

RICHARDS, HENRY BRINLEY (1819 - 1885), musician

Name: Henry Brinley Richards
Date of birth: 1819
Date of death: 1885
Parent: Elizabeth Brinley Richards (née Brinley)
Parent: Henry Brinley Richards
Gender: Male
Occupation: musician
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Music; Performing Arts
Author: Robert David Griffith

Born 13 November 1819 in Lower Market Street, Carmarthen, the son of Henry and Elizabeth Brinley Richards. The father was organist of S. Peter's church, Carmarthen; he also kept a music shop. His mother was the daughter of John Brinley, Swansea (see F. Jones, *God Bless the Prince of Wales*, Carmarthen, 1969).

Intended for the medical profession, the son showed that his inclination was towards music. In the Gwent and Morgannwg eisteddfod of 1834 he won a prize for variations on the Welsh air called 'Llwyn Onn' ('The Ash Grove'). The duke of Newcastle became his patron, and he entered the Royal Academy of Music, London. In the following year (1835) he won the king's scholarship, repeating this success in 1837. He went to Paris for a further course of study and there came to know Chopin. On his return to London he was appointed an instructor in the Royal Academy; later he became director. He was the originator of the Academy's local examination system and became superintendent of the examinations held in Wales and Scotland. Regarded as the finest piano player in the country, he also won repute as a teacher of the piano.

He did not sever his connection with Wales - he served as adjudicator in eisteddfodau, took an interest in the triple harp (see [NLW MS 1904B](#)), and delivered a course of lectures on the music of Wales. His compositions and arrangements were very numerous - there are over 250 items listed in the British Museum catalogue of printed music. Among them are several piano pieces, the three volumes entitled *The Classical Pianist*, *Student Practice*, and *The Pianist Library*; and 'Overture in F minor' (published at Paris in 1840 and performed at the Chester eisteddfod of 1860), a concerto for piano and orchestra, choral pieces ('Cenwch udgorn yn Seion,' 'Let the hills resound,' etc.). His best-remembered piece, as far as Welsh people are concerned, is 'God bless the prince of Wales' (1862). His *Songs of Wales*, first published in 1873, had a very wide circulation, in this respect proving a more popular work than his *Welsh Choir*.

He was a prominent member of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion from 1873 until his death on 2 May 1885; he was buried in the Brompton cemetery, London.

Author

Robert David Griffith, (1877 - 1958)

Sources

Y Geninen, 1886, 56, 281

The Musical Times, 1885

M. O. Jones, *Bywgraffiaeth Cerddorion Cymreig* (1890)

Y Cerddor, January 1893

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Groves, *Groves' Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1940)

NLW MSS, 1904, 2302, 2340, 4704, 5551, 7379

Y Cymmrodor, 1951, vi

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Henry Brinley Richards](#)

Images

Edward Grimstone, H. Brinley Richards

Barraud & Jerrard, Brinley Richards, composer

John Thomas, Brinley Richards (print)

Additional Links

NLW Archives: NLW MS 8284D: 'Ar D'wysog gwlad y bryniau'

NLW Archives: NLW MS 8285C: Certificates of Henry Brinley Richards

NLW Archives: NLW MS 21592E: Arrangements of music by Brinley Richards

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