

HUWS, ALUN 'SBARDUN' (1948-2014), musician and composer

Name: Alun 'sbardun' Huws
Date of birth: 1948
Date of death: 2014
Spouse: Gwenno Peris Huws (née Jones)
Parent: Catherine Ann Hughes (née Davies)
Parent: Richard Wynne Hughes
Gender: Male
Occupation: musician and composer
Area of activity: Music
Author: Richard Rees

Alun Huws was born in Bangor, Gwynedd, on 26 September 1948, the eldest son of Richard Wynne Hughes (1921-1989) and Catherine Anne Hughes (née Davies, 1920-1972). The family home was in Penrhyndeudraeth. His father worked at Cookes Explosives Ltd., part of the ICI Group, while his mother was a teacher. The couple had one other son, John Wyn Hughes. Alun changed the spelling of his surname to the Welsh form in later life.

Alun attended Penrhyndeudraeth primary school from 1954 to 1959, then Ysgol Ardudwy, Harlech from 1959 to 1967. After leaving school he moved to Cardiff and studied at Cardiff Art College for 12 months from 1967 to 1968. He then moved to Cyncoed College of Education, where he studied for three years and gained a Certificate of Education. After leaving college he began a career in television, working in turn as a researcher, producer and director for HTV Wales and the BBC. He married Gwenno Peris Jones on 29 May 1978.

In spite of a long and successful career in broadcasting, Alun, or 'Sbardun' as he was known to all, will be best remembered for his musical talent and his important and prolific contribution to the contemporary Welsh language music scene. During his time at the college in Cyncoed, Alun forged a life-long friendship with three other young men who would play a very important part throughout his life. Dewi 'Pws' Morris, Stan Morgan Jones and Emyr Huws Jones were Alun's contemporaries in college and they soon got together to form one of the most influential and popular bands of the period, Y Tebot Piws.

When the Tebot Piws disbanded in 1972, Alun joined a contemporary folk group called Ac Eraill whose other members included Cleif Harpwood, Iestyn Garlick, Tecwyn Ifan and Phil 'Bach' Edwards. When the National Eisteddfod visited Carmarthen in 1974, Alun and the other members of Ac Eraill wrote and composed the first Welsh language rock opera, Nia Ben Aur, which was performed on the Eisteddfod's main stage. When Ac Eraill disbanded in 1974, Alun went on to become a member of another very popular contemporary folk group, Mynediad Am Ddim, touring to Brittany and Ireland on several occasions.

In 2005/06 Alun produced a documentary film for the Welsh language TV channel S4C called '*Llythrau Ellis Williams*'. He co wrote the script and composed the music for the film with his life-long friend and contemporary in the Tebot Piws and Mynediad Am Ddim, song writer Emyr Huws Jones. The film was based on a period in the life of Ellis Williams from Peniarwaun who was exiled from Wales at the start of the 20th century. Ellis lived in Patagonia and Australia until his death in the trenches in France in 1918. The film was a blend of music and drama, and was broadcast on Christmas Day 2006.

In 2008 the Tebot Piws had a re-union which led to the release of a new album, Twll Du Ifan Saer. The album features several of Alun's songs including 'Crac' and 'Wedi Mynd'. The band performed at the Faenol Festival and then toured Wales performing up and down the country for another four years before finally calling it a day in 2011.

Without a doubt Alun's most important contribution to Wales and the Welsh language was the catalogue of songs that he wrote for many of the most popular and best known singers and performers of Welsh contemporary music. Many of his compositions are amongst the most famous and best known songs in the Welsh language: 'Cwsg Osian' for Sidan from the rock opera Nia Ben Aur; 'Strydoedd Aberstalwm' for Bryn Fôn; 'Dyddiau' for Linda Griffiths; 'Becci'n Chwarae'r Blues' for Heather Jones and a number of other popular songs for John ac Alun, Tecwyn Ifan, Iona ac Andy, Brigyn and more recently, songs written specifically for young singers like Casi Wyn.

Many people bear witness to Alun's help and support as they struggled with alcoholism. Alun was an alcoholic himself, but he had been sober for 28 years. When the Living Room - a day centre for people addicted to drugs and alcohol - was opened in Cardiff in 2011 Alun was asked to write a song to mark the occasion. 'Cân y Stafell Fyw' was recorded by Bryn Fôn, Elin Fflur, Ynyr Roberts and Côr Eifionydd (Eifionydd Choir).

Alun will always be remembered for his mischievous eyes and his unique laugh. He was a kind and very witty man with a memorable sense of humour, and he was instinctively artistic and creative. One of the many stories that abound about Alun involves his attempt at making a guitar from an old shoe box and a broom handle. Penrhyndeudraeth meant the world to Alun. Despite having left there at the age of eighteen and living nearly fifty years in south Wales, his heart remained in Penrhy.

Alun 'Sbardun' Huws died at the Heath Hospital in Cardiff on 15 December 2014. The cause of death was recorded as pneumonia, bronchiectasis and myocardial infarction. His funeral was held at Barry Crematorium on 29 December 2014.

Author

Richard Rees

Sources

Personal knowledge and information from the family

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Sbardun](#)

Additional Links

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