

DAVIES, EVAN THOMAS (1878 - 1969), musician

Name: Evan Thomas Davies
Date of birth: 1878
Date of death: 1969
Spouse: Mary Llewellyn Davies (née Jones)
Parent: Gwenllian Davies (née Samuel)
Parent: George Davies
Gender: Male
Occupation: musician
Area of activity: Music; Performing Arts
Author: Huw Williams

Born 10 April 1878 at 41 Pontmorlais, Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, son of George (a barber whose shop was in South Street, Dowlais), and Gwenllian (née Samuel) his wife. He was brought up in Dowlais, but moved to Merthyr Tydfil in 1904. His parents were musical; his father was precentor in Hermon, Dowlais, for nearly a quarter of a century, and his mother was a good singer, a descendant of the same family as the song-writer, [R.S. Hughes](#). He was given private tuition and came heavily under the influence of [Harry Evans](#). He visited the U.S.A. with a party of singers from Wales in 1898, and after returning he came to be regarded as the leading musician in his native district, and as a worthy successor to [Harry Evans](#), his tutor. He was organist at Pontmorlais chapel, Merthyr Tydfil, 1903-17, and a part-time singing teacher in Merthyr Tydfil secondary school, 1904-20, making his home in 'Cartrefle' near the school-the house where [Harry Evans](#) had lived.

After gaining his F.R.C.O. his services as a solo organist were in great demand, and he was said to have inaugurated about a hundred new organs in Wales and England. In 1920 he was appointed the first full-time director of music of the University College, Bangor, where he was responsible for numerous musical activities, and collaborated with [\(Henry\) Walford Davies](#), Aberystwyth, to enhance knowledge of music in a wide area under the auspices of the university's Council of Music. In 1943 he retired and moved to Aberdare, where he spent the rest of his life composing, adjudicating and broadcasting.

He first came into prominence as a composer after winning the first prize for 'Ynys y Plant' in the national eisteddfod held in London in 1909, and although he was not a very prolific composer, and tended to regard composing merely as a hobby, he had a beneficial influence upon Welsh music for more than half a century. Besides writing a few songs, he also composed part-songs, anthems and works for various musical instruments and instrumental groups, and about 40 of his tunes, chants and anthems are to be found in various collections of tunes. He recognised the excellent work on folk-songs that [John Lloyd Williams](#) had done before him at Bangor, and he was one of the first Welsh musicians to find sufficient merit in the folk-songs to arrange them for voice or instrument. His arrangements of over a hundred of these songs, (many of them produced when the composer was in old age) have great artistic merit. He also took an interest in Welsh national songs, and was co-editor with Sydney Northcote of *The National Songs of Wales* (1959). He married, 31 August 1916, Mary Llewellyn, youngest daughter of D.W. Jones, Aberdare. He died at home in Aberdare on Christmas Day 1969.

Author

Huw Williams, (1922 - 2002)

Sources

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Y Cymro, 7 January 1970

Welsh Music, the journal of the Guild for the Promotion of Welsh Music, 3 (1970), No. 6, 2-10

Robert Smith (ed.), *Complete Catalogue of Contemporary Welsh Music*, No. 5 (1972)

Further Reading

[E. T. Davies \(1878-1969\)](#), Discover Welsh Music website, viewed 7 March 2018

Wyn Thomas, 'Davies, E. T. (1878-1969)', *Cydymaith i Gerddoriaeth Cymru (Talybont 2018)*, p.135

Wikipedia Article: [Evan Thomas Davies](#)

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