

EVANS, DAVID EMLYN (1843 - 1913), musician

Name: David Emlyn Evans
Date of birth: 1843
Date of death: 1913
Spouse: Ann Elizabeth Davies (née Francis)
Parent: Mary Evans
Parent: Evan Evans
Gender: Male
Occupation: musician
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Music; Religion
Authors: David Ewart Parry Williams, Emrys Peregryn Evans

Born 21 September 1843, at Newcastle Emlyn, Carmarthenshire, son of Evan Evans (1817 - 1902) and his wife Mary (1816 - 1884) both of whom were buried in the old cemetery at Tre-wen, Cwm-cou. Evan Evans's mother (née Peregryn) was of Huguenot stock and descended from the Francis family of Dinas Ceri and Cwmsylltyn and was a relative of [Enoch Francis](#) (1688/9 - 1740); his father fought in the battle against the French at Fishguard in 1797, and the sword which he used was kept near the fireplace in the livingroom at Brynderwen, Newcastle Emlyn, and subsequently used by Evan Evans when he took part in the Rebecca Riots. Evan Evans, a foreman in the Cyfarthfa steel works, used to frequent sales in old houses and farmhouses and built up a good library.

Emlyn Evans was apprenticed as a draper's assistant at Bridgend, Glamorganshire, and began his studies with the help of the scant Welsh musical textbooks available at the time and occasional lessons from [John Roberts](#) (Ieuan Gwyllt, 1822-7). He gained numerous eisteddfodic successes for composition and became a commercial traveller, at the same time continuing to devote himself to composition, adjudicating, and criticism, under great difficulties of indifferent health and unsettling conditions of travelling. Up to his marriage, he led a migratory life - at Swansea, Cheltenham, and Newtown, Montgomeryshire; but in 1878 he married Anne Elizabeth (Francis), widow of [Mynyddog](#) (Richard Davies, 1833 - 1877); they lived for two years at Shrewsbury, then (1880-94) at Hereford, and finally at Cemaes, Montgomeryshire. His compositions include numerous songs, anthems, glees, part-songs, and hymn-tunes, of which 'Trewen' and 'Eirinwg' have become well known in Welsh circles. He wrote three extended choral works: 'Y Tylwyth Teg,' an operetta in which use is made of Welsh melodies, a cantata, 'Gweddi'r Cristnogion,' and a more ambitious work on oratorio lines, 'Y Caethgludiad.' He also orchestrated 'Ystorm Tiberias' by [Edward Stephen](#) (Tany Marian), the first Welsh oratorio.

As an editor, critic, and adjudicator, Emlyn Evans made a distinctive contribution to the art of music in Wales. He took part in the editorship of *Y Gerddorfa*, 1872, *Y Cerddor*, 1880-1913, and several hymnals, including the Welsh Congregational *Caniedydd Cynulleidfaoi*, 1895, *Y Salmydd*, and *Llyfr Tonau y Wesleyaid*. He also edited and harmonized upwards of 500 traditional airs collected by [Nicholas Bennett](#), afterwards publishing them as *Alawon fy Ngwlad*, and brought through press the biography of Welsh musicians, *Bywgraffiad Cerddorion Cymreig*, by [Moses O. Jones](#). His articles in the press (*Musical*

Times, *South Wales Weekly News*, etc.) greatly influenced Welsh music. He expressed his views fearlessly against the prevailing over-indulgence in glee-writing merely for purposes of eisteddfodic gain, and against the lack of discrimination and taste in hymn-singing in Wales. He published a successful Welsh textbook on harmony, *Llawlyfr ar Gynganedd*. He died 19 April 1913 at Newcastle Emlyn and was buried 24 April at Llandyfriog, Cardiganshire.

Authors

Professor David Ewart Parry Williams, (1900 - 1996)

Emrys Peregryn Evans, (1898 - 1981)

Sources

E. Keri Evans, *Cofiant D. Emlyn Evans* (1919)

Western Mail, 22 April 1913

Further reading

Nicholas Bennett a D. Emlyn Evans, *Alawon fy Ngwlad* (1896)

Gwawr Jones, 'Evans, David Emlyn (1843-1913)', *Cydymaith i Gerddoriaeth Cymru* (Talybont 2018), pp.169-70

Additional Links

NLW Archives: [Emlyn Evans Manuscripts](#)

VIAF: [2171539](#)

Wikidata: [Q18546445](#)

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