

= Guto Puw =

Guto Pryderi Puw (born 1971) is a Welsh composer , university lecturer and conductor . He is considered to be one of the most promising Welsh composers of his generation and a key figure in current Welsh music . Puw 's music has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and been featured on television programmes for the BBC and S4C . He has twice been awarded the Composer 's Medal at the National Eisteddfod .

Puw 's works include pieces for unusual combinations of instruments , such as a tuba quartet or a trio consisting of harp , cello and double @-@ bass , as well as more traditional forces such as solo baritone and piano , choir or orchestra . He was associated with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales as its Resident Composer , the first holder of this title , from 2006 to 2010 . Puw wrote an Oboe concerto as part of this association , and his latest composition for the orchestra was premiered at the 2007 Proms . Puw 's own Welsh identity is a recurrent theme in his music : some of his pieces set Welsh @-@ language poetry to music and one of his pieces , Reservoirs , is written about the flooding of Welsh valleys to provide water for England .

= = Biography = =

Born in Parc (a village in Gwynedd near Bala) , Puw studied at Bangor University with John Pickard , Andrew Lewis and Pwyll ap Siôn . Puw was awarded a MMus degree in 1996 and a PhD degree in 2002 . He was then awarded an Arts Council of Wales bursary and studied with the composer John Metcalf . Puw was appointed as a Lecturer in Music at Bangor University in 2006 , having previously been a Teaching Fellow in Music from 2004 . A Welsh speaker , he has been the Welsh Medium Teaching Fellow for the School of Music . He was the founding member and conductor for Côr Cyntaf i 'r Felin , a Welsh @-@ language choir based in Y Felinheli near Bangor .

Puw has received commissions from (amongst others) BBC Radio 3 , the Welsh baritone Jeremy Huw Williams , the Bangor New Music Festival and the North Wales International Music Festival . He was appointed the first Resident Composer with BBC National Orchestra of Wales (BBC NOW) in 2006 and held this position until 2009 . During this time , Puw wrote a concerto for oboe (premiered in 2006) and an orchestral piece , ... onyt agoraf y drws ... , which was first performed to critical acclaim at the 2007 Proms .

He has been active in the promotion of new music in north Wales through his involvement with the Bangor Music Festival , being its Artistic Director and founding member since 2000 . In 2014 he received the Sir Geraint Evans Award by the Welsh Music Guild for his ? significant contribution to Welsh music . ?

= = Music = =

= = = Welsh links = = =

Puw 's music is rooted in the language and literature of Wales , with a particular affinity to the poetry of R. S. Thomas . Welsh titles and settings of poetry in Welsh feature in his work , such as Mekanwaith , Dawns y Sêr , and ... onyt agoraf y drws ...) . He has won the Composer 's Medal at the National Eisteddfod of Wales twice , winning it first in 1995 for a harp piece , Ffantasia II . In 1997 , when the Eisteddfod was held in Bala , he won the Medal for a string quartet , Mekanwaith (" Mechanism ") ? this piece was later featured in S4C 's television series Y Cyfansoddwyr (" The Composers ") . Mekanwaith has also been performed by the Duke Quartet at the 1998 Bath International Music Festival and the 1999 Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival .

= = = Orchestral works = = =

Puw 's oboe concerto was commissioned by BBC NOW and was premiered by them at Theatr

Brycheiniog , Brecon , on 27 April 2006 , with the orchestra 's principal oboist (David Cowley) as the soloist . It takes its inspiration from different qualities of the human voice , including stutters and chatterboxes . Puw has said that " The second movement is inspired by talkative people who won 't let you contribute to a conversation " , represented by a repeated row of 13 notes played until " it gets rather unbearable " . It was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 1 March 2007 as part of a programme of music by Welsh composers to celebrate St David 's Day . The concerto won Puw the 2007 BBC Radio 3 Listeners Award at the British Composer Awards .

His orchestral piece Reservoirs was inspired by a 1968 poem by R. S. Thomas about the drowning of Welsh valleys such as Tryweryn (a few miles from where Puw grew up) and Clywedog to provide water for England . Puw had a particular affinity with the topic as his grandfather lost farmland in the Tryweryn flooding . Nevertheless , he has said that he " decided not to take the poem too literally because as a composer you can be subject to criticism for doing that . " It was nominated in 2005 in the Large @-@ Scale Composition category of the Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards . The music was used in a BBC2 Wales documentary , " Drowning a Village " , broadcast on 9 March 2006 . A performance by BBC NOW was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 as part of the 2005 Vale of Glamorgan Festival .

