

## Dylan Thomas Festival 2009

### **Dannie Abse and Peter Finch**

**Monday 26 October 7.30pm**

We open the Festival with a reading from two of Wales' finest and most prolific poets. **Dannie Abse** was at one of Dylan's last UK readings, in London, and in his 80s, is writing as well as ever. His volume dedicated to his late wife won the 2008 Welsh Book of the Year. **Peter Finch** is recognised as one of the UK's foremost 'experimental' poets and performers, but he is also a fine writer of more formal poetry, and somehow manages a copious, high-quality output despite being for decades probably the major figure in literary promotion in Wales.

Full Price £6 Concessions £4-20 Swansea PTL £2-40

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### **Cerys Matthews in Conversation**

**Tuesday 27 October 1pm**

On Dylan Thomas's birthday, Swansea-educated songstress Cerys will sing a song, read a poem by Dylan and one by W.B. Yeats, and take questions from the audience. She will be introduced by **Jeff Towns**. On a tour to promote her latest solo album *Don't Look Down*, we are delighted that Cerys can take time out to be part of our festival. The former Catatonia front-woman recently presented a programme on Celtic Poetry for BBC TV's Poetry Season, which of course featured Dylan, and the highlight of which was Cerys' rendition of Yeats' 'Sally Gardens' in a Dublin pub folk session!

All tickets ONLY £1-00 PLEASE book in advance.

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### **Cerys Matthews (Private Hire at Taliesin Arts Centre)**

**Tuesday 27 October 7.30pm**

Cerys Matthews has hit what is arguably the busiest time in her career. October sees the release of her new album *Don't Look Down* in both Welsh and English language versions to coincide with this theatre tour. The live shows will feature old and new songs written or collected by Cerys during her far-reaching travels and will be backed by two of Nashville's finest young musicians, Kevin Teel and Mason Neely. Cerys has come a long, long way

from her widespread popularity as lead singer of Catatonia, bursting onto the music scene with hit singles like *Road Rage* and *Mulder and Scully* as well as number one albums in the charts. She had an equally successful parallel solo career duetting with Tom Jones on the perennial classic *Baby It's Cold Outside* and with Space on *The Ballad of Tom Jones*, plus two critically acclaimed solo albums *Cock a Hoop* and *Never Said Goodbye*. More recently, Cerys' song *Awyren=Aeroplane* won the Eisteddfod award for contemporary song - the first time the award had been bestowed in seven years!

Taliesin Arts Centre Box Office 01792 60 20 60

Tickets: £22 Concessions: £20 (includes booking fee)

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**On the Edge presented by Michael Kelligan - Burton**

**Wednesday 28 October 7.30pm**

Richard Burton's voice is synonymous with Dylan's words, and he asked to be buried with a copy of Dylan's *Collected Poems*. In a new play by **Gwynne Edwards**, looking at the life of Pontrhydyfen's favourite son twenty- five years after his death, actor **Rhodri Miles** gives his interpretation of the great Welsh actor. Directed by **Hugh Thomas**. This production recently received a four-star review at the Edinburgh Fringe.

All tickets £3-00

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**New Welsh Review presents Stevie Davies in conversation with Kathryn Gray**

**Thursday 29 October 7.30pm**

Stevie Davies is a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, a noted literary critic and biographer, and the author of ten highly acclaimed novels, including *The Element of Water*, which was longlisted for the Booker Prize and *Kith and Kin*, which was shortlisted for the Orange Prize and is currently being adapted as a feature film. Her eleventh novel, *Into Suez*, set in the years leading up to the Suez crisis of 1956, will be published in February 2010. She talks about her career with *New Welsh Review* editor Kathryn Gray, and reads from a selection of her work.

Entry £4-00 which entitles you to a copy of NWR on the night.

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**Friday 30 October 7pm**

**Lynette Roberts Film** – as a precursor to tomorrow's Conference, **Owen Sheers** will introduce his recent BBC Poetry Season film on much neglected modernist poet and friend of Dylan Thomas, Lynette Roberts, followed by:

**8.00pm - An evening with Fflur Dafydd and Owen Sheers**

Fflur Dafydd is a novelist, singer-songwriter and lecturer in Creative Writing at Swansea University. Fflur won the Literature Medal in the National Eisteddfod in Swansea in 2006 for her novel *Atyniad* (Y Lolfa, 2006). In June this year she was announced as the first winner of the Oxfam Emerging Writer of the Year Award. Owen Sheers is an award-winning poet and novelist. His debut prose work *The Dust Diaries* (Faber, 2004) won the Wales Book of the Year Award in 2005 and his first novel *Resistance* (Faber, 2008) has been translated into nine languages. Together Fflur and Owen will perform their work in a unique bilingual evening of poetry and song.

