

5 November 2018

Dear Friend(s),

Now that the first frosts of the autumn have arrived in Gower and the evenings are drawing in, it is time for another Newsletter before our memories of last summer's Festival fade away. It was a wonderfully warm summer, of course – so warm that someone asked whether we shouldn't be selling fans as well as cushions at our events! But good weather certainly helps a Festival like ours, and this year's one was a great success both financially and artistically. From the music of Morfydd Owen at the start to Griff Harries's *Armistice Suite* at the end, the programme had a clear overarching theme and all of us will have enjoyed hearing pieces that were new to us as well as more familiar repertoire. As ever, we owe much to Gordon Back's resourceful planning, to the generosity of the Festival's sponsors, and to equally generous donations from Ty Cerdd and the Gower Society. Above all, our thanks go to Festival Friends like you for your continuing support and for spreading the word among locals and visitors.

Plans are now well advanced for the 2019 Festival, which runs from 1st to 13th July. It is full of good things and will have some new features too. On the first three days we will welcome a group-in-residence, the versatile London Conchord Ensemble, performing a varied repertoire of music old and new and for different combinations of instruments. Later on, the Carducci String Quartet, who gave one of the outstanding concerts of the 2017 Festival, will make a welcome return to Llanrhidian Church. And we will have two concerts honouring significant birthdays. One is for the artist Glenys Cour, to be given appropriately in the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, a new venue for us, with a fine acoustic. The other is for Sir Karl Jenkins, and will be conducted by him - an orchestral concert in St Mary's Swansea on the last night of the Festival.

There will be solo recitals too. The young violinist, Christian Li, junior first-prize winner at this year's Menuhin Competition in Geneva, will play at Newton Church; and two master-pianists, both well-known to Gower audiences, will return – Llyr Williams in the first week and Ji Liu in the second. Afternoon events have proved a popular part of the Festival in recent years and there will be five in 2019. Among them will be a children's concert, devised by Sir Karl and Lady Carol Jenkins and featuring the North Gower Partnership Choir. And – what may be a 'first' for the Festival – there will be a concert specially intended for people who because of old age or disability cannot normally get to hear live music. These are some highlights of a fortnight which promises something for all tastes and all ages. As usual, the Festival leaflet with dates, times and information about the music to be played, will be circulated in the spring.

A word about the Festival Friends 100 Club, which helps to support Festival concerts while also giving members the chance to win cash prizes. A share costs £12 per year and you can take out more than one share if you wish. Draws are in November, March and July, with prizes of £100, £50 and £25. If you would like to join the 100 Club, please contact Anne Pope at friends@gowerfestival.org or telephone 01793

850927 and she will be pleased to send you further information. If you join the Club by 12 November the cost will be only £8 for this year!

Finally, a couple of forthcoming piano recitals which might be of interest:

- Since 2017 our Patron Llŷr Williams has been performing a cycle of concerts of Schubert's piano music at the Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff and the last in the series is on 31 January 2019 at 7.30 pm. The programme includes Schubert's wonderful late Sonata in B flat alongside two of his songs in piano arrangements by Liszt. You can book online

at https://www.rwcmd.ac.uk/whats_on/all_events.aspx or by phoning 02920 391391.

- Before that, and closer to home, there is an attractive concert of piano duets on Sunday 18 November at 3 pm in the Great Hall, Swansea University Bay Campus on Fabian Way. The players are Emma Abbate and Julian Perkins and their programme includes music by Mozart, Ravel and Dvořák – two of his delightful Slavonic Dances. If you enjoyed the evening of piano duets at the 2017 Gower Festival as much as I did, this one is for you! You can book online at www.taliesinartscentre.co.uk or by phone on 01792 602060.

Also, don't forget Griff Harries' Armistice Suite, which will be performed once again on 12th November at The Grand Theatre, Swansea at 7.30pm. If you missed seeing it at the festival, do get along to see it. It is not to be missed. It is a multi-media performance piece consisting of words, music and visuals, to commemorate the centenary of the end of the Great War and the signing of the Armistice, in November 1918.

With best wishes, and on behalf of everyone on the Gower Festival Committee,

Hugh Dunthorne