

JONES, FRANCES MÔN (1919-2000), harpist and teacher

Name: Frances Môn Jones
Date of birth: 1919
Date of death: 2000
Spouse: Robert Môn Jones
Parent: Mary Jane Davies (née Goodwin)
Parent: David Charles Davies
Gender: Female
Occupation: harpist and teacher
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Music
Author: Rhidian Griffiths

Frances Môn Jones was born on 20 October 1919 at Broughton near Wrexham, the daughter of David Charles Davies and his wife Mary Jane (née Goodwin). She was educated at the local school and Grove Park Grammar School in Wrexham, and mastered Welsh as a schoolgirl, in spite of not hearing the language at home. She began to play the organ at Pisgah chapel in Broughton at the age of 14, but a year before then her father had bought her an Erard harp and she took lessons from Alwena Roberts, 'Telynores îâl' (1899-1981), winning the solo harp competition at the National Eisteddfod on three successive occasions, in 1937, 1938 and 1939. In 1949 she won the solo soprano competition. During the period 1955-60 she attended the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, where she took lessons from Jean Bell, and also received instruction in music from [Professor D. E. Parry-Williams](#) in Bangor. Having retired from competing, she concentrated on teaching, and counted among her pupils the folk singer Siân James and Ieuan Jones, Professor of Harp at the Royal College of Music, London. She also taught in schools, particularly in the area around her home in Llanfair Caereinion, and established a harp consort.

Admitted to the Gorsedd in 1953 under the name 'Telynores Brython', which she later changed to 'Ffranses Môn', she played the harp regularly at Gorsedd ceremonies from 1957 onward. She was also official harpist of the Powys Eisteddfod from 1964 to 1990.

During the Second World War she had joined the Gwynn Singers, conducted by [W. S. Gwynn Williams](#), and assisted him in the establishment of the Llangollen International Eisteddfod in 1947. Annually from 1954 to 1981 she sang penillion to her own harp accompaniment during the Eisteddfod opening ceremony, using words written by her husband. From 1978 to 1999 she was a member of the panel of adjudicators at Llangollen, alongside a number of distinguished musicians. She gave loyal service to folk music societies: Treasurer of the Welsh Folk-Song Society from 1957 to 1985, she became a Vice-President from 1985 to 1988, and its President from 1988 until her death. She was also Secretary of the Welsh Folk Dance Society from 1959 to 1971 and a Vice-President from 1975 to 2000, and when the Society for the Traditional Instruments of Wales, Clera, was founded in 1996, was elected its Honorary President.

She married the Methodist minister Robert Môn Jones, a native of Aberffraw, in 1947. They lived in a number of different places in North Wales before settling at Llanfair Caereinion in 1965, where she lived for the rest of her life. Her husband died in 1982. She was invested with the MBE in 1983 and the Sir T. H. Parry-Williams Medal at the Anglesey National Eisteddfod in 1999. She died on 8 September 2000 and was cremated at Wrexham Crematorium. She was commemorated at a special event when the National Eisteddfod visited her home area of Meifod in 2003.

Author

Rhidian Griffiths

Sources

Robin Gwyndaf, 'Portread o gymwynaswraig: Frances Môn Jones', *Folk Song Journal of the Welsh Folk-Song Society* 22 (1999), 3 - 10

Further reading

Eiry Palfrey, 'Frances Môn Jones (1919-2000)', *Cydymaith i Gerddoriaeth Cymru* (Talybont 2018), p.208

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