

2-4 SEPT / MEDI 2011, CYFARTHFA PARK

# MERTHYR ROCK

2 SEPT / MEDI 2011

**IAN WATKINS DJ SET**  
(LOSTPROPHETS)

**BOLDDOG FMX**  
MOTOCROSS STUNT TEAM

PLUS REAPER IN SICILY AND EVAROSE / FIREWORKS DISPLAY / BIG DEAL CLOTHING GIVEAWAYS

3 SEPT / MEDI 2011

**oceancolourscene**



FRIENDS ELECTRIC  
TIGER PLEASE  
TOWN

**BIG DEAL STAGE**

LAST REPUBLIC  
STRAIGHT LINES  
BROKEN VINYL CLUB  
RICHARD KINSEY

CAESAR'S ROME  
MASTERS IN FRANCE  
CUBA CUBA

4 SEPT / MEDI 2011

**THE BLACKOUT**

*funeral  
for a  
friend*

**SKINDRED**

YOUNG GUNS  
MY PASSION  
THE GUNS

ATTACK! ATTACK!  
REVOKER  
GO-X

**BIG DEAL STAGE** CURATED BY **KIDS-GLASS HOUSES**

FUTURE OF THE LEFT  
EXIT INTERNATIONAL  
THE SOCIAL CLUB  
DEAD BEGGARS CLUB

JETTBLACK  
SAVE YOUR BREATH  
SPYCATCHER  
CROSSBREAKER

## Final Report

November 2011



HAY FESTIVALS





Photos: madebyfinn.com

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## Executive Summary

Merthyr Rock delivered on many levels: exceptional music curation; innovative approaches to education and training; and the transformation of how Merthyr is perceived on a national, and even more crucially, local level. The pilot year has been a wonderful investment in the development of a sustainable music industry celebration.

“Proud to say I’m from Merthyr right now.”

**Alyce Jones, 16**





## The Music

“This has to happen again... this was the best collection of Welsh acts that has ever been put together.” **James McLaren, *BBC Wales Music***

It was the aim of Merthyr Rock to bring an international-standard festival to Merthyr, and to give the Valleys the occasion to match their rich musical heritage. In programming the event it was essential that the festival featured household names that could draw large crowds performing alongside the best of established and emerging Welsh musicians.

The headliners in 2011 were Ocean Colour Scene and The Blackout. In their 21-year life as a band, Ocean Colour Scene have notched up nine albums, three of which went Top 5 – 1996's *Moseley Shoals*, 1997's *Marchin' Already* and 1999's *One From The Modern* – and a run of nine successive Top 20 hit singles commencing with 1996's *The Riverboat Song*. They supported Oasis at their massive Knebworth shows that same year, and two years later helmed the biggest arena tour of any UK band to date. The Blackout represent the established Welsh talent that the festival aimed to celebrate. With three major albums released and a string of significant tours, The Blackout are a major success story who relished the opportunity to headline a major event in their hometown of Merthyr Tydfil. Ian Watkins, also from Merthyr and frontman of Welsh giants Lostprophets, headlined the festival's opening Friday night event. Ian's DJ set was a great finale to a night which featured an extreme sports display from the Bolddog FMX team and a fireworks display from West Coast Fireworks.

The Festival line-up was completed by a wealth of emerging and established talent. Funeral For A Friend, Cast and Skindred are established acts with a long history of successful and popular tours and releases. Their presence cemented the festival's reputation as one with a rich depth of talent and high profile acts with a focus on rewarding Welsh achievement. The festival also had strength in depth with great up-and-coming acts like Young Guns, Friends Electric, Attack! Attack!, Tiger Please, My Passion, Revoker and Future Of The Left. The diversity of the acts programmed also ensured that the festival appealed to a broad demographic, and could be enjoyed by music fans of all ages.

Taking into consideration the short period of time (three months) that the festival team had to put together the bill, the quality of the line-up is even more impressive. This high standard of programming under tight time constraints signified a statement of intent to provide a signature event that South Wales can be proud of. Wales has been lacking a rock music event that lives up to the country's impressive history, and Merthyr Rock 2011 showed that it has the potential to become just that. Thanks to the support of the Welsh Government and Arts Council of Wales we achieved exactly that.



“When we started in this town people said we'd never do anything, we'd never go anywhere... Thank you very much, you guys have made our dreams come true”  
**Sean Smith,  
The Blackout**



“Merthyr Rock was a fantastic event for the Borough. I walked the area on the Saturday and spoke to many young and old people who were full of praise for the event, not just for the content with over 30 acts but also for the excellent organisation delivered by all agencies – including the Hay Committee, Council, Police and vendors – working in partnership to deliver a trouble free event. This was a perfect example of how such an event should be organised.”

**Mayor of County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil**

## Introducing New Voices

“En route home! Thank you @merthyrrock for providing a fantastic festival & having some of my favourite local talent on the line up #mrock” **Rachael Hawkins (via Twitter)**

Merthyr Rock reached across Wales during the summer, as we teamed up with Promo Cymru and CLIC to launch a nationwide Battle of the Bands competition, to give young unsigned acts from Wales a chance to open a stage at Merthyr Rock and win a Schecter guitar. Widely advertised online and through word of mouth, we received over 50 applications from bands to take part. Our keen team of listeners including Julian Gardner at Promo Cymru, Martin Williams from Ebbw Vale Institute, Rhodri Jones from Merthyr Rock and Ryan Heegr from CLIC, created a shortlist of 25, who went on to compete regionally. In July we kicked off with heats in Porth and Ebbw Vale; August saw further heats take place in Bridgend and Swansea, before the final battle in Clwb Ifor Bach in Cardiff on 18 August. Over 200 people attended the final, at which Eric Unseen, Hotel Ambush and Editions scooped the chance to play at their first major festival event.

In addition to championing new talent, the Battle of the Bands acted as a valuable connection with the needs and aspirations of young people across Wales, both as fans and artists, in advance of the festival itself. In terms of marketing the festival, impressive content for social networks was created to stimulate the word of mouth campaign. This close attention to grassroots involvement included using local, independent venues, local promoters and local experts on the judging panels, including:

Glyn Mills – International Tour Manager;  
Hannah Jenkins – CEO Community Music Wales;  
Matthew Davies – The Blackout; Darren Smith – formerly Funeral For A Friend; Paul Gray – The Damned

*“Playing Merthyr Rock was a fantastic opportunity and has really opened the door for us in the music industry. The whole event was brilliantly organised and gave local bands the chance to perform original material to thousands of music fans!! Merthyr Rock was the best thing to come to the valleys in recent years!!! Bring it on next year!!!”*

**Daniel John Hagerty, Eric Unseen (pictured)**

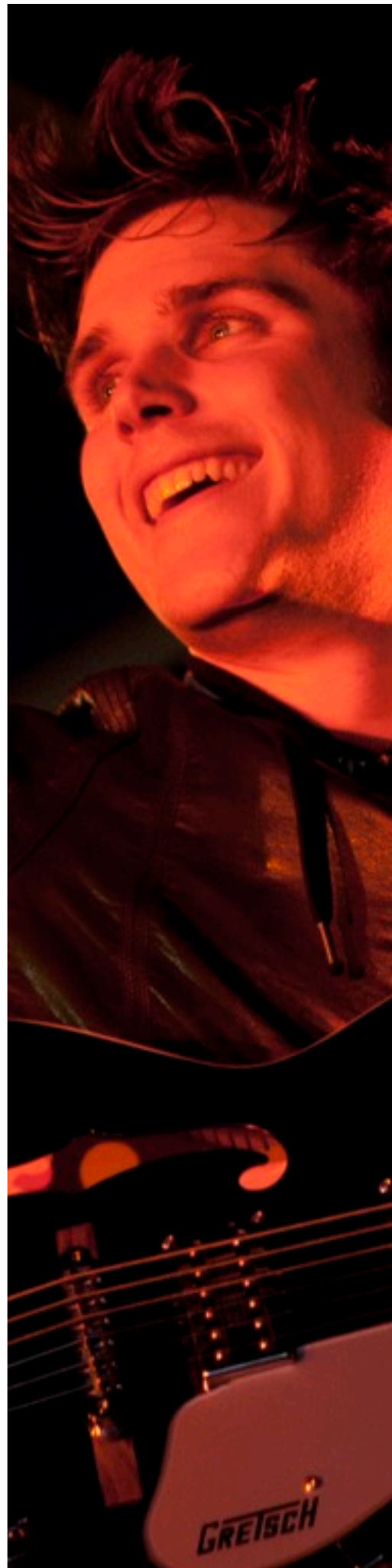




Photo: madebyfinn.com

Introducing New Voices (cont.)

