

# Art Music and 'Welshness': Perspectives from Cardiff

---

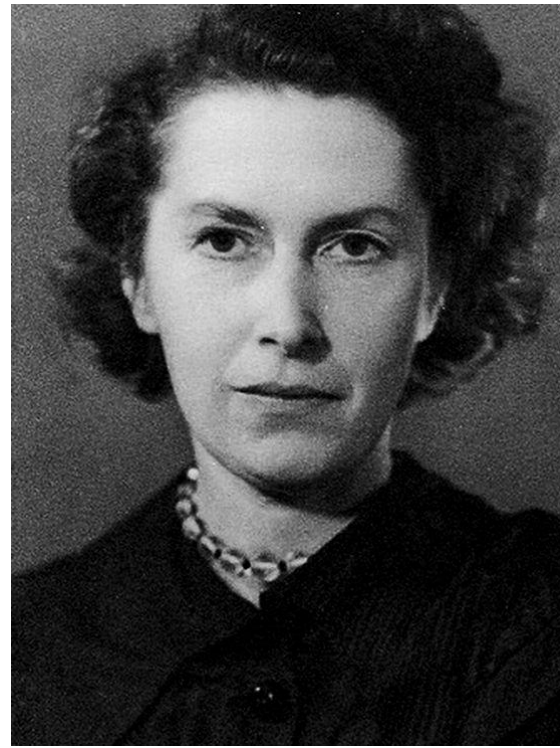
**Dr Nicholas Jones**



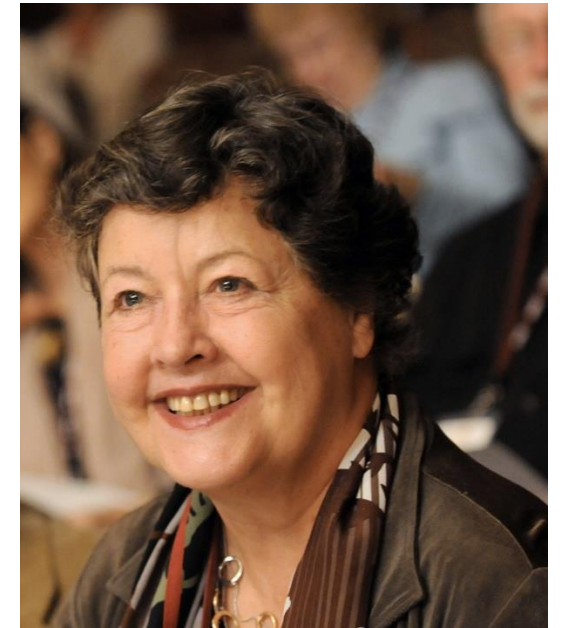
**Morfydd Owen (1891–1918)**



**Dilys Elwyn-Edwards (1918-2012)**



**Grace Williams (1906–1977)**



**Hilary Tann (1947–2023)**



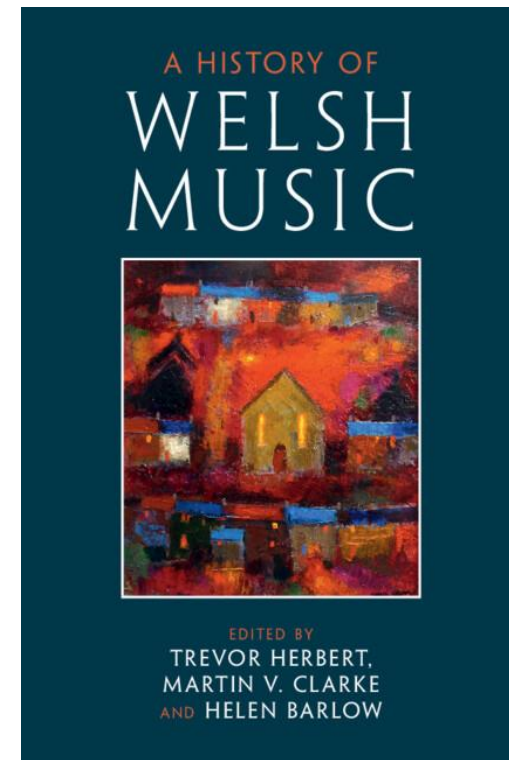
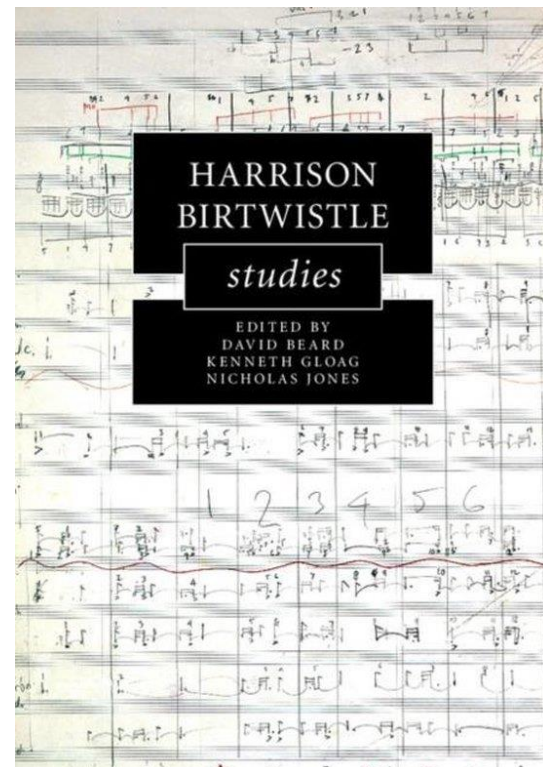
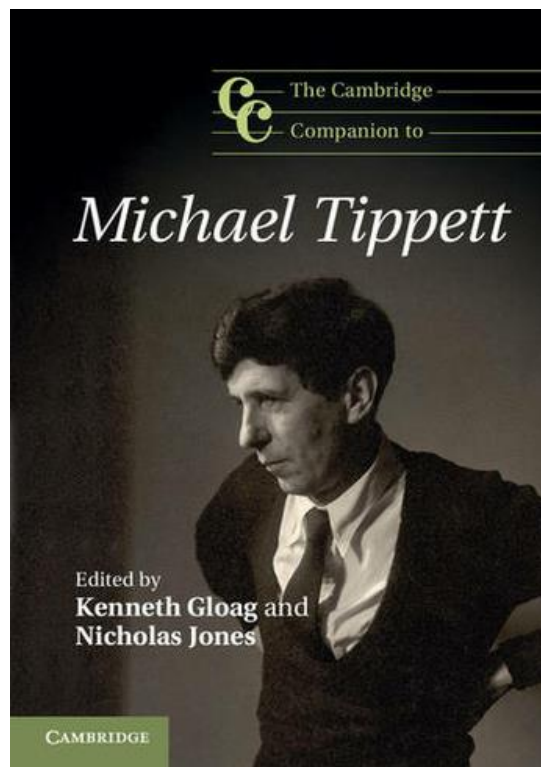
- Cardiff is the capital and largest city of Wales (population approx. 400,000) and eleventh largest in the UK.
- Cardiff is the main commercial centre of Wales as well as the base for the Senedd, the Welsh Parliament.
- Cardiff is a major centre for television and film production (such as the 2005 revival of Doctor Who) and is the Welsh base for the main national broadcasters (BBC Wales).
- Cardiff is also a major centre for music and the arts – **St David's Hall and Wales Millennium Centre; BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Welsh National Opera.**



