

The New Music Director

The Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod has announced its 8th music director and first ever representative of Greek origin to hold the prestigious title, Vicky Yannoula.



Portfolio musician with international experience, Vicky, joins the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod following successful positions at organisations such as Trinity College London, Middlesex University and the Drake Calleja Trust, succeeding Eilir Owen Griffiths following his six-year tenure.

“As soon as I saw the role advertised online, I was instantly drawn to it,” said Vicky, “I already knew of the Llangollen Eisteddfod due to the incredibly special place it holds in the world’s musical calendar.

“The International Eisteddfod’s core values of peace and multi cultural celebration inspire me, so to be appointed and follow in the footsteps of a host of incredibly talented music directors is a real honour.”

Royal College of Music

Since moving from Corfu to

London in 1995 to study at the Royal College of Music, Vicky’s list of accomplishments has made her a notable pianist on stages around the world and seen her collaborate with a wealth of international artists. Her impressive CV is also bolstered by her experience as a tutor, recording artist, manager and an entrepreneur.

Vicky continued: “Throughout my career, I have been lucky enough to be involved in an array of performances, educational projects and to hold managerial positions in music. It is my passion and understanding – both as a musician and manager – that I can’t wait to



bring to the role as Music Director.

Global Prominence

“It’s such an honour to be appointed. The organisation’s heritage and global prominence along with the team’s vision, passion and sense of purposefulness are a huge source of inspiration to me.

“It is a privilege to be joining this superb team and I am overjoyed that we shall be working together towards a dynamic International Eisteddfod for 2018.”

Exciting Opportunity

Vicky’s comprehensive and varied experience combined with her globally relevant background, represents an exciting opportunity for the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod as it continues to develop.

Chairman of the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod, Dr Rhys Davies, said: “We’re excited to see Vicky add her personal flair to this year’s festival and use her extensive international experience to further cement the International Eisteddfod on a global stage.

Reaching New Audiences

“Her impressive background will ensure the International Eisteddfod continues to grow and develop reaching new audiences nationally as well as globally.”

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Message From The Chairman

On behalf of the Eisteddfod I would like to thank you, the Friends, for the wonderful support you give to Llangollen. The financial support that comes from Friends is so important to us and we are most appreciative.

Artistically Splendid

Llangollen 2017 was artistically splendid with something for everyone. The 70th Anniversary Concert was a rousing opening to the Eisteddfod with a celebration of brass and voices. We are very thankful to Owain Arwel Hughes. **Tosca in Concert**, with Kristine Opolais, Kristin Benedictine and Sir Bryn Terfel amongst others, was truly memorable.

Calling All Nations

Christopher Tin's Calling All Nations was what the Eisteddfod is all about, it was very moving and emotive. Our International Celebration also highlighted peace credentials and introduced the International Voice of the Future Competition to our concert audiences.

Other highlights included:

- Gregory Porter, the Californian jazz man, was a great success with his soulful renditions.
- Choir of the World was a splendid finale to the Eisteddfod once again. Our congratulations go to The Aeolians of Oakwood University, USA.
- Llanfest with Manic Street Preachers was a wonderful end to Llangollen 2017.



Rhys Davies partaking of a snack on the Parade

Brian Evans

Unfortunately, I regret to inform you that one of our long-standing volunteers, board member and member of Friends, died recently after a short illness. Brian Evans, formerly Competitors' Liaison Officer, will be missed by many.

His enthusiasm for the Eisteddfod and competitors was second to none. The Eisteddfod has sent condolences to his family.

High Standard

The competitions continue to be of very high standard and we hope to develop them further over coming Eisteddfodau.

Breath of Fresh Air

Our new Music Director, Vicky Yannoula (see front page), started

We must maintain our U.S.P., which is that we are an International, Music and Dance Festival

with us in September. Vicky has been very busy since starting and the concert stream has already been launched. She has certainly brought a breath of fresh air to Llangollen and we look forward to continued working with her.

We are eagerly looking forward to Llangollen 2018. We have many other music festivals to compete with now. However, we must maintain our Unique Selling Point (U.S.P.), which is that we are an International, Music and Dance Festival, a Peace Festival where there is something for all in our day presentations and our evening concert stream cannot be seen anywhere else.

With new input into our Artistic Forum we are already looking at 2019 and 2020. We need to evolve continually to survive.

I look forward to welcoming you all next July.

Thank you very much once again.

Rhys Davies,
Eisteddfod Chairman



Luda, Our Wonderful Friend

This is how we, in Friends, first heard of Luda.

In 1999, a group called Rosinka came from Ukraine to Llangollen to compete in the Children's Folk Dance event. To help with the financing of their visit, they brought an exhibition of artwork made by children in Ukraine who were suffering from the terrible effects of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster of 1986. Friends gave them space in the Tent for this exhibition, and it raised a lot of interest. They naturally came to the attention of the Eisteddfod's Ukrainian Interpreter, Jaroslav (always known as Jerry) Chomyszak. He, with his wife Elaine, got much involved in the problems they faced during their visit.

