15.09.2022

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Erthygl i'r Wasg **Press Release**

Bywyd rhyfeddol y delynores Elinor Bennett yn Sgwrs Dan y Lloer

Wrth i'r haul fachlud dros arfordir Arfon a'r lleuad yn goleuo'r mynyddoedd mae Elin Fflur yn teithio i Bontnewydd ger Caernarfon i gwrdd a'r delynores Elinor Bennett yn y bennod ddiweddaraf o **Sgwrs Dan y Lloer** ar nos Lun 26 Medi am 8.00.

Gyda thanllwyth o dân a'r sêr yn gwmni, mae Elin yn cael clywed am fywyd a gyrfa rhyfeddol un o'n prif gerddorion ni yng Nghymru.

Ganwyd Elinor Bennett yn Llanidloes ond cafodd ei magu yn Llanuwchllyn yng nghanol bwrlwm diwylliant Cymraeg. A bu'r ardal yma yn ddylanwad yn aruthrol arni:

"Roedd y cyfan yn ddiwylliant naturiol Gymreig, gyfoethog dros ben...Roedd gan fy nhad ei weledigaeth – roedd o eisiau mynd a'i ddwy ferch fach i fyw mewn lle roedd yn naturiol Gymraeg."

Bu ei rhieni yn ganolog i'r bwrlwm yma drwy arwain corau, a'i thad oedd un o aelodau cyntaf Côr Godre'r Aran. A fo oedd yr un a gyflwynodd hi i'r delyn, ar ôl dod a un adref wedi taith i Lundain gyda'r côr. Ond, coeliwch neu beidio, doedd hi methu chwarae'r offeryn am flynyddoedd gan ei bod hi'n rhy fyr!

Er i'r delyn fod yn ganolbwynt i'w bywyd hi maes o law – i astudio'r gyfraith ym Mhrifysgol Aberystwyth aeth Elinor. Ond arhosodd y delyn gyda hi. Buodd hi'n llwyddiannus mewn Eisteddfodau ac wedyn ennill ysgoloriaeth yn yr Academi Gerdd Frenhinol yn Llundain. Fe arweiniodd hyn, a'i chyfeillgarwch gyda'r athrylith Dr. Osian Ellis, at weithio fel cerddor llawrydd yn Llundain mewn cerddorfeydd megis Cerddorfa Symffoni Llundain.

Ac yn y ddinas hon cyfarfod ei gŵr, y gwleidydd, Dafydd Wigley. Pan ddaeth yr amser i fagu plant, daeth y dynfa i fynd yn ôl i Gymru.

"Doedd o ddim yn hawdd i adael fy ngwaith i" cyfaddefa Elinor, "Roedd o'n dipyn o rwygiad i wneud ond doedd gen i ddim amheuon mai dyna oedd y peth i'w wneud ac, fel Cymraes gref, roeddwn i eisiau bod yn ôl yng Nghymru." I Ferthyr Tudful aeth y teulu ifanc, a chael croeso arbennig gan y bobl yno.

Mae gwleidyddiaeth yn ran mawr o fywyd Elinor. Cafodd ei magu ar aelwyd wleidyddol – ei thad oedd un o aelodau cyntaf Plaid Cymru ym Maldwyn ac mi enillodd hithau sedd ar y Cyngor pan yn byw ym Merthyr. Ac wrth gwrs, gwaith Dafydd yn nhŷ'r Arglwyddi.

Ond, mae ganddi ei hunaniaeth ei hun. Ac mae cael ei enw ei hun yn bwysig iddi erioed, yn enwedig yn ei gwaith proffesiynol:

"Dydi'r teitl Arglwyddes ddim yn mynd efo Bennett o gwbl – efo'r Wigley ma' hwnnw'n mynd!" Meddai Elinor.

Does dim amheuaeth mai yn y byd cerddorol y mae Elinor Bennett wedi gwneud y marc mwyaf. Mae hi wedi teithio'r byd yn perfformio, wedi trefnu gwyliau cerddorol, rhyddhau recordiau, wedi dysgu a mentora cannoedd ar gannoedd o ddisgyblion ac wedi ennill sawl anrhydedd.

Buodd hi'n ganolog i sefydlu Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias yng Nghaernarfon a aeth o gael saith disgybl i gannoedd erbyn hyn.

