

NEW ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR MID WALES OPERA

The Board of Mid Wales Opera (MWO) has appointed **Jonathan Lyness and Richard Studer** to lead the company forward, after the welcome news that it will continue to receive core funding from Arts Council Wales.

Jonathan and Richard, who together have created imaginative and highly acclaimed opera productions over more than 20 years for Opera Project, Bristol's Tobacco Factory Theatres, Longborough Festival Opera, West Green House Opera and Iford Festival, amongst others, will formally take up their roles as Music Director and Artistic Director respectively from April 2017, when Nicholas Cleobury steps down, following his appointment as Head of Opera at the Queensland Conservatoire in Brisbane.

However, the duo – who are based respectively in Herefordshire and Powys - will start work immediately on developing MWO's future touring and outreach programme, full details of which will be announced in the 2017/18 season launch in early summer.

Gareth Williams, Chair of the Board said:

'We are absolutely delighted to have been able to appoint Jon and Richard to open a new chapter in the history of Mid Wales Opera. They clearly emerged from a recruitment exercise which attracted a wealth of really talented and inspiring applicants as the obvious choice to take the company forward in an environment that remains hugely challenging for the arts – and opera in particular – outside of the largest cities. We are convinced that their approach will deliver entertaining and inspiring work, which will delight audiences who have few opportunities to see genuinely live opera and which, at the same time, will offer exciting career development opportunities to singers early in their professional lives.

Jonathan Lyness and Richard Studer said: 'We're both thrilled to be entrusted by MWO to take this great company forward, to build on MWO's extraordinary achievements in the fields of outreach and young artist development, and to secure for MWO an unparalleled reputation for audience building right across Wales and beyond'.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Mid Wales Opera (<http://www.midwalesopera.co.uk/>) was created in 1989 and has the twin mission taking fully-staged opera with orchestra to venues in areas which would not otherwise experience the joy of live opera and of providing fully-staged opera experience with orchestra for young professionals. It is based in Powys.

Its current Artistic Director, Nicholas Cleobury (<http://nicholascleobury.net/>), took up the post of Head of Opera at the Queensland Conservatoire in Brisbane, Australia (<https://www.griffith.edu.au/music/queensland-conservatorium>) in January 2016 but continues in his post at MWO until March 2017.

Jonathan Lyness is a conductor, arranger and pianist and Richard Studer a designer, stage director and artist who have collaborated on opera productions since meeting at the University of Bristol more than 25 years ago (<http://www.operaproject.co.uk/about/opera-directors/>). Photographs of both are attached.

MWO is a revenue funded client of Arts Council Wales (ACW). Following its latest Investment Review, ACW confirmed that it would continue to fund MWO as one of only three opera and music theatre companies in receipt of core funding (<http://www.arts.wales/97396>). MWO also regularly receives funding from Arts Council England for touring in England and is supported by Powys Council and a range of charitable Trusts and Foundations, individual patrons and Friends and commercial sponsors including Emerson/Control Techniques.

MWO expects to announce its programme of performance for 2016/17 in the early summer and it is hoped this will include two new productions and an exciting plan of community activity using young and promising opera singers and musicians.