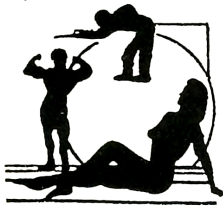


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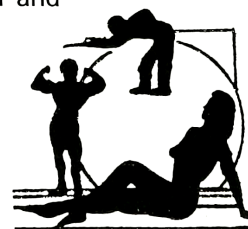
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Her Worship the Mayor of Islwyn Councillor Mrs Zena Creed

It is a delight to be the Mayor of Islwyn while such a prestigious event is taking place. The idea, drawing the community together and involving people of all walks of life, is one of outstanding appreciation of the great part the Chartists played in our heritage.

I am sure the production of "The Forbidden Hymn" will attract people from many areas to view the artistic capabilities of the Islwyn community with prodigious approbation.

The Council, through the Leisure Services Committee, has provided a platform for the Arts in Islwyn and will be gratified to know that their support has enabled this event to take place.

On behalf of the Council I would like to thank all of the businesses, grant giving bodies and other patrons who followed the Council's lead and added their support to the production.

I hope all who attend this performance will recognise the skills and efforts that were needed to bring it to fruition and will take home in their hearts a part of Islwyn's heritage which will bear fruit in the future of Art in Islwyn.



Councillor R. Saralis Chairman, Leisure Services Committee

The Leisure Services Committee has always attempted to maintain a network of local arts activities in the Borough. Thanks to the support of the Welsh Arts Council we have been able to gather all these local groups together to mark this very important anniversary. The idea of a "Peoples' Production" of the Peoples' Charter germinated from the recent decision of our Council to develop on this site, a new Arts Centre. I am quite sure that the enthusiasm radiating from the performers tonight will more than justify support for our decision. Already some of that enthusiasm has resulted in the formation of a Youth Drama Group and a Youth Dance Company.

I have no doubt that the decision of my committee to support this venture will be appreciated by all who have participated in, sponsored, and witnessed this production. We thank everyone for their support and involvement. We recognise the fact that as a committee we only made the decision and expected others to do the work. That is why on this occasion I must single out our Leisure Services Development Officer, Mr Lyn Evans, for special mention. He has had to carry out that daunting task in such a limited period of time, that only through total commitment and personal sacrifice has achieved success. Our thanks must also extend to all those people who have so willingly supported him.

I am sure you will be delighted not only with this production but also with the knowledge that when the arts centre is completed we will have the opportunity for similar ventures in the future.

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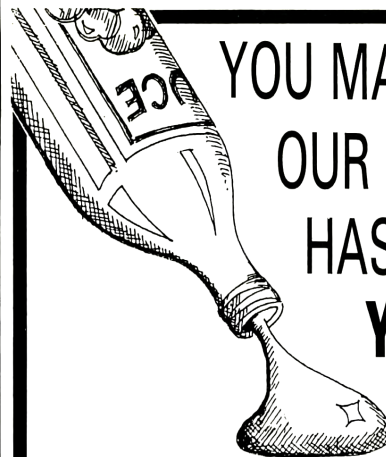
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FOREWORD BY

Professor Gwyn A. Williams

One hundred and fifty years ago this November, in the greatest mobilisation of working people south Wales had seen, 20,000 men of the Valleys of Gwent set out on a long march. Their banners proclaimed their cause — *Cyfiawnder*, Justice. They were fighting for the People's Charter and full political democracy.

God had clearly never intended human beings to live up at those Valley Heads. The ironmasters corrected Him on the point. Two generations of frenetic industrialisation brought to birth a new, tough, humane, raucous and cultivated working-class society which embraced 200,000 people.

They had known two generations of struggle for rights and dignity — in the Jacobin movements of the 1790s, the trade unions led by Robert Owen, the Merthyr Rising of 1831, the guerilla war of the Scotch Cattle, that highly effective resistance movement whose Welsh language shielded them from authority and whose base was Blackwood.

It was People's Charter of 1838 which set their minds on fire. Chartism, the first nation-wide workers' political movement in the western world, called for the overthrow of a narrow, oligarchical and corrupt parliament and the creation of full political democracy.

It swept up the Valleys like a crusade preached by missionaries — Henry Vincent an orator from Bristol, William Jones, actor, preacher and watchmaker from Pontypool, Zephaniah Williams, mineral agent, innkeeper and freethinker of Blaina, Dr. William Price, surgeon and Druid of Pontypridd, Morgan Williams, pioneer of a people's press from Merthyr. All sorts of local leaders sprang to life, like Jack the Fifer, John Rees, mason of Tredegar who'd fought with the army of Texas as San Anton.