### Kids In Glass Houses curation

As another of the acts that have established themselves in Wales and emerged as major stars, Kids In Glass Houses were asked to curate the second stage on the Sunday of the festival. Not only did this 'artist's choice' element strengthen the programming, by bringing forward emerging talent from the Welsh music underground, it also acted as a valuable PR hook to promote the festival to a wider demographic.

This decision also challenged the preconception that bands can only be involved in a festival if they perform, and its success proved that Welsh acts are skilled beyond onstage performance. Creating an event where bands are actively encouraged to support each other and engage with each other's progress was one of Merthyr Rock's key underlying aims. In the long term with the right support such activity will result in varied, yet sustainable music programming within Wales and beyond. The showcase of new Welsh talent extended across the weekend and as a consequence of their festival performances many of the bands have since

*"It was something we've never done before and it was quite exciting for us... it was an awesome opportunity."*

**Aled Phillips, Kids In Glass Houses**

found themselves catapulted into new limelight. Newport's Save Your Breath have been on a nationwide tour with Florida punk giants New Found Glory; Cardiff emerging stars Exit\_International have an upcoming tour with rock superstars The Wildhearts; and Merthyr's very own Richard Kinsey and Attack! Attack! supported The Blackout at the Dr Martens #FIRSTANDFOREVER Festival. Following the affirmation given to The Blackout as a headlining act the Merthyr band has gone on to launch their biggest UK tour to date and become Kerrang cover stars. This clearly shows the potential Merthyr Rock has to make headline acts out of Welsh talent and propel them into the A-list of UK recording artists.



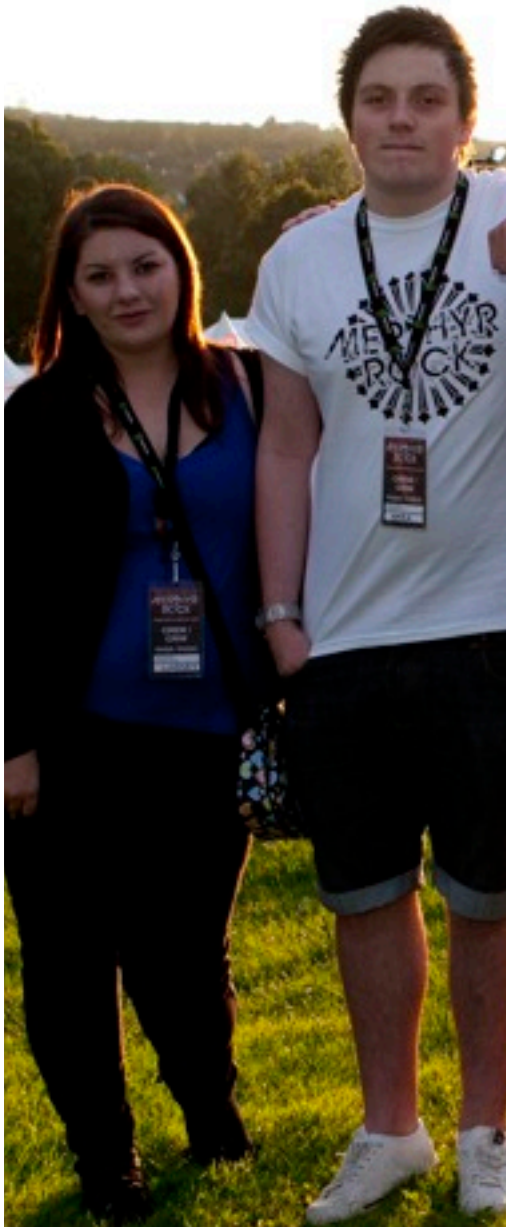
## Supporting Welsh Talent

June saw the launch of our internship scheme, initially offering five people from Wales over the age of 18 the chance to work with our Artist Management and Marketing teams.

Our team pored over hundreds of applications to narrow it down to the final list. Such was the quality and passion of the letters we received, we decided to extend the number of internships to six. All applicants, whether successful or not, received guidance towards other avenues they could pursue for experience, as well as information on the Foundation Degree in Music Industry Entrepreneurship at the University of Glamorgan.

Liam Toomey, Rhys Mitchell, Mark Jones, Hannah Durham, Henry Stephens and Lindsey Williams all made the final cut and we wasted no time in getting them on board with the festival. Tasks they were given included:

- Promotion – online, on the streets, at gigs and interviews. We believe grassroots involvement as promoters in advance of the festival was a vital introduction to the industry at large.
- Artist liaison – contact with managers and talent was a crucial element of their frontline role. They built up important social skills essential to the industry, as we stressed the vital balance of being professional, relaxed and efficient.
- Timetable management – with full staff briefings at the start of each day, the interns were fully involved in sound check co-ordination, load in and out, and dressing room turnovers.
- Hospitality - sharp attention to detail was required of the interns as they assisted the production team in delivering and co-ordinating riders.
- Environmental programme support – getting hands-on with our GreenPrint team on site, the interns received an introduction to the process and importance of creating an ecologically sustainable event and the necessity of it being standard practice. GreenPrint is Hay Festival's blueprint for creating ecologically sustainable events, supported by Arts & Business Cymru.
- Community Programme support – helping directly with the on-site workshop events allowed the interns to see the bigger picture of the festival, the wider organisations that Merthyr Rock partnered with, their activities and the impact they have on audiences.
- Signing Tent and Merchandise experience – working on the retail side of the festival gave the interns a sense of the commercial aspects involved in the wider festival infrastructure, from relationships with concession holders to the skilled operations of band merchandising and the impact of public contact with talent.



*"It was a privilege to attend the Hay Merthyr Rock Festival. Merthyr has a wonderful musical heritage though primarily through the great tradition of Welsh choirs. It is important that we update that heritage by connecting with the exciting Welsh rock and pop scene and its emerging bands and singers."*

**Lord Ted Rowlands  
MP for Merthyr and  
Rhyimey**

During the festival the interns were given a per diem, ensuring the scheme was thoroughly inclusive. All of the interns will now be invited into the wider Hay Festivals intern scheme, which operates across all our UK festivals.

