

= Wales Millennium Centre =

Wales Millennium Centre ( Welsh : Canolfan Mileniwm Cymru ) is an arts centre located in the Cardiff Bay area of Cardiff , Wales . The site covers a total area of 4 @. @ 7 acres ( 1 @. @ 9 ha ) . Phase 1 of the building was opened during the weekend of the 26 ? 28 November 2004 and phase 2 opened on 22 January 2009 with an inaugural concert . The centre has hosted performances of Opera , Ballet , Dance , Theater , comedy and Musicals .

The Centre comprises one large theatre and two smaller halls with shops , bars and restaurants . It houses the national orchestra and opera , dance , theatre and literature companies , a total of eight arts organisations in residence . It is also home to the Cardiff Bay Visitor Centre .

The main theatre , the Donald Gordon Theatre , has 1 @, @ 897 seats , the BBC Hoddinott Hall 350 and the Weston Studio Theatre 250 .

In 2001 Lord Rowe @- @ Beddoe was appointed chairman of Wales Millennium Centre , a company limited by guarantee . Board members include Sir Michael Checkland .

= = Background = =

= = = The failed Cardiff Bay Opera House project = = =

The Centre replaced an earlier project for the site , the Cardiff Bay Opera House , a plan supported by the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation to construct a permanent home for the Welsh National Opera . The project failed to win financial support from the Millennium Commission , the body which distributed funds from the UK National Lottery .

An international design competition attracted 268 international applicants , and was won by Iraq @- @ born architect Zaha Hadid . Her avant @- @ garde design was so radical that she and a selection of other applicants were asked to submit revised designs for a second round of competition ? which she again won with " a sleek and dazzling complex of sharp lines and surfaces that she compared to an ' inverted necklace ' " .

In December 1995 , the Millennium Commission decided against lottery @- @ money funding for the project . It was suggested that the bid failed because of " the unpopular Conservative government 's fear of controversy , " favouring the funding of projects perceived as more populist , such as the Millennium Stadium .

= = = Origins of Wales Millennium Centre = = =

After the Cardiff Bay Opera House project was rejected , a new project was conceived that included more than opera and was felt to be a better reflection of Welsh culture . The change of name symbolised this , but the project still had to overcome many hurdles . Funding from the Welsh Assembly and Millennium Commission took years to obtain . Cardiff Council had to buy the land after the previous owners , Grosvenor Waterside ( Associated British Ports property division ) threatened to build a retail centre there due to the delays . Further boosts were given by large donations from South African businessman Donald Gordon and a loan from the international bank , HSBC . The GB £ 20 million donation from Donald Gordon was split evenly between the Royal Opera House and Wales Millennium Centre and was spread over five years . This is believed to be the largest single private donation ever made to the arts in the UK .

= = Phase 1 ? Donald Gordon Theatre and Weston Studio Theatre = =

In addition to the two main theatres of the Donald Gordon Theatre and Weston Studio Theatre , the 37 @, @ 000 @- @ square @- @ metre ( 400 @, @ 000 sq ft ) phase 1 of the Wales Millennium Centre also has six function rooms : the Victor Salvi Room , the David Morgan Room , the Sony Room , the Seligman Room , the Japan Room , and the Lloyds Enterprise Suite . The Urdd Gobaith

Cymru has a hostel with accommodations for 153 people overnight in en @-@ suite bedrooms , called the Urdd City Sleepover . It also has performance and teaching space in the Urdd Hall / Theatre , with 153 retractable seats .

The building also includes rehearsal rooms , orchestral facilities for the Welsh National Opera , dance studios for Diversions , called The Dance House , and the Blue Room , with seating for up to 100 .

The foyer has three bars ; the Penderyn Awen Foyer Bar on level 2 , the Horizons Foyer Bar on level 4 , and the Stones Foyer Bar on level 5 @.@ ffresh restaurant is also situated in the foyer , along with Crema , which is a coffee shop , Hufen , which is an Ice cream parlour and One , which is a wine bar . Free performances also take place during the day in the foyer on the Glanfa Stage .

