

Project Ffilmiau Cyfoes Cymraeg 2006

Contemporary Welsh Films Project 2006

(Project title)



Final Report

Name: Festival Director, Mark Woods (Instructor/Project Leader)

School: Ysgol Diwydiannau Creadigol a Diwylliannol Caerdydd /
The Cardiff School of Creative and Cultural Industries

Administration: Peter Robertson, Dean
Professor Steve Blandford, Associate Dean

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[Pictured above: Mark Woods, Instructor / Project Leader and Winner of the Learning and Teaching Innovation Grant – 2005/06]

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Project Description:

- March 2006 Month-Long, Welsh Retrospective Film Festival
- BBC Wales Interactive Web Page Launch
- E-Learning Documentary Film, Working title: '*Darluniad y Diwydiant*' '*Portrait of an Industry*'
- Graduate Film Business & Film Marketing Workshop
- Co-sponsored by Screen Academy Wales & Actors Equity UK (Cardiff), BBC Wales, S4C TV, and the National Screen & Sound Archive.

Project Duration:

Sept. 2005 – April 2006



Learning Outcomes:

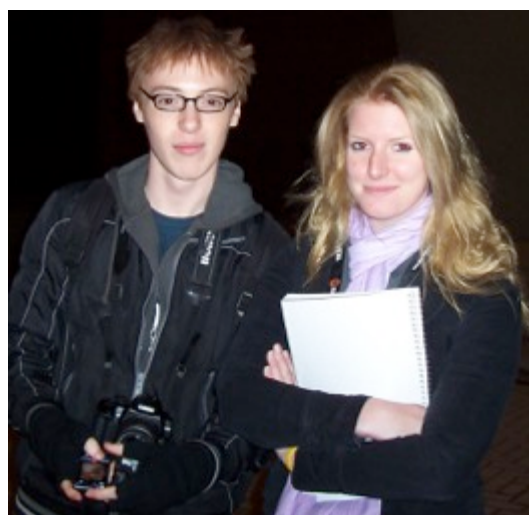
Students are challenged to study and analyze the organization and working of a film festival, and the socio-economic and cultural implications of the phenomenon of film festivals, as a function of film product valuation (both academic and industrial), exhibition, marketing and distribution. Following this orientation, students organize and executive a film festival.

Basic text: *The Film Festival Guide*, by Adam Langer. Chicago Review Press, 2000.

Basic text: *The Ultimate Film Festival Survival Guide*, by Chris Gore. ifilm Publishing 1999.

Utilizing the production of an actual film festival as the site of learning constitutes an alternative pedagogical approach. Generally, students from every discipline benefit from skill sets acquired during the actual process of organizing and running a film festival.

Students from the specifically addressed disciplines benefit from practical, 'hands-on' experience, that is, relative to the individual student's field of study, e.g., law students learn about copyright law as they directly engage broadcasters, trade unions and talent agencies; business students create a budget, raise operating capital, and administer purchasing, accounting, and inventory; technology students access the needs particular to the location of the special events, and design and install digital/electronic systems as required, and so on.





Additionally, students are afforded various indirect skills and opportunities to learn, as they meet with accomplished celebrities and scholars in the film and television industry, and develop invaluable personable contacts, face-to-face ‘brushes with their heroes’, and a ready network of industry contacts. The not-so-subliminal message blasted into our students’ psyches went something like this: “If ‘so-and-so’ was born/bred/educated/trained in Wales and has become a famous-and-successful player in the new media, film and television industry, then why shouldn’t I have a similar vision for my life and for my career?”

This is an innovative, student-created event. The purpose of the event is to raise awareness of significant contributors to the body of Welsh films produced, primarily for television, over the past 30 years. The project provides a scholarly forum to celebrate and analyze the work of these media artists, and its impact on the life of contemporary Wales.

[Pictured below: Instructor and Project Leader Mark Woods opens the Masters Class Film Academy events.]



Students benefit from observing how film scholars contribute to a ‘film culture’ which in turn values and elevates the visibility, both academic and commercial, of film genres. Various materials and images from this project have been reproduced in the pages of related University of Glamorgan, BBC Wales and S4C web sites, as well as eventually intended to be reproduced in the documentary film, with the working title: *Darluniad y Dwyniant / Portrait of an Industry*.