*"It was the best weekend I could've asked for, so much better than I thought it would be. I got to meet some of my hero's and as well as working I got to see them play. It also gave me an insight into how these type of things work and gave me great experiences for the future. I'd recommend anybody who loves music to do this because they will love it!"*

**Liam Toomey**

*"So Merthyr Rock 2011 was definitely one of the best weekends of my life and I'm sure many others agree! Got to see and work with some great bands and generally had an awesome time"*

**Hannah Durham**

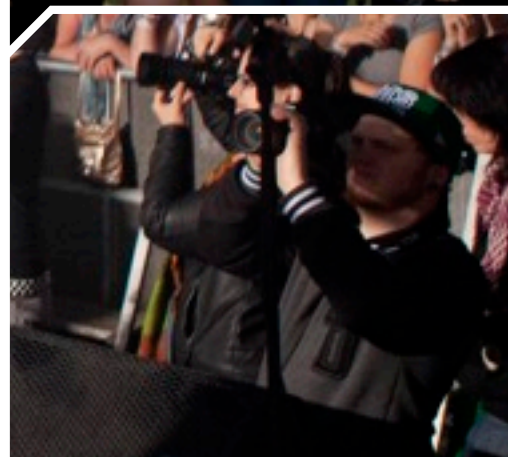
### Film team

Merthyr Rock collaborated with the award-winning Gingenious Films in Cardiff to offer budding film-makers the once-in-a-lifetime chance of working alongside a professional production company to shoot live music footage and artist interviews. A team of six amateur creatives were led by Young Entrepreneur of the Year finalist 2010, Ben Smith. They captured every side of the festival, amounting to a terabyte of footage, which is being edited down to create show reels targeted at potential sponsors and audience generation for the future. This project tied in closely with our overarching aim to provide practical, live skills development at a level usually beyond reach to young people.

### Merthyr Rock Days

Thanks to the support of the Welsh Government and Arts Council Wales, across the summer we worked alongside Cool Fossil Music and a number of professional freelance artists to reach into secondary schools and community organisations, promoting skills required to gain access to the music industry at large. During this pilot period we reached 357 people in sessions including: *The Telegraph's* Online Culture Editor on music journalism; music photography with Eleanor Jane Parsons; music design with Lucy Driver-Williams; and a broad range of rock music workshops with Rob Parrett and Alex Prince.

Merthyr Rock Festival, September 2011



*Can't believe @merthyrrock was a week ago already! what a great day to celebrate south Wales music and the awesome welsh bands that played!*

**Gareth Lawrence, The Blackout**  
(via Twitter)

*Well done @merthyrrock you were amazing. A humbling experience. It's amazing how far we've come. Thanks to everyone who's made it possible.*

**James Davies, The Blackout**  
(via Twitter)

*@merthyrrock shows how much welsh music really does rock! Great day & I was one of the lucky ones in wellies :D #mrock*

**Sarah Phillips (via Twitter)**



In a comprehensive programme of hands-on workshops, professional musicians and artists headed into Bishop Hedley High School, Pen Y Dre High School, Dowlais Engine House and Ebbw Vale Institute to work directly with young people from the Merthyr area.

Each session was tailored to the groups' varied abilities. The emphasis was placed on peer learning, ensuring optimum engagement, as the young people directed and commented on their fellow participants' practical work. We used our position as a festival and events organiser as a strength when engaging with the teens. The popular nature of the industry and their perception of it added an immediate acceptance, interest and ease.

### Schools

All four schools we targeted were fully supportive and welcomed the opportunity of participating in the music workshops; however, due to time limitations within the schools' summer term schedules, we were only able to visit two before September: Pen Y Dre and Bishop Hedley High Schools. Key Stage 4 & 5 pupils primarily participated in these varied music sessions, covering guitar, bass, drums, percussion, synths and samplers. All of these were aimed at advancing technical ability for the experienced players and learning basics for the beginners. The drumming sessions were particularly popular, as they concentrated on basic patterns, playing in time and the 'drum fill', before culminating in how to work together as a rhythm section. Young professional musicians Stuart Busby and Pedro Kirk appeared as guests in a number of the sessions to look closely at band syncing, and to provide advice on setting up groups and recording demos at home.

### Youth Organisations

Between the Ebbw Vale Institute (EVI) and the Engine House the age groups were more varied than in the schools, with students ranging from 9 to 25 years. Workshops were over-subscribed on various occasions and so the times were extended to ensure that everyone could be involved. In the music sessions, comprising guitar, bass, drums, percussion, synths and samplers tuition, participants were encouraged to play together, build up the instrumentation and create their own song. This was the first time many of them had had a chance to perform with other musicians. In the photography sessions participants were given an introductory tour of their camera, be it a mobile phone or compact, before heading outside to work on capturing movement,

portraits and atmosphere using examples from the music press as inspiration. Similarly, in the design sessions, participants were introduced to iconic designs in music before creating their own work using inks and hand cut stencils. The age range of the design participants was lower than expected, which significantly altered the aims and outcomes – as we go forward, these particular art sessions will focus on schools. The participants in the music journalism session explored the ingredients of a good review, be it 140 characters or 300 words, with *The Telegraph's* Online Culture Editor Martin Chilton. They also received tips and techniques from photographer and blogger Lucy Gold, who drew on her experiences of the Welsh music and education scene. Using this dual approach both increased the accessibility and practical application of this session. The most challenging element of this session came with the sharing of participants' writing, both among themselves and wider audiences, something we did not encounter in any other sessions.

*"As the largest youth facility in Britain, we were over the moon to get involved with the Merthyr Rock team during the establishment of what should become an annual event in our town."*  
**Phil Matthews, Dowlais Engine House**

The Community Programme is year-round and the initial sessions, which have encouraged creativity, confidence and a sense of self-achievement, have been a superb launch. As we go forward beyond the festival all these workshops and more will continue, weaving in accreditation schemes where possible and linking with other brilliant organisations.

Cool Fossil Music have already been requested to organise further weekly workshops at the Engine House, based on the summer workshop programme, funded independently. Merthyr Rock will continue to support these and assist in linking them to an accredited award. These are presently being discussed and Roland UK have confirmed their support. In this sense we're proud to see a major event acting as a catalyst for wider arts activities. Using a live event as the focus provides a firmer sense of identity for arts activities, as well as making skills development within the local population tangible and achievable. Furthermore, plans are already in place to continue work in Pen Y Dre and Bishop Hedley Schools, as well as kick off sessions in Cyfarthfa High School and Afon Taf High School.

## Continued Professional Development Day

Proposed date: Friday 2 September

Having contacted relevant music-based companies nationally and youth organisations across South Wales, a conference was arranged at the University of Glamorgan's 'Atrium' in Cardiff on 11 May 2011, to develop contacts and relationships and discuss creating a CPD day.

In attendance were: Welsh Music Foundation, Mix Music Education, Roland UK Ltd, Gwent Music Support Services, 3 Fire Music, Promo Cymru, University of Glamorgan, EVAD Cave Studios.

The main discussion points were:

- Project's progress to date and the most effective ways to share resources and opportunities.
- Structure and collaboration for the proposed CPD day.
- Festival weekend update.
- Community Programme continuation (September 2011–June 2012). Sharing opportunities and resources.
- Structuring an awards and accreditation scheme.

Even though the conference meeting had to be arranged at short notice, in order to make planning of a CPD day feasible, we had an extremely positive attendance from the organisations involved and their representatives. It was agreed that a day of structured seminars, exhibitor stands, demonstrations, workshops and panel events would be organised. These would showcase the very best in music education for music educators and anyone involved with youth groups, communities and organisations who engage with young people in music creation and related roles.

All agreed that, to make the day successful and beneficial to everyone concerned, the structure would be based on the following Key Objectives:

- Spreading awareness of available technology in providing accessible professional development in education.
- Extending the power of music education.
- Developing contacts within creative communities.
- Creating wider awareness of opportunities and resources.
- Creating a bridge between private organisations and public institutions.
- Giving examples of effective practice.
- Adding value to the participants' teaching practice.