Nuclear Disaster

After the Eisteddfod was over, Jerry and Elaine set up a fund for the support of orphanages in Ukraine which were trying to care for the children of the nuclear disaster. They were dismayed to find the conditions which the children were living in; they were clean, but otherwise neglected, with no toys, nothing to encourage their development.

Van Loads

So Friends decided to support their project, by finance and by collecting toys and other goods from Llangollen and nearby Shropshire. We collected several large van loads of toys, clothing, and medical goods over the next five years, and these were transported to Ukraine.



Luda and Elaine enjoying the parade in 2017, and (centre top) on stage presenting prizes



During a visit, Jerry and Elaine were introduced to a three-month-old baby called Lyudmyla. She was severely disabled at her arms and legs, and they felt called to arrange for her to come to Britain for specialist treatment. In April 2003, they eventually succeeded. She has stayed with them ever since. Known now as Luda, she has become their adopted daughter.



With Terry Waite and Gethin Davies on the bench to commemorate her father

Familiar Figure

Year by year, Luda has come to Llangollen, a familiar figure on the Eisteddfod Field. We have been able to witness her astonishing development. Three years ago, Jerry died; there is a bench outside the Friends' Tent in great respect and grateful memory of him.

Luda continues to come with Elaine, able to get around on her scooter and busily writing on her i-Pad with a stylus held in her teeth.

And she has just celebrated her 18th birthday.

Luda's is an extraordinary story, of generosity, courage, and sheer persistence against all the odds. But as Elaine has said, 'It all started with a meeting, between total strangers, in the opportunity provided by the Eisteddfod'.

And now it is time to hand over to Luda herself, as she picks up the story in her own words:



Luda with her father, the late Jerry Chomyszak



Examining the size of Terry Waite's shoe

Since leaving school in 2016 with 8 GCSE's I got a place at Hull College and I'm studying performing arts.

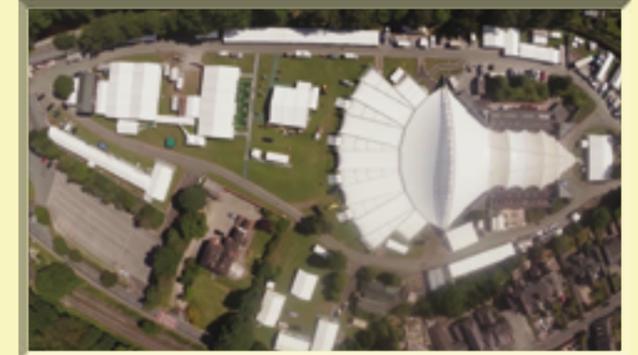
Last year I was on Level 2 which is a 1-year course and during that year I played as Carabosse the evil fairy in **Sleeping Beauty** and then in my end of year show I played as Widow Corney in **Oliver the musical**. I finished the year with an overall Distinction Merit which was the 3rd highest mark in my class.

This year I progressed onto Level 3 which is a 2-year course and I am currently working on the pantomime which is **Jack & The Beanstalk** and I'm playing the character Edena the Eco Fairy which is a very different character to what I'm used to playing so this will be quite a learning curve for me but I think I am doing really well.

After these next 2 years I am hoping to progress onto a Drama School where I will do a 2-3-year course and after that I am hoping to get onto the West End. Look forward to seeing you this year and thanks for the continued support.

From the Archives

The Archive Tent display in 2017 included a poster of images entitled “Continuity & Change”, which compared different aspects of the Eisteddfod in its early years to their twenty-first century counterparts.



Annwyl Gyfeillion,

Well, another landmark, the 70th birthday of the Eisteddfod has passed, but you will have seen by the advanced ticket notice sent out before Christmas that our new Music Director, Vicky Yannoula, has got off to a flying start with getting the concert stream set up. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Friends, to welcome her to her post and to wish her every success in it.

Annual Donation

One thing that can only help competitors to get here is the Bursary Fund that was set up with a contribution from your subscriptions, and is now the main use for the Friends' annual donation to the Eisteddfod. To my mind, this is what Friends are for, and I am proud to be part of an organisation that is able to give people a chance to promote their culture of music and dance in such a positive way.

This year we will be able to give a bit extra to this cause, thanks to the generous legacy of Ms Celia Jackson, the details of which are outlined in Selwyn's report on the next page.

Long Standing

Several of our members also make generous donations directly to the Eisteddfod. Mrs Martin of Aberwystwyth has sponsored competitions for many years, and I was delighted to see her up on stage presenting the prize for one of them (below, left).

Standing Orders

This edition of Limelight has been timed to coincide with the arrival of your subscription standing orders. This is always a frantic time for your



From the Chair

membership secretary, Derrick Francis, with the help of his assistant Christine Holmes and treasurer Selwyn Evans. Between them they have worked tirelessly to get the records up-to-date.

Unfortunately this is not always easy. The majority of you have heeded our pleas to include your FLIME membership number in the standing order reference, which makes finding your record to update very easy. However, there are still a few off you who have not done this yet. In most cases we can find the record from your name, but there are still several payments we have not been able to associate with a particular member. Once again I urge you to check that your membership number is a part of the standing order reference, so we know how to allocate each payment to its proper owner.

