

Sir David Davies

President Wexford Festival Trust

Sir David Davies was appointed as President of Wexford Festival Trust in October 2014. Following in the tradition of the eminent previous presidents including Sir Compton Mackenzie, Sir Alfred Beit and most recently Sir Anthony O'Reilly, Sir David brings to the role a remarkable knowledge of the opera world from his extensive involvement over a long number of years in many of the leading international opera companies and festivals. His family moved from Wales to Ireland after the war, and he has always maintained a home in Ireland.

First introduced to Wexford twenty three years ago his enduring interest and involvement in Wexford Festival Opera stems from his passion for opera, and the discovery of new and rare works. His appointment comes at a time of an ambitious international philanthropic focus for the world-renowned festival.

The role of President of Wexford Festival Trust dates right back to the foundation of the organisation in 1951. The President acts as the key figure-head for Wexford Festival Opera, fulfilling the lead ambassadorial role for it on the national, and increasingly on the international, stage. As such, a key function of the office is to advocate for the Festival's artistic and development plans and strategies amongst all of its key stake-holders.

A banker by profession and international businessman of repute, Sir David started his business career in 1963 with Chase Manhattan Bank in New York, and then with Hill Samuel, the leading English merchant bank in New York and then London. In 1973 he became Finance Director of MEPC, at that time the second largest property company in the UK. He moved to Hong Kong in 1983, becoming a director of Jardine Matheson and managing director of Hong Kong Land and returned to London in the late 1980s, where as chief executive of Hill Samuel he restored the fortunes of the bank. In the 1990s he served both as Chairman and Chief Executive of Johnson Matthey, the leading precious metals business in the world. Subsequently he was appointed as Chairman of EFG Private Bank Ltd in London from 1999 to 2006 with which he continues to maintain a close association.

He was awarded the Knights Bachelor in the 1999 New Year's Honours List for his work as chairman of the Advisory Committee on Business and the Environment.

He has been a director or trustee of a number of leading opera and cultural organisations, including Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Royal Opera House Trust, Grange Park Opera (Founding Chairman), the Wales Millennium Centre, the Irish Heritage Trust (Founding Chairman), and the Chairman of Wexford Festival Trust (UK) Ltd.

Sir David's Irish home is Abbeylax Estate in Co. Laois, which he has spent many years extensively restoring to become one of the great stately homes of Ireland.