

Another fantastic concert yesterday evening with Llŷr Williams, and I heard that the Children's Concert went really well, though I was not able to be there myself.

On Tuesday we will be at Llangennith for the Wales International Academy of Voice when three singers, plus their accompanist, will be entertaining us with various arias and songs, some of which were in the repertoire of Adelina Patti, who died 100 years ago. Adelina Patti was a French-Italian opera singer who earned huge fees at the height of her career. She lived at Craig Y Nô's Castle and the Patti Pavilion in Swansea was moved from the Craig Y Nô's estate to Swansea in 1920 from her Winter Garden as a gift from her to the people of Swansea.

If you wish to learn more about this amazing lady, there will be a pre-concert talk by Griff Harries at 6pm in Llangennith Village Hall, which is free to all ticket holders. The talk will last about an hour and will be fully illustrated.

As parking is limited in the village, there will be a shuttle bus running from the top of the hill as you approach Llangennith, both before and after the concert. Look out for the Gower Festival parking signs as you approach the village.

There are no toilets in the church, but if you attend the pre-concert talk you will be able to use their facilities before going to the concert, otherwise you might wish to buy a drink in the King's Head and use their facilities.

This concert has been sponsored by Susan and John Medwell; we are very grateful for their support. I thought it would be good to explain how the Gower Festival is run. We are a charity and any profits we make are ploughed back into the Festival. As you may appreciate, all of the artists are quite expensive as they are of such a high calibre. The ticket prices, along with sponsorship and grants, have to cover the cost of the artists, venues, piano moves and tuning, shuttle buses, toilet hire, programmes etc. The committee are all volunteers who are not paid and buy all of their own tickets. We meet each month for a morning to plan the festival throughout the year, but also spend a lot of our time outside that making sure everything is ready each year for the Festival. You will also have seen many of us working at each concert but you may not know that when we manage a concert we spend much of the day at the venue setting up, being there for the piano tuner and piano arrivals and departures as necessary, being there for the artists' rehearsal, and at the end of the concert clearing everything away and transporting everything home ready to take to the next venue. We do not always get everything right, but we do our best to ensure that high quality music can be enjoyed by as many people as possible in Gower. I think you will agree that the concerts so far this year have been exceptionally good and I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the committee for all their hard work. Without them the Gower Festival would cease to exist.

And now, once again, over to the Mumbling Maestro of Mumbles....

"Heard melodies are sweet but those unheard are sweeter" - John Keats

I wasn't planning on a Sunday mumble but then I changed my mind and have decided to run a few serious thought provoking issues past you. Please muse over them as you enjoy a lazy Sunday.

The connection between music and health has been a favourite topic of research. Whether it's playing classical music to developing foetuses, studying when listening to Mozart or simply putting on some Bach after a long day at the office to unwind (I find that a G&T helps) Science has confirmed that music is good for you (well we all know that).

A new study at the University of Utah shows that music - particularly Mozart's music - could have a major impact on the treatment of pain (do they get paid for coming up with this stuff? Only in America eh!!). The study found that they could amplify the effects of Ibuprofen as a pain killer in mice simply by playing Mozart to them. The study showed that Mozart's music boosted the effectiveness of the pain reliever by an extraordinary 23 percent (now I'm lucky in that I never get headaches and I've never taken Ibuprofen, but is this possible?) Human trials will be needed to see if the results work on people, not just mice. So, the next time you reach for the Ibuprofen, put on some Mozart and see if you can feel the difference.

Hey if you've got a Sunday hangover after a glass of wine too many last night - give it a try!

Before you settle down to that lazy Sunday afternoon post lunch nap in front of the TV, have a think about this one as well: learning to play an instrument can have long-lasting effects. In several studies children who took piano lessons for six months improved their ability to do puzzles and solve other tasks by as much as 30 percent. Why does playing an instrument make such a difference? Researchers at an American University believe that musical training creates new pathways in the brain (this is also true).

Finally, a 'Boffin' at the University of Pittsburgh has come up with a list of 'Classical Music for Cats' (this really is true as well!). Here is our feline friends' top ten. It's the music they enjoy.

A Cat's Music Playlist

- 1). **Chopin:** The Nocturnes - ideal for afternoon naps.
- 2). **Debussy, Fauré & Ravel:** String Quartets - French music is a favourite with all cats and the sound of a string instrument is equally well enjoyed (played on catgut strings I assume - perhaps they recognise a relative?).
- 3) **Schubert:** Lieder - Cats have great taste when it comes to song.
- 4) **Rachmaninov:** Second Symphony - Cats are great romantics; they love passionate music. This one is for early evenings, with some adrenalin rushes before a good night's sleep.
- 5) **Mahler:** Symphony No.5 - Each cat will have its favourite movement.
- 6) **Mendelssohn:** Symphonies 1-5 - This is clearly morning music, lots of energy and good for playful moments.
- 7) **Wagner:** Parsifal - Most cats will listen and then fall asleep for the entire opera (close to five hours! - I know plenty of humans that do that)
- 8) **Bruckner:** Symphonies Nos. 1-9 - It might seem like an odd choice but Bruckner's symphonies are a big hit with all cats. It touches the harmony of the earth and nature and therefore our pets.
- 9) **Stravinsky:** - When cats need to burn some energy - sprints, marathons, mouse hunting - this is perfect.
- 10) **Rossini:** Cats' Duet - Of course cats can sing this 'better' (in their minds) but they still enjoy when humans try to imitate their unique vocabulary.

(Are these things worthwhile and clever or are they utter and complete bunkum? I know what I think! Still, they are amusing!!)

We don't have a Gower Festival concert or event on Sunday but you might enjoy visiting the Gower Open Studios 2019 (see our printed programme). This is a great scheme that involves a selection of talented artists working in lovely studios that are hidden away in beautiful corners of Gower. Their names and contact details are listed in the Gower Festival programme along with a description of their craft. All the artists are anxious for you to visit their studios and see their work at any time during this year's Gower Festival. Highly recommended! Their project is being run in association with Llanmadoc & Cheriton Village Open Gardens which is happening today - 1.00pm to 6.00pm - and this year fourteen gardens will be welcoming visitors.

So many nice things to do!!

Have a good Sunday!

Tomorrow, I will be mostly mumbling about the harp.

Mumbling Maestro of Mumbles