THE MUSIC OF  
**PETER  
MAXWELL  
DAVIES**

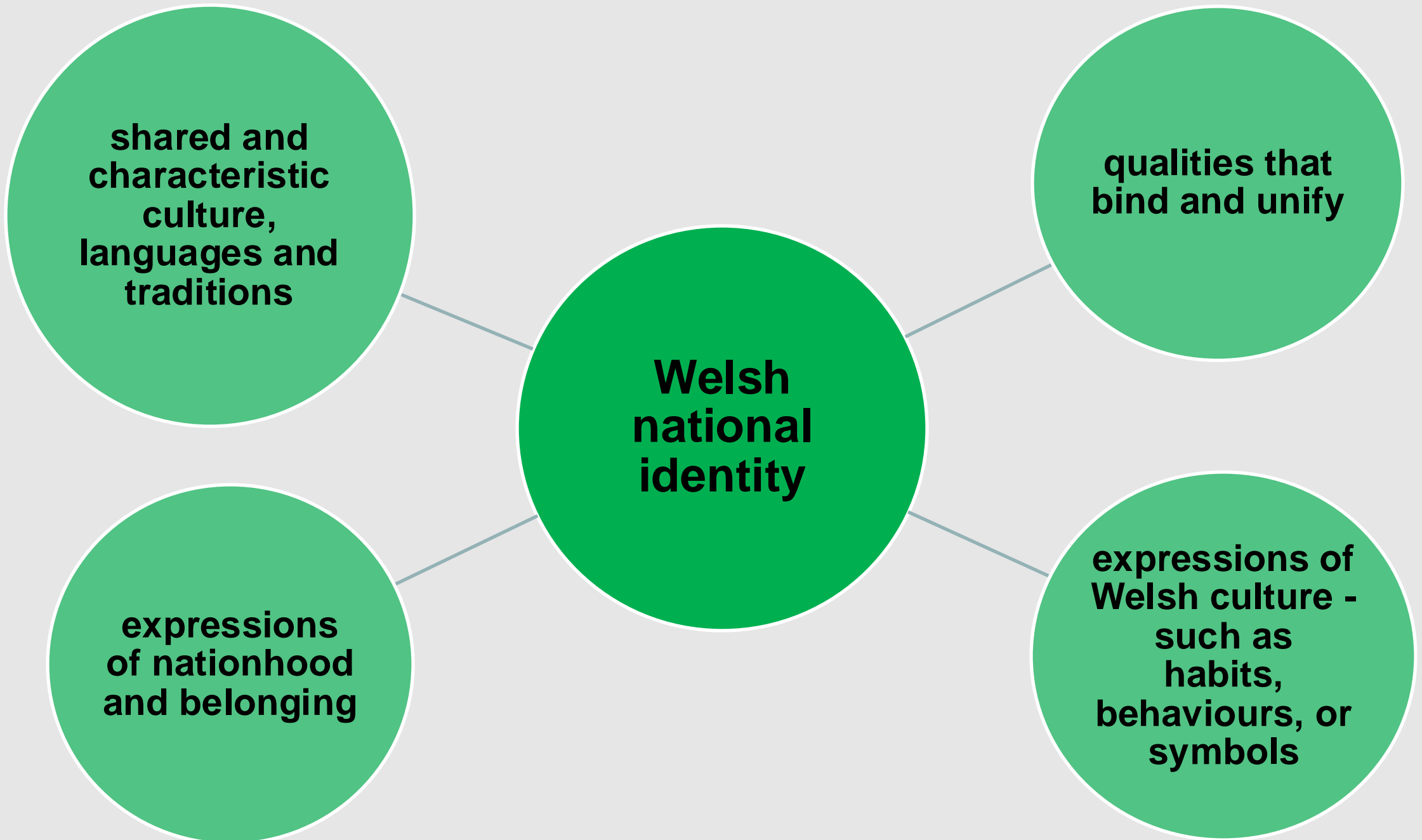


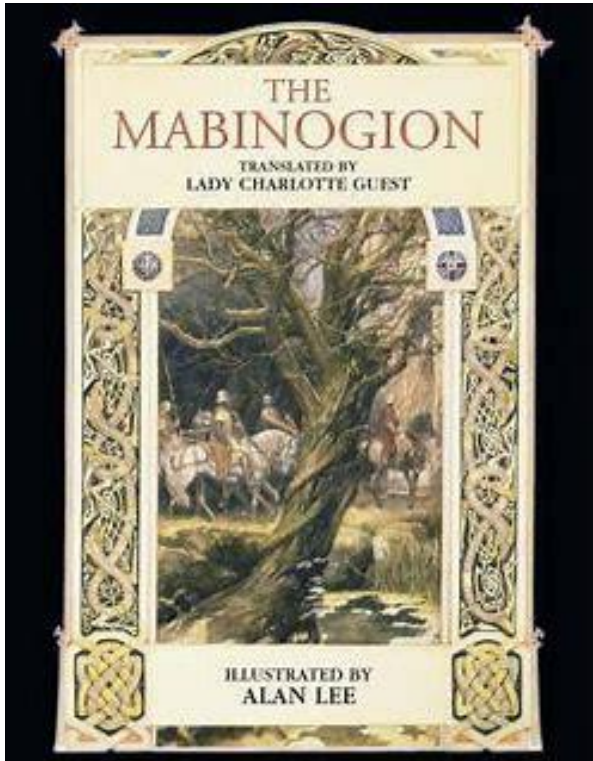
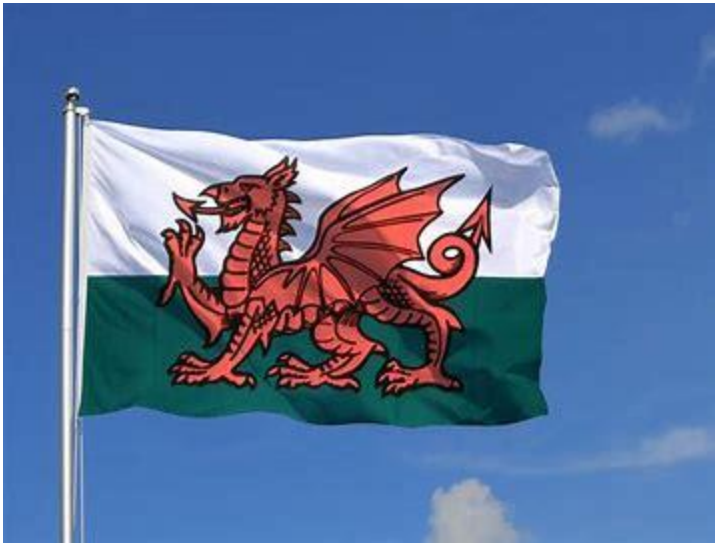
Nicholas Jones and Richard McGregor



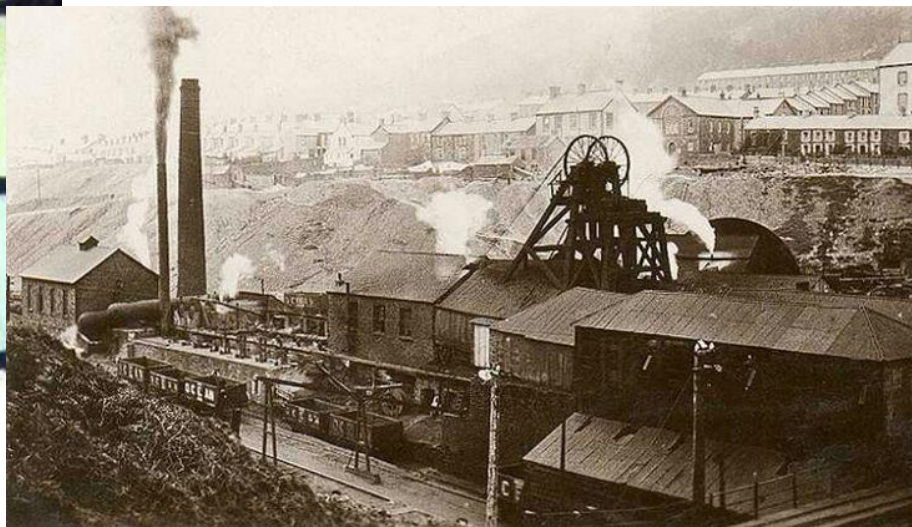
**Although identities are clearly about ‘who we think we are’ and ‘where we think we came from’, they are also about ‘where we are going’. National identities are always a narrative of the nation becoming; as much about ‘routes’ as they are about ‘roots’.**