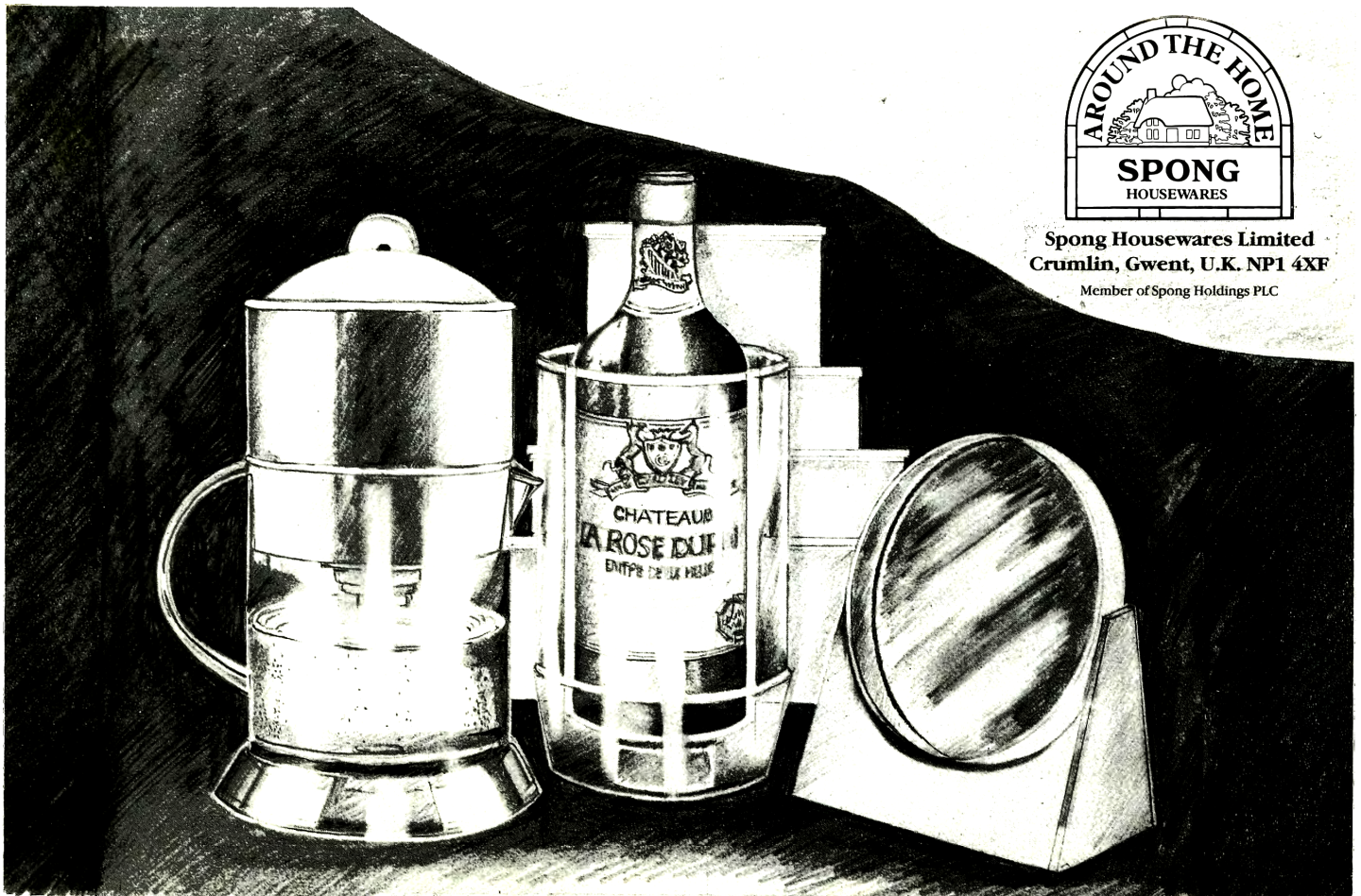
It was a movement drenched in colour and ritual — young girls in white dresses carrying forests of green flags, songs, marches, dances, penillion singing. They had their own Tricolour devised by Hugh Williams of Carmarthen (the grey eminence of Rebecca and Her Daughters in the west). On that tricolour, they swore an oath to live or die by the People's Charter. When Parliament rejected the Charter, south Wales was ready to rise at once.

John Frost, draper and former Mayor of Newport, their delegate to the Chartist Convention, persuaded them to wait until he'd rallied support in England. They planned a five-pronged assault throughout south Wales. They were to take over south Wales and ignite rebellion throughout Britain, to be what Che Guevara once called the little motor which starts the big one going.

No support came. They lost patience and went ahead on their own. There was a last-minute change of plan. D-Day had been fixed for Guy Fawkes' Day! Now the Gwent people were told to concentrate on Newport and move a day early. This was a fatal mistake, compounded by the foul weather. The rebellion was a disaster and its leaders became martyrs.

But that was not the end of Chartism. it was more like a beginning. Within weeks of Newport, Morgan Williams brought out *Udgorn Cymru* the Trumpet of Wales, one of our greatest popular newspapers. Chartism surged again, in 1840, 1842, 1848, the 1860s. And within a hundred years, the People's Charter had become the British Way of Life.

Then, of course, the People needed a new Charter. The People will always need a Charter. That is why it is necessary to remember and salute those brave and generous men and women of 150 years ago. We need their memory. For we are still trudging on that long march to justice.