The film industry has a historically 'glamorous' cachet, which by means of this project is localized and realized to the direct learning benefits of the participating students, and to their enhanced CVs. The reputation and prestige of the University benefits from the high-profile nature of this project, and gives the students an enhanced sense of participation in both their careers and in collegiate life, to the benefit of everyone.

The interplay of intellectual property production, and its scholarly analysis and commercial promotion, allows students to observe the marketing lifecycle of copyrighted-entertainment-products, and directly stimulates their imagination and initiative, as they create a new venue for exhibiting the very films they are studying. This brings 'to life' the subject of film studies and permits the students a rare insight into the macro-management of the creative industries. Related discussions of



merchandising, audience reception, market-line extension, etc. spontaneously occur as students 'discover' the process of event management, film marketing and distribution, and 'real-time' entrepreneurial innovation.

One disadvantage about this alternative approach to learning was that students were keen to abandon their normal studies, and had to be discouraged from

neglecting regular studies, so intense was their sense of purpose, self-determinism and adventure engendered by the impetus of this project. In other words, students were 'thrilled' to volunteer, and constantly percolating with new ideas to overcome limitations caused by limited budgets, technical difficulties, etc. (If they had been anymore excited, we'd have had to beat them off with a stick.)



Targeted awards

Undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students, from all five faculties of the University of Glamorgan, participated in the project, including students from a broad range of award programmes. It should be noted that the educational and entertainment impact extended throughout metropolitan Cardiff and the Rhondda-Cynon-Taff Valleys, as the students developed a system of ancillary support among alumni, faculty, and family of staff and community members, which they called

‘Friends of the Festival.’ Accordingly, this ancillary support system engaged younger students from secondary, grammar, and Welsh medium schools throughout South Wales.

Objectives

The objectives of this project were, in a ‘nutshell’:

- 1) Students and Faculty participated in four highly-publicized, early evening, on-campus events screening eight recent and significant Welsh filmic products, while showcasing live interviews / scholarly panels / question-and-answer forums, with featured, prominent Welsh film directors, producers and casts. (Evening Format: Networking reception, Web page Launch, Film screening, Film Scholar panel).



- 2) Each evening also introduced and celebrated a new set (related to the featured filmmakers) of bilingual, interactive ‘e-Learning’ web pages to be produced and platformed by BBC Wales ‘Cymru’r Byd.’ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cymru/>

- 3) Animation and Graphic Design students collaborated with Business students to create stunning presentation graphics and advertising display and print /online graphics. The Business students also cooperated with the Creative Writing and Marketing students, as they created strategies and materials for Advertising and Promotional/Public Relations campaigns, which they then financed and executed.
- 4) University of Glamorgan students in modules across the involved disciplines participated in six evening workshops, led by industry specialists from within the faculties and local industries, responding to pre-designed essay questions, (subject to individual Module Leader/Lecturer’s participation) which integrated this learning experience into their module curriculum.





Students had diversified and rotating opportunities at each event:

- a) to meet and to network with the media celebrities, i.e., ‘career role models’ in an informal reception;
- b) to observe their module instructors interviewing the media celebrities in panels considering historical/technical/theoretical questions;
- c) to ask specific inquiries of each media celebrity in a formal question-and-answer format;
- d) to become acquainted with the related on-line web site intended for further study.
- e) time-allocation and management skills were discussed and demonstrated to the students at workshops. During the special events, students were challenged to balance their designated ‘work responsibilities, i.e., running the festival, with active participation in the festival itself as audience members and hosts.

[Pictured right: Opening Night Gala brings excitement backstage as Film Studies Lecturer Mark Woods greets University of Glamorgan Pro Vice Chancellor Professor David Halton along with project co-host Clive Myer, Director of the Film Academy.]