**John Storey, ‘Becoming British’, in *Cambridge Companion to Modern British Culture* (2010), p. 13**









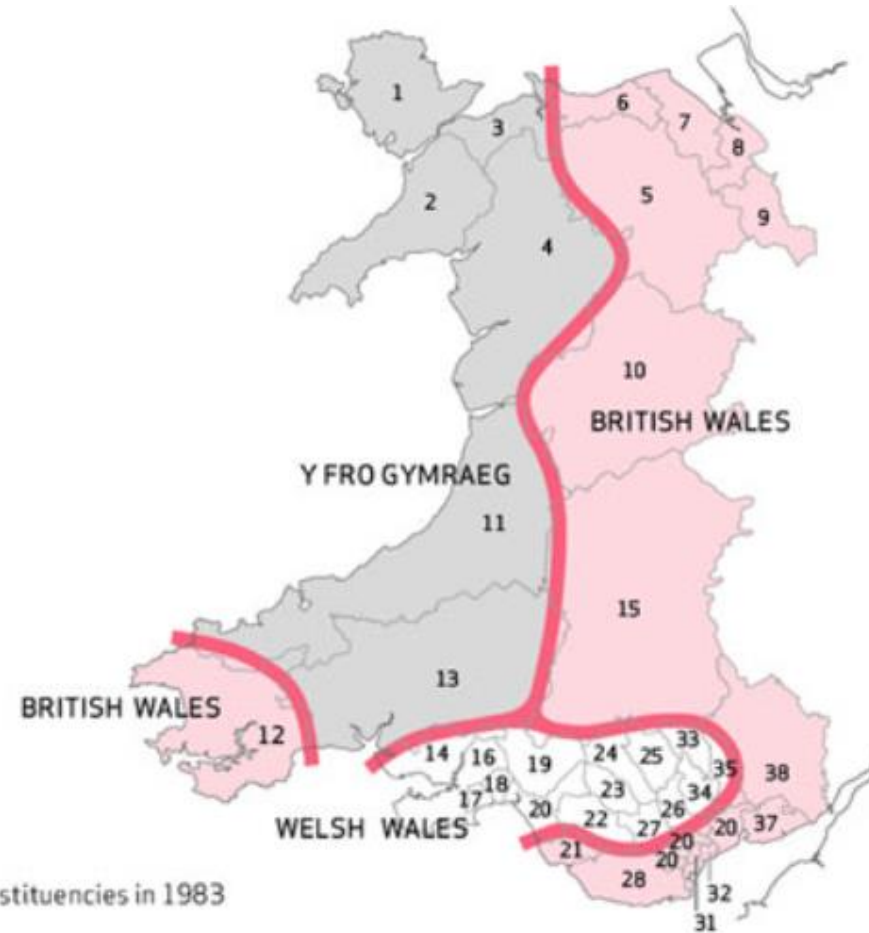


Despite the country's compact size, scholars of modern Wales have **frequently stressed the depth of its internal divisions and differences**, which mean that people living in different parts of the country face a range of contrasting conditions and experiences.

Hugh Mackay, *Contemporary Wales*  
(The Open University, 2012)

# Denis Balsom's 'three-Wales model' (in J. Osmond, (ed.) *The National Question Again*, Llandysul, Gomer, 1985)

- Two key measures: whether or not a person spoke Welsh, and whether or not they identified as 'Welsh', 'British', or something else.
- **Y Fro Gymraeg** = Welsh-speaking, Welsh identifying
- **Welsh Wales** = non-Welsh speaking, Welsh identifying
- **British Wales** = non-Welsh speaking, British identifying



The Constituencies in 1983

- |                                  |                               |                              |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Ynys Mon                       | 14 Llanelli                   | 27 Pontypridd                |
| 2 Caernarfon                     | 15 Brecon and Radnor          | 28 Vale of Glamorgan         |
| 3 Conway                         | 16 Gower                      | 29 Cardiff West              |
| 4 Meirionnydd Nant Conwy         | 17 Swansea West               | 30 Cardiff North             |
| 5 Clwyd South-West               | 18 Swansea East               | 31 Cardiff Central           |
| 6 Clwyd North-West               | 19 Neath                      | 32 Cardiff South and Penarth |
| 7 Delyn                          | 20 Aberavon                   | 33 Blaenau Gwent             |
| 8 Alyn and Deeside               | 21 Bridgend                   | 34 Islwyn                    |
| 9 Wrexham                        | 22 Ogmore                     | 35 Torfaen                   |
| 10 Montgomery                    | 23 Rhondda                    | 36 Newport West              |
| 11 Ceredigion and Pembroke North | 24 Cynon Valley               | 37 Newport East              |
| 12 Pembroke                      | 25 Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney | 38 Monmouth                  |
| 13 Carmarthen                    | 26 Caerphilly                 |                              |



**Grace Williams**

***Fantasia on Welsh Nursery  
Tunes (1940)***

## **Three key preoccupations shared by all four composers:**

1. An awareness and pride in Wales's history, mythology and ancient traditions.
2. A love for the Welsh landscape.
3. A deep affection for the native homeland, including a sense of place, belonging and rootedness.



