

PARR-DAVIES, HARRY (formerly DAVIES, HARRY PARR; 1914 - 1955), pianist and composer

Name: Harry Parr-davies
Date of birth: 1914
Date of death: 1955
Parent: Rosina Davies (née Parr)
Parent: D.J. Davies
Gender: Male
Occupation: pianist and composer
Area of activity: Music; Performing Arts
Author: Rhidian Griffiths

Born at Briton Ferry, Neath, Glamorganshire, 24 May 1914, son of D.J. and Rosina Davies (née Parr). He was educated at Dunraven school, Treherbert and Neath intermediate school. His musical talent became evident when he was a child, and he is said to have composed 30 songs and two operettas before he was 13 years old. Seymour Perrott, the Neath borough organist, provided his musical education, and [Sir Henry Walford Davies](#) urged him to make a career as a classical composer; but light music was more to his taste and he studied the works of Eric Coates and Edward German to perfect his technique. He introduced himself to the singer Gracie Fields and became her accompanist in Britain and on tour in Canada and South Africa. He composed the song ' Sing as we go ' which Gracie Fields sang in the film *Shipyard Sally* (1939), and which gave the title to her autobiography; he also provided the music to Phil Park's words, ' Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye ', which became popular at the beginning of World War II. For his song ' Smile when you say goodbye ' he received an advance royalty of £1000, the highest sum paid at that time for a song. Among his stage shows were *Black velvet*, *The Lisbon story*, *Her Excellency*, and *Deaf Miss Phoebe*. He composed music for Gracie Fields ' film, *This Week of Grace* (1933), and songs for other performers such as George Formby.

He died at home in Knightsbridge, London, 14 October 1955, and was buried in Oystermouth cemetery near Swansea.

Author

Rhidian Griffiths

Sources

The Times, 15 October 1955

Western Mail, 15 October 1955

Neath Guardian, 21 October 1955

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Harry Parr-Davies](#)

Images

Art UK: [Harry Parr Davies \(1914–1955\)](#)

Additional Links

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