

ANTHONY, WILLIAM TREVOR (1912-1984), singer

Name: William Trevor Anthony
Date of birth: 1912
Date of death: 1984
Spouse: Olga Anthony (née Bonnell)
Child: Robert J. B. Anthony
Parent: Adeline J. Anthony (née Lewis)
Parent: David John Anthony
Gender: Male
Occupation: singer
Area of activity: Music
Author: Rhidian Griffiths

Trevor Anthony was born on 28 October 1912 in Tŷ-croes, near Ammanford, the eldest son of David John Anthony and his wife Adeline (née Lewis). After leaving school he worked underground while receiving singing tuition from **Gwilym R. Jones**. He came to prominence when, at the age of only 21, he won the bass solo competition at the Neath National Eisteddfod of 1934, and was encouraged by one of the adjudicators, the singer Henry Plunket Greene, to pursue a professional career. His tutor **Gwilym R. Jones** organised a local appeal fund to support a course of study in London, and Anthony studied at the Royal Academy of Music from 1935 to 1939, under the tutelage of Norman Allin. He held the George Mence Smith scholarship, and at the end of his course won the Robert Radford Memorial Prize and the Rutson Memorial Prize.

During this period he sang in operatic performances in London and broadcast on Welsh radio. In 1937 he was appointed to the choir of Westminster Abbey, but his career was interrupted by the Second World War, in which he served as a telegraphist in the Royal Navy. After the war he resumed his singing career and became a popular concert and oratorio artist. He impressed the conductor Thomas Beecham, who invited him to sing the part of King Mark in a broadcast performance of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* in 1946. From 1948 onward he appeared at Covent Garden and at a number of important music festivals, at Leeds, Edinburgh and Aldeburgh, under the direction of Benjamin Britten. In June 1958 it was he who created the part of the Voice of God in Britten's opera *Noye's Fludde*. Between 1946 and 1960 he appeared at the Proms concerts seven times, including performances as the bass soloist in Beethoven's ninth symphony in 1955 and in the same composer's *Missa Solemnis* in 1960, on both occasions conducted by Malcolm Sargent. He also appeared with the D'Oyly Carte opera company.

His voice is preserved on record in a 1947 recording of Handel's *Messiah* conducted by Beecham, and in a number of recordings (including another *Messiah*) conducted by Sargent. He performed and adjudicated at the National Eisteddfod on numerous occasions, and at the Newtown National Eisteddfod in 1965 took the part of Christ in the oratorio *St Peter* by **Daniel Jones**.

Illness forced him to retire early from the concert platform, and he ran a hotel in London for some years. His brother was Cyril Anthony, the organist of King's Cross chapel in London.

He married in 1941 Olga Bonnell, daughter of Tom Bonnell, a well known Rhondda singer, and they had one son, Robert. She died in 1978. Trevor Anthony died on 1 August 1984 and his funeral was held in London on 8 August. He was buried with his wife in Mortlake Cemetery.

Author

Rhidian Griffiths

Sources

Donald Brock, *Singers of Today* (Llundain 1948)

Musicus, 'Trefor Anthony', *Y Ddinas, Cylchgrawn Cymry Llundain*, February 1959

Gareth H. Lewis, 'Trevor Anthony (1912-1984)', *Welsh Music, the journal of the Guild for the Promotion of Welsh Music*, 8/2 (Spring 1986), 98-9

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