In association with Academi.

Full Price £6 Concessions £4-20 Swansea PTL £2-40 to cover both events.

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***Gods with Stainless Ears* - Lynette Roberts Conference**

**Saturday 31 October from 10am to 5pm**

2009 is the centenary of the birth of Lynette Roberts (1909-1995), the modernist war poet who produced her most important work in West Wales. Organised in association with the University of Oxford, CREW (Swansea University), the Dylan Thomas Festival and Carcanet Press. The conference will open on Friday 30th with a showing of the recent BBC4 film about her, in the company of writer and presenter **Owen Sheers**, and end on Saturday 31st with a poetry reading by poets from Wales and beyond.

Conference speakers will include **Deryn Rees-Jones**, **Patrick McGuinness**, **Stella Halkyard**, **John Goodby**, **Charles Mundy**, **Zoe Skoulding** and the poets will be **Deryn Rees-Jones**, **Menna Elfyn** and **Nigel Jenkins**.

**Angharad Rhys**, Lynette's daughter, will talk about her mother's life, and there will be an exhibition of photographs, books and papers from the Lynette Roberts family archive.

More information and a full conference programme are available from Professor Patrick McGuinness, St Anne's College, University of Oxford, OX26HS [patrick.mcguinness@st-annes.ox.ac.uk](mailto:patrick.mcguinness@st-annes.ox.ac.uk).

Registration should be made with the Dylan Thomas Centre on 01792 463980.

Cost for attendance at the conference, including reception, poetry reading, and tea and coffee is £40 full price and £30 concessions.

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**Lynette Roberts Reading**  
**Saturday, 31 October at 7pm**

An open reading of some of the works of this extraordinary Welsh modernist poet, by fellow poets and admirers of her work, including Nigel Jenkins, Menna Elfyn, Deryn Rees-Jones and Margot Morgan.

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**PoetCasting**  
**Saturday 31 October**

PoetCasting, the UK's foremost poetry podcasting enterprise, returns to Swansea with an innovative new literature event, and will be in residence throughout the day alongside the Lynette Roberts Conference. At last year's festival a number of poets were recorded for the project, including Aeronwy Thomas. Come this year and hear the best emerging and established poets writing in the UK today. Hundreds of poems from over 150 poets will be available on iPod Shuffles for you to listen to. All are welcome - whether you are a web wizard, or haven't even heard of an RSS feed.

To get a flavour of the exciting work PoetCasting does, visit the website at [www.poetcasting.co.uk](http://www.poetcasting.co.uk)

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***Reminiscences of Childhood* - Adrian Metcalfe**  
**Sunday 1 November 1pm**

Following its award-winning debut at the Edinburgh Festival, Swansea-born actor Adrian has performed this one-man show all over the world to considerable critical acclaim. It was developed from the short stories and poetry of Dylan Thomas and focuses on a dying man's attempts to justify his existence. During this journey through his memories, he begins to learn about the transience of life and the joy of innocence, the loss of love and the sadness of regret. It is at once beautiful and ugly, engaging and hilarious. Metcalfe draws on a wide range of works by the author including *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*, *Quite Early One Morning*, *The Collected Poems*

and *Return Journey*. These are all seamlessly entwined with Metcalfe's own prose creating this poignant and touching portrayal.

Full Price £6 Concessions £4-20 Swansea PTL £2-40

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**Friends of the Glynn Vivian Event at Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Alexandra Road - Byron Beynon Poetry and the Mirror of Art  
Sunday 1 November 3pm**

As a poet, Byron has often been inspired by paintings, and a sequence of his poems appeared in a Painters and Poets exhibition in Harrow. Here, he will examine how paintings have been used to inspire poets, discuss the shared and arguably mutually beneficial language of poetry and art: "painting is silent poetry, and poetry, painting that speaks" Simonides (Greek poet sixth century BC). Byron's collections include: *The Girl in the Yellow Dress*, *The Restaurant of Mud and Cuffs*. The latest, *Nocturne in Blue*, published by Lapwing Publications is due to appear in the Autumn.

