

Welsh Language music championed by Government

Funding has been awarded to PYST Cyfyngedig – a digital distribution and label promotion service for labels and artists in Wales – to aid the much needed growth of its digital distribution service, the first of its kind to be based in Wales and able to tailor services specifically for the Welsh Language music industry.

The financial backing will also allow for a bespoke service that will be able to drive the promotion of Welsh language music through appropriate and popular channels to increase awareness and number of streams.

In addition the money will create the role of the first ever booking agent for Wales. This role will fill a gap in representing artists to secure more gigs around the country and beyond. It is hoped the role can trigger the creation of a Welsh touring circuit and encourage growth in the number of promoters and venues in Wales.

Minister for Culture Tourism and Sport, Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

“The Welsh music scene is growing quickly and it’s important that we as a Government react and seek to foster that.

“With this partnership we are taking steps to ensure Welsh language music is easily accessible and promoted well on all digital platforms. We hope this move will increase the awareness and popularity of Welsh language artists.

“The foundations for a thriving music industry are in place and it’s a real privilege to be able to encourage that in any way possible.”

Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, Eluned Morgan, said:

“Dydd Miwsig Cymru has shown that there is interest in and an enthusiasm for Welsh language music in Wales, the UK and internationally. Music is an ideal way to introduce people to the language in a social setting and to show that Welsh is a language that is alive and thriving.

I am delighted that PYST will build on the success of Dydd Miwsig Cymru and make Welsh language music more accessible all year round. Our efforts here will also help to fulfill the target of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050.”

Co-founder of PYST, Alun Llwyd, said:

“Our aim is to create a structure that reflects the vibrancy and energy of the Welsh language music scene and carves a route to develop growth so that labels and artists not only achieve greater success but multiply in numbers for the future.

“Following the initial work undertaken by PYST, 2018 has seen Welsh language music pass a million streams on digital service providers which is huge for a minority language – and Welsh labels will now be able to exploit that initial success on a national scale.”

Gruffydd Wyn Owen, founder of Libertino Records, said:

“The growth of PYST as an all-encompassing support service for Welsh labels and artists will for the first time see a coherent outward looking vision to bring Welsh music not only to a bigger UK stage but also a global stage.”

Yws Gwynedd, manager of Recordiau Côsh, said:

“The establishment of PYST as a bespoke digital distribution and promotion service based in Wales is a huge and vital step towards the professionalisation of our contemporary music landscape in Wales.”

75% of Wales’ fastest growing businesses supported by Welsh Government

The Fast Growth 50 list, which has been published every year since 1999 and is compiled by Professor Dylan Jones-Evans OBE, celebrates the fastest growing businesses in Wales. Since 1999 over 600 firms are estimated to have generated £20bn of turnover annually, creating 40,000 jobs.

Of this year’s Fast Growth 50, 38 companies were supported by the Welsh Government’s Business Wales support programme which is jointly funded by the European Regional Development Fund and Welsh Government.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“I’ve long been clear that if we as a Government are to encourage businesses to start, grow and prosper, we first have to ensure entrepreneurs and SMEs have access to the information, advice and support they need to achieve success. That’s not always about competing for grants or loans, indeed for many, expert support on business plans, marketing or international markets is much more valuable.

“The support network in Wales is unrecognisable from that of only a few years ago. Through the different types of support offered by Business Wales, the Development Bank of Wales and partners including Colleges and Universities, Wales really is a fantastic place to successfully grow a business, as the wide range of businesses from all over Wales on the FG50 list have demonstrated.

“Business Wales has supported 24,500 individual entrepreneurs and businesses since the start of the current programme in April 2015. Between them, these businesses have created over 12,000 new jobs and raised £210m in investment. I hope to see the package of support available through Business Wales continue to have a positive impact on established, fledging and potential future businesses as we tackle the challenges of tomorrow together.”

Fast Growth 50 winning companies that have received support from Business Wales include:

ALS Managed Services, who won Fastest Growing Firm in Wales, along with two other awards joined the Business Wales Accelerated Growth programme in 2017. They offer managed services and recruitment solutions for waste and recycling companies, specialist recruitment and added value services for a growing client base across the UK. Business Wales provided support in identifying a new property to enable business continuity and the platform for growth in new offices. Their dedicated Business Wales adviser also provided advice on recruitment, leadership and management development.

Another FG50 success story, Business Wales Accelerated Growth programme client, Pontypridd based Laserwire Solutions joined the programme in 2015. They manufacture a complete range of off-the shelf and tailored laser wire stripping machines for tech cables and wires. Business Wales has supported Laserwire with advice on raising finance, market research, recruitment and HR, IT systems, Intellectual Property, marketing and PR.

Business Wales Accelerated Growth programme client Nutrivend also joined the programme in 2015. It is the fastest growing distributor of sports nutrition vending services to gyms, universities and leisure centre across the UK and have received Business Wales support on PR, strategy, sales and marketing.

[£25m investment in future of #OurValleys](#)

Last month, Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford announced £25m of capital investment in the draft Budget to create seven strategic hubs across the South Wales Valleys, in line with the priorities of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys, which Alun Davies chairs.

The taskforce's plan Our Valleys, Our Future, included seven strategic hubs for the Valleys – areas of focused public sector investment, which aim to attract private sector investment, creating jobs and opportunities within the Valleys.

The seven areas identified as strategic hubs are accessible within 45 minutes to most people living within Valley communities by public transport. These are Northern Bridgend, Ebbw Vale, Cwmbran, Merthyr, Pontypridd, Caerphilly, and Neath.

Mr Davies said:

“We've been working hard with our local partners, including local government, to identify schemes which will stimulate local economies if supported in the right way. This announcement will enable us to take forward those projects that we believe have the best chance of achieving our aims.”

The funding will be delivered through a strategic hubs grant fund, which will enable local authorities and third sector organisations to bid for capital funding to develop projects in their areas in line with the taskforce's priorities, as set out in Our Valleys, Our Future. The scheme will support projects which will create fair and high-quality jobs, enhance skills and support entrepreneurship. The ultimate aim is to create long-term sustainable economic prosperity in the South Wales Valleys and transform places.

The criteria for the fund will ensure investment is made which adds value, develops collaboration across public, private and third sectors to target investment in the strategic hub areas and strengthen the impact of other Welsh Government investment.

[Economy and Transport Secretary](#)

appoints Members of the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales

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Welsh Government established the NICW to support independent, better informed advice on a longer-term strategy for infrastructure investment, which enshrines the goals and principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

It has been established as a non-statutory, advisory body to provide advice and recommendations to the Welsh Ministers on the economic and environmental infrastructure needs of Wales over five to thirty years. The Commission will also consider the interactions of these needs with ‘social infrastructure’, such as schools, hospitals and housing.

Economy and Transport Secretary Ken Skates said:

“The calibre of candidates who came forward for this role through the public appointments process was high and I want to thank all those who took the time to express their interest

“I’m delighted to appoint a group of Commissioners with such expertise and experience. I look forward to receiving their advice and am convinced they will make a major contribution to Wales’ well-being through improved infrastructure.”

Economy and Transport Secretary Ken Skates had already appointed Mr John Lloyd Jones OBE, FRAGS, Hon FLI to the Chair of the Commission.

Mr Lloyd Jones said:

“I’m privileged to lead such a talented and capable group of commissioners. Our first meeting will be an opportunity to introduce ourselves to each other. After this, we look forward to making a substantial contribution to Wales’ long-term infrastructure development.”

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