

JONES, WILLIAM ARTHUR (W. BRADWEN; 1892 - 1970), musician

Name: William Arthur Jones
Date of birth: 1892
Date of death: 1970
Parent: Elizabeth Jones (née Jones)
Parent: J.R. Gwyndaf Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: musician
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Music; Performing Arts
Author: Huw Williams

Born at Caernarfon, 5 April 1892, son of J.R. Gwyndaf Jones, proof-reader for *Y Genedl*, and Elizabeth Jones his wife. On his father's side he was related to **Richard Jones**, 'Gwyndaf Eryri', while his mother was the daughter of **John Jones**, 'Eos Bradwen'. Because of his mother's family connections he was known as 'William Bradwen' when he was a child at school, and he chose to keep the name to the end of his life. He was brought up in a musical home; his mother gave him piano lessons from an early age, and he later studied organ playing with John Williams, Caernarfon, and with **Roland Rogers**, organist of Bangor cathedral. After short periods as organist and pianist to the Honourable F.G. Wynn at Glynllifon, Llandwrog, and from 1910 to 1915 as organist and choirmaster at Rug chapel, Corwen, he served with the Royal Welch Fusiliers in Palestine and Egypt, rising to the rank of lieutenant in 1918. In 1919 he was appointed (from among a hundred applicants) organist and choirmaster of St. Seiriol's church, Holyhead, a post which he held until November 1951. From 1951 to the end of his life he was organist of Hyfrydle (Presb.) church, Holyhead. He won many diplomas in music, including A.R.C.M. (1920), L.T.C.L. (1921), L.R.A.M. (1922), A.R.C.O. (1925), F.R.C.O. (1927) and F.T.C.L. (1928), and as an accomplished pianist he became the official accompanist at the national eisteddfod, and in the county and provincial *eisteddfodau* for a very long time. But despite his undoubted skill as a pianist and organist, it was as a teacher and composer that he excelled and is remembered. For fifty years and more he gave private music lessons at Holyhead, and many of his pupils gained prominence as pianists and singers.

As a composer, he served his apprenticeship in the *eisteddfod* and he won about 25 of the chief prizes at the national eisteddfod for his compositions. His solo 'Paradwys y bardd' won a prize at the Liverpool national eisteddfod (1929), and his song 'Mab yr ystorm' at Aberavon (1932). At Wrexham national eisteddfod (1933) he accomplished the notable feat of winning seven of the main prizes in the music composition section. He played a prominent part in changing the nature of Welsh song in the second half of the 20th c., and through his experiments and those of a few of his contemporaries it was realised that the expressive rendering of the words could be enhanced by making the accompaniment an important and integral part of the song. Although he is chiefly remembered as a composer of songs, he also wrote part-songs, anthems, duets, works for the piano and string orchestra, several works for the piano, and pieces for the organ. (A complete list of his works appears in *Welsh Music*, vol. 5, no. 3, summer 1976). His MSS. were bought by the National Library of Wales in 1973.

He died in hospital in Holyhead, 3 December 1970, and was buried in St. Seiriol's churchyard, Holyhead.

Author

Huw Williams, (1922 - 2002)

Sources

Welsh Music, the journal of the Guild for the Promotion of Welsh Music, 5 (1976), no. 2, 34-40, no. 3, 43-9, and the sources noted there

G. I. Jones, *Meistr cerdd bywyd a gwaith William Bradwen Jones* (Caernarfon 1983)(1983)

his baptismal name from the Rev. Dr. Llewelyn Jones, Holyhead

Further Reading

Mansel Thomas, *Cyfansoddwyr Ieuainc Cyfoes, Tir newydd*, rhif 7, Chwefror 1937, pp.3-6

Additional Links

NLW Archives: [W. Bradwen Jones Papers](#)

Wikidata: [Q20804819](#)

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