**Merthyr Rock Festival, September 2011**



Merthyr Rock has embarked on creating a platform for organisations to share resources and opportunities for the benefit of all, contributors and participants, an enriching programme which cannot be underestimated in the current economic climate. Taking place in the heart of the South Wales valleys – Merthyr and Blaenau Gwent – the programme is completely open and accessible to all, regardless of geographical location, and its cross-generational aims fit into the themes of the 2020 Our Merthyr Tydfil – A Bright Future community strategy.

Following continued discussions with the main contributors to the CPD day it was decided that, given the short time scale of both the proposed CPD event and the festival's proposed date (the weekend before schools returned from summer break), even though we could make contact with the relevant education establishments and make them aware of the event, there would not be the time or opportunity (due to the summer break), to coordinate and organise the programme to its full potential. Schools and educationalists would need to be contacted over the summer period regarding updates, pre-booking seminars, workshops and discussion groups. It was therefore decided that the organisations presently engaged should produce a series of free workshops, discussions and demonstrations as part of the festival itself. The onsite programme would be open to all, but music educators would be targeted with details. The resulting venues created on site were fully programmed with activity across the festival (see enclosed for the full line-up). These sessions were extremely well attended, by a cross generational audience, with constant engagement over the weekend in photography, music and silent stage sessions.

*"It was a pleasure to work with the organisers of the festival, who were efficient, hardworking and obviously passionate about the success of the weekend."*

**Kieron Jones, Welsh Music Foundation**

In addition to these hands-on sessions we used our experience of spoken word events to provide a new angle within the music festival format to produce the live Q&A with headliners The Blackout, in association with the Welsh Music Foundation. Over 150 people turned out to hear details of the band's inspirational journey through the music industry, in this intimate and unique

event. The clear demand for live interviews with bands and artists means we're keen to grow this feature of the festival in years to come.

*"One young guy needed help to write his name though he loved giving his opinion on the music of the artists you have playing. Can't wait to see what we get out of him from his review of the Saturday night performances."*

**Darren Griffiths-Warner, Plugged In**

### Plugged In Magazine

Merthyr Rock collaborated with Plugged In, the not-for-profit social enterprise music magazine based in Pontypridd. The magazine works with disadvantaged young people in the area, giving them an introduction to writing and journalism. The fantastic issue they created (see enclosed) using content from Merthyr Rock is commendable, providing both the contributors and the bands involved with the public platform they deserve. The magazine was distributed across the Valleys in advance of the festival and throughout the festival itself via the Box Office and stewards. It quickly found itself becoming the unofficial programme for the weekend, providing details of the lesser-known bands in print.

*"We had constant engagement throughout the days and all who tried it got the message. Music is about trying your best and it doesn't matter if you aren't technically great: so long as you give your all anyone can make music with anyone."*

**Dan Jones, Mix Music Education**





## Audiences

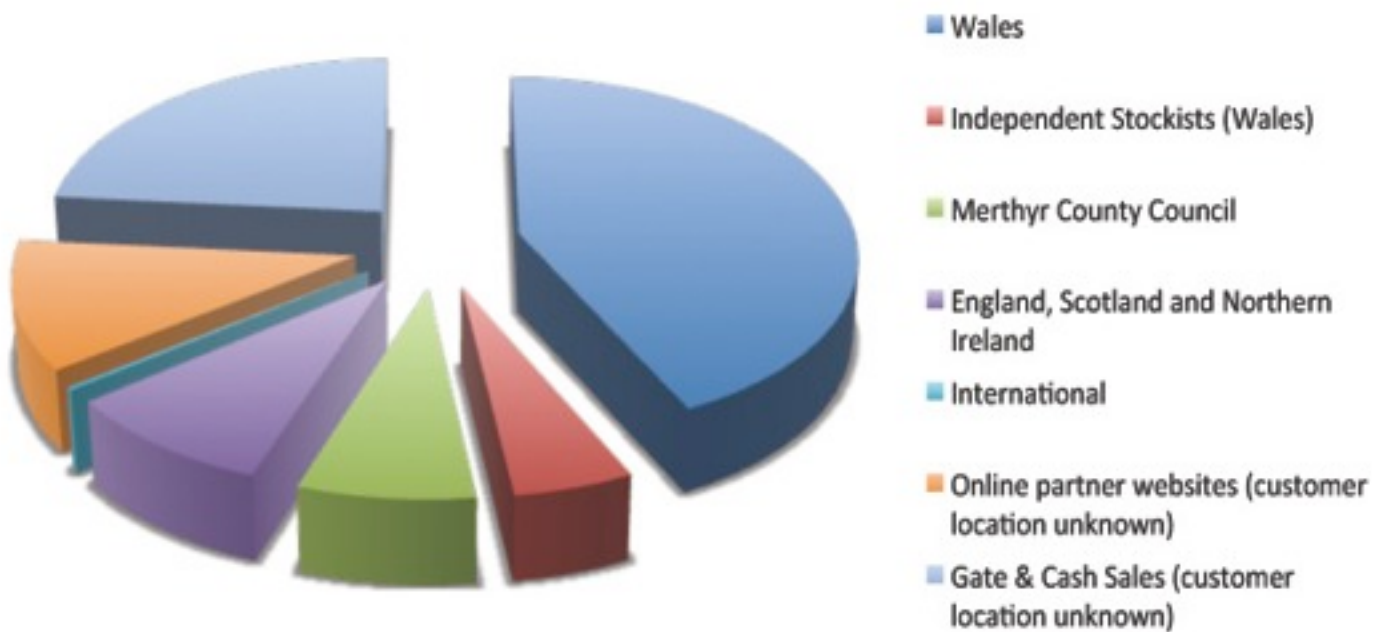
We developed a Welsh language policy in conjunction with the Welsh Language Board. This policy ensured that all signage onsite, publicity materials, and online terms and conditions were bilingual. The Welsh language policy was made available to all staff working on the event. In addition to this, 50% of the technical team employed spoke Welsh as a first language and wore badges so that people were aware of this. In order to ensure that we could offer a Welsh language service as often as possible, we had at least one member of staff able to speak Welsh to members of the public. A number of acts performed in Welsh, and we will look to extend our Welsh Language provision in future years.

In order to ensure that Merthyr Rock was accessible to everyone, we provided disabled Blue Badge holders who require full time assistance with a free ticket for a personal

assistant (PA). There were also full disabled facilities including a viewing platform for the main stage, to ensure the festival could be enjoyed by all, and dedicated on-site parking.

We established a successful relationship with Arriva Trains to put in place an unprecedented late night rail replacement service to link Merthyr with Cardiff via the connecting towns. The service was greeted with an incredibly positive reception and the buses were busy on both Saturday and Sunday nights. Accessible public transport will be a key feature of any future plans, as access across the Welsh regions, particularly in the evening, is a significant issue to those without cars.

## Ticket Sales



### Audiences (cont.)

Ticket prices for the event were kept very low to encourage attendance across a wide demographic, particularly for groups with limited means. Most Welsh music fans have to travel to Cardiff to see concerts and smaller-scale gigs. Music fans looking for a high quality rock festival have to travel to Reading, Leeds or Donnington and pay around £150 for a ticket – too expensive for most people in the Valleys region. Merthyr Rock represented the start of a reinvigoration of the regional music scene with a high quality festival at the extremely low price of £45 for a 3-day ticket. (Day tickets were £10 for the Friday night and £20 for Saturday or Sunday tickets).

Tickets were sold primarily online and through the Hay Festival Box Office. However, to ensure that all audiences were catered for ticket stocks were also held by Merthyr Council Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale Institute, online ticket providers See Tickets and Ticketline, as well as independent record stores in Cardiff, Swansea and Newport.