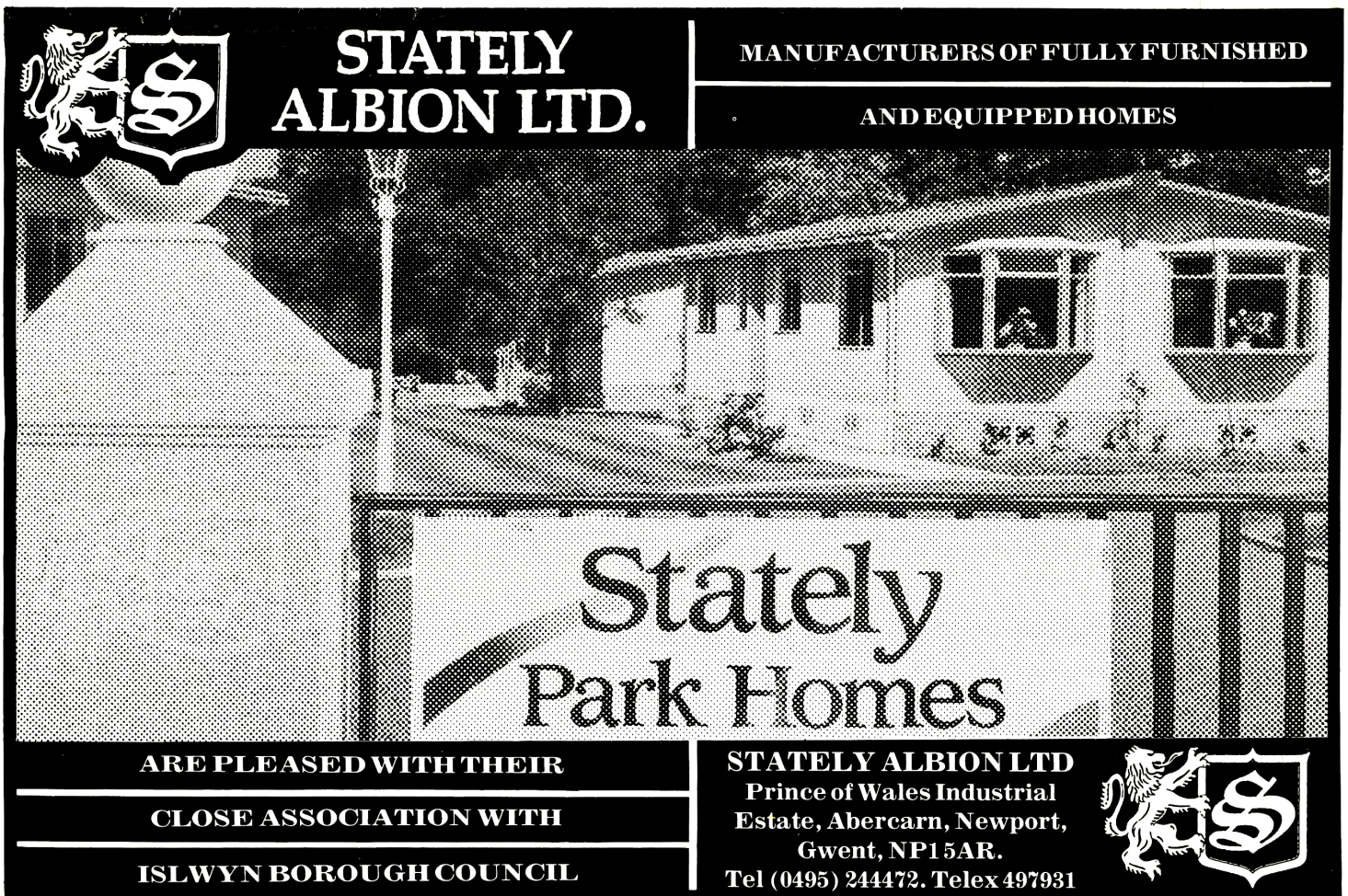


The Forbidden Hymn

President of all the immortals
Lord of the rocks and of my thoughts won
Lord of the knowledge of human pain
Lord of the sadness in the rain
In the shadow of the vale
The burning brightness of the sun
Force that on the anvil forged heart
Bring together the people of the globe
Lord of the power and peaceful make
Lord of the birth and Lord of the wake
On us bestow again
The beauteousness of thy robe
Parliament of all the common life
Lords of the fields and all stock might
Lords of the sedition and fitful fear
Lords of the votes the grasping peer
In the gallows and the boat
The deportation of our right

Mystery in light of the skies
Shining through your tender gaze
Lord of the touch whose hands do heal
Lord of the mendings I can feel
In the moment of a day
The nearness of your secret way
Government of all our active strength
People of fire destroy the law
People of the green flags start the wheel
People of hope begin to steal
From the bullet and the blade
The price of freedom in our blood.

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Chartist Song

Discontent grew in the valleys
Whispering talks in caverns dark.
Unholy feelings, rife in splendour.
The chorus rose. The Chartist born.

Mine lords cringed at valleys onslaught.
Welshmen lead the unforgotten cry.
Weapons poised, hearts raging
Unto war, let no man hide.