As part of his association with BBC NOW , Puw was commissioned by the BBC to compose for the 2007 Proms . His orchestral piece , ... onyt agoraf y drws ... (" ... unless I open the door ... ") was premiered on 9 August 2007 , conducted by David Atherton . It is based on a story from the Mabinogion , a collection of medieval Welsh tales , in which a group of warriors , lately returned from Ireland , feast in Harlech for seven years with the severed head of their leader at the head of the table . They then feast in Penfro for eight years in a hall with three doors , and only remember the dreadful events that happened in Ireland when the third door opens . Each of the three doors in Penfro was represented by an instrument in a box in the Royal Albert Hall .

= = = Other works = = =

Unusual instrumentation and unusual performance techniques , including elements of improvisation , are also important features of his work . In 1998 he composed X @-@ ist , a piece for IST (the Improvising String Trio , consisting of harp , cello and double @-@ bass) . It was described by reviewers as a " frighteningly frantic " and " challenging " piece . X @-@ ist uses a graphic score and includes written directions to the players that act as " creative stimuli " , containing notes and motifs to be followed . The piece also requires the cellist and double @-@ bassist to tap their instruments , as well as use normal playing methods . Another piece requiring improvisation by performers was his commission for the 2001 Bangor New Music Festival , Trioled , which was written for ensemble (saxophone , guitar , harp , keyboard , cello , piano) and optional dancer . In his performing notes , Puw describes the pieces as a " stimulus for musical improvisation " in which any notes , normal or extended musical techniques and / or percussive effects may be applied . Trioled has two contrasting sub @-@ sections , a and b , arranged in the form a @-@ b @-@ a @-@ a @-@ a @-@ b @-@ a @-@ b to match the Welsh poetic measure of the same name , with the strings playing calmly in the " a " sections , and saxophone and keyboard (gradually joined by the other instruments) playing in a more lively manner in the " b " sections . The musicians and the dancer are required to react to each other 's contributions in each section to create a " multi @-@ media " experience .

Visages , his 1999 piece for 2 tubas and 2 euphoniums , was described as " astringent , often whimsical but well written for these instruments " . Puw said that in the piece " Freedom is granted to the performers to make any subtle facial expressions that add to the musical interpretation " . Puw describes Ffantasia III (a piece for solo piano , composed for the 2000 Bangor New Music Festival) as an " intimate reflection " upon the music of , and a tribute to , Robert Schumann , his " intricate compositional style " and " world of delicate expression " . The music becomes " simpler and softer " throughout the piece , moving from the " rhythmic complexity " of the opening bars through to slow quavers transforming into triplets . An ensemble piece , different light (for clarinet , violin , cello and piano) was " inspired by the idea of moving a picture from one place to another , be it to another

house , or from one room to the next , or even from one wall to another . " As the picture is moved , it looks the same but is perceived in a different light . Puw attempts to convey this in musical terms by having each instrument enter separately with its own musical phrase in the first part of the piece . Then , in the second part of the piece , all the thematic material is repeated with the instruments playing simultaneously , so that the music is similarly perceived in a different light. different light was featured at the 2001 UKwithNY festival at the Angel Orensanz Center in New York City . His 2005 composition for the Bangor New Music Festival , Stereo Type , was written for amplified typewriters and tape . It was premiered by UWB School of Music students in the Deiniol Shopping Centre , Bangor , on 5 March 2005 .

= = List of compositions = =

A list of Puw 's major compositions .

= = Awards and nominations = =

1995 ? Winner of the Composer 's Medal at the National Eisteddfod of Wales for Ffantasia II (harp)

1997 ? Winner of the Composer 's Medal at the National Eisteddfod of Wales for Mekanwaith (string quartet)

2005 ? Reservoirs (orchestral) nominated in the Large @-@ Scale Composition category of the Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards

2007 ? Winner of the BBC Radio 3 Listeners Award at the British Composer Awards for his Oboe Concerto

2013 ? Sir Geraint Evans Award presented by the Welsh Music Guild " for his significant contribution to Welsh music "

= = Recordings = =

Reservoirs ? Orchestral Works by Guto Pryderi Puw , Signum Records (May 2014) . Tracks includes ... onyt agoraf y drws ... , Concerto for Oboe , Reservoirs , Hologram and Break the Stone ' Overture .