Analysis of the the ticket sales according to postcodes, reveals that the festival audience travelled from across the UK to attend, with international audiences coming from as far as Ireland and Germany.

10% of advanced sales through the Hay Festival Box Office came from beyond Wales.

All six Welsh postcodes were significantly represented in advance sales, showing that the festival had nationwide as well as regional appeal.

Encouraging sales through the independent stockists demonstrates that there is clear demand for ground level promotion, as well as assisting word of mouth marketing.



*"Thanks to everyone who's RT'd our @merthyrrock blog. Seems like there's a massive appetite for another #mrock"*

**BBC Wales Music**

### **Audience development**

With the continued support of the Welsh Government and Arts Council of Wales Merthyr Rock has the potential to draw international audiences and create a homegrown event that produces an annual source of revenue and tourism. With a longer lead time it would be possible to greatly increase the audience numbers achieved in the first year. Merthyr was not seen as an appealing location for such an event, but the positive feedback coupled with the press and publicity from year one has the potential to make the festival a far more attractive prospect in the future. Feedback via Twitter, email, Facebook and the press pointed firmly toward the desire for the event to continue and to become a firm event in the Welsh music calendar.

### **Audiences (cont.)**

Highlight videos from the event produced by Gingenious Films will shortly be released online giving potential attendees a greater sense of the feel of the festival, which cannot be conveyed with posters and advertisements in print.

As we move forward collaborations with other festivals and corporate partners have the potential to greatly increase the visibility of the festival. Monster Energy have access to 12 million Facebook fans from the target demographic, and other companies such as Big Deal Clothing are able to promote the festival as part of their tours across gigs and festivals throughout the year. By harnessing the power of these partners, word of the festival can be spread in a cost effective way to increase audience numbers significantly.

Many of the factors that were barriers to attendance in year one will cease to be obstacles in future years. One of the problems faced was the lack of permission to use banners and signs in public places in the run up to the event, as there wasn't time to obtain this from the relevant authorities. With more time it will be possible to get far better visibility for the event in public places throughout the area and engage a far greater number of people. In the future we hope to work with the Welsh Government Major Events Unit to create a sustained multi-platform advertising campaign across

South Wales. It will also be possible to release line-up details far earlier which will help the festival increase attendance.

The buses from Cardiff were seen as a great initiative for audience development as well as having important environmental and accessibility benefits. With these in place earlier the service can be publicised on all promotional materials (posters/flyers, etc.) which will help to unlock greater audiences from across Wales and beyond.

It is important that additional ways of generating more revenue without restricting accessibility are explored. One way this could be potentially be achieved might be through giving reduced rates for tickets ordered from local postcodes, and higher rates for ticket-buyers from further afield.





## Economic Impact

Using eventIMPACTS analysis it is estimated that Merthyr Rock created a boost to the economy greater than the amount of WG funding allocated. The estimated value of the festival was £130,000 in year one. In addition to this was a spend of £99,300 on Welsh bands, technical teams, security providers and policing. This will grow even more significantly in years 2 and 3 as the event grows in reputation and recognition, and reliance on public funding subsidies.

Hay Festival contributed £40k of in-kind support for the event, with an in-house team of 10 salaried staff working on the festival, with an extensive skills base. This provided a great boost to the festival and to the region as a whole.

### Supporting Local Business

In order to maximise the impact that the festival had on the local area, Merthyr Rock used local businesses wherever possible for technical

equipment, trade stands, transport, security and stewarding.

The companies used in this instance for Merthyr Rock in year one were: the Welsh Venison Centre, AB Acoustics, Extreme Organics, Little Events Catering, Safon, Showsec, The Radnor Arms, Eleventh Hour, Power Electrics, West Ent, Rock City, EV Entz, Grawen Farm Caravan & Camping, Semaphore, Jonathan Morgan Signage and Brecon Scaffolding.

## Partnerships

In year one Merthyr Rock started a number of great partnerships. In addition to those with the Welsh Music Foundation, ProMo Cymru, CLIC, Cool Fossil Music, Mix Music Education and the University of Glamorgan, Merthyr Rock has also started encouraging relationships with Head 4 the Arts, Youth Cymru, Musical Futures, Notion Music and Community Music Wales that can be built on further in future years.

## Local Authority

Merthyr Rock worked very closely with Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council, Police, Fire, Environmental Health and Licensing to ensure that the festival logistics went as smoothly as possible. Monthly meetings of the Event Safety Advisory Group were scheduled for a 6-month period leading up to the event to ensure the safety and security of the audience was established at every stage of development. During the festival itself the Event Liaison Team met regularly to pre-empt potential risks and settle queries. There were no formal complaints made to the council about the event and there was not a single arrest made in association with the event.

Merthyr Council provided valuable in-kind support for the festival including refuse collection, traffic management assistance and rental of the festival site.

## Industry

The festival also forged first-year relationships with Steadmans Bars, The Agency Group, X-Ray Touring, Primary Talent International, Art and Industry, Bolddog FMX, Coda, Black and White Music, Select Agency, TKO Booking, Glory or Death, Raw Power Management, See Tickets, Ticketline UK, Spillers Records, Arriva Trains, the Print Partnership, City Centre Posters, Miniature Music Press, SWN, 3Gs Development Trust, Plugged In, SWNMF, Welsh Music Foundation, South By Southwest (Texas), and By:Larm (Norway).

## Corporate

A number of companies from the private sector were keen to get involved with the festival in year one. It is hoped that these companies will be sources of sponsorship for the future and each of them are keen to meet up to discuss further commitment and involvement after a successful first year.

**Big Deal Clothing** sponsored the second stage at Merthyr Rock and created two exclusive clothing designs to mark the festival, which were sold over the weekend and continue to sell online.

*“Merthyr Rock was one of the most enjoyable festivals we worked with over the summer and one of the most successful as well. We are 100% wanting to be involved in it next year and is now a key festival in our plans along side established festivals like Groezrock, Slam Dunk and Hevy Fest.”*

**Michael Douglass, Big Deal Clothing**

**Monster Energy Drink** provided in-kind support for the festival with accessories and free product for the public, staff and artists.

**Mesa Boogie Amplification** and **Schecter Guitars**, global industry leaders in their fields, provided in-kind support in the form of competition prizes and equipment for use at the festival.

**Barclays** brought their Premier League Trophy to the festival site on the Sunday, which added significantly to the positive atmosphere, as festival-goers posed with the trophy for photos.

**Roland** a leading company at the forefront of music technology with an essential element of their work based on education. Extending our existing relationship with Roland at Brecon Jazz and Hay Festival, we were immediately offered their support in contributing equipment to the project workshops and demonstrations in the community and onsite.



Photos: madebyfinn.com

## Environmental Impact

Our environmental sustainable management plan (see enclosed) set out a series of targets for Merthyr Rock to achieve and report back on as follows.

**1. Waste Management:** We achieved 50% recycled/composted of the total waste collected. This was against a first-year target of between 50% and 60%. The operation of the money-back scheme for beer 'glasses' worked extremely well, resulting in 3,336 returns in total. Our waste partners Cylch worked very hard and co-ordinated the volunteers who came to help collect and sort the waste. Local firm Amgen Cymru provided the waste removal service including composting of any back-of-house food waste.

**2. Transport:** The partnership with Arriva to resolve the fact that the last train left Merthyr at 21:30 resulted in a coach service leaving the Festival site at 23:30 on

each night, calling at all the railway stations on the route back to Cardiff. The aim of providing this service was two-fold: to reduce the number of cars coming to the festival and to open up the event to those people who did not have access to a car. The result was that a total of 132 people used the service, which while not as many as hoped for, has helped set the standard for next year. We have estimated that around 20% of people came on foot, via public transport, or car-shared.