J. A. Easthope

The Ragged Army

The ragged army trundles into battle
Urging each other on like naughty boys;
Spurred on by hooligans dressed up as cattle
And fortified with beer and empty noise.
So sure that justice blindly marches with them;
So sure they're right and therefore they will win.
They know life must have something more to give them
And, brave as lions, they roar from inn to inn.
The sound of broken boots and muttered stories
Splashing along an unadopted street.
Along the unlit road to promised glories
The ragged army marches to defeat.

Ann Drysdale

To The Cause

Who were these men we think of so,
From Dowlais, Merthyr and Brynmawr
From Tredegar, Blackwood and Nantyglo,
Who rebelled against the tyrants power.

They were the common working men,
But more like slaves if the truth be told,
Who had no rights or privilege then
Just worked to swell the masters gold.

They joined in for the common cause,
That each man should be free, not tied
To masters backed up by biased laws
That ruled them till the day they died.

R. J. Harris

Murder By Design . . .

Westgate! Westgate! Westgate Hotel
Burnished windows straightlining Hell.
"Shoot! Shoot!" the command was loud
Lead without names scattered the crowd.

Hearts were stilled nay more to flutter
Fleeing souls to Heaven soar —
Bloodied bodies in the gutter
Feared not the Muskets roar . . .

E. D. G. Shorney

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Michael McCarthy, Director

Michael McCarthy studied music at Birmingham University and theatre studies at the Sherman Theatre, Cardiff.

In 1983 he was awarded a Welsh Arts Council Trainee Director's Bursary. In 1982 he founded Cardiff New Opera Group, which has now become Music Theatre Wales, and has directed all their productions.

Other opera includes "Fidelio" for Opera North, The Seraglio for Opera 80, Il Re pastore for Kent Opera.

He has directed education projects for Welsh National Opera and Kent Opera.

Early attempts at community performance were made in 1983 and '84 in Blaenau Ffestiniog and Llandysul with Cardiff Laboratory Theatre, and future plans include a large scale choral-theatre piece in the grounds of St Donats Castle with Lumiere and Son.

This month also sees the first tour in Wales of his production of The Fall Of The House Of Usher by Philip Glass for Music Theatre Wales.

Alan Osborne Writer

AGE:

46. Born Merthyr Tydfil 1942.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Taught Art, Design and Art History for fifteen years at Oxford, London and Merthyr. Head of Art and Design, Salvatorian College, Harrow 1971-1975. Writer in Residence for South East Wales Arts Association 1983-1984.

CREATIVE CAREER:

Contemporary Operas

1979 "Terraces". Chapter Arts

1981 "Johnny Darkie Jazz Suite". Chapter/Sherman

1985 "Tiger Tiger". Moving Being. St Stephen's Theatre

Plays

1983 "Bull, Rock and Nut". (Won 'Play for Wales' competition in 1982 and staged at the Sherman in 1985 after having been accepted at the Royal Court)

1985 "In Sunshine and in Shadow". Sherman. Toured Wales

1987 "The Tuscan". 'Made in Wales'. Sherman

1987 "The Rising". Moving Being. St Stephen's Theatre

1987 "Redemption Song". Sherman

Television

1986 "Tan Tro Nesaf". A six part Drama Series commissioned by S4C

1986 - Music for films on S4C and HTV

1979/80 Subject of two HTV Arts Documentaries: "Image '79" and "Image '80"

Radio

1986 "Mestizzo". BBC Radio Wales

Work in Progress

1988 "Armies of Nostalgia". (Novel/Radio), "The Best Defensive Boxer in the World". (Play), "America and the Boy". (TV), "The Flight at Kittyhawk". (Play), "The Whistling Boy". (Film script for S4C)

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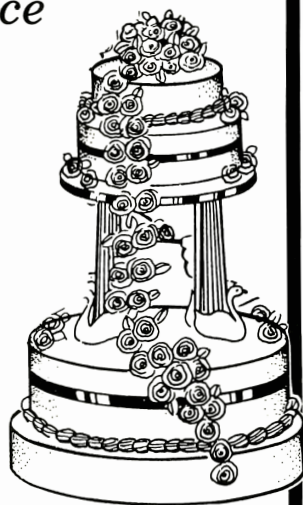
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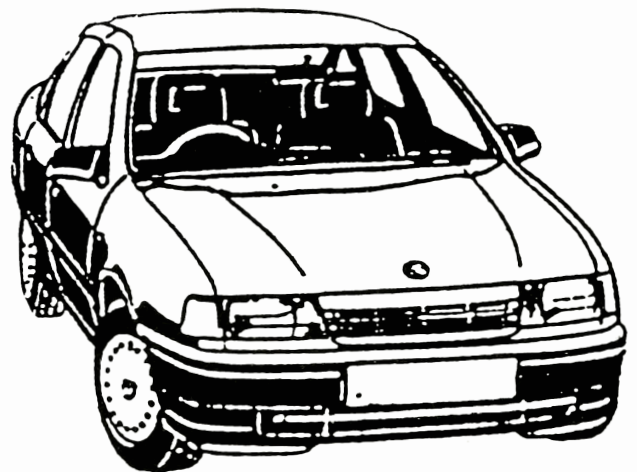
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The Forbidden Hymn

