

LARS Music of the Night at Machynys

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Review by Robert Lloyd (Media Consultant)

Loud Applause Rising Stars 'Music of the Night' at Machynys Golf Club, featuring host Mark Llewellyn Evans and Rising Stars Keely Morgan, Thomas Bytheway, Callum Rhys Williams, Jordan Williams and Callum Howells

Tears of laughter, tears of remembrance . . . this was a night when emotional heartstrings were played in perfect harmony. The Loud Applause Rising Stars charity 'Music of the Night' event at Machynys didn't necessarily set out to have the audience reaching for their hankies, but the power of the music and the singing made it so. It was an evening when the featured artistes were the members of the Loud Applause Rising Stars stable of young up-and-coming performers. But host Mark Llewellyn Evans is such a wonderful performer that he couldn't help but steal a sizeable chunk of the show.

His rendition of Tell My Father from the Civil War musical was timed as his tribute to the World War One Somme battle centenary. Mark's version of the song has already raised an estimated £250,000 for The Welsh Guards Afghanistan Appeal fund. Check it out on YouTube. The start features a Llanelli World War One veteran with haunting eyes. It should come with a 'tears' warning. Carmarthen-born Mark was a generous host for what was an intimate evening at Machynys, designed to showcase young talent and raise funds for the Friends of Loud Applause Rising Stars charity.

Cerith Owens, chairman and director of Loud Applause Rising Stars, said in his welcome speech: "We are entering uncertain times – funding for the arts might take a hit. Cuts in funding could result in less opportunities for up and coming performers. Organisations like Loud Applause Rising Stars will become important in providing mentoring and staging experience along with raising the profile of young up-and-coming singers."



Mark Evans echoed Cerith's remarks when he urged all the singers taking part to "aim high and follow your dreams". The baritone set the benchmark for a quality evening with Summertime from Gershwin's Porgy and Bess. Swansea teenager Keely Morgan made a sparkling entrance with Dat's Love from the musical Carmen Jones.

Ysgol y Strade Llanelli pupil Thomas Bytheway made the first touch on feelings of remembrance with his Empty Chairs from Les Miserables. This was followed by another Les Mis classic, Stars performed by St John Lloyd pupil Callum Rhys Williams. Mark Evans provided interludes with a whole host of comical anecdotes and an inspiring medley from Rodgers and Hammerstein – Oh what a beautiful Morning and Some Enchanted Evening.

Treorchy Comprehensive pupil Callum Howells already has his sights set on a career in musical theatre and added a big slice of drama to the evening with Not A Day Goes By from the [Stephen Sondheim](#) musical [The Story So Far](#). Thomas Bytheway closed the first half with a stirring version of Anthem from Chess.

The interval saw a special presentation to Loud Applause Rising Stars trustee Susan Roberts and a special chorus of Happy Birthday to Lindsey Shanahan, led by Mark Evans. Jordan Williams continued the theme of celebrations by wishing his grandparents Ian and Gill Williams a happy Golden Wedding Anniversary by singing the Elvis Presley classic Love Me Tender.

Callum Howells was back at his dramatic best for You'll Be Back, a thriller from the Hamilton, the Broadway musical. Mark Evans then took us Somewhere Over The Rainbow before producing the tear-jerking Tell My Father.

Callum Rhys Williams enjoyed taking centre stage once again with This Is The Moment from Jekyll and Hyde, before we all moved back again into the Music of the Night theme. The first of the Phantom of the Opera favourites was Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again sung by Keely Morgan.

Jordan Williams produced an emotional Music of the Night before Mark and Keely duetted on a show-stopping All I Ask Of You. As an encore, the artistes moved in from all four corners of the room to perform You'll Never Walk Alone from Carousel.

There wasn't a dry eye in the house

The splendid accompanists for the evening were Andrew Pike and Rhiannon Williams Hale.