**3. Traders/Contractors:** All traders and contractors were sent the festival's environmental requirements within their contract. These included specifics on waste, energy reduction and site management. Every trader and contractor abided by most of these requirements and almost all achieved full compliance.



## Marketing

“This was something special, and that it happened in Merthyr Tydfil surely shows that there is a demand and a market for well-run rock/indie festivals in this perennially under-served area.” **BBC Wales**

Hay Festival has one full-time member of staff working on PR, using Hay Festival’s existing international, national and local press contacts for coverage. Merthyr Rock also employed John Rostron (Swn Festival/ Plugtwo PR) on a temporary contract to work up specialist coverage and news stories in advance of and during the festival. This strategic approach resulted in huge amount of media coverage for Merthyr Rock and also for the region as a whole, accentuating Merthyr’s potential and capability to host major events.

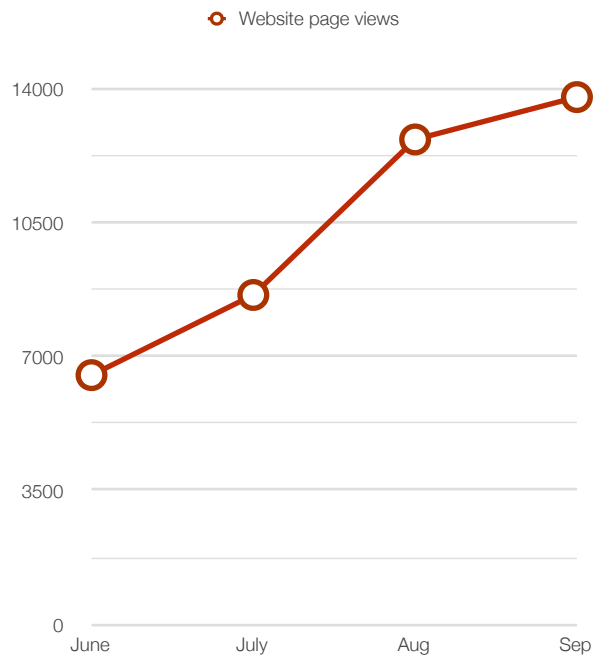
**Merthyrrock.com** was officially launched in May 2011 and received 43,899 page views between May and September 2011.



The top 20 words associated with the festival on Twitter were:

MERTHYR, ROCK, THANKS, AMAZING, BEST, AMAZING!, WEEKEND, FEEL, THANK, ALOT, LOVE, FANTASTIC, YESTERDAY, NIGHT, FUCKING, MUCH, ABSOLUTELY, EVER, EVERYONE, and AWESOME.

Source: Archivist 09.09.11



### Social Media

This utilisation of social media was essential in spreading the word of the festival as quickly as possible and was a valuable source of feedback from the public. Two of our team successfully applied to the Ogilvy Idea Shop, a pop-up agency where volunteers from across Ogilvy Group UK give up their own time to come and give free ideas to community projects. This proactive engagement, seeking out skills to bring back into Wales, was forward thinking and the impact the results of this skills development are clear. The massive response via social media channels is a clear demonstration the the festival is both relevant and meaningful to modern music audiences.

## Twitter

**@merthyrrock** has 1,048 followers. At the peak of the festival, on 4 September, the festival dominated the trending charts in Wales, with **#mrock** taking the number-one slot in the country, with '@merthyrrock' coming in at number four, and 'Merthyr' in at number six.

This undeniably demonstrates the massive buzz Merthyr Rock created across Wales. The festival was a huge talking point online and provided significant positivity for a region that had been in the news for less positive reasons in recent times.

## Facebook

**facebook.com/merthyrrock** has 2,848 fans. In the week commencing 1 September the page had:

**9,886 monthly active users**

**707 wall posts or comments**

**3,935 visits**

## Spotify

As part of Merthyr Rock's online social networking strategy the festival created a free Spotify playlist so that potential and participating audiences could listen to the bands performing at the festival before the event. This online mix-tape approach widened access and gave further exposure to those lesser-known bands on the bill.

## Broadcast Media – MTV

MTV, airing in Japan and Canada, before crossing over into other territories, showcased Merthyr Rock internationally. Chris, the up-and-coming media star from Maesteg, chose Merthyr Rock over festivals like Reading and Download, as he felt that the festival had a better spirit.

"Big props to @merthyrrock and @rhoonestone for everything yesterday! Such an awesome event. Best I've attended in a long time!!!"  
@Chrisoffmyspace

## Broadcast Media – BBC Radio Wales

Bethan Elfyn interviewed Rhodri Jones live in the studio a month before Merthyr Rock.

The Mal Pope Breakfast Show also featured a studio interview with Rhodri and Liam Tooney (intern) in the build-up to the festival

The News Programme featured an interview with Rhodri, Liam and the band Town the day before the festival began.

Jason Mohammad's show ran a feature on Merthyr Rock.

The Bethan Elfyn Show also featured 2.5 hours of live broadcast from the festival on Saturday afternoon with acoustic sets from many of the emerging Welsh bands performing at the festival.

*"Well done to the Hay Festival team for bringing Merthyr Rock to Cyfartha Park. They brought together some of the biggest and most important names in Welsh music, as well as the stars of the future, to entertain an excitable crowd over a weekend where there was something for everybody to enjoy. Merthyr Rock created a buzz of excitement in a town that's so often in the headlines for the wrong reasons and we had a tremendous amount of fun broadcasting our radio show live from there."*  
**Chris Bolton, Producer, Bethan Elfyn Show**

## Broadcast Media – BBC Radio One

There were national previews of the festival on both the Daniel P. Carter and Huw Stephens shows.

The Jen Long Show took live recordings from the festival, which provided the majority of content on her show that aired on the Sunday of the festival. Jen also compered the main stage of the festival on the Sunday.



Marketing (cont.)

### Additional Broadcast Media

ITV Wales News featured the festival in a news piece on Friday 2 September.

Kerrang Radio ran a nationwide competition for festival tickets.

Nation Radio featured interviews with Rhodri Jones and The Blackout.

Wales Online featured a video interview preview with Sean Smith from The Blackout and numerous video interviews with bands over the course of the festival weekend.

BRFM and GTFM 107.9 featured live interviews with Rhodri Jones.

The Blackout's official music video for their new single 'You Are Not Alone' is made up entirely of footage from Merthyr Rock, giving the festival and Merthyr extraordinary worldwide exposure.

### Print Media

For a year-one festival Merthyr Rock received a phenomenal amount of coverage from national and regional magazines and local press including: Kerrang! (Gig of the week), Front Magazine, NME, Buzz Magazine, The Western Mail, Cardiff and South Wales Advertiser, Plugged In Magazine, Merthyr Express, Rhymney Valley Express, South Wales Argus and The South Wales Echo.

### Online Media

In addition to broadcast and print, the festival featured a great deal in online coverage. The festival featured on the front page on Walesonline.co.uk both on Saturday and Sunday of the weekend in preference to major upcoming events in the Millennium Stadium. Other websites that reviewed, previewed or featured Merthyr Rock included: 247magazine.co.uk, bbc.co.uk/blogs, bbc.co.uk/blogs/walesmusic, GQ Online, musicweek.com, News.bbc.co.uk, Newswales.co.uk, rocksound.tv, Stereoboard.com, Telegraph.co.uk, uberrock, rocksoundtv and Virgin.com.

