

26 May 2009
PRESS RELEASE

Carbon 12
7.30 pm, 25 June 2009
Pre-performance talks with composer Errollyn Wallen
will begin at 6.30pm.



Errollyn Wallen, the award-winning composer, will be hitting the road with Welsh National Opera as *Carbon 12 – A choral symphony* begins a tour of Wales. They will perform at Aberystwyth Arts Centre on Thursday 25th June, 7.30pm.

Premiered at Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff in 2008, *Carbon 12* tells the story of coal and its effects on the industrial and social history of South Wales from its birth to its decline in the 1980s. The first performance of *Carbon 12* made national headlines, including Radio 4's Today Programme, because of the unusual choice of subject matter and ambitious scope.

Audiences will have the opportunity to hear Errollyn Wallen discuss how she and librettist John Binias created *Carbon 12* in a pre-show talk beginning at 6.30pm. WNO's Chorus and Orchestra will then perform the fifty-minute work.

Carbon 12, tells the story of coal through the character of John 'the bookcase' Jones, who has been a miner for as long as anyone can remember. From its birth millions of years ago through to the demise of the mining industry the fifty-minute oratorio explores how the fossil fuel put South Wales on the global industrial map.

This concert staging of *Carbon 12* is a chance for audiences to see the world renowned Chorus and Orchestra of Welsh National Opera performing live onstage. Alwyn Mellor returns as Bronwen Jones, a role she originally sang in the first performances in 2008 and Baritone Roland Wood performs John Jones. Roland has previously sung for English National Opera, English Touring Opera and Scottish Opera and was a semi-final winner after being chosen as the English entrant for Cardiff Singer of the World in 2003.

While the full WNO Chorus will be singing in *Carbon 12*, solo roles will be sung by soprano Samantha Hay and Megan Llewellyn Dorke, mezzo solo roles by Amanda Baldwin and Sian Meinir. Alun Rhys Jenkins, Simon Curtis, Michael Clifton-Thompson will sing tenor solos roles, while baritone solo roles will be sung by Julian Boyce and James Robinson-May. Gerry Cornelius who

conducted the Valleys performance of *Carbon 12* in 2008, returns to conduct this tour.

Errollyn Wallen is an award-winning composer of contemporary new music and a singer-songwriter of pop influenced songs. Errollyn received critical acclaim for her opera *The Silent Twins* for Almeida Opera; she also won a 2005 British Composer Award for *Spirit Symphony – Speed Dating for Two Orchestras*.

Librettist John Binias has worked with WNO MAX on a number of touring projects, as well as with Opera North. He wrote the BBC series *Mountains of Britain* in collaboration with Griff Rhys-Jones.

Tickets for this production are £12 (£7 for school groups) and can be booked by contacting the Arts Centre ticket office on 01970 62 32 32 or online at www.aber.ac.uk/artscentre

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Further information is available from Rachel Taylor on 01970 622889 email rst@aber.ac.uk

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Editor's Notes:

- Welsh National Opera is the national opera company for Wales. It tours extensively throughout Wales and is the largest provider of opera to regional England. WNO receives annual revenue funding from the Arts Council of Wales and the Arts Council England.