= = = Design and construction = = =

The Centre was designed by Jonathan Adams , of local practice Percy Thomas Architects ( taken over by Capita Group in 2004 ) , with Arup Acoustics providing the acoustic design and Arup as building engineer . His first concept drawings were made in early 1998 , by 1999 his design was starting to look more like the building it is today .

Construction began on 25 February 2002 , the main contractor being Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd and Kelsey Roofing Industries Ltd being the roofing contractor . Carr and Angier were the theatre consultants . Other contractors included Stent ( foundations ) , Swansea Institute of Higher Education , now part of University of Wales Trinity Saint David ( glass ) , GH James Cyf ( stonemasonry ) , Rimex ( stainless steel ) , Alfred McAlpine ( slate ) , Coed Cymru ( wood ) , Ann Catrin Evans ( door furniture ) , Amber Hiscott ( etchings on glass walls ) .

The architect 's concept of the building was a building that expressed " Welshness " and was instantly recognisable . The building was designed to reflect the many different parts of Wales with local Welsh materials that dominate its history : slate , metal , wood and glass . All the materials used come from Wales ; the Centre was built from 1 @,@ 350 tonnes of Welsh slate , 300 @,@ 000 concrete blocks , and a million metres of electric cable .

#### Slate

The exterior of the building is clad in multi @-@ coloured slate collected from Welsh slate quarries . Narrow windows are built into the layers of slate to give the impression of rock ; strata they depict the different stone layers in sea cliffs . The purple slate came from the Penrhyn Quarry , the blue from Cwt y Bugail Quarry , the green from the Nantlle Valley , the grey from Llechwedd quarry , and the black from the Corris Quarry .

I always loved going to Ogmere and Southerndown . I thought the cliffs there looked like a building anyway . A building capable of withstanding the roughest weather for hundreds of years . The older they get , the better they look . I wondered if it would be possible to make a building which had the same qualities as these magnificent cliffs . To do that I needed a lot of stone . Normal stone for buildings has to be specially cut into blocks ; it takes a long time to make and costs a fortune . But in north Wales the historic slate industry has left behind whole mountains of waste stone that no @-@ one wants . This was stone cut from the mountainside for nearly two hundred years but which wasn't good enough to make roof slates . Over 90 % was thrown away . But it was ideal for making walls like the one I had in mind ... ? architect Jonathan Adams

#### Metal

The Centre 's main feature , the bronze coloured dome which covers the Donald Gordon Theatre , is clad in steel that was treated with copper oxide . It was designed to withstand the weather conditions on the Cardiff Bay waterfront and will look increasingly better with age . The architect , Jonathan Adams , decided not to use copper and aluminium as they would both change colour with age and weather conditions .

We all know that steel making has been important to south Wales , just as slate making has changed the landscape of the north . We have to use a special type of steel that won't go rusty near to the salt @-@ laden , maritime air of Cardiff Bay . This stainless steel will be made near to Pontypool . For the Wales Millennium Centre I thought it was important that the materials should

have a " natural " texture , and that they should be instantly recognisable to anyone seeing them , even from a distance . For this reason I felt it was important that the steel of the shell should have the rough grain and the riveted pattern that we think of as more typical of old industrial structures , such as those that used to be commonplace around the landscape of the industrial south . ? architect Jonathan Adams

#### Wood

Both inside and outside the building , including the main Donald Gordon Theatre , the balconies and the rear of the building , is dominated by bands of hardwood lining the walls .

Like the exterior of the building , the principal internal spaces are designed to make the best use of natural materials in their natural state . The structure and detail of the concourse galleries echo the form of the exterior , with the curving strata formed in native hardwoods . Oak , ash , beech , sycamore , alder , birch , chestnut and cherry woods from renewable sources in mid @-@ Wales will be used together in proportions that reflect their relative availability from the forest . The design of the concourse galleries is intended to evoke the image of the edge of the forest , partly as a counterpoint to the coastal nature of the exterior , and partly because the edge of the forest in folklore and mythology represents a line between the real world and the magical world , a line which resembles the front edge of the theatre stage . The form of trees is created by the interweaving curvature of the gallery edges , and by the random positioning of the supporting columns . ? architect Jonathan Adams

#### Glass

Glass was used to incorporate into the bands of slate . The glass is 15 @-@ centimetre ( 5 @.@ 9 in ) thick and was cut and installed by the Architectural Glass Department at Swansea Institute of Higher Education . Glass is not used in the contemporary British architectural style of the glass curtain .