Full Price £6 Concessions £4-20 Swansea PTL £2-40

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**Booklaunch - Aeronwy Thomas My Father's Places /John Goodby  
lecture – 'In Country Sleep'  
Sunday 1 November 7.30pm**

Sadly, this long-planned launch must now be posthumous following Aeronwy's death in July. Her long-anticipated memoir of her early life, and reflections on her father, has recently been BBC Radio 4's *Book of the Week*, and will be presented and placed in context by the author of the most recent Dylan biography, **Andrew Lycett**. This will be followed by our annual lecture by Swansea Dylan scholar and poet **John Goodby**, who this year dedicates his talk to Aeronwy, and focuses on the poem 'In Country Sleep' which Dylan wrote for her.

Free Entry

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**Out of Order Theatre Presents A Tail of Two Dogs by Emma Blundell  
Monday 2 November 7.30pm**

A Staged Reading Directed by **Bronwen Carr**

*"This is the fantasy of the mind of the fantasist and dreamer Dylan Thomas. It is a place of country born shadows, city rough arse-backwards dawn, chittering in the shadows and the half formed sounds of the Gower moonlight."*

In his final days, Dylan looks back over his life and work and confronts his younger self, alive with promise and ambition. What has he become and what did he dream of? As Dylan relives the myriad twists and turns of a gloriously dysfunctional and racketsy existence, we see the man behind the myth: a sober drunk, a valorous coward, a faithful philanderer and an unreliable but always devoted friend.

**Out of Order** was founded in 2005, with the production of *Past Tense* at the Old Red Lion in London. The company produces new work with a historic setting and occasional revivals and adaptations of rediscovered texts.

Full Price £6 Concessions £4-20 Swansea PTL £2-40

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***The Artist and the Poet* Noel Chanan introduces his film of Ted Hughes and Leonard Baskin**

**Tuesday 3 November 7.30pm**

In 1983, film-maker and photographer, Noel Chanan, recorded an unrehearsed conversation between Ted Hughes and Leonard Baskin in which they talked to him about their friendship and the nature of their artistic collaboration. This combined poetry and images in such works as *Crow* and *Cave Birds*. In this new 40-minute documentary, their previously unpublished dialogue, incorporating recitations by Hughes from his poems, is set over informal photographs of Hughes and Baskin, and extensive illustrations from Baskin's works.

Full Price £6 Concessions £4-20 Swansea PTL £2-40

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**W.B Yeats Celebration with the Dylan Thomas Staggering Players**  
**Wednesday 4 November 7.30pm**

Dylan was a great admirer of William Butler Yeats, generally acknowledged as one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most important poets. Yeats died 70 years ago this year, and our loose group of local bards and performers, among them John Goodby, Nigel Jenkins, Peter Read, Margot Morgan, David Woolley and Malcolm Parr present an anthology of the great Irish poet's finest works,

chosen by John Goodby, including 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree', 'Sailing to Byzantium' and 'The Second Coming', as well as prose, and a song or two!

Full Price £6 Concessions £4-20 Swansea PTL £2-40

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### **Aeronwy Thomas Celebration event**

**Thursday 5 November 7.30pm**

Invited performers come together to celebrate the life and work of Dylan's only daughter. Short presentations will include stories, anecdotes and poems, and contributors will include her son Huw, her publisher Martin Holroyd, Jeff Towns, Paul Ferris, members of the Dylan Thomas Society, representatives of the Dylan Thomas Centre and others, with music from Jen Wilson and Margot Morgan.

Free entry and wine – open to all.

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### **Alun Richards celebration in association with Parthian Books**

**Friday 6 November 7.30pm**

Mumbles writer Alun Richards produced an enviable body of work, for TV, radio and in books. Richards' *Dai Country* has recently been re-issued by Parthian as part of the Library of Wales series of classics. , **Dai Smith** critic and biographer, and great friend of Alun, will be joined by novelist **Des Barry** to reminisce, swap anecdotes and celebrate the life of a great Welsh character and writer.

Free wine and nibbles provided by Parthian.

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### **Warmley - Adrian Metcalfe and Rob Marshall**

**Saturday 7 November 1pm**

Another opportunity to catch this splendid piece of theatre. A warm and moving portrayal of Dylan's great boyhood friend, and much undervalued composer **Daniel Jones**, as he looks back on the joys and tragedies of their friendship. With Adrian as Dan, with Jones' own music performed by pianist Rob.

Full Price £6 Concessions £4-20 Swansea PTL £2-40

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***Shakespeare's Last Drink* – an evening of poetry and dramatic extracts  
Saturday 7 November 7.30pm**

It is said that D.J.Thomas recited Shakespeare while Dylan was in the womb, and the Bard was certainly a powerful influence on Dylan the writer. Award-winning Northern Irish poet **Shaun Traynor** took part in the festival in 2007 when we celebrated Louis MacNeice, and has recently published his intriguing long poem *Shakespeare's Last Drink* in pamphlet form after its acclaimed appearance in *The London Magazine*. Shaun will read the poem, and other poems which inform the historical context of the Bard's death.

