

March 2010
PRESS RELEASE


Canolfan y Celfyddydau
Aberystwyth Arts Centre

Launch Concert
Mid Wales Chamber Orchestra
Conductor James Slater
Leader Marcia Crayford

Friday 14 May, 7.30pm

Prokofiev Symphony No. 1 in D major, 'Classical Symphony'
Huw Watkins Three Welsh Songs
Vaughan Williams The Lark Ascending (Soloist: Marcia Crayford)
Mozart Symphony No. 41 in C major K551, 'Jupiter'



BRAND NEW PROFESSIONAL ORCHESTRA LAUNCHES IN MID WALES

A brand new professional orchestra is launching in Mid Wales between Friday, 14 and Sunday, 16 May 2010. The Mid Wales Chamber Orchestra (MWCO), conducted by James Slater and led by violinist Marcia Crayford, aims to bring classical music of the highest standard to concert audiences, schools and community groups across Mid Wales.

Mid Wales Chamber Orchestra will be the first ensemble of its kind in the area – a collection of hand-picked, world-class musicians conducted by James Slater whose burgeoning career has already seen him work with some of the world's greatest conductors and performers. The orchestra will be led by Marcia Crayford, whose career has seen her lead the famous Nash Ensemble for 25 years as well as guest lead for most of the UK's major orchestras including BBC National Orchestra of Wales, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra.

The orchestra's eagerly awaited launch takes the form of three concerts – on Friday, 14 May at 7.30pm, MWCO performs at Aberystwyth Arts Centre; on Saturday, 15 May at 7.30pm, the group will be at Theatr Brycheiniog in Brecon where it is the new Orchestra in Residence; and on Sunday, 16 May at 6.30pm the orchestra will be at St Andrew's Church in Presteigne.

The concerts will showcase the orchestra's aim of celebrating the great classical works whilst also providing a platform for composers connected to the area. Vaughan Williams' 'The Lark Ascending' will evoke the soundscape of the local hills, while Huw Watkins' 'Three Welsh Songs for String Orchestra' evokes a different Welsh soundscape. Originally from Blackwood, Huw Watkins has already established a reputation as one of the outstanding young composers of his generation. His

'Three Welsh Songs' was originally commissioned to celebrate the 60th birthday of the Prince of Wales. These two works are framed by two classical masterpieces – Prokofiev's Symphony No 1 in D major, the 'Classical Symphony' (Opus 25) and Mozart's final symphony, Symphony No. 41 in C major, the 'Jupiter Symphony' (K551).

Commenting on the launch, James Slater said: "I am incredibly excited to have this opportunity to work with a group of outstanding musicians, bringing live concerts to audiences across this wonderful region. I love living here and hope that MWCO will offer new opportunities for young and established musicians to develop their musical careers here in Wales."

Marcia Crayford, the orchestra's leader and joint Artistic Director said: "MWCO has given me a great opportunity to make music with like-minded people in an inspiring landscape. We have a wonderful team of players, all bursting with ideas and enthusiasm and looking forward to making music together on our own doorsteps."

In addition to the orchestra's key launch season, soloists from Mid Wales Chamber Orchestra will be presenting a series of three chamber concerts. On Thursday, 4 March, the soloists of MWCO performed at Theatr Brycheiniog; on Friday, 30 April they will be at Holy Trinity Church in Llandrindod Wells; and on Saturday, 1 May they will be at St Michael's, Discoed performing Dvorák's String Quintet in G major (Opus 77) and Beethoven's Septet in E flat major for strings and wind (Opus 20).

Mid Wales Chamber Orchestra's outreach programme is an important part of its future plans. Huw Watkins' 'Three Welsh Songs' provides the inspiration for the launch of the outreach programme which will take place in primary schools in Presteigne, Llandrindod Wells and Builth Wells this Summer. John Hymas, viola player and well known local composer, leads other orchestra members for a two-day workshop in each school working with the children to create new arrangements of a traditional Welsh song for the schools' singers and instrumentalists to perform.

The orchestra's future plans include working with other community arts groups to bring a range of creative projects to young people in the region, and touring Mid Wales with school and family concerts. The orchestra's aim is to reach as many new audiences, schools and communities as possible.

Tickets for this performance are £12.50 (£11.50) Cardi Card £12 (£11) and can be booked by contacting the Arts Centre Box Office on 01970 62 32 32 or online at www.aber.ac.uk/artscentre

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Notes to editors:

Further information is available from Rachel Taylor on 01970 622894 email rst@aber.ac.uk

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