

EVANS, TIMOTHY EDGAR (1912 - 2007), opera singer

Name: Timothy Edgar Evans
Date of birth: 1912
Date of death: 2007
Spouse: Nan Evans (née Walters)
Child: Huw Evans
Parent: Margaret Evans
Parent: William Evans
Gender: Male
Occupation: opera singer
Area of activity: Music; Performing Arts
Author: Rhidian Griffiths

Edgar Evans was born at Cwrt Farm near Cwrtnewydd, Ceredigion, on 9 June 1912, the youngest of 13 children of William Evans (d. 1927) and his wife Margaret (d. 1947). He received elementary education at the local school where the headmaster was the poet and local historian **David Rees Davies**, 'Cledlyn'. In 1921 he heard the Italian tenor Enrico Caruso on the radio, and was sufficiently enchanted to want to become a singer. Having attended the Llandysul county school and a private school in New Quay, he worked in the county architect's department in Llandysul. Evans sang in several local choirs before moving to London in 1934 to join his brother Dai's milk business, and was 'discovered' as a singer the following year at a party in London on the occasion of a Wales-England rugby international. He was referred to Dawson Freer, a professor at the Royal College of Music, and studied with Freer while supporting himself from the proceeds of his milk round.

In the spring of 1937 he auditioned for Sadler's Wells opera, and joined the chorus along with at least one other Welshman, baritone Bruce Dargavel. When war broke out he was rejected for military service on medical grounds, and served in the Metropolitan Police until 1942; then he began performing with CEMA and ENSA, travelling all over Britain and singing in over 500 concerts.

When the Covent Garden Opera Company was formed in 1946 he was engaged as one of three principal tenors, and first came to prominence on 25 March 1947 when he deputised for Heddle Nash as Des Grieux in Massenet's opera *Manon*. From then until his retirement in 1974 he appeared in around 45 different roles, sometimes performing several times a week, which taxed his vocal resources severely. At Covent Garden he was said to have sung more often, and to have sung more roles, than any other artist. His roles varied from standard repertoire, such as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and Calaf in *Turandot*, to contemporary works like *Captain Vere* in Britten's *Billy Budd*. He was one of the first British singers to sing abroad after the end of the Second World War, and in 1950 studied for a while with Luigi Ricci in Rome. Following his retirement from the stage, Evans taught for ten years at the Royal College of Music.

As well as performing in opera, he sang widely in concerts and oratorio, including performances in Wales and for the Welsh in London. He made few recordings, but his singing of some minor roles is preserved, for instance in the role of the Mayor in a recording of Britten's *Albert Herring*.

On 19 August 1939 he married Nan Walters (1910-1998), a native of Lower Cwmtwrch in the Swansea Valley, whom he had met in London where she worked as a nanny. They had one son, Huw (1942-1999). Edgar Evans died at the age of 94 in Northwick Park Hospital in north-west London on 22 February 2007.

Author

Rhidian Griffiths

Sources

Robert Little, *Edgar Evans: Extempore* (St. Albans 2005)

The Daily Telegraph, 26 February 2007

The Guardian, 12 March 2007

The Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard, 20 June 2002

Further reading

Wikipedia Article: [Edgar Evans \(tenor\)](#)

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