

WALTERS, IRWYN RANALD (1902-1992), musician and administrator

Name: Irwyn Ranald Walters
Date of birth: 1902
Date of death: 1992
Gender: Male
Occupation: musician and administrator
Area of activity: Education; Music; Public and Social Service, Civil Administration
Author: Rhidian Griffiths

Irwyn Walters was born on 6 December 1902 in Ammanford, the second of six children of William Walters and his wife Elizabeth (née Morgan). His father kept a tobacconist and newsagent's shop at Clifton House on the town square; he was also a keen solfaist and precentor at the Ebeneser Baptist chapel. Irwyn received early instruction in music from **Gwilym R. Jones** (1874-1953), conductor of the Ammanford choral society, and later studied with **David Vaughan Thomas**. He was the first pupil at Amman Valley County School to study music for the Higher Certificate, but at Aberystwyth he first took a degree in French before graduating in music. While at school he had formed a trio with his brother Merfyn on the cello and **Rae Jenkins** (1903-1985), later a well-known conductor, as violinist. As a student of **Henry Walford Davies** Irwyn Walters had the opportunity to observe famous conductors who took part in the Gregynog music festivals, including Adrian Boult, Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Henry Wood.

He became a teacher at Bideford then moved to Islington in 1928, where he also served as organist of the Welsh chapel in Willesden Green. He then moved to the King Edward VI School in Stafford where he formed a string orchestra known as Stafford Strings. In 1936 he was appointed a Schools Inspector for music for the whole of Wales, and moved to Swansea, where he lived for the rest of his life. There he conducted the Festival Orchestra and after 1939 the Welsh Philharmonic Orchestra. During the Second World War he organised concerts for London artists in all parts of Wales.

In 1943 he began to arrange for pupils from Wales to attend orchestral courses in England, but because of high demand he decided to make separate provision for Wales, and in 1946, with the support of the Monmouthshire Education Authority and of music teachers in general, the National Youth Orchestra of Wales was established, with Clarence Raybould as conductor and Irwyn Walters as director. The Welsh Joint Education Committee subsequently took over the administration of the orchestra, and Walters's association with it continued until 1957. He retired from the Schools Inspectorate in 1963, but continued active as an examiner for the Trinity College of Music all over the world.

Irwyn Walters married Margaret Jane Edwards (died 1992) and they had one son, the composer **Gareth Walters**. Irwyn Walters died in Swansea on 21 November 1992.

Author

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Sources

Welsh Music, 9/6 (1993)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Irwyn Ranald Walters](#)

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