- 5) These gala, faculty-guided and student-run events were videotaped. The videotapes are currently being edited and converted into a DVD 'documentary film' series, intended as a new audiovisual product to supplement teaching of 'Welsh Media Education' throughout Wales. This series will be made available to educators throughout Wales via curriculum portals including 'Wales on the Web' Film Studies, http://www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk/4-0-0-0_learning_country/4-3-0-0_curric/4-3-1-0_film_studies.htm and on the Media Ed Website (<http://www.mediaed.org.uk>) which has downloadable resources for film and media teachers and which is funded by the BFI.
- 6) Original copies of the documentary video/DVD series will be archived for future research students.
- 7) It is intended that each videotaped/DVD recording of the events will be digitally encapsulated and launched as 'streaming video' available on-line on the Wales 'Cymru a'r Byd' platform.
- 8) On-line student-modulated *Blogs* featured on the various online networks paralleled each event, incorporating a transcription of the events, and permitting a conversation with the on-line community, acting as an interactive educational reinforcement of the presented subjects.



[Pictured above: Third Year Film & Media Studies students held key leadership roles in the management of the event, including technical and hospitality posts.]

Executive Summary: Forty-seven undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate students from all five faculties, participated in six evening, two-hour workshops during the months January and February 2006. These workshops were jointly taught/moderated by faculty from the School of Computing, Glamorgan Business School, The Film Academy, Arts & Media, The Law School, with special assistance from the University Marketing Department and the Welsh Studies Department.

Students on the workshop course attended two lectures regarding:

‘the history, role and function of film festivals, as an integral player in marketing of filmic copy-righted entertainments products, and the valuation and distribution of these products, along with the promotion and merchandising of related goods and services.’

The remainder of the workshops focused on the practical business of running a film festival. Students were divided into committees and assumed assignments related to the execution of the film festival. The energy and enthusiasm of the student was high, and Heather Skinner and Lisa Derrick of the Business School led two sessions where the students outlined their creative projects. After brainstorming sessions led by Heather and Lisa, the students listed and delegated innovative ways to overcome their most constraining obstacles: time and money.

Informal Curriculum Benefits: By far, the most tangible advantage of this ‘hands-on’ project was, its ability to invigorate and involve EVERY division of almost EVERY faculty across the entire University. The students marveled at the integrated workings of their project as it expanded and grew, and this gave them practical observations and opportunities at problem solving. Students who had completed the University course in Project Management ‘*Prince2*’ offered by the Commercial Services Office were especially helpful in developing schemes for managing the ‘Big Picture’ which toward opening night, became as chaotic and dazzling as an oil painting by Wassily Kandinsky; for example:

- 1) Law students consulted with their lecturers and devised various legal forms needed for the festival, including model releases, internet intellectual property agreements, and exhibition contracts.
- 2) Marketing students and Creative Writing students created advertisements and press releases.
- 3) Marketing students then met with Graphic Design, Animation, and IT Specialists from the School of Computing, and with the guidance of Dr. Geneen Stubbs and Dr. Daniel Cunliffe created web pages and flash animation banners to place on corresponding websites, to promote the event. These students also created presentation graphics and titles for projection during the event.
- 4) Professor Hugh Coombs gave added guidance and advice to students developing the budget and setting up the operating Box office.
- 5) Professor Hugh’s students devised an on-line, automated reservation response system / email service, and ticket-tracking mechanism.
- 6) Sarah Gilbert and Alexandra Harden met with students and advised them on setting up a publicity campaign according to University guidelines.
- 7) Non Stevens gave special advice for working with Welsh Medium Schools.
- 8) Cyril Jones helped students to translate the Welsh language liner notes and actor biographies for the event souvenir programmes.
- 9) Rob Campbell and Diana Brand met with Marketing students and Business students, to develop a story for the Journalism classes.



- 10) Another team of Film, Photography, and Drama Performance students met with Daryl Perrins, Sara Jolly, and Mary Trainer to plan their event shooting schedules and logistics.
- 11) Students from Criminology and the Care Sciences developed event First Aid plans, along with crowd control emergency exit plans, and Health and Safety guidelines for electrical technicians.
- 12) The Hospitality and Tourism students developed plans for the events location, catering for the 'wine and cheese' receptions, and seating plans. Joanne Philips worked directly with the students to plan this phase.
- 13) Stephen Johnson and Diana Brand met with students and arranged both studio-recorded and 'on-air' interviews with visiting celebrities and festival organizers, in conjunction with GTFM.
- 14) The Hospitality and Tourism students met with Accommodation services and developed a plan for accompanying and transporting arriving celebrities, overnight housing for the celebrities and their entourages, a 'Green Room' for off-stage dressing and relaxation, and a list of families who provided guest housing and meals to various scholars and film industry visitors.
- 15) The Hospitality and Tourism students worked with Karina Haake of the Film Academy to design a stage and set, and to decorate the lobby and auditorium for the event. They worked with sound technicians and lighting technicians, who received advice from Dr. Akram Hammoudeh and his electrical engineering students. These students participated in the event by assisting with the sound system recordings and amplification.