Cast List: In order of appearance

ACT 1

Tommy Warner:	Steve Botcher
Dead Chartists:	Alexis Meehan Thelma Wiltshire Jean Weller Gwen Wasley Roger Hurn Lydia Meehan Ruth Baker
Dance:	Islwyn Youth Dance
Preacher:	Tom Powell
Man:	Roger Hurn
Woman:	Daphne Woodward
Street Scene:	Oakdale Youth Choir Pontllanfraith Youth Group
Migrators:	Blackwood Operatics
Comedian:	Peter Williams
Banker:	Dawn Price
1989 Couple:	David Meehan Anita Potts
Donovans:	Mother Anita George Father Elvet Morgan
	Miner's Son: Viv Hobbs
	Policeman's Son: Paul Newman
Dance:	Islwyn Adult Dance Group
French Fop:	Huw Jones
Mad Edwards:	Leon Gardner

INTERVAL

YOUTH FOLK DANCE – Choreographer: Pam Hollister
WELSH SONG – Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw

ACT II

Dignitary/Mine Owner	Peter Williams
Dignitary Children:	Owen Davies Bethan Davies
Henry Vincent:	David Hughes

Mrs Frost: Gail Williams

Radical Women: Julie O'Donoghue
Joan Williams
Eluned Davies
Jackie Wilson

Poster Song: Newbridge Ladies Choir
Dawn Price
Pat Wagstaff

Pit Bottom: Siân Powys Elvet Morgan
Ffion Harries Reg Nash
Paul Newman

Scotch Cattle: Peter Reynolds Crad Lewis
PC Hughes Dewi Llewellyn
Idris Thomas L. Suitor.
J. R. Lewis

Woman's Leader: Pat Davies

Soldiers: Chris Hawker Sid Peacock
Lyn Evans Les Herring
Mike Butler Teddy Thomas
Tony Edwards Rod Wight
Lyn Morgan

RESIDENT ARTISTS

Director: Michael McCarthy
Writer: Alan Osborne
Composer: Tony Biggin
Designer: Alison Hughes
Choreographer: Rose Livermore

PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Manager: Pete Ferda
Lighting Designer: Alan Blakoe
Set Construction: Ian Hill
Wardrobe Supervisor: Jane Craggs
Dance Costume Design: Julie Mathews
Props Co-ordinator: Lesley Griffiths
Sound Consultant: Mathew Hobbis
House Manager: Graham Andersen

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Students at Crosskeys College (Music and Drama Course)
Karen Taylor Stephanie Parker
Neil Griffiths Julie Knight
Coryn Daniel Emma Griffiths
Celina Kerrell Adam Evans

GROUPS

Mynyddislwyn Choir	Blackwood Operatic Society
Oakdale Youth Choir	Blackwood Writers
Newbridge & District Ladies' Choir	Islwyn Dance Group
Markham Band	Pontllanfraith Youth Drama
Celyn Band	Islwyn Folk Dance Group
Curtain Raisers	

Tony Biggin:— Composer

Tony Biggin, composer, teacher, pianist and musical director of the Leavers since their inception in 1978, was born in 1952. He was educated at Ackworth School, Yorkshire, and at the University of Wales in University College, Bangor, where he studied music with William Mathias and Sebastian Forbes. During his first teaching appointment with the Inner London Education Authority at Clissold Park School he discovered an ability that was later to flower into a passion for writing large-cast school musicals with immediately catchy melodies.

So it was no surprise, when he was appointed head of music at Jordanthorpe School, Sheffield, that he wrote both words and music to a first-ever 'skatboard rock opera' (King Wozzy) and a Christmas cantata (Begin Again at Bethlehem), the latter of which is now widely performed in primary and secondary schools. Both enthusiastically involved half the school in their presentation. Subsequently, as head of music in Ysgol Aberconwy, North Wales, he wrote, to the librettos of Ron Grindley, full length scores for two musical plays, 'Rats', and the 'Circle of Gilt', the latter since released as an LP by Tryfan, Sain Recordings.

Over seven years Tony Biggin has collaborated with librettist Alec Davison to write more than 150 songs for the Leavers (a Youth Theatre drawing young people from all over Britain) in four heroic-mythic music-dramas, 'Quest of the Golden Eye' (1979), 'Bull of Minos' (1980), 'Fires of Levana' (1981) and 'Ring of Darkness' (1982) as well as a musical biography of the young George Fox, the 'Fire and the Hammer', a new musical comedy, 'Pigs among the Roses', still being worked on, and also in four full length revues (1981-1984). In May 1983 Plant Life Records released 'Bird of Freedom', an LP of songs from some of these shows and while producing the record Tony learned that Stainer and Bell were to publish eight of the songs in the 'Songs of Tony Biggin and Alec Davison'. In March 1985, Blow-up Tapes produced a cassette of twelve of their songs, 'Finger on the Button'. As well as acting as musical director to each of these productions, he also directs a small travelling singing group, 'Q for a Song', which performs nationally.