Jonathan Adams said , " The glass veins in the external walls of the Wales Millennium Centre make use of conventional glass in a unique way : the sheets of glass are stacked together and fused in a kiln to form solid blocks . "

#### Calligraphy

Inscribed on the front of the dome , above the main entrance , are two poetic lines , written by Welsh poet Gwyneth Lewis in the Welsh and English languages . The lettering is formed by windows in the upstairs bar areas and is internally illuminated at night .

The idea of this monumental inscription comes from Roman classical architecture . The Romans brought Christianity to these islands , along with the custom of engraving stone . The form of the Celtic cross embodies the cross @-@ fertilisation of indigenous and Roman cultures , from which the Welsh nation first emerged . The monumental inscription is a familiar feature of Roman architecture . The inscription over the entrance of the Wales Millennium Centre is a revival of this classical tradition , and also a recognition of the formative influence of Roman culture upon our nation . We ? re lucky to have two languages ; one that we share with half the world and one which belongs just to us . Words in songs , stories and poems have helped to make Wales the proud country that it is . ? architect Jonathan Adams

Gwyneth Lewis said of the inscription :

I wanted the words to reflect the architecture of the building . Its copper dome reminded me of the furnaces from Wales 's industrial heritage and also Ceridwen 's cauldron , from which the early poet Taliesin received his inspiration ( ' awen ' ) . Awen suggests both poetic inspiration and the general creative vision by which people and societies form their aspirations . [ ... ] It was important to me that the English words on the building should not simply be a translation of the Welsh , that they should have their own message . The strata of the slate frontage of the Wales Millennium Centre reminded me of the horizons just beyond Penarth Head . The sea has , traditionally , been for Cardiff the means by which the Welsh export their best to the world and the route by which the world comes to Cardiff . The stones inside the theatre literally sing with opera , musicals and orchestral music , and I wanted to convey the sense of an international space created by the art of music . ? Gwyneth Lewis " In These Stones Horizons Sing " is also an orchestral work , which was composed by Karl Jenkins , and commissioned by the Wales Millennium Centre for the opening of the Centre .

= = = Opening weekend ceremony = = =

The building was officially opened on the weekend of the 26 , 27 and 28 November 2004 . The ceremony was organised by Bryn Terfel , the creative director of the whole opening weekend .

Day 1 ? 26 November 2004

The day started with a speech from Lord Rowe @-@ Beddoe , chairman of Wales Millennium Centre , who declared to the crowd that the proceedings were under way . This was followed by a speech from Rhodri Morgan , the First Minister , who stressed that the new arts centre belonged to the whole nation , that it was for all of the people of Wales and not just for the elite .

The building was opened by Janet Thickpenny , a young mother from Barry , who was chosen because her 40th birthday coincided with that of the opening day . A human chain delivered the symbolic key , designed and cast by Ann Catrin Evans , to Janet with a fanfare from the National Youth Brass Band of Wales to a Karl Jenkins specially commissioned work In These Stones Horizons Sing and the Centre was open .

The evening celebrations began with Cymru for the World , which celebrated the achievements of five leading Welsh artists ; Gwyneth Jones , Shirley Bassey , Siân Phillips , Alun Hoddinott and Richard Burton , represented by his daughter Kate Burton . This included tributes from Robert Hardy , Jonathan Pryce , Derek Jacobi , Nana Mouskouri , Catrin Finch , Ruth Madoc and Ian McKellen . The concert was directed by Ken Caswell and conducted by David Charles Abell .

Bryn Terfel started off with a short speech and introduced the Wales Millennium Centre singers and dancers , who in hard hats and donkey jackets sang and danced the story of the construction of the building . They were later joined by all 322 participants in a chorus , including Gwyn Hughes Jones , Bryn Terfel and Dennis O 'Neill sang a duet from Pearl Fishers . Diversions performed a new ballet based on one of Alun Hoddinott ' s works . The Welsh National Opera performed the final scene of Beethoven 's Fidelio in their new home . The evening ranged across all musical types from popular to classical .

