

The Camac Harpist

Summer 2006



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Festival Special

People from all over the world gathered at Galeri – Caernarfon's sparkling new arts centre – in April to experience the first Wales International Harp Festival. Participants came not just from Europe, but from every continent, with visitors from Russia, Turkey, Israel, Patagonia, Australia, Thailand, the United States and other countries. A warm welcome, a spectacular setting in this World Heritage town and a week of dry, sunny weather – not to mention the first class programme and impeccable administration – helped make the Festival an outstanding success. Those who attended will remember the event for many years to come.

The Festival was directed by **Elinor Bennett** and sponsored by **Camac Harps** in association with **Telynau Vining Harps**. Competition prizes included a Camac Concert Grand Pedal Harp (value £15,000) and Camac Lever Harp (value £3,000), as well as cash prizes donated by Camac Harps, Telynau Vining Harps, the William Mathias Music Centre and national and local companies.

Competition results

Many congratulations to all the harpists who took part in the competitions and especially to the very talented winners in all categories:

Under 13 Competition

1. Ben Creighton Griffiths	Wales	£300
2. Artemy Ismaylov	Russia	£200
3. Ksenya Karrask	Russia	£100



Nine Year old Ben Creighton Griffiths, winner of the Under 13 Competition

Under 16 Competition

1. Glain Dafydd	Wales	£800
2. Tomos Xerri	Wales	£400
3. Zahara Lever	England	£200

Under 21 Competition

1. Glain Dafydd	Wales	£1000
2. Mali Llywelyn	Wales	£600
3. Elen Hydref	Wales	£300



Fourteen year old Glain Dafydd, winner of both the Under 16 and Under 21 Competitions

Traditional and Folk Harp Competition

1. Mairi Macleod	Scotland	Camac lever harp*
2. Mael Lhopiteau	Brittany	£500
3. Branka Crowder	Serbia Montenegro	£250



Mairi Macleod winner of the Traditional and Folk Harp Competition

**Mairi Macleod was given a choice of any Camac lever harp and chose the 38 light gut strung Stivell harp, which was jointly designed by Jakez François and the famous Breton harpist, Alan Stivell.*

Chief Musician Competition

1. Constance Luzzati	France	Camac concert harp*
2. Eleanor Turner	England	£1000
3. Eva Debonne	France	£750



Jakez François and Elen Vining with the first and second prize winners of the Chief Musician Competition: Constance Luzzati (left) and Eleanor Turner (right)

**Constance Luzzati will select her Camac concert harp at the Paris showroom of Camac Harps.*

Camac's largest harp exhibition

The Festival was the setting for the largest exhibition ever mounted of Camac harps. Nearly 100 harps – from small lever harps to grand concert pedal harps – were on display throughout the Festival for use by competitors, visitors and anyone wishing to play, beginners as well as practised players.



Daniel Piré, Camac's Chief Technician, tuning one of the many harps on display at the Festival



The harp room: some of the many Camac harps on display

Evening concert programme

Festival goers had a wide choice of evening concerts as well as being able to listen to all the competitions and attend workshops, masterclasses and lunch time recitals.

The opening concert was performed by internationally acclaimed classical harpist **Isabelle Moretti**, Professor of Harp at the Conservatoire Nationale Supérieur de Musique in Paris. Isabelle gave a captivating performance, which won her a standing ovation from the appreciative audience.



Isabelle Moretti receives a standing ovation at the opening concert

Tuesday's concert of World Harp Music featured a galaxy of international talent: **Gwenan Gibbard** (voice and harp) with **Maartin Allcock** on guitar; **Paul Dooley** played a wire strung Irish harp; **Catriona McKay**, winner of the Jakez François International Celtic Harp Competition 2004; **Zi Lan Liao**, who is one of the leading exponents of Chinese music and of the Chinese harp worldwide; **Andrew Lawrence King** playing cross strung Spanish Harp; and **Robin Huw Bowen**, playing the Welsh triple harp.

Mid way through the Festival, **Catrin Finch** made a welcome appearance on the concert stage, performing a varied repertoire of classical pieces, including an exceptional rendition of Debussy's *Dances Sacrée et Profane* with the **Pavao String Quartet** and the first performance of a new

composition by Welsh composer **Geraint Lewis**. Festival Director (and Catrin's mother-in-law), **Elinor Bennett**, joined Catrin on stage for part of the concert, the two of them giving a lively performance of Bizet's *Fantasy on Themes from Carmen*, arranged by John Thomas.