Alison Hughes (Designer)

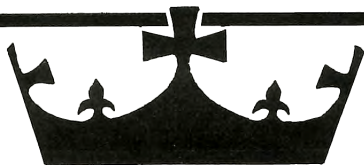
Studied sculpture at Sheffield Polytechnic and in California. Worked in artists studios in Leicester and Cardiff (AADW) and began work as a theatre designer at the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff with set, costume, poster and lighting designs for student and local companies. Productions included Chicago, The Hard Man, The Hostage, The Mikado, Cloud Nine and The Fool. Then moved to London to study Theatre Design Diploma with Margaret Harris at Riverside Studios. Design work since then includes National Opera Studio at the Bloomsbury Theatre, Fringe productions at The Old Red Lion, Offstage Downstairs and The Rose Tavern, 'Pax' by Deborah Levy at Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff. Also worked as assistant designer for the New Sculpture Gallery at the Walker in Liverpool, designer Charles Ryder, and assisted Brien Vahey at Leicester Haymarket Theatre. Now a freelance designer and modelmaker, most recent production — set and costume designs for 'Peter Grimes' by Benjamin Britten for Opera Milton Keynes in April 1989.

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November 3rd FOREST OF DEAN COLLEGE THEATRE
November 4th PANDY VILLAGE HALL, NR ABERGAVENNY
November 6th TONTEG SOCIAL HALL, TAFF ELY
November 7th STOCKTONVILLE OAP HALL, TREDEGAR
November 8th COUNTY HALL, CWMBRAN
November 9th BEAUFORT BALLROOM, EBBW VALE
November 10th EVESWELL COMMUNITY CENTRE, NEWPORT
November 11th MAESGLAS COMMUNITY CENTRE, NEWPORT
November 13th WEST POINT COMMUNITY HALL, CWMBRAN
November 14th TREVETHIN COMMUNITY CENTRE, PONTYPOOL
November 15th PONTYCLUN COMMUNITY CENTRE, TAFF ELY
November 16th OXFORD HOUSE, RISCA, C.E.C.
November 17th MONMOUTH LEISURE CENTRE
November 18th MALPAS COMMUNITY CENTRE, NEWPORT
November 22nd CEFN COMMUNITY CENTRE, MERTHYR TYDFIL
November 23rd THE DRAMA CENTRE, ABERGAVENNY
November 24rd THE DRAMA CENTRE, ABERGAVENNY

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Gwent Theatre is publicly funded by Gwent County Council, The Welsh Arts Council,
South East Wales Arts with additional funding from Newport Borough Council.

Rosemary Livermore (Dance Animateur)

BA (Hons) Performing Arts, majored in dance at Leicester's school for the performing arts (Leicester Polytechnic) course included drama, music and arts administration. Studied various dance forms from contemporary (new dance), Indian classical and Folk, to Afro Caribbean and ballet (Graham, Nicholas, Cunningham, Limone etc).

Returned to Cardiff in July 1986 and re-established contacts in dance community. Has since been a freelance teacher, choreographer of contemporary dance, ballet, tap, modern, keppit and creative movement.

* At present teaches GCSE Dance and Drama students at Pontypool College of HE.

* Dance and Creative Movement Studies on B'TEC Performing AAs Course. Afon College, Port Talbot.

* Through Cardiff's Community Dance Project — the Rubicon, has been involved in schools projects both as an assistant and currently as a leader.

* Contemporary dance classes ranging from the beginner through to the more experienced student — at the Rubicon and privately.

* Is a student member of the RAD and assists and teaches the children's syllabus to Senior Grade, as well as tap and modern ISTD syllabus work.

* During the summer months belongs to a company of Dancers and Musicians called 'Drop of a Hat' who work in community centres, adventure playgrounds, playgroups, and summer festival that requires that special creative touch for children and adults alike (and if that's not a plug for a company I don't know what is!).

* Has also choreographed for amateur operatic societies — recently — Llandaff's "White Horse Inn" at the Sherman (1988).

* Comes in contact with a wide range of ages and abilities from 3-93 or more.

* Has some experience of work with the disabled — through the Rubicon Tremorfa Special School

Ely Hospital

Ty Gwyn Special School (summer school)

Plasnewydd Day Care Centre, Fairwater.

The latter as part of a research into special needs in the South Glam area.

ie: Playgroups, crèches, the elderly, physically and mentally handicapped, hospitalised patients, etc, etc.

* Most recently led a 3 day course for 7-18 year olds, organised by Gwent Leisure Services. Very well received by youngsters and their parents an Easter course.

Steve Botcher:— Tommy Warner

Born Port Talbot worked 7 years before joining the Drama College. After leaving college presented BBC's educational series Home Front for 2 years. Also appearing: Jenny's War, Treasure Island, and Coleg for HTV. "We are Seven" — HTV 3 series of Bowen i Bartner. BBC/S4C "Robin Hood", the New Theatre Panto playing Adam Bell, Bernie the Skinhead, Made in Wales, stage company in Sunshine and in Shadow. Also — Blood Brothers Watermill Theatre Newbury. Under Milk Wood at Greenwich Theatre, Sherman Theatre Co. Clown in A Winters Tale, Tom in Glass Menagerie, Happy in Death of a Salesman. Also acted for various writers workshops rehearsed readings and BBC directors training course. Also appearing in a dozen radio plays for BBC.