Day 2 ? 27 November 2004

The second day was an open door for the public to explore the Centre with a continuous stream of people filling through the building from early morning until the fireworks display out in the Roald Dahl Plass .

Day 3 ? 28 November 2004

The final day of the opening weekend began with the arrival of Queen Elizabeth II , Prince Philip , and the Prince of Wales who met First Minister Rhodri Morgan and Lord Rowe @-@ Beddoe , and marked the event by unveiling a plaque . Philip Madoc , Siân Phillips , Gaby Roslin , Michael Ball , Charlotte Church , Catrin Finch and Only Men Aloud ! were among the artists that entertained the audience during the first act . The second act was opened by the Welsh National Opera and later the Kirov Ballet and Cirque Éloize entertained the audience . Bryn Terfel ended the celebrations .

= = Phase 2 ( C Bay ) ? BBC Hoddinott Hall = =

Phase 2 of the Centre is home to the BBC National Orchestra of Wales ( BBC NOW ) and the BBC National Chorus of Wales . BBC NOW moved from Studio 1 at Broadcasting House in Llandaff , which the orchestra had outgrown since the late 1960s . Phase 2 opened on 22 January 2009 with an inaugural concert performed by the BBC NOW and conducted by Thierry Fischer . Phase 2 includes the 350 seater BBC Hoddinott Hall ( Welsh : Neuadd Hoddinott y BBC ) , also known simply as Hoddinott Hall , which is named after the late Welsh classical composer Alun Hoddinott CBE ( August 11 , 1929 ? March 12 , 2008 ) , and the Grace Williams Studio , which is named after another Welsh composer , Grace Williams ( February 19 , 1906 ? February 10 , 1977 ) , and is used as a centre for education and outreach work . Phase 2 also has space for practice rooms , a music library , backstage facilities , it also provides a four @-@ storey office space for Wales Millennium Centre and the Arts Council of Wales .

## == Design and construction ==

The original plans for the Centre were that it would have a concert hall , however the final design of phase 1 did not include one . Space had been left , though , for a concert hall to be built in the future when phase 1 of the Centre was opened in 2004 , and construction on phase 2 was then due to begin early in 2005 . However , construction of phase 2 did not actually begin until April 2007 . Phase 2 was designed to fit into the Centre ' s curved slate frontage , with an upper part constructed from timber .

Phase 2 of the Centre was designed by the then newly qualified Tim Green and Keith Vince of Capita Architecture , formerly called Capita Percy Thomas and now part of Capita Symonds , with Arup Acoustics again providing the acoustic design . The main contractor was again Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd , with MJN Colston Ltd responsible for the design and installation of all the mechanical , electrical and public health services in the building . Other subcontractors on the project included URS Corporation , Davis Langdon and Hulley & Kirkwood .

Tim Green said of the building that the exterior of the building was designed to be in keeping with the existing Wales Millennium Centre , while the interior had a theme all its own . " The concept behind the design of the interior of Hoddinott Hall was that of a traditional Welsh chapel . " " The timber treatment at low level is very reminiscent of Victorian chapels and the masonry above . The stonework you would normally get in a stone chapel has been replaced by concrete . "

During the design and construction period , the project name for phase 2 was C Bay . Construction of phase 2 began in April 2007 , and ended when the keys to the building were handed over at an official ceremony in September 2008 , and the beginning of the fitting out of the BBC Hoddinott Hall by BBC Wales .

## == Opening Festival ==

To commemorate the opening of the BBC Hoddinott Hall an inaugural concert took place on 22 January 2009 . It was part of the Opening Festival which took place between 22 January and 1 February 2009 . The concert was performed by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and was conducted by Thierry Fischer . The concert included the world premiere of St Vitus in the Kettle by Simon Holt , the orchestra ' s composer in association , who took over from Michael Berkeley . The BBC Hoddinott Hall was officially opened by the Prince of Wales on 31 January 2009 , where he unveiled a plaque .

