

## DAVIES, CLARA NOVELLO ('Pencerddes Morgannwg'; 1861 - 1943) musician

**Name:** Clara Novello Davies  
**Pseudonym:** Pencerddes Morgannwg  
**Date of birth:** 1861  
**Date of death:** 1943  
**Spouse:** David Davies  
**Child:** Myfanwy Margaret Davies  
**Child:** David Ivor  
**Parent:** Margaret Davies  
**Parent:** Jacob Davies  
**Gender:** Female  
**Occupation:** musician  
**Area of activity:** Music; Performing Arts  
**Author:** Robert David Griffith

Born 7 April 1861 in Canton, Cardiff, daughter of Jacob Davies and Margaret his wife, and named Clara Novello after Clara Anastasia (née Novello), whom Jacob Davies had heard singing. She received her musical education from her father, Dr. Frost, Frederick Atkins (Cardiff), and Charles Williams (organist of Llandaff Cathedral).

She was appointed, when quite young, accompanist to the Cardiff United Choir and the Cardiff Blue Ribbon Choir, which took many prizes at the Crystal Palace, London, under her father's baton. In 1883, Clara Novello formed a ladies choir which held many successful concerts in Wales and England. In 1893 the choir won the prize in the World Fair, Chicago, the test pieces being 'The Lord is my Shepherd' (Schubert) and 'The Spanish Gypsy'. Afterwards they toured through part of the United States and gave several concerts in some of the chief towns of England and Wales on their return. In 1900 that choir was invited to sing in the Paris Exposition.

Throughout the years some of Clara Novello's pupils succeeded in winning prizes in national eisteddfodau. In 1927 she began to experiment with her own particular method of voice-production and breathing, and in 1928 published an explanatory book entitled *You can sing*; this work was dedicated to her son, **Ivor Novello** (1893 - 1951).

She had a voice-training school in New York, and, in 1924, she formed the Novello Davies Artist Choir to take part in concerts. In 1928 the Welsh Ladies Choir was invited to sing at Windsor Castle; it also received a similar invitation on 26 April to the Paris Exposition in 1937. The Choir rendered much service by raising funds for charitable purposes, especially during the two World Wars.

An autobiographical work, entitled *The Life I have loved*, was published by Clara Novello in 1940. She died 7 February 1943 and was cremated at Golder's Green, London.

### Author

**Robert David Griffith**, (1877 - 1958)

### Sources

F. Griffith, *Notable Welsh Musicians* (1896)

*Y Cerdor*, March 1896

*Who was who?*, 1941-50

### Further Reading

Gwawr Jones, *'The mighty Mam': Clara Novello Davies a byd cerddoriaeth broffesiynol yng Nghymru*, PhD thesis, Bangor University, 2015

Wikipedia Article: [Clara Novello Davies](#)

### Additional Links

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 19398D: Some Memories by Clara Novello Davies](#)

NLW Archives: [Clara Novello Davies and the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW ex 2980: Ivor Novello and Madame Clara Novello Davies memorabilia](#)

VIAF: [48999521](#)

Wikidata: [Q5126032](#)

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