

## ELWYN-EDWARDS, DILYS (1918-2012), composer

**Name:** Dilys Elwyn-edwards  
**Date of birth:** 1918  
**Date of death:** 2012  
**Gender:** Female  
**Occupation:** composer  
**Area of activity:** Music  
**Author:** Rhidian Griffiths

Dilys Roberts was born on 19 August 1918 in Dolgellau. Her father was a musician, precentor and choral conductor, and also played the euphonium. She attended Dr Williams School in Dolgellau and took advantage of the school's strong musical tradition; it was there that she began to be interested in the music of Delius, Holst and Vaughan Williams, and also composed her first song. She was offered a Turle Scholarship at Girton College, Cambridge and a Joseph Parry Scholarship at the University College in Cardiff, and chose the latter, studying under **David Evans**. Her compositional gifts were developed during her time at Cardiff and some of her songs were broadcast by the BBC. After taking her B.Mus. she taught for three years at Dr Williams School before gaining an open scholarship in composition at the Royal College of Music in London, where she studied composition with Herbert Howells and piano with Kathleen McQuitty.

She married Elwyn Edwards on 3 September 1947 and lived in Oxford while he was studying at Mansfield and she continued to teach in local schools. They returned to Wales when he accepted the pastorate of Castle Square Presbyterian Church in Caernarfon. From 1973 onwards Dilys Elwyn-Edwards taught piano in the Normal College and the University College in Bangor. She was a regular adjudicator at eisteddfodau and often appeared on radio and television.

Although she composed some instrumental music her main interest was in the human voice. She was greatly interested in poetry and acknowledged her admiration for the English composer Peter Warlock, who was also renowned for his songs. Her settings are well crafted, sensitive and lyrical, and belong to the mainstream of Welsh and British art song. She composed a number of song cycles, such as *Caneuon y Tri Aderyn* (commissioned by the BBC in 1961, and which includes her best-known song, 'Mae hiraeth yn y môr'), *Chwe Chân i Blant*, *Tymhorau* and *Hwiangerddi*. She also composed choral settings of Psalms. Some of her early solo and part songs are settings of English poems with Welsh translations, such as 'Sweet Suffolk Owl' and 'The Bird of Christ', but she later concentrated on setting original Welsh poets like **R. Williams Parry**.

She died on 13 January 2012 in a nursing home in Llanberis.

### Author

Rhidian Griffiths

### Sources

*Welsh Music* 6/4 (1980)

### Further Reading

Dilys Elwyn-Edwards (1918-2012), Discover Welsh Music website, viewed 7 March 2018

Geraint Lewis, 'Elwyn-Edwards, Dilys (1918-2012)', *Cydymaith i Gerddoriaeth Cymru* (Talybont 2018), pp.163-4

Wikipedia Article: [Dilys Elwyn-Edwards](#)

### Additional Links

NLW Archives: [Archif Gerddorol Dilys Elwyn-Edwards](#)

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