Costs of project:

Internal expenses:

Number of staff days = 24 days @ £220 per day	5,380.
Film Transfer 35mm to DVD (S4C TV)	330.
Celebrity 'honorary' fees (Union)	200.
Conference and Hospitality:	210.
Travel, additional staff, and translation services:	3,871.
Internal expense subtotal:	<u>£10,000.</u>

External expenses:

Archival research, information search,	
Systems development and multi-media support	2,000.
Film Transfer 35mm to DVD (BBC Wales)	3,400.
Film Transfer 35mm to DVD (S4C Archive)	3,600.
Actors' expenses:	400.
Celebrity & Agents' 'honorary' fees (non-Union):	600.
Florist and Printing:	3,000.
Misc. Meals and Travel:	2,000.
External expense subtotal:	<u>£15,000.</u>

Total Cost of Project **£25,000.**

Income:

Learning & Teaching Grant:	10,000.
In Kind Subsidy BBC Wales:	2,500.
In Kind Subsidy S4C TV:	3,000.
In Kind Subsidy Actors Equity:	3,000.
In Kind Subsidy National Archive	800.
Celebrity 'honorary' fees 'waived'	600.
Cash wholesale discount ASDA	50.
Cash wholesale discount TESCO	50.
Donated Florist and Printing:	3,000.
Donated Misc. Meals and Travel:	2,000.

Total Income of Project **£25,000.**

Conclusions: The box office statistics are not bad, considering this was an event which was organized and executed by novice student committees in a brief 4-month period, managed by inexperienced students, without an operational or promotional budget: 267 people attended screenings during four nights of festival events. 42 students and 5 former students, along with 18 faculty/staff members were directly involved in the teaching and direction of the event. 19 ‘major player’ celebrities participated in the scholars’ panels and interviews; news of the event was carried in 3 newspapers, in over 50 web sites, 13 blogs, and on 3 radio stations. ‘Live’ celebrity interviews were broadcast during an entire month on GTFM Radio; and 3 participating students were offered and secured summer employment in the film industry, directly from introductions made during the event with industry enterprise partners.

Measuring the learning outcomes of this project remains very subjective, by nature of the project itself. Most of the feedback is anecdotal, but it was overwhelmingly positive. It has been observed that the students acquired numerous new skill sets, and clearly enjoyed doing so. It was the consensus of the students, audience and staff that this was a worthwhile and rich educational experience.

Numerous students and community members have offered to participate should this become a recurring annual event under the auspices of the new CCI faculty. Because of various difficulties related to acquiring films, cooperating with other established campus events, and scheduling celebrity appearances, it was suggested that project be transformed into a joint 10 month retrospective film festival and scholars’ forum and roundtable speaker series, holding once-a-month events. Another suggestion would be to showcase student films, in preparation for their eventual screening at the Ffresh Student Film Festival, and at other festivals.

Additional event programming might be expanded, by cooperating with the Cardiff Screen Festival. Funding was promised via two different sources related to the now defunct Sgrin Film Agency, and that funding might be revived via Education and Exhibition Funds of the new Film Agency for Wales. Other ideas to expand the program include collaboration with Cardiff University, UWIC, and the University of Wales at Swansea and Newport, to leverage resources and maximise attendance.

Finally, inviting cooperation with the Black Welsh Film Festival, W.O.W. Film Festival and others could create a coordinated ‘slate’ of film screening events, which would assist in raising the university and faculty’s (CCI) profile, while nurturing a returning festival audience in South Wales. It is imagined that this type of project might be the template for future projects, which could be launched in Cardiff during the inaugural year at the new Cardiff campus.

Acknowledgements: I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the faculty, administration, and staff who unquestioningly and unselfishly gave of themselves and their time to this project, and to the students who made it happen, and to my family and my partner for encouraging me, to all our generous sponsors, and especially to the Learning and Teaching Office for their support in funding the Lion’s share of this project.