At The End

*Westgate's gutter holds the Chartists cost
The battle has been fought, and now is lost.
These men have died, their pride stripped surely bare,
they lie with frozen faces and they stare
As Chartist men, once bold, flee underground
To hide from men, in truth, they will confound.
Their silent lips not uttering a sound.*

K. Jenkins

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29**
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For further details contact Mr B. Davies, 101 High Street, Blaenavon, Gwent. Telephone (0495) 792093.

SATURDAY EVENING
Islwyn Constituency Labour Party are organising their annual rally, national & international speakers.

SUNDAY, 29th
Isca Antiques Fayre — For antiques as old as the Chartists!
For any information on any of these events, please contact: John Watkins, B.Ed, The Manager, Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre., Pontllanfraith, Blackwood, Gwent, NP2 2DA. Tel Blackwood 224562.

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Blackwood Amateur Operatic Society

Blackwood Miners Welfare Operatic Society was formed before the Second World War, but during the war time of course it was disbanded.

In 1936 it was started up again still under the auspices of the Miners Welfare Institute, but for the past 15 years it has been an independent society under its own funding and has been called The Blackwood Amateur Operatic Society.

The Society is made up of members from many walks of life. Primarily the Society likes to do works which have strong musical background, because it has a very good chorus and likes to utilise it to the fullest.

The Society performs one show a year rehearsing from September to the following March/April. The venue for the show is the Miners Welfare Institute, Blackwood where they also have rehearsal facilities.

The Society has had quite a number of successes i.e. first, second and third, in the Competition which used to be run by The Welfare Committee of the South Western Division of the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation "CISWO". They were also successful in the Light Opera International Competition in Waterford in Ireland.

They are always looking for new members, and would like to see more young people join them, so that the Society may grow and continue for many more years.

Many of the members belong to other choirs and singing groups in the Islwyn area and give concerts for Senior Citizen Groups and local charities.

This season the society are performing "Calamity Jane" in the Welfare Hall, from 3rd April to 7th April 1990.

Blackwood Writers Workshop

Blackwood Writers Workshop has been running for nearly eight years. Beginning as a writers class it soon developed into a writers workshop with three aims:

- 1) To foster the art of writing in all its forms
- 2) To give help and guidance to other members
- 3) To provide a common meeting place for all persons interested in writing.

Under the guidance of its first Secretary Mr Arthur Paynes and its present secretary Mrs Kay Jenkins the group has had some notable successes, with members work being published at home and abroad. Members are at present working on their second anthology which is hoped to be published before Christmas.

With members from all walks of life the Blackwood Writers Workshop meet every Tuesday evening 7-9pm at Blackwood County College.

The Curtain Raisers

Formed ten years ago from a small group of friends, who were amateur entertainers and singers, initially performing to pensioners, sheltered housing groups and the handicapped, the Curtain Raisers become the resident drama group at Oxford House, Risca in 1985.

Since then they have performed 3 original pantomimes Dick Whittington, Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty; a show entitled "Victoriana and an Hilarious Edwardian evening at Oxford House; 2 major shows at the Congress Theatre, Cwmbran, "The Wizard of Oz" and "Holiday Fantastic".

All shows with the exception of "The Wizard of Oz" were compiled and written by our producer Pat Wagstaff

Forthcoming events include "Ali Baba" at the Dolman Theatre, Newport, 7th-10th February 1990. Written by Pat Wagstaff, music by Mike Wagstaff and orchestration by Charles Smith.

The group meets at Oxford House, Risca every Tuesday at 7pm. New members are always welcome.

Markham Band

The Band was formed in 1928 and was known as the Markham British Legion Band. In 1930 it became the Markham & District Colliery Silver Prize Band. Post war the Band began the long ascent to Championship Standard eventually achieved in 1958.

1968 it became Champion Band of Wales and between 1969-1976 the band was chosen to form the National Brass Band of Wales performing at the National Eisteddfod and the Royal Albert Hall.

During recent years the Band has had mixed fortunes but is now reaping the benefits of the return of Mr D U Hendy as Musical Director, together with some new Junior and Senior Members.

After winning the Pontins 3rd section Final of Great Britain in 1988, the band is back in the second section and could soon be back in The Championship section.

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Newbridge & District Ladies' Choir

Musical Director: Mr W. E. Dyte. Accompanist: John Emery. Was formed in 1962 by Mrs Dorothy Davies Jones of Newbridge, have a membership of 38 and give many concerts for charities, senior citizens and hospitals.

Oakdale Youth Choir

Oakdale Youth Choir was formed in September 1985, most members being past or present pupils of Oakdale Comprehensive School. Rehearsals take place weekly, on a Tuesday evening, at Oakdale Youth Centre.

Throughout their school careers (from 11 to 16 years) they had been members of the school choir. Their musical activities, in school, culminated in a highly acclaimed theatrical performance of "Jesus Christ Superstar".

