

JONES, (WILLIAM JOHN) PARRY (1891 - 1963), singer

Name: (William John) Parry Jones
Date of birth: 1891
Date of death: 1963
Spouse: Hilda Dorothy Jones (née Morris)
Parent: Mary Jones (née Parry)
Parent: John Rees Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: singer
Area of activity: Music; Performing Arts
Author: Huw Williams

Born 14 February 1891 in Blaina, Monmouthshire, son of John Rees Jones, butcher, and Mary Jones (née Parry) his wife. At 11 years of age he won a scholarship to Abertillery county school, but he left after 18 months owing to the family's financial circumstances, and went to work in the colliery. After studying in evening classes and being appointed librarian at the Miners' Institute there, he joined the Blaina Choral Society and came to the notice of Norman McLeod, a teacher of voice production. He decided to follow a career as a professional tenor, and with the help of [Lord Rhondda](#) (David Alfred Thomas and others, he went to the Royal College of Music in London to study with Albert Visetti, Thomas Frederick Dunhill and Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. He later studied singing in Italy (with Colli), in Germany (with Charles Webber) and in England (with John Coates). He toured the U.S.A. and Canada, 1913-15, and was among those rescued when the liner *Lusitania* was sunk in May 1915. After the World War I, he became one of London's most versatile singers and his services were much in demand. He was appointed principal tenor with the D'Oyly Carte opera company (1915), with the Carl Rosa opera company (1920), and he sang many of the leading roles with the British National Opera Company (1922-28). He also appeared at the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells in the 1920s and 1930s, and by the time that he joined the management board at Covent Garden in 1955 he had had the honour of singing in the Royal Opera House during 19 international seasons there. He was also a leading member of Sir Thomas Beecham's opera company and he was invited to sing in the Henry Wood promenade concerts in 27 consecutive seasons. He also sang at the chief festivals in London and on the continent after 1919, including the festivals at Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Oslo (1945-54). He was honoured in being chosen to be the principal tenor at the Beethoven centenary festival, 1927, and the Schubert centenary festival, 1928. He was elected an honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Music, the Guildhall School of Music, and Trinity College of Music, and in 1962 he was awarded the O.B.E. for his notable services to music. For a time after retiring from singing he taught at the Guildhall School of Music and Trinity College of Music. He was endowed with an exceptionally good memory, and by the time of his death it is said that he had sung in performances of 70 operas and 80 oratorios. In 1917 he married Hilda Dorothy Morris, Cirencester, and they had one son. He died in London, 29 December 1963.

Author

Huw Williams, (1922 - 2002)

Sources

Leslie Orrey (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Opera* (London 1976) (1976)

Who was who?

Welsh Music, the journal of the Guild for the Promotion of Welsh Music, 1 (1960) and 2 (1964)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Gwynn Parry Jones](#)

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