

PARRY, JOSEPH (1841 - 1903), musician

Name: Joseph Parry
Date of birth: 1841
Date of death: 1903
Spouse: Jane Parry (née Thomas)
Child: Joseph Haydn Parry
Child: Mendelssohn Parry
Child: William Sterndale Parry
Child: Annie Edna Parry
Child: Dilys Parry
Parent: Daniel Parry
Parent: Elizabeth Parry (née Richards)
Gender: Male
Occupation: musician
Area of activity: Music
Author: Gwilym Prichard Ambrose

Born at Merthyr Tydfil on 21 May 1841, was a pit-boy at 9 years of age, and an iron-worker at 12. He grew up in a musical environment; and sang alto in performances of oratorios by [Rosser Beynon's](#) choir. In 1854 his family moved to Dannville, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., where he worked in the rolling-mills until 1865, and studied harmony in his spare time. His successes in composition in the national eisteddfod of Wales (1863-4) aroused public enthusiasm, and a fund was raised which enabled him to study at the Royal Academy of Music (1868-71). On returning to Dannville he established a musical institute there. He was appointed professor and head of the new department of music at University College, Aberystwyth, a post which he held from 1874 to 1880. In 1878 he gained the degree of Mus. Doc. (Cantab.) Parry was now much in demand as adjudicator and busy with his students, giving concerts in which his own compositions were prominent. From 1881 to 1888 he worked at Swansea as organist of Ebenezer and head of a musical college, which he founded. From 1888 until his death at Penarth, near Cardiff, 17 February 1903, he was lecturer in music at University College, Cardiff.

Parry was a prolific and facile composer of songs, choruses, anthems, hymns, and some instrumental works. He composed several operas, of which 'Blodwen' (1880) had some 500 performances by 1896. Among his other larger works were the oratorios, 'Emmanuel' (1880), 'Saul' (1892), and the cantata 'Nebuchadnezzar' (1884). He lectured and wrote much to periodicals. His romantic career, unflagging industry, fluent talent, and professional training made him a predominant figure in the Welsh musical life of his day. His hymn-tune 'Aberystwyth' has become a classic.

Author

Principal Gwilym Prichard Ambrose

Sources

E. Keri Evans, *Cofiant Dr. Joseph Parry* (Cardiff 1921)

Y Cerddor, 1913

Further Reading

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 9661D: Dr. Joseph Parry autobiography](#)

[Joseph Parry \(1841–1903\)](#), Discover Welsh Music website, viewed 7 March 2018

Wikipedia Article: [Joseph Parry](#)

Images

Henry Alfred Chapman, [Joseph Parry](#)

John Harrison Goldie, [Dr. Joseph Parry](#)

John Thomas, [Joseph Parry](#)

Humphreys's Photographic Studio, [Joseph Parry](#)

Humphreys's Photographic Studio, [Joseph Parry](#)

NLW: [Joseph Parry](#)

T. Sinclair & Son, [Joseph Parry, Bachelor of Music, Cambridge, England](#)

Additional Links

NLW Archives: [Dr Joseph Parry Manuscripts.](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW MSS 19772-19826: The works of Dr Joseph Parry \(1841-1903\)](#)

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