärt composed very little, immersing himself in the study of medieval and Renaissance polyphony in a quest to find his own style. In 1976, he introduced a stunningly simple piano piece, "Für Alina," consisting of only two voices. This work clearly typified his new, unique style and was the first example of his so-called "tintinnabuli" technique which draws its meaning from the Latin word for bells. With this seemingly simple composition technique, Pärt has gained a large following of admirers and to this day, he remains highly popular. The octet has been friends with Arvo Pärt for more than 10 years, which has resulted in a number of compositions and transcriptions for 8 cellos that Pärt has dedicated to the ensemble.

Two Mediterranean Dances: Zeybek, Iberica (1998)

Theo Loevendie (1930) is a composer, saxophonist, and clarinetist. He devoted himself exclusively to jazz until 1968, after which time he transitioned to also writing contemporary classical music and to teaching composition at various conservatories in the Netherlands. In March 2020, Cello Octet Amsterdam had the opportunity to work closely with Loevendie on his "Two Mediterranean Dances". He encouraged us to minimize the typical "cello sound" and to explore other, less conventional sounds. At the conclusion of the rehearsal, he was surprised by the success of his own music exclaiming "Wow, it's quite a good piece!". The first part, "Zeybek," is based on the Turkish dance of the same name in a slow 9/4 time signature. "Iberica" is a faster dance inspired by traditional music from the Iberian Peninsula.

AT A GLANCE

Friday 22.09.23, 12pm–4pm

Community Engagement Day
Memo Arts Centre, Barry
FREE

- **12pm** Talk by Ben Wallace
- **2pm** Presentations by the Tredegar Town Band Mentees
- **7pm** Pre-concert Talk with Steph Power

Friday 23.09.23, 8pm

Tredegar Town Band
Memo Arts Centre, Barry
£17 (Students/U16 £5)

Saturday 23.09.23, 7.30pm

Huw Watkins + Mark Fewer
All Saints Church, Penarth
£16 (Students/U16 £3)

Sunday 24.09.23, from 2pm

PRCS with Mark Fewer and Huw Watkins
Cardiff University Concert Hall
FREE to observe

Monday 25.09.23

PRCS Tutorial Day 1

Tuesday 26.09.23

Professional Development Day for PRCS cohort

Wednesday 27.09.23, from 12pm

Cello Octet Amsterdam
Glanfa Stage, Wales Millennium Centre
FREE

Wednesday 27.09.23, from 2pm

PRCS with Cello Octet Amsterdam

Wednesday 27.09.23, 7.30pm

Sinfonia Cymru
Penarth Pier Pavilion
£16 (Students £3, U25 £8)

Thursday 28.09.23

PRCS Tutorial Day 2

Thursday 28.09.23, 7.30pm

Cello Octet Amsterdam
Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama
£16 (Students/U25 £8)

JOHN METCALF

Artistic Director

The Festival's founder John Metcalf is a leading Welsh/Canadian composer whose work, represented by a definitive catalogue of recordings, has received wide exposure internationally. His creative output includes seven operas, two to commission from Welsh National Opera, the most recent being his highly acclaimed opera to the iconic text of Dylan Thomas' Under Milk Wood.

The return to live concerts in 2022 following the pandemic saw the premiere of Hallelujah for 8 part choir (hear it on 28.09.23), of a new solo piano work entitled Metaphysical Studies and the recording of a new string quartet Towards Silence. 2022 also marked the return to live concerts of the Vale of Glamorgan Festival – the celebration of living composers – of which he is the founding Artistic Director. John Metcalf is an Honorary Fellow of Cardiff University, St. David's College Lampeter, and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. In 1999 his music was played as Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II signed the Act bringing into being the Wales Assembly Government.

DAVID JOHN ROCHE

Producer

Welsh composer David John Roche joined us as Producer in July 2023, but was already a firm member of our festival family!

He was part of our inaugural Peter Reynolds Composers Studio cohort and has continued to work with as a composer and mentor. He is currently writing a new piece for Tredegar Town Band, whilst mentoring 6 promising composers though the process of creating fabulous new pieces for the Band.

David's music is direct, determined, and loud. Strongly influenced by heavy metal, lush orchestral music, and his working-class Welsh background, his work has been praised for its "passages of intense expressive power" (Thomas Adès), described as "exquisite" (Adam Walton, BBC Introducing), and marked out as "bold, exciting, and beautiful" (Sir James Dyson).

In tandem with a consistent string of international performances and commissions, his compositions have been broadcast, televised, and written about internationally to millions of people (Rai5, Tellebelluno, S4C, NHK, BBC Radio 3, BBC Introducing, London Evening Standard, and many others). David has recently completed commissions for the Tanglewood Music Center, Tokyo Opera City Cultural Foundation, and the Solem Quartet, and he is now working on newly commissioned works for the Vale of Glamorgan Festival (working with Tredegar Town Band), Jeremy Huw Williams, and Aberystwyth Philomusica.

David holds degrees from the universities of Cardiff, Oxford, and Cambridge – he is the recipient of over 30 academic and professional awards.

Trustees

David Leron (Chair)
Jennifer Hill
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Committee of Management

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Tracey Harding (Vale of Glamorgan Council)
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