Un peth oedd yn bwysig i Elinor oedd bod y ganolfan hon yn gynhwysol, a hynny ar ôl trasiedi a darodd y teulu. Bu farw meibion Elinor a Dafydd, Alun a Geraint, o fewn mis a hanner i'w gilydd o ganlyniad i gyflwr geneteg prin iawn.

"Dwi'n meddwl fod cerddoriaeth yn perthyn i bawb." Meddai Elinor, "Mae pawb efo rhyw elfen o gerddoriaeth jest wrth fyw – mae'n calon ni'n curo mewn mydr ac yn anadlu – dyna ydi cerddoriaeth."

Mae o wir yn rhyfeddol faint mae Elinor Bennett wedi cyflawni ar hyd y blynyddoedd. Cofiwch wylio'r bennod yma o **Sgwrs Dan y Lloer** gyda Elinor Bennett i glywed mwy am ei bywyd a'i gwaith ysbrydoledig.

Sgwrs Dan y Lloer
Nos Lun 26 Medi am 8.00, S4C
Isdeitlau Saesneg
Ar alw: S4C Clic, iPlayer a llwyfannau eraill
Cynhyrchiad Tinopolis ar gyfer S4C

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The extraordinary life of harpist Elinor Bennett in the latest episode of Sgwrs Dan y Lloer

As the sun sets over Arfon and the moon shines on the mountains, Elin Fflur travels to Bontnewydd near Caernarfon to meet the harpist Elinor Bennett in the latest episode of **Sqwrs Dan y Lloer** on Monday 26 September at 8.00pm on S4C.

Accompanied by a roaring fire and the stars, Elin will hear all about the extraordinary life and career of one of Wales' leading musicians.

Elinor Bennett was born in Llanidloes but grew up in Llanuwchllyn right in the midst of Welsh culture. This area was a big influence on her:

"It was a very natural and very rich Welsh culture...My father had his vision - he wanted his two little girls to live in a place that was naturally Welsh."

Her parents were at the center of this buzz by leading choirs, and her father was one of the first members of Godre'r Aran Choir. He was the one who introduced her to the harp, after bringing one home following a choir trip to London. But believe it or not, she couldn't play the instrument for years because she was too short!

Although the harp became central to her life in the following years – Elinor went to study law at Aberystwyth University. But the harp stayed with her. She was successful in various Eisteddfod competitions and won a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music in London. This, and her friendship with the talented Dr. Osian Ellis, led to a career as a freelance musician in London playing in orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra.

And in this city, she met her husband, the politician, Dafydd Wigley. When the time came to raise children, the pull came to go back to Wales.

"It wasn't easy to leave my job" admits Elinor, "It was quite a struggle, but I had no doubts that it was the right thing to do and, as a strong Welsh woman, I wanted to be back in Wales."

The young family settled in Merthyr Tydfil and received a warm welcome.

Politics is a big part of Elinor's life. She was brought up in a political household - her father was one of Plaid Cymru's first members in Maldwyn and she won a seat on the Council when she lived in Merthyr. And of course, Dafydd's work in the House of Lords.

But she has her own identity. And having her own name has always been important to her, especially in her professional life:

"The title Lady doesn't go with Bennett at all - it goes with the Wigley!" Elinor said.

There is no doubt that in the music world Elinor Bennett has made the biggest mark. She has travelled the world performing, organized music festivals, released records, taught, and mentored hundreds and hundreds of pupils and won several honours.

She was also central to establishing the William Mathias Music Centre in Caernarfon which went from having seven pupils to hundreds.

One thing that was important to Elinor was making this centre inclusive, after a tragedy that struck the family. Elinor and Dafydd's sons, Alun and Geraint, died within a month and a half of each other as a result of a rare genetic condition.

"I think music belongs to everyone." Elinor said, "Everyone has some element of music just by living - our heart beats in a rhythm and we breathe - that's music."

It really is extraordinary how much Elinor Bennett has achieved over the years. Don’t forget to watch this episode of **Sqwrs Dan y Lloer** with Elinor Bennett to hear more about her inspiring life and work.

Sgwrs Dan y Lloer
Monday 26 September, 8.00pm
English subtitles available
On demand: S4C Clic, iPlayer and other platforms
A Tinopolis production for S4C