Many were due to leave school that summer. So, it was decided that a youth choir should be formed in order to keep the group together. Since then the Oakdale Youth choir has gone from strength to strength.

They regularly give concerts in South Wales and are undefeated at eisteddfodau and competitive festivals throughout Wales. In the Autumn of 1986 they reached the semi-final of the Sainsbury's "Choir of the Year" Competition representing Wales and the West of England. The choir made three network appearances on BBC TV.

Also, the choir has performed with the BBC Concert Orchestra as part of the Welsh Counties Youth Choir in a Royal Gala Performance which was broadcast on BBC Radio.

A number of the choir are still in school and are also members of the Oakdale Comprehensive School Choir. In 1988 the school choir, under the same conductor, won second prize in the "BBC Wales School Choir of the Year" Competition. The final was broadcast on BBC TV.

These successes establish the name of Oakdale among the top ranks of youth choral music in the UK.

Many of the choristers sing with the Gwent Youth choir and two of the choir have gained entry into the prestigious National Youth Choir of Wales.

The choir's steadily increasing repertoire covers almost 400 years of choral music, ranging from English Madrigals and Welsh Folk Songs to Twentieth Century works, taking in larger works such as Vivaldi's "Gloria" and Faure's "Requiem" on the way. Lighter works also feature in the choir's repertoire, the aim being to give a balanced programme of music.

Oakdale Youth Choir is a mixed choir of almost 40 voices. In July 1987 they visited Austria and, in March 1989, they visited Washington DC, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland, USA.

In July 1989 they sang at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank, London in the National Festival of Music for Youth.

Plans for 1990 include a visit from an American High School choir and competing at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod.

Conductor Nigel Jones trained at the Welsh College of Music and Drama where he won academic, composition and woodwind prizes. He has been head of Music at Oakdale Comprehensive School since 1979.

Accompanist David Blackwell graduated from University College, Cardiff with an honours B.Mus. and later studied at the University of London. He was a tutor at the Welsh College of Music and Drama from 1974 to 1985 and presently teaches at the Tertiary College, Cross Keys, Gwent. As an accompanist he has worked throughout Wales and also in London and Vienna.

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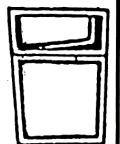
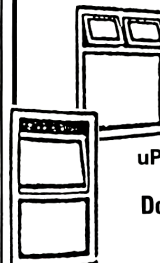
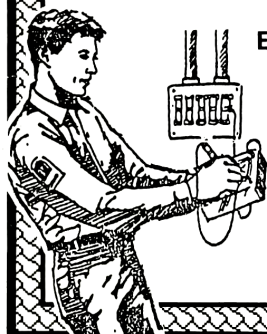
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Mynyddislwyn Male Voice Choir

The Mynyddislwyn Male Voice Choir was formed in 1969 and during these past twenty years has grown from twelve members to well over one hundred. The choir is based in Blackwood, with the membership coming from around the vicinity.

The choir acclaims itself principally on helping charitable organisations and receives many requests throughout the year for concerts. The choir has travelled to various towns and cities in England and Wales to assist in charitable fund raising events. This is largely due to the success of the choir and its increasing reputation as one of Wales' leading choirs.

Indeed their choir has achieved many successes at Eisteddfod competitions but regard the concert platform as its forte.

The choir has given concerts in such distinguished venues as Colston Hall, Bristol, and St David's Hall, Cardiff. Last year the choir gave a prestigious concert at the Grand Hall, Eton College. The previous year the choir sang at the Royal Albert Hall, London, as guests of the Church of England Children's Society.

The Mynyddislwyn choir is "twinned" with the Hanover Sing-Kreis "Aloe" choir in Germany. Regular exchange visits take place between the choirs. Last April the Mynyddislwyn Choir travelled to Hanover and performed in concert with their fellow German singers. In 1990 our German friends will visit Wales.

The Spring of 1987 saw the release of the choir's first record "Islwyn in Harmony". This recording proved a great success, its popularity influencing the choir to make another recording. At the end of last year, for Christmas, "Islwyn in Harmony" Vol II, was released. Both records and cassettes are still available.

Celyn Collieries Institute Silver Band

The Band was founded some 40 years ago — based in Newbridge 75% of band members, are youth players of the County — many of whom are members of the Gwent County Youth Brass Band & the National Youth Brass Band of Wales —

The Band are now completely self-supporting following the closure of the Celyn pits

During summer months the Band play in Summer Entertainment seasons in Tredegar, Gwent & South Glamorgan.

Christmastide, the Band are carolling from the beginning of December up until Christmas Eve.

Last year the Band gained promotion from the 3rd Section to the 2nd Section within the Welsh grading system. They represented Wales at the National Championships in London.

Spring Bank holiday 1988 saw the band sail across the sea to the Isle of Man Music festival.

The Band is led by principal cornet player Adrian Harris & directed by Mr Neil Watson.

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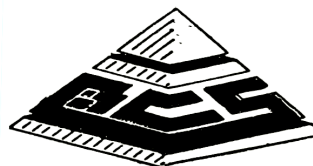


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