

# MUSIC. THEATRE. WALES.

## Welsh Language Plan March 2023

Music Theatre Wales has a commitment to delivering creative opportunities to engage with the Welsh language, working with reference to the Future Generations' Wellbeing Act which aims to see "a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language". As a Welsh company, we recognise the importance of championing and advocating for the Welsh culture and language, and we celebrate Welsh as a distinct creative and cultural resource.

### **Our work – past, present and future**

In October 2017, we launched our first bilingual Make an Aria project, working in partnership with Bangor University. The project culminated in a bilingual Masterclass in May 2018, led in both Welsh and English by composer Rhian Samuel, and featured two arias composed in Welsh and three Welsh-speaking singers.

Also in 2017, in partnership with Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru, we presented our first ever opera commissioned and sung in Welsh and the first ever opera commissioned in Welsh for professional performers: *Y Tŵr* by Guto Puw and Gwyneth Glyn, based on the play of the same name by Gwenlyn Parry. We gave six performances at five venues in Wales and a performance at Buxton International Festival - the first time an opera in Welsh had been presented at either Buxton Opera House or the Festival.

In 2009 we created our first production in Welsh – *Stori'r Milwr* (not simply a translation, but a new performing version of *The Soldier's Tale* by Stravinsky). This production was part of a project titled *Temptation/Temtasiwn* which also included Welsh language creative workshops in schools.

In 2021, during lockdown and the months that followed, *Y Tŵr* was streamed online as part of Theatr Genedlaethol's Eto programme, and received over 500 online views.

The success of these projects has heightened MTW's resolve to create more bilingual and Welsh-language work. And we want to go further:

- We will seek to employ at least one Welsh speaker on every project we create, including workshop programmes.
- All digital work MTW produces will be captioned in Welsh and English.
- We will explore how best to present live productions with bi-lingual titles.
- All future contracts for librettists will include a clause that enables MTW to translate work into Welsh, if it was not written in Welsh originally – or to translate from Welsh to English if it is written in Welsh.
- All print marketing in Wales and all social media marketing will be bi-lingual, and our website will continue to be available in Welsh and English.

In future, our work as a whole will not exclusively focus on the development of opera as an artform, but will also focus on how new opera and music theatre can engage with a much wider audience. At the centre of this will be a significant change to the artists we work with and the nature of the work we make, and we want Welsh language to form a significant part of this work.

- **New Directions** – supporting the development of work by diverse artists who have not previously worked in opera or music theatre.  
*Action: We will be encouraging artists to create new work in the language of their choice whilst ensuring the work is accessible to all. All digital work MTW produces as part of New Directions will be captioned in Welsh and English (and any other languages the artists choose to work within).*
- **Future Directions** – working with young people across Wales in collaboration with professional artists to support their creative development and engagement with opera, and ultimately to feed into the future performance work of MTW.  
*Action: Young people will be encouraged to work in the language of their choice, including Welsh. At least one Welsh-speaking creative facilitator will be engaged to work on each project. Digital creative output from the project – if it involves spoken or sung words – will be bilingual and/or captioned in Welsh and English.*
- **Street Art Operas** – we are planning to commission two Street Art Operas for presentation in Summer 2025. We intend for one of these pieces to be in Welsh
- **Prosser Rhys project** – We are working in partnership with Eisteddfod Genedlaethol, Aberystwyth Music Centre and Sinfonia Cymru to commission and produce a new operatic monodrama in Welsh for production in Summer 2024
- **Schools Storytelling Project** – A newly created collaborative project with Sinfonia Cymru which will commission and produce a bi-lingual project in schools across Wales during 2025 and 2026.

### **Our board**

MTW's Board is currently made up of 9 members, of whom two are first language Welsh speakers.

*Action: Ensure that at least 20% of the Board are Welsh speaking*

*Action: Discuss our Welsh Language Policy at a Board meeting annually.*

### **Our workforce**

Currently we have one Welsh learner among the core team of three.

We work with many freelance artists and staff and strive to find Welsh speakers for these roles.

*Action: We will offer Welsh language training to any of our workforce who wish to develop their skills.*

*Action: We aim to recruit at least one Welsh speaker as creative facilitator for every Future Directions project*

*Action: Whenever we are recruiting, we will promote the vacancies via our networks within Welsh language theatre, and all vacancies will be advertised in Welsh and English.*