

**GREGYNOG FESTIVAL 2019: VISION**

**22-30 June 2019**

Aberystwyth takes centre stage as Gregynog Festival celebrates the vision of Gwendoline, Margaret and David Davies for a better world rooted in culture and peace following the First World War. The season is inspired by two centenaries - the appointment of Henry Walford Davies as first Gregynog Professor of Music at Aberystwyth University and the foundation of the Department of International Politics - all funded by the Davies family in 1919.

The opening and closing concerts also take place in Aberystwyth with chamber-folk band VRȉ playing at the National Library of Wales (22 June, 7.30pm), while Meirion Wynn Jones gives a recital on the fine Frederick Rothwell organ at Bethel Chapel in Baker Street (30 June, 2.30pm).

VRȉ (Patrick Rimes, Jordan Price Williams and Aneirin Jones) have become the hottest property in Welsh music since their début CD *Tŷ Ein Tadau* won Best Album and Best Traditional Welsh Song at the first Wales Folk Awards in April (“a magic chemistry that is absolutely bewildering, mesmerising and thoroughly addictive”, *FolkWales*). For Gregynog Festival, they showcase the album in the context of two remarkable 19th-century portraits interpreted by Peter Lord as well as introducing a new set of tunes drawn from the collection of Dr Meredydd Evans (Merêd) and Phyllis Kinney at the National Library (see <https://blog.llyfrgell.cymru/helar-hen-ganeuon/>).

Meirion’s programme includes music by composers with Aberystwyth connections such as William Mathias, David de Lloyd and Walford Davies himself. Walford gave the inaugural recital on Bethel’s organ in 1924, while de Lloyd’s composition ‘Er Cof’ was written for the service to dedicate the instrument to the memory of Chapel members killed in the First World War.

Dr Rhian Davies, Gregynog Festival’s Artistic Director, is an Aberystwyth alumna who returned to live here last year. “I love being back in Aber,” she said, “and it’s been great to create this Festival on the spot. It was so exciting to trace the manuscript of ‘Er Cof’ to the University Archives and then to discover Mathias’ ‘Prelude, Elegy and Toccata’ in the National Library. It’s an early work that Mathias wrote when he used to play at Bethel as a student, and it was premièred at Gregynog by the famous Aberystwyth organist Charles Clements, so it’s perfect to hear it during this year’s Festival. Meirion will also be playing a piece called ‘Aria’ by Firmin Swinnen, a Belgian refugee who gave recitals at several Aberystwyth chapels in 1915 before emigrating to make a celebrity career in the USA.”

Festival events at Gregynog include the Odysseus Piano Trio (28 June, 7.30pm) whose repertoire pays tribute to the Aberystwyth Trio appointed by Walford Davies in 1919 as the first resident chamber ensemble at any university in the world. They even shared the platform with Béla Bartók when he made his UK début in Aberystwyth in 1922.

The Davies family’s interests are also explored in an afternoon of talks by Dr Jan Ruzicka (29 June, 2.30pm) and Craig Owen (29 June, 4.00pm). Jan is Director of the David Davies Memorial Institute at Aberystwyth’s Department of International Politics, while Craig is Head of Wales for Peace at the Temple of Peace and Health in Cardiff. To close the day, the outstanding French Baroque ensemble, A Nocte Temporis, directed by Reinoud Van Mechelen, make their Wales début with a beautiful programme of Bach arias for tenor, flute, viola da gamba and harpsichord (29 June, 7.30pm).

There’s another chance to catch VRȉ and Peter Lord in Llangadfan (23 June, 2.30pm) with a delicious afternoon tea at Cwpan Pinc to follow. Rhian Davies also speaks about Walford Davies’ visionary schemes for music in Wales, including the Aberystwyth and Cardiganshire Festivals, at the Drwm (28 June, 1.00pm) and Gregynog (28 June, 6.00pm).

Tickets and full programme details are available from [gregynogfestival.org](http://www.gregynogfestival.org) and 01686 207100.

**Gregynog Festival 2019: *Vision***

**Season events**

**Saturday, 22 June 2019, 7.30pm**

**Drwm, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth**

VRȉ, *Tŷ Ein Tadau*

Chamber-folk string trio VRï (Patrick Rimes, Jordan Price Williams and Aneirin

Jones) showcase their acclaimed debut album *Tŷ Ein Tadau* in the context of

two remarkable 19th-century portraits, interpreted by Peter Lord. Following

their double success at the recent Wales Folk Awards, catch them while you can

in an intimate acoustic concert to open the 2019 Festival season.

