

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / The Culture, Welsh Language
and Communications Committee
Ariannu addysg gerddoriaeth a mynediad ati / Funding for and access to
music education
CWLC(5) FAME13
Ymateb gan xxx/ Evidence from Isle of Anglesea Choral Society & Music of
St. Mary's Church in Mold

I have received the invitation from the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee of the Welsh Assembly, and I herewith would like to provide a short statement in the formal capacity as Director of Music, St Mary's Church in Mold, and Music Director of the Isle of Anglesey Choral Society. I would particularly like to emphasis the aspect of current position of regional ensembles.

Professionally, I am not involved with music education in schools, but I also provide private vocal tuition, where possible. I have a full DBS check.

Combining my experience of the past three years since my arrival in North Wales (October 2013), I have noticed increased enquiries from parents for musical facilities that teaches and trains children music as well as coach them in developing their vocal abilities. It has come to my attention that where there are school choirs especially, singing coaching is bot provided. Of all my private students I taught in the past two years one a one-to-one basis, age range from 7 to 13 years of age, I noticed particularly lack of the ability to read music.

I am Director of Music at St Mary's Church in Mold since January 2016, which is one of the few churches in North Wales that have a traditional church choir, and we also make provision for junior singers – currently four members – in the age range of 9 to 13. I have noted the same issue with regards to the ability to read music. It is my personal belief to strengthen the musical abilities of the young singers especially and provide training opportunities for them alongside the very short rehearsal time. Since beginning this year we provide coaching of the Royal School of Church Music's chorister training Voice for Life for adults as well our junior singers. I do dedicate my own personal time unpaid for this at the stage, because lack of funding.

My suggestion for the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's inquiry is to free financial resources for choirs and ensembles for activities like ours in Mold. I have not undertaken any similar activities

with the Isle of Anglesey Choral Society (which I have taken over as Music Director only since October 2016), but this issue is on my mind to increase the educational facilities here as well. In the latter, this is an adult only mixed choir that also enjoys the training aspect, vocally and musically. Again, the resources are stretched for us here, as to why I have not be able to advance on specific plans here on Anglesey.

Personally, it is my impression that there is a lack of professionals – either choral/orchestral trainers or vocal coaches – to provide significant support in the remote parts of the region in North Wales. This goes hand in hand with the lack of financial resources and the move of young people out of the region. Financial support, even on a minimal scale – e.g. covering costs for some of the music purchases or occasional subsidising of coaching sessions – would at this stage to be covered by the individual singer – and in both cases, most of the music purchases are paid by individuals.

I am aware of institutions like Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias (CGWM) or similar, that provide individual tuition. A better share of facilities would of such centres with the regional ensembles would benefit both – but the more significant work ought to be done within the weekly rehearsals, like at the Isle of Anglesey Choral Society or institutions like church choirs, which also uphold a long vocal tradition or choral singing.

I can only implore the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee to consider freeing financial resources for specific educationally-driven projects within regional ensembles.

As a final note, I would like to add my professional background to this statement: I am Austrian by birth, and residing in the UK for somewhat 10 years spread over the past two decades. I am living in Bangor, North Wales, since October 2013 and I have lead Cor Mebion Y Traeth (Ilse of Anglesey) as its last Music Director until the end of 2013. I am completing my PhD in Musicology at Bangor University. I am an orchestral conductor and choral trainer with international experience. As a child I was trained at the Vienna Boys Choir, which formed me musically.

Thank you for considering my statement, which I would be happy to elaborate further in writing or in person, if required.