## == Resident organisations ==

The Wales Millennium Centre is home to nine arts organisations :

Literature Wales - The Welsh National Literature Promotion Agency and Society For Writers

National Dance Company Wales - previously known as Diversions - the Dance Company of Wales

Hijinx Theatre - a theatre company that promotes community work , aiming to bring together people of all ages

Touch Trust - providing educational touch and movement therapies to people with profound disabilities and autism

T? Cerdd - music information centre for amateur and professional musicians , including the Welsh Music Information Centre , Welsh Amateur Music Federation , National Youth Arts Wales and Cyfansoddwyr Cymru ( Composers of Wales )

Urdd Gobaith Cymru ( The Welsh League of Youth ) - the Welsh language youth movement

Welsh National Opera - an international touring opera company

BBC National Orchestra of Wales - The only professional national symphony orchestra for Wales

Arts Council of Wales - The body responsible for funding and developing the arts in Wales

It is also home to the Cardiff Bay Visitor Centre .

## == Corporate financing and rebranding ==

The total cost of phase 1 of the project was £ 106 @. @ 2 million . The National Lottery Millennium Fund provided £ 31 @. @ 7 million , a further £ 37 million came from The National Assembly for Wales and £ 10 @. @ 4 million was donated by the Arts Council of Wales . In addition a private investor , South African businessman Donald Gordon donated £ 20 million to be shared equally between the Royal Opera House and the Wales Millennium Centre . The Centre also received a £ 13 @. @ 5 million loan from HSBC . The remaining funds for the project came from a major sponsorship deal with the Principality Building Society . Today the Centre has many corporations and public bodies who provide sponsorship to the Centre .

The National Assembly for Wales announced on 6 November 2007 that it was to pay off the outstanding loan of £ 13 @. @ 5 million from HSBC and also increase the annual funding . From April 2008 , the National Assembly for Wales have given a grant to the Wales Millennium Centre with £ 3 @. @ 5 million per annum for 3 years . This would only repay the capital debt and not any ongoing operating loss as the Centre remains profitable . The money used to pay the debt came from unallocated funds from the Assembly 's previous budget and it was said by the Minister for Heritage , Rhodri Glyn Thomas , that the new money allocation would not come at the expense of other art projects from other parts of Wales .

The cost of phase 2 of the project was approximately £ 18 million , however the BBC does not own the building , they have leased it for 25 years from the Lime Property Fund , which is a subsidiary of Aviva Investors . The building was built by Concert Bay Ltd , which is a subsidiary of Sir Robert McAlpine Enterprises Ltd who co @- @ funded the scheme along with Lime Property Fund .

In November 2006 , Wales Millennium Centre announced that they would begin a two phase rebranding project . The project was won by a local Cardiff company , Sweet . The first phase of the project involved a new corporate logo , the second phase included the complete redesign of other marketing tools , such as brochures and advertisements .

= = In popular culture = =

#### Doctor Who and Torchwood

The Centre has made numerous appearances in film and television including Doctor Who , whose modern era is produced locally by BBC Wales . It has appeared seven times to date : as itself from outside in the episode " Boom Town " , its marquee momentarily at the end of the episode " Bad Wolf " , its lobby as a hospital lobby in the far future in the episode " New Earth " , and again in " The Girl Who Waited " , . It also appeared briefly in the episodes " Utopia " and " The Stolen Earth " , and also in the final episode of series 3 , " Last of the Time Lords " .

The spin @- @ off series Torchwood , has its headquarters , known as " The Hub " , set underneath the Water Tower , Roald Dahl Plass , with the Wales Millennium Centre 's frontage featuring heavily through the show .

#### Jones Jones Jones

On 3 November 2006 , a record breaking attempt to gather the most people with the same surname , Jones , took place in the Centre under the show banner Jones Jones Jones , filmed for television by S4C . The record was broken with 1 @, @ 224 Joneses filling the Donald Gordon Theatre . The previous record was set in Sweden in 2004 when 583 people gathered who had the same surname of Norberg .

#### Gavin & Stacey

Episode 1 of the second series of BBC TV show Gavin & Stacey was filmed in the Wales Millennium Centre . The centre was supposed to be an airport .