[**www.vri.cymru**](http://www.vri.cymru)

**Sunday, 23 June 2019, 2.30pm**

**Pontcadfan, Llangadfan**

VRȉ, *Tŷ Ein Tadau*

Another chance to hear VRȉ and Peter Lord, this time in the former chapel that

has become a popular recent Festival venue. Afternoon tea at Cwpan Pinc is

included in the ticket price.

**Friday, 28 June 2019, 1.00pm**

**Drwm, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth**

Rhian Davies, *Walford and Wales*

A lecture that considers Walford Davies’s ambition ‘to further the expression of Welsh nationality in music’ and his visionary initiatives that were bankrolled by the ‘boundless generosity’ of Gwendoline and Margaret Davies.

**Friday, 28 June 2019, 6.00pm**

**Senior Common Room, Gregynog**

Rhian Davies *Walford and Wales*

Another opportunity to hear the Artistic Director’s introduction to the season

curation, this time as a pre-concert talk at Gregynog.

**Friday, 28 June 2019, 7.30pm**

**The Music Room, Gregynog**

Odysseus Piano Trio

Core classical repertoire and music by Welsh composers associated with the Aberystwyth Trio, the first resident chamber ensemble at any University in the world.

[**www.odysseustrio.com**](http://www.odysseustrio.com)

**Saturday, 29 June 2019, 2.30pm**

**Senior Common Room, Gregynog**

Dr Jan Ruzicka, *‘Considering all the peoples of the world as one’: David Davies and international politics*

The Director of the David Davies Memorial Institute considers how the world’s first Chair of International Politics came to be founded at Aberystwyth University in 1919.

[**www.aber.ac.uk/en/interpol**](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/interpol)

**Saturday, 29 June 2019, 4.00pm**

**Senior Common Room, Gregynog**

Craig Owen, *David Davies and the Temple of Peace*

A lecture by the Head of Wales for Peace to mark 80 years since the Temple of Peace and Health opened in Cardiff to commemorate the men and women of all nations who died in the Great War.

[**www.walesforpeace.org**](http://www.walesforpeace.org)

**Saturday, 29 June 2019, 7.30pm**

**The Music Room, Gregynog**

Reinoud Van Mechelen, tenor, director

A Nocte Temporis

*Erbarme dich,* an all-Bach programme of arias for tenor, flute, cello and harpsichord, performed by the multi-award-winning Flemish tenor and French Baroque ensemble.

[**www.anoctetemporis.org**](http://www.anoctetemporis.org)

**Sunday, 30 June 2019, 2.30pm**

**Bethel Chapel, Baker Street, Aberystwyth**

Meirion Wynn Jones, organ

Music by Walford Davies, William Mathias and other Aberystwyth composers who have played the Chapel’s fine Frederick Rothwell organ over the years.

[**www.meirionwynnjones.com**](http://www.meirionwynnjones.com) **ENDS**

**Note to editors**

Born in Oswestry, **Henry Walford Davies (1869-1941)** was one of the most famous British musicians of his generation as an organist, composer and broadcaster. He was invited by Gwendoline and Margaret Davies to become the first Artistic Director of the Gregynog Festival in 1933, and succeeded Edward Elgar as Master of the King’s Musick in 1934.

**David Davies (1880-1944), Gwendoline Davies (1882-1951) and Margaret Davies (1884-1963)** were the grandchildren of the remarkable Welsh industrialist and entrepreneur, David Davies, Llandinam (1818-1890), and used their inherited wealth with imagination to sponsor numerous cultural, educational and social projects to benefit the people of Wales.

**Gregynog Festival** was founded in 1933 by Gwendoline and Margaret Davies at their home, Gregynog Hall, near Newtown in North Powys, and is the oldest classical music festival in Wales. Gregynog has hosted a remarkable roster of artists over the years from Jelly d’Arányi to The Sixteen, plus world premières by composers including Gustav Holst and Eric Whitacre. The Festival Directors gratefully acknowledge the generous support of sponsors and partners to present concerts and community outreach events across our rural Mid Wales catchment:

Aberystwyth at War (Aberystwyth University)

Arts Council of Wales

Gwendoline and Margaret Davies Charity

Live Music Now

Music Reprieval Trust

Nidec (Control Techniques)

Town Council of Newtown and Llanllwchaiarn

Tregynon Wind Farm Trust

Tŷ Cerdd

**For press enquiries and photographs:**

Dr Rhian Davies, Artistic Director, Gregynog Festival

0793 206 3563 / cerddores@gmail.com

**For Box Office enquiries:**

Sarah Yeomans, Administrator, Gregynog Festival

01686 207100 / sarah@gregynogfestival.org

 You can follow the Festival on Facebook and Twitter

 **@gregynogfest**

[**www.gregynogfestival.org**](http://www.gregynogfestival.org)

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