### National Radio

18 July–12 August 2011: Total of 136 airtime spots for a 30-second Merthyr Rock advert, comprising 6 slots daily Mon-Fri, 2 slots Sat and 2 slots Sun. MPU advert on Nation Radio website.

*"In one word, Merthyr Rock was EPIC."*

**Buzz Magazine**

*"Merthyr Rock was a fantastic way to close the festival season, superbly organised and set up, we have nothing but praise for the event and hope to be gallivanting around the site next year."*

**Virgin.com**





Marketing (cont.)

### **Kerrang**

30 July issue: inside half page advert

### **The Telegraph**

Sat 30 July: Saturday Review, music pages, quarter page advert

Sat 13 August: Saturday Review, music pages, full page advert

### **Big Issue Cymru (weekly)**

18 July issue: outside back cover, full page

8 August issue: inside quarter page advert

### **Buzz Magazine**

August 2011 issue: full inside page close to editorial Merthyr Rock coverage

### **Around Town Cardiff**

August–October 2011 issue: full page advert

### **Miniature Music Press**

August 2011 issue: outside back cover

### **Poster Campaign**

Multiple poster sites across Cardiff secured by City Centre Posters. A print run of 5,000 A3 posters and 5,000 A4 posters in sites across Wales.

### **Flyers**

60,000 flyers were handed out by volunteer teams at music events across Wales, selected because they fitted the target demographic of the festival, as well as in Cardiff City Centre and Merthyr Town Centre.

### **Internal Corporate Communications**

Over 25 large organisations based in Wales, including NHS and BT, were specifically targeted by email, offering all staff members the waiver of the booking fee from the cost of their tickets.

This online marketing campaign was enthusiastically received and resulted in our Box Office team being invited into T-Mobile in Merthyr to promote the festival directly to their workforce. We also hope that these initial communications can be built upon and developed into potential corporate sponsorship.



*“Forget Glastonbury, because Cyfarthfa Park was the place to be this weekend as it played host to the very first Merthyr Rock event... Despite the heavy downpour late yesterday, social networking sites were awash with praise for the event, which was set up to showcase local talent and provide a platform to show off Wales as a venue to rival the big name festivals... Music fan Alyce Jones tweeted: “Proud to say I’m from Merthyr right now.”*

**South Wales Echo**

## The Future

We do not underestimate the fresh challenges a second year will bring to a young festival in a fiercely competitive market. However, the overwhelmingly positive response from the audience coupled with the need for such an event in the region gives us the belief that it is possible to position ourselves among the leading festivals across the UK. The successful development of this festival will be vital in the long term strategy of ensuring a successful and economically viable live music sector in Wales, as outlined in the Welsh Music Foundation’s Critical Analysis of the Live Music Industry Within Wales.

The more detailed aims for the development of the festival are to:

### **Create A Legacy For Wales**

Continue to programme a high quality music event for Wales that not only shows the best of Welsh talent, but also draws international high quality acts to the region. Merthyr Rock presents an opportunity for Wales to enhance its international reputation and simultaneously improve the well-being of its people and communities. The festival is committed to building Wales’ position as a world class destination for major events and to becoming part of the successful delivery of the 2020 Vision for Wales, developing on progress made in year one to see the economic and socio-cultural impact of the festival expand to an all-Wales level.

### **Expand Education**

To continue to engage a broad range of people in practical, valuable skills development that will build on their self-confidence, talent and well-being.



*It's gonna take some time until I realize @merthyrrock was real. Better than any fest I've been to in my 21 years on earth!*

**Enna Kay (via Twitter)**

*Still hasn't sunk in how amazing @merthyrrock was last night, roll on #mrock 2012!*

**Sean Moores (via Twitter)**

#### The Future (cont.)

Merthyr Rock will continue to provide vocational skills opportunities both independently and in partnership with a range of leading community organisations currently working within the region. The festival, alongside Welsh Government and Arts Council of Wales, is committed to investing in the clear passion and loyalty the community have for music.

#### Nurture Local Talent

The Welsh Music Foundation's Critical Analysis of the Live Music Industry Within Wales highlights that there is a tendency for skilled workers to be 'imported' from England to the detriment of Wales' skills base and opportunities. Merthyr Rock is actively seeking to change this trend, favoured by some of the more established festivals in the country, by employing and developing Wales-based talent in all departments of its execution.

#### Create Lasting Relationships

With future endorsement from the Welsh Government and Arts Council of Wales the festival undoubtedly has the promise to stand alone and become a sustainable annual event – to continue to develop links made in year one, and to further links to unlock other revenue streams and increase awareness of the festival.

Contact that has been made with international Festivals such as NXNE, SXSW and By:Larm will be developed to expand the scope of the festival internationally and make Merthyr Rock part of the international festival calendar. WOMEX 2013 in Cardiff will be another fantastic opportunity for Merthyr Rock to increase its scope and reach, as all eyes from the music world will be on South Wales. We also hope to develop on the strong links that the Hay Festival holds with the British Council to increase their spread to include Merthyr.

Merthyr Rock has also caught the attention of Live Aid promotor Harvey Goldsmith and we have a meeting scheduled in to discuss his forthcoming involvement in the festival's development.

The impressive media involvement from year one will provide a solid foundation for future development. We will strengthen BBC links made and use the footage taken to develop potential TV rights which will increase revenue along with the event profile.

Corporate relations that have been established will be developed and increased to reduce reliance on public funds and increase the sustainability of the event. Hay Festival is a good example of how an event can be funded primarily from contributions made from the private sector and ticket sales. We hope to be given the opportunity to replicate this success in Merthyr.

**Merthyr Rock Festival, September 2011**





*"To the organisers and staff of Merthyr Rock I say a very sincere well done! The organisation and execution of the event was excellent"*

**Buzz Magazine**

## Governance & Management

**Board:** Revel Guest (Chair), Rhoda Florence, Frances Copping, Samantha Maskrey, Lyndy Cooke, Peter Florence, Jesse Norman.

**Trustees:** Rosie Boycott, Revel Guest, Ed Victor, Lyndy Cooke, Caroline Michel.

### **Hay Festivals Council:**

President – Eric Hobsbawm

Vice Presidents – Corisande Albert, Justin Albert, Robert Ayling, Rosie Boycott, Nick Broomfield, Rosanna Bulmer, Terry Burns, Nick Butler, Liz Calder, Maria Sheila Cremaschi, Matthew Evans, Amelia Granger, Geordie Greig, Sabrina Guinness, Rhian-Anwen Hamill, Josephine Hart, Julia Hobsbawm, Dylan Jones, Helena Kennedy, Denise Lewis, Brenda Maddox, John Mitchinson, Ursula Owen, Hannah Rothschild, Andrew Ruhemann, Philippe Sands, Simon Schama, William Sieghart, Jon Snow, Caroline Spencer, Francine Stock and Lucy Yeomans

### **Festival Team:**

Rhodri Jones – Director

Sophie Lording – Producer

Paul Elkington – Technical Director

Fred Wright – Site Manager

Jo Rodell-Jones – Site Producer & Artist Management

Maggie Robertson – Artist Management

Siobhan Maguire – Intern Manager & Artist Management

Jesse Ingham – Editor & Artist Management

Finn Beales – Web Design & Photographer

Andy Fryers – GreenPrint & Merchandise

Hannah Lort-Phillips – Press

John Rostron – Press

Penny Compton – Box Office

Andy Davies – Box Office

Mike Barker – Accounts

Pete Hurley – Blogger

Ashley Maugham – Intern Team

Steve Maugham – Intern Team

Alexia Tucker – Intern Team

Emily Murray – Intern Team

Hannah Durham – Intern Team

Liam Toomey – Intern Team

Henry Stephens – Intern Team

Mark Jones – Intern Team

Rhys Mitchell – Intern Team

Lindsey Williams – Intern Team

### **Event Liaison Team:**

Richard Marsh – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Rob Gough – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Melanie Haman – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Lyndon Williams – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Steve Lewis – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Llewellyn Patrick – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Melissa Clee – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Stuart Spragg – Merthyr Tydfil Police

Keith Prosser – Merthyr Tydfil Police

Claire Hallet – Merthyr Tydfil Police

Don Freeman – Merthyr Tydfil Fire Service

**Advisors:** Glyn Mills, Julian Gardner, Martin Williams



Photo: madebyfinn.com

## Feedback

"It was a privilege to attend the Hay Merthyr Rock Festival. Merthyr has a wonderful musical heritage though primarily through the great tradition of Welsh choirs. It is important that we update that heritage by connecting with the exciting Welsh rock and pop scene and its emerging bands and singers.