**Fluellen Theatre Company** will offer some tasty little extracts to preview their forthcoming *Romeo and Juliet* at the Grand Theatre, Swansea, and **The Dylan Thomas Centre's Staggering Players** will read the hilarious final act – 'the play within a play' from *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Full Price £6 Concessions £4-20 Swansea PTL £2-40

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***Stuff Happens Artshow*  
Sunday 8 November 10am – Close**

As part of our *stuff happens* evenings local artists are invited to display their work. Those invited for this evening's event will be displaying throughout the day in the Dylan Thomas Centre.

Free Entry

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***Dylan Thomas' Great Voice* Rona Campbell  
Sunday 8 November 2pm**

Opera singer, poet and voice coach Rona examines Dylan's vocal qualities – his varied speed, pitch and dramatic delivery. The combination of actor and poet leads to a charismatic performance, as distinct as other great orators like John F Kennedy or Winston Churchill. Rona will demonstrate these qualities, and examine what poets and performers today can learn from them.

Full Price £6 Concessions £4-20 Swansea PTL £2-40

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**Phil Bowen & Rhian Edwards  
Sunday 8 November 6.30pm – Free Entry & wine**

Poet, playwright and biographer Phil Bowen has contributed regularly and ingeniously to the Festival since 1998's *A Drawer Marked Pyjamas*, and his Dylan-related plays, *A Handful of Rain* and *The Same Boat* have played widely, including in Edinburgh, London, Cornwall and New York. Tonight we launch Phil's *nowhere's far - New and Selected Poems 1990 – 2008* which Salt Press have recently published. Phil will be joined by Bridgend-born, London-based poet, singer and actress Rhian Edwards, who played Dorothy Parker in last year's festival production of Phil's *Anything but Love*, which has recently debuted at Hampstead's New End Theatre. Rhian's first collection *Parade the Fib* was published in 2008 by tall-Lighthouse press, and was Poetry Book Society Choice for that Autumn. Phil & Rhian will read from their work, immediately prior to:

### ***Stuff Happens***

**7.30pm**

The third of our occasional events, where several young, up & coming local poets deliver short, sharp readings, between music, Dadaist doodlings and other fun stuff happening!

Free Entry

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### ***The Wizard, The Goat and The Man Who Won the War***

**Monday 9 November 7.30pm**

**David Lloyd George** was a charismatic giant of 20<sup>th</sup> Century world politics, yet Wales and Britain remain divided about his controversial personal life and his extraordinary political works.

In *The Wizard, The Goat and The Man Who Won the War*, writer/director **D.J.Britton** and renowned Welsh actor **Richard Elfyn** create a theatrical fiction to explore the rich complexities of Lloyd George. They find humour, music, poetry and mystery in the mind of the Great man. How could a Welsh-speaking chapel boy brought up in a Gwynedd bootmaker's workshop become the steely Prime Minister who saw Britain through the First World War? How could the champion of non-conformist Christianity become the womaniser who lived a double life with his long-term mistress? Why did this protector of the poor risk so much to advance his own personal wealth?

One hundred years after his visionary Act of Parliament which made today's Welfare State possible, and despite being perhaps Britain's most written-about Statesman, Lloyd George remains an enigma. In this lively piece of solo

performance, Britton and Elfyn discover a man who is humorous and hard-headed, but never hard-hearted.

Full Price £6 Concessions £4-20 Swansea PTL £2-40

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**Music from Fflur Dafydd and Rhys James**

**Monday 9 November 9pm**

To finish our festival with a flourish, author and lecturer Fflur dons her musical hat. She has released 3 albums, most recently *Byd Bach (Small World)*, and is joined by musician and lecturer Rhys, who composes regularly for television, and plays with numerous bands and other artists. He and Fflur have performed together in festivals in Wales, Latvia and Ireland.

Free Entry

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This exciting festival offers something for everyone and further information can be obtained by e-mailing [david.woolley@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:david.woolley@swansea.gov.uk) or [jo.furber@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:jo.furber@swansea.gov.uk)

Alternatively, ring the Dylan Thomas Centre in Swansea on 01792 463980.

For more information about the life and work of Dylan Thomas, please visit [www.dylanthomas.com](http://www.dylanthomas.com).