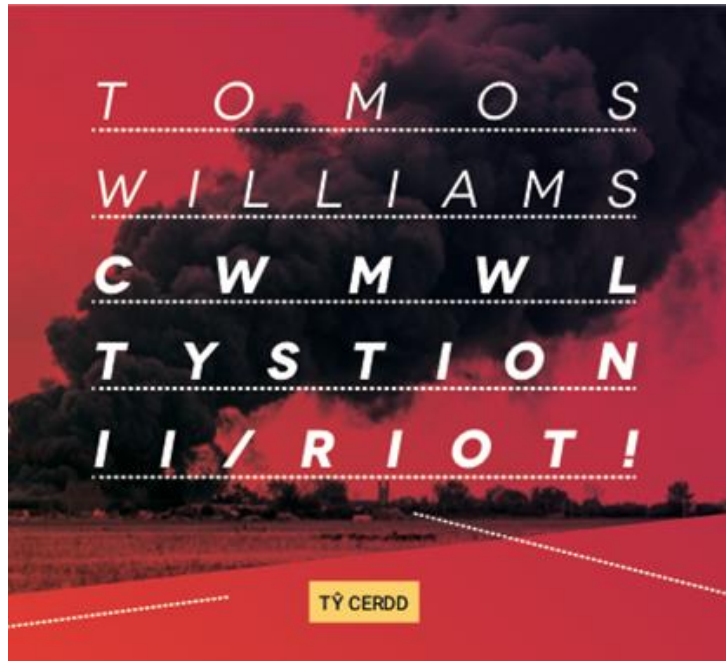


**TOMOS WILLIAMS**

## **Cwmwl Tystion II / Riot!**



Tŷ Cerdd Records (TCR043)

**Release Date: Friday 13 October 2023**

**Listen here:** <https://promo.theorchard.com/7BZDVSdcLs2n1SpoNAJ0>

(with the single '**Cardiff Race Riots 1919**' out on Friday 6 October)

***Cwmwl Tystion II / Riot!*** is the second iteration of trumpeter and composer Tomos Williams's Welsh jazz project dealing with Welsh culture and history. Focusing on specific riots in Welsh history, the *Riot! Suite* also draws attention to racial injustice in Welsh history and questions ideas of Welsh identity.

The hand-picked band consists of two giants of the UK jazz scene; Soweto Kinch (saxes, spoken word) and Orphy Robinson (vibes, effects), alongside young Welsh vocalist Eädyth Crawford, and two of Tomos's long-term collaborators, the rhythm section of Aidan Thorne (bass) and Mark O'Connor (drums).

The formation of the *Cwmwl Tystion II / Riot!* band and the composition of the music emerged as a result of the success of Williams's first *Cwmwl Tystion / Witness* project in 2019. That band consisted solely of Welsh musicians, whereas with this iteration Williams wanted to open the band out to include masters from the UK jazz scene as well as including a Welsh-language vocalist in the mix.

The title ***Cwmwl Tystion***, although Biblical in its source, is derived in this instance from a poem by

the Welsh poet, pacifist and nationalist Waldo Williams (1904-1971) called '**Pa Beth yw Dyn?**' (**What is Man?**), in which he confronts the existential issues of his time. *Cwmwl Tystion* has now become the Welsh-language moniker for this on-going project.

The composition **Riot! Suite** includes fierce soloing, deep grooves, spoken word, free improvisation and a Welsh hymn, alongside moments of vocal tenderness, beginning and ending with an *a cappella* rendition of the Welsh folk song 'Aderyn du' (Black bird). The music refers to the Merthyr Rising of 1831 and the Tonypany Riots of 1910, as well as the Cardiff Race Riots of 1919. The *Suite* ends with a tribute to Mahmood Mattan, the last man hanged in Wales, in 1952, for a crime that he didn't commit (more background on all these events appears in the CD booklet).

The **Riot! Suite** was nominated for an [Ivors Academy Award](#) in the jazz ensemble category in 2022 and is deeply influenced and inspired by the music of Wadada Leo Smith, John Zorn, Don Cherry and Matana Roberts's magnificent *Coin Coin* series.

Tomos Williams says: "Following the success of *Cwmwl Tystion / Witness* in 2019 it dawned on me that the core 'Cwmwl Tystion' concept could be developed for a different set of musicians. During lockdown I spent time thinking about the musicians I would most like to work with who also have a political leaning, or an extra layer of meaning to their music. Orphy Robinson and Soweto Kinch were obvious choices – I've been following both their careers for a long time and it was a real thrill to get to perform with them night after night. I also hope that this album will introduce Eadyth Crawford's magnificent voice to a new audience. Eadyth represents a new generation of young Welsh vocalists who are fearless in their creativity – she's a phenomenal talent."

The band toured Wales and also had one performance in London in late-November and December 2021. The music on the album was recorded live at Taliesin Arts Centre, Swansea; Pontio, Bangor; and the Lost ARC in Rhaeadr. Each performance was augmented by live visuals from Simon Proffitt.

Tŷ Cerdd Director Deborah Keyser adds: "I am really thrilled that we have been able to add *Cwmwl Tystion II / Riot!* to our Tŷ Cerdd Records catalogue. It feels more important than ever to celebrate composers and performers and we are so pleased to bring a range of Welsh music to a wider audience. The post-pandemic period has put a huge focus on all the services we provide to the music community in Wales, as well as the imbalances and exclusion that have been prevalent in the funded arts sector. In addition to providing essential networks and distribution of funds, Tŷ Cerdd has been expanding our artist development initiatives and striving to reach further with our work, our mantra being: 'If you're making music in Wales, it's Welsh music!' Our role of nurturing and developing music in Wales has never seemed as crucial as it does today."

### **Notes to editors**

***Cwmwl Tystion II / Riot!*** is released 13 October 2023, CD and digital. It will be available to purchase on the [Tŷ Cerdd shop](#) and to stream across platforms.

### **Musicians**

Tomos Williams (trumpet, composer), Soweto Kinch (saxes, spoken word), Eädyth Crawford (vocals, effects), Orphy Robinson (vibes, effects), Aidan Thorne (bass), Mark O'Connor (drums), Simon Proffitt (live visuals).

**Movement titles** (all text in the CD booklet is bilingual):

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| 1. Cadw tŷ mewn cwmwl tystion / Keeping house in a cloud of witnesses | [11:42] |
| 2. Merthyr Rising 1831  | [15:59] |
| 3. Tonypandy Riots 1910   | [07:05] |
| 4. Tredegar Riots 1911  | [05:35] |
| 5. Beth yw Byw? / What is Living?                                     | [10:50] |
| 6. Cardiff Race Riots 1919  | [04:42] |
| 7. Mahmood Mattan 1952  | [05:34] |

*Total: 01:01:29*

**Performances**

**Cwmwl Tystion II / Riot!** will have one final live performance as part of the WMC (Wales Millennium Centre) [Llais](#) festival, on 14 October 2023, 19:30.

[Tŷ Cerdd](#)'s mission is to promote and celebrate the music of Wales. Through its activities and working with a variety of partners, Tŷ Cerdd works to:

- bring Welsh music to audiences across the nation and around the world
- protect the heritage of Welsh music of the past and drive the development of new composition, across musical genres
- enable increasingly diverse communities and audiences to make and enjoy music in Wales.

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