"The Hay Festival initiative offered an excellent venue and opportunity for this emerging Welsh talent. Set in Cyfarthfa Park, the rock festival acted as a showcase for Merthyr, bringing in thousands who had not previously been to the town. In this kind of a post-industrial economy, the Merthyr Borough Council is emphasising leisure and heritage development. The Hay Festival's Merthyr Rock with, I hope, other Hay Festival events and projects will reinforce efforts to develop the borough's heritage and leisure economy."

**Lord Ted Rowlands**  
MP for Merthyr and Rhymney

"The link between CLIC and Merthyr Rock has been invaluable. Merthyr Rock deserves to grow in stature and we are certainly willing to help."

**Marco Gil-Cervantes**  
Chief Executive ProMo-Cymru

Credit is due for all the guys involved in @merthyrrock, pulled off a fantastic festival. Look forward to it growing in the future.

**Seanna Natalie Fatki (via Twitter)**

"It will get bigger and bigger over the years... it's a great fixture on the Welsh music calendar."

**Jen Long**  
BBC Radio 1

"I was thrilled to attend the 2011 Merthyr Rock event, not only did it bring generations of people together, it gave the youth of Merthyr Tydfil a positive event to look forward too, bringing people into Merthyr Tydfil who perhaps would never have visited our wonderful town before. The event organisation was fabulous from the staging, security through to the merchandise and others vendors. What a wonderful event and I can't wait to attend next year! My thanks to all of the team."

**Cllr Lisa Mytton**  
**Councillor and Deputy Mayor at Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council**

"My brain is still humming from @merthyrrock #mrock literally one the best days ever for welsh music. Stand Up Tall"

**The Guns (via Twitter)**

"@merthyrrock has made some very big waves! It's great to see such an awesome festival right here on our doorstep! Well done guys n girls :)"

**Digital Inferno (via Twitter)**

"Fantastic well organised festival with a consistantly superb line up. Same time next year guys?"

**Amped Wales**

"Rather gutted that @merthyrrock is over. One of the best weekends in ages and we were proud to be part of Welsh music last night."

**The Dead Beggars (via Twitter)**

"Yesterday was our busiest ever day for hits on SWS, largely thanks to our @merthyrrock coverage."

**South Wales Sounds (via Twitter)**

"Merthyr Rock was sweet. Mud covered, anthem screaming, fist pumping good."

**Howard Dyer (via Twitter)**

"Merthyr Rock was a fantastic event for the Borough. The rock festival scene had arrived at Cyfarthfa Park. I walked the area on the Saturday and spoke to many young and old people who were full of praise for the event, not just for the content with over 30 acts but also for the excellent organisation delivered by all agencies – including the Hay Committee, Council, Police and vendors – working in partnership to deliver a trouble free event. This was a perfect example of how such an event should be organised.

"Many were already asking for a repeat next year and pledging to certainly return along with friends who had missed out. The event has shown how progressive the Borough is in its thinking by hosting Merthyr Rock, and, judging by the comments on the Internet, has put the Borough on the international rock festival stage. This event has provided a huge boost to the economic activity of Merthyr bringing important financial investment and spin off for local traders.

The Council looks forward very much to welcoming the event next year which I am sure will be bigger and better – if that is possible!!!"

**Cllr Paul Brown**  
**Mayor of County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil**

"Please accept my sincere gratitude to Sophie Lording, Rhodri Jones and your team for their hard work and commitment in delivering a first class event for the communities of Merthyr Tydfil and within the South Wales region.

"The council hopes that Merthyr Rock can establish itself as one of the best rock festivals within the UK. The true benefit to the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil for having an annual event would not only be based on the local economy, but a more positive image, together with tourist opportunities."

**Robert Gough**  
**Head of Local Resilience Unit,**  
**Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council**



## Feedback (cont.)

"Top-notch music wasn't all this small but perfectly formed festival had to offer – Onsite Workshops, Masterclasses and Jam Sessions were put on throughout the day... I am personally already eager to find out what Merthyr Rock 2012 will have to offer,"

**Sophie Eggleton**  
**Culture Compass**

"The Blackout played a set, which has been described as "the best in their career" which I, myself would agree with. The town of Merthyr Tydfil came out to rock and showed how proud they are of their home town,"

**Sam Panasuik**  
**Sonic Shocks**

"It was so good to see something so positive happening in our town!! This defo puts Merthyr on the map now!! Brilliant weekend thankyou!!!! :D xx"

**Rea Hughes**

"I was there and had the best time of my life."

**Rightnow Jengis**

"Loved, Loved, Loved itttt!!!! Although standing up for 10 hours straight really took it's tol on me lol! I really hope there is a next year :D"

**Rhiannon McCarthy**

"Big, big respect for the organisers of Merthyr Rock – it was totally awesome. Even the mud was awesome ! ;- ) Hopefully you were able to cover costs (and more) and would therefore be in a position to host another grand session next year !!! I went on my own (sad git with no friends) but loved every minute. And all you Merthyr Rockers are a friendly bunch. The amount of musical talent coming from South Wales is astounding. Events such as this just help demonstrate what a honeypot of musical high jinx South Wales is."

**Rob Beavan**

"I stood for over 15 hours at Merthyr Rock yesterday and it was worth every second! Oh and thank you to the man who gave me a can of monster in the queue :D"

**Lauren Thomas**

"So I'm skint and every limb hurts... but it was fricken epic!! So worth 20 quid, please do it next year:3"

**Chloe Worth**

"Cheers for a great weekend merthyr rock you better get a landing pad next year because I'm coming by Newport Helicopter"

**Jack Brimble**

"My ears are still ringing from Merthyr Rock on Sunday, had a great weekend!"

**Jess Oldland**

"Awesome festival. All ready planning to go again next year."

**Gary Mills**

"Badass. Definitely going next year if it's on. Boss of a festival."

**Amy Williams**

"What an amazing day/night :D Defo going again next year ♥ The blackout was amazing glad to say they from my hometown ♥ :D"

**Lauren Nicole Jones**

"Had an amazing time only drawback is having to wait another year for the next one lol Merthyr defiantly Rocked xx"

**Bethan Elizabeth Carlson**

"Had a great time! :) Hope to go again!"

**Louise Jane**

"That was amazing turnout for a first time festival! hope it happens again next year."

**Adam Phillips**

"Fair play guys!! Amazing weekend, amazing atmosphere, great bands and a pleasure to work with :) Can't wait for next year."

**Simon Ogston**

"Alright guys! Cracking weekend, definitely a great 1st event and I look forward to attending future festivals"

**Aron Stenning (via Facebook)**