Please ask at the membership desk in the tent if you are not sure.

Flowers

It was with great sadness that I learnt of the death of Mal Tucker who for many years, up to and including 2017, was responsible for the fabulous floral display which helped to make our tent such a special place to sit and have a rest from the hustle and bustle of the Eisteddfod Field.

She had been battling cancer for many years beyond the original expectations of her doctors, which is testament to her character. She refused to give up, insisting on living life to the full, despite the intense pain she was suffering. She will be missed by all who knew her and I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to her family.



Mal (right) celebrating her birthday during the 2017 Eisteddfod with Danielle Williams (centre) and Carys Henderson, who both helped her in the Friends' tent

I would also like to add my personal sympathies to the family of Brian Evans, whose death is reported on p2 by Rhys Davies. Brian was particularly keen to help with the Archive's proposals to the Heritage Lottery Fund to set up a project to develop the archives and to make them more widely accessible.

Continuity

I was pleasantly surprised on entering our tent to find Bhagwant Singh (below right), who had recognised himself as the leaping dancer in the bottom left hand corner of our banner. The original photo was taken well over ten years ago, so it is heartening to see such continuity.

So, It only remains for me to wish you all a very Happy New Year, and the hopes that we can look forward to a vibrant and successful 72nd International Musical Eisteddfod in Llangollen.



Dear Friends,

2017 Eisteddfod—yes I know it seems far away now but this is the first opportunity for me to mention some things that happened during the week.

It was a pleasure to welcome so many "Friends" to our marquee last year and to welcome quite a few new members, not quite as many as 2016! I would record my thanks to Christine for her help in the "office" during the week.

And now Greetings to "Friends" and best wishes for 2018 .

Thank you to all "Friends" who have actioned their standing order payments, a big improvement this year THANK YOU for making our job easier.

Sadly we still have a few without any membership number as a reference.

Please ensure that your bank records your membership number as our reference, the word "FLIME" is not sufficient.

Membership Desk

please check with your bank instruction and ask your bank to include your membership number in future

This year to date we have had some 60 new "Friends" when you bought your Eisteddfod tickets— Thank you and please come and visit YOUR MARQUEE during the week.

That concludes my brief report.

Sincerely,
Derrick Francis
Membership Secretary

Acrobatics on the Field - you never know what will happen in Llangollen in July!



The late Ms Celia Jackson

You will recall that in a previous edition of Limelight we advised you that we had been informed of the death of Ms Jackson by a firm of solicitors in Sheffield, They also advised us that we were to receive a legacy of £20,000 from the estate of Ms Jackson.

We received this legacy in September 2017 and after a discussion with a friend of Ms Jackson we established that her main interest in the Eisteddfod was choral singing.

With this information we then had discussions with Eisteddfod officials as to the best way to use the £20,000. It was decided that this very generous legacy would be used as follows:-

Prize monies for 2018 & 2019 for the Junior Children's Choir	£950 x 2 = £1900
Prize monies for 2018 & 2019 for the Senior Children's Choir	£950 x 2 = £1900
Prize monies for 2018 & 2019 for Youth Choir	£1500 x 2 = £3,000
Prize monies for 2018 & 2019 for Female Choir	£1500 x 2 = £3,000
Total Prize money	£9,800
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The remaining amount to be added to the Bursary Fund	£10,200
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Total	£20,000

Selwyn Evans, Treasurer

Arty Local Students 'Makeover' Eisteddfod Building



A local school provided a key building on the site of the International Eisteddfod with a makeover for its 70th anniversary celebrations with the help of funding from the Friends.

Message of Peace

Pupils from Ysgol Dinas Brân were invited by the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod to create a piece of artwork that represented the festival's message of peace, goodwill and international friendship, which have been transformed into a mural to brighten up the Eisteddfod's hospitality building.

The mural was formally unveiled on Tuesday 4th July last year, when 12 of the 100 children involved attended a reception with President of the International Eisteddfod, Terry Waite CBE.

Permanent Installation

The mural will remain on the building, which is used as a reception



Photo: Alan Potts

centre for international competitors throughout Eisteddfod week, as a permanent installation created by the talented local students.

Speaking at the reception, President of the International Eisteddfod, Terry Waite CBE (back row, centre in the photo above), said: "The artworks created by the students from Ysgol Dinas Brân are superb and a great deal of thought has gone into communicating the message of the International Eisteddfod.

Special Occasion

"Children's Day is always a very special occasion and it is vital that younger generations continue to

participate in the Eisteddfod and spread its message of peace, friendship and uniting people through music and dance."

Ysgol Dinas Brân

Alison McDonald from Ysgol Dinas Brân, said: "We were honoured to be invited by the International Eisteddfod to participate in this project and the children had great fun creating their artworks.

"It was wonderful to see the mural in place and hope that the competitors arriving for the 70th anniversary celebrations - and for future Eisteddfodau – enjoy the installation."



Photo: Alan Potts



Limelight is published by the Friends of the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod.

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