

PRESS RELEASE

Harlech school banners to fly from the castle ramparts as

Gregynog Festival comes to town

Students from Ysgol Ardudwy have teamed up with esteemed artist Luned Rhys Parri to celebrate Gregynog Festival arriving in Harlech for a five day extravaganza. Under the artist's guidance the year 7 pupils will create eye catching pageantry banners to be proudly displayed at Harlech Castle during the acclaimed festival.

Award winning artist Luned Rhys Parri made her name through devising quirky three dimensional images depicting quintessential Welsh life. Working from her studio in Groeslon near Caernarfon, she creates sculptures out of paper and mixed media.

Snowdonia National Park Authority is co-ordinating the project and Head of Education and Communication Naomi Jones said,

“Luned is a great friend of Snowdonia, previously working with the National Park on a variety of cultural heritage projects and we're looking forward to her residency in Harlech. We are all eager to see what excellent banners the pupils of Ysgol Ardudwy will create under the guidance of such an exceptional artist.”

Gregynog is Wales' oldest extant classical music festival, but its most significant predecessor was the Harlech Castle Musical Festival, the inspiration for this year's Gregynog Festival programme as curator Rhian Davies explains,

“Bringing the festival to Harlech is a great honour and seeing my 20 years' of research come alive in and around the community will be incredible. One of the highlights will be brass ensemble Septura playing fanfares from the Castle battlements during the hour before their concert on 2 July, just as they used to do in Harlech a hundred years ago.

“Every Festival concert this year revives repertoire by composers associated with Harlech, many of which were written locally and inspired by Welsh landscapes and legends, quite timely considering we are beginning our journey through the Year of Legends in Wales.”

It will be a momentous occasion as Gregynog Festival's Pageantry season comes to Harlech from 28th June until 2nd July and Ysgol Ardudwy pupils are thrilled to be part of the event as the school's Head of Art, Emma Marini says,

“Gregynog Festival has such a wonderful reputation and the fact that their theme is something personal to Harlech is wonderful. There will be such a buzz in the town and the students are very excited to be part of the occasion.”

The banners they create will be on full display throughout the Festival and this is a great way of getting the children enthused about art as the artist Luned Rhys Parri herself explains,

“I’m looking forward to working on such a special project, the rich history of the Gregynog Festival and the Harlech pageants are inspirational. I always enjoy working with local students, seeing what the budding young artists will create, but it can be rare for the finished work to have such an opportunity to showcase.”

As well as Harlech Castle, events will be taking place all over the town including the Golf Club, Memorial Hall, Coleg Harlech. An innovative addition will be Croesi Traeth / Crossing A Beach, a special production commissioned by Gregynog Festival from the dance collective, Light, Ladd and Emberton, and performed in response to the tides on Harlech Beach. There will be tours of iconic locations including several private houses and a special outing on the Ffestiniog Railway.

Headline artists include cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan at Llandanwg Church, plus violinist Sara Trickey, pianist Clare Hammond, Hebridean folksinger Joy Dunlop and pianola player Rex Lawson at Theatr Ardudwy.

The strong programme of talks includes historian Paul O’Leary on the Harlech Pageants, photographer Iestyn Hughes on Alvin Langdon Coburn, Cuillin Bantock on his musical family, and a guided walk by Sian Roberts.

For further information and to buy tickets visit www.gregynogfestival.org or call 01686 207100.

ENDS

For further information contact:

Deian Creunant – deian.creunant@four.cymru / 01970 636419

Kate Patten – kate.patten@four.cymru / 01970 636401

Notes to the Editor

The Gregynog Festival is a lottery funded project for the Arts Council of Wales, a Signature Event of the Major Events Unit, Welsh Government (Visit Wales), and the only Welsh member of REMA, the European Early Music Network based at Versailles.

Launched by sisters Gwendoline and Margaret Davies at Gregynog Hall, Tregynon, near Newtown in 1933, the Gregynog Festival is Wales' oldest classical music festival.

The granddaughters of industrialist, entrepreneur and politician, David Davies, who came from Llandinam, Powys, they became philanthropists travelling throughout Europe, passionate about art and music, and bequeathing over 260 works from their collection to the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, where many are now displayed.

The Gregynog Festival attracts visitors from all over the world into Wales as well as having a social and economic impact on the local community through its investment in concerts, workshops, talks and outreach projects.