Due to too close an encounter with a plant on stage, we almost didn't get to see a rare UK appearance by American jazz harpist **Deborah Henson Conant**! And that would have been a pity, because she delivered an outstanding performance, complete with dark glasses. She also made Ben Creighton Griffiths' day, inviting the nine year old winner of the Under 13 Competition to share the stage for a duet on one of Deborah's own compositions, *New Blues*. Unforgettable!



Deborah Henson Conant on stage

All the competition winners got the chance to perform in concert on the Saturday or Sunday, including fourteen year old Glain Dafydd from North Wales, who won both the Under 16 and Under 21 Competitions!

Awards

At the end of the Festival special awards were presented to four distinguished harpists – **Ann Griffiths**, **Skaila Kanga**, **David Watkins** and **Edward Witsenburg** – to commemorate the founder of Camac Harps, the late Joel Garnier.



Elen Vining congratulates Ann Griffiths, one of the four distinguished harpists to receive a special award at the Festival

Festival Director: Elinor Bennett OBE

The Festival was the brainchild of **Elinor Bennett**, whose contribution to the harp world was recognized earlier this year with the award of OBE. Elinor is very influential as a performer, harp teacher and international ambassador for Welsh music. A co-founder of Coleg Telyn Cymru (Wales Harp College) and Telynu Bangor, she is now the artistic director of the William Mathias Music Centre in Caernarfon. For thirty years, Elinor directed the Harp Studies at the University of Wales, Bangor and was Visiting Professor of Harp at the Royal Academy of Music. She has made thirteen solo recordings of music ranging from the traditional to classical, popular and the experimental. Elinor's wide experience and excellent administrative skills were put to good use, not only during Festival week but in the preceding year of planning and organization.



Elinor Bennett, Director of the Wales International Harp Festival

Thanks

Our thanks to all those who helped make the first Wales International Harp Festival such a resounding success, especially:

- Elinor Bennett, Festival Director;
- Meinir Llwyd Jones, Festival office and all the staff at Galeri;
- Jakez François and Camac Harps for their generous sponsorship;

- the 'Camac Team': Eric Piron, Daniel Piré, Yann Chevalier, Alexis Dartois, Florence Marque and Rhian Evans;
- all the competition judges: Robin Huw Bowen; Paul Dooley; Ann Griffiths; Meinir Heulyn; Elinor Hudson; Geraint Lewis; Catriona McKay; John Metcalf; Isabelle Moretti; David Watkins; and Edward Witsenburg;
- and everyone who helped in whatever way.

Will there be another Festival?

We hope so! So please watch this space...

Exclusive UK distributorship

We are proud to announce that **Telynau Vining Harps** has been given exclusive UK distributorship rights for Camac harps. Announcing the new contract, Jakez François, Managing Director of Camac Harps said: *'We are very pleased with the effective way in which Vining Harps has represented Camac in the UK over the last seven years and we are delighted to announce the new exclusive distributorship. This reflects the commitment and investment made by Elen Vining and her father Paul, in establishing Vining Harps and in developing the Camac business in the UK.'*

European Harp Symposium

Next year, the **Seventh European Harp Symposium** will be held in Wales: this time in Cardiff, between 22-27 July 2007. Further details of the Symposium programme will be included in our next newsletter.

New harp



We are very pleased that, following discussions with Jakez François, Camac have now designed a brand new lever harp especially for the UK market. The as yet unnamed harp is a 34 gut strung folk harp which is perfect for a beginner or a more experienced harpist looking for a portable gut strung folk harp.

We hope to have the harp in our shop in time for Christmas.

Eisteddfod

Once again, we shall be exhibiting at this year's National Eisteddfod of Wales: from 5-12 August in Swansea. Do please come along to see us in the Exhibition Hall. The Electroharp continues to grow in popularity and we are very excited that **Catrin Finch** will be playing both our pedal and folk electroharps in her concert on Thursday 10 August in the Eisteddfod Pavillion. ***A concert not to be missed!***

Mai Fukui

Telynau Vining Harps is sponsoring another concert at The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

The concert will take place on Thursday, 19 October at 7pm and will feature Mai Fukui as part of her 1st Prize of the Cité des Arts de Paris Competition. Please contact us for tickets and further information.

Website

Coming soon...our two new websites:

www.camacharps.co.uk should be online in September for all your harp needs and **www.rowlandsonline.co.uk** will be available for you to purchase sheet music for all instruments online.



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