Photo: Lawrence White

The work sets text by an unknown Welsh-American slate quarryman which speaks of the poet's love of his country of origin, perhaps, even, his longing to return. It is this sense of longing for the homeland (in Welsh, *hiraeth*) which infuses the composition.

Hilary Tann, programme note,  
*Wales, Our Land*

For the Welsh, hiraeth is a very special word, and one that holds a particular significance and cultural meaning; however, it is a word that is notoriously difficult to translate adequately into English. Tann highlights two basic definitions: a love of, and sense of longing for, the Welsh homeland. But hiraeth embraces much more than this, and involves a complex combination of the notions of homesickness, nostalgia and melancholy, and a profound sense of loss or grief for a person or a landscape, or of a time or place that can never be recovered. The Welsh writer Roland Mathias has described the latter emotion as Gwlad-yr-Haf (the land of the summer), ‘the happy past from which we have come and to which we can never return’.

Nicholas Jones, ‘Composing Cymru: Welsh Art Music Since 1940’, in *A History of Welsh Music*, ed. Herbert, Clarke and Barlow (CUP, 2022)





*for Ann Griffiths*

# HIRAETH

GRACE WILLIAMS

**Andante poco dolente**

HARP



**Perthyn** (belonging)

**Cynefin** (the place where we feel we belong, where the landscapes and the people feel reassuringly familiar)

for 'Harriet'.

*Morfydd*  
FOUR WELSH IMPRESSIONS.

for Pianoforte.

I. 'Llanbrynmair.'

II. 'Glanraf.'

III. 'Nant-y-ffrith.'

IV. 'Beri Bwl.'

Morfydd Owen.

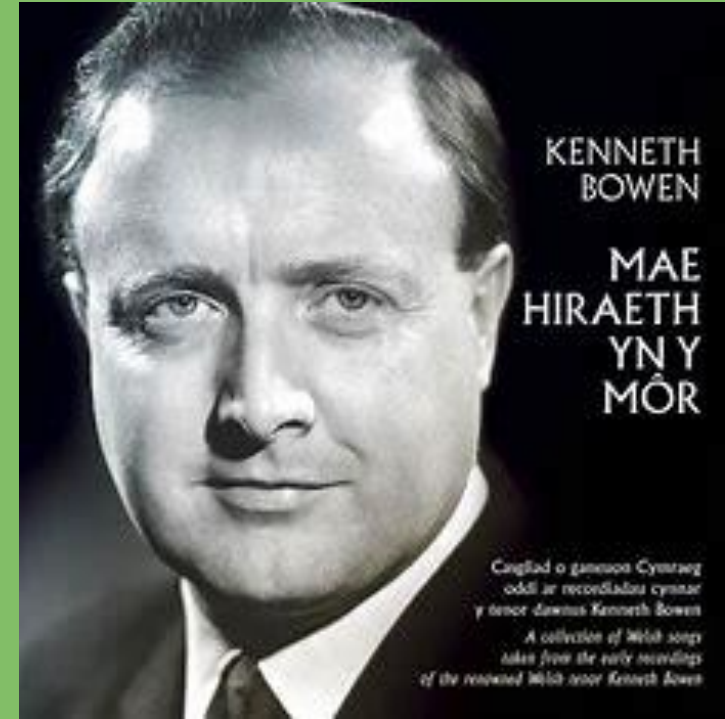
**Morfydd Owen**

***Four Welsh Impressions***  
**for solo piano**  
**(1914-15)**

(manuscript held in  
Morfydd Owen Archive,  
Special Collections,  
Cardiff University)

# Dilys Elwyn-Edwards

## ‘Mae Hiraeth yn y Môr’ (1962)



Mae hiraeth yn y môr a'r mynydd maith  
Mae hireath mewn distawrwydd ac mewn can  
Mewn murmur dyfroedd ar dragywydd daith  
Yn oriau'r machlud ac yn fflamau'r tan

There is longing in the sea and in the far mountain  
There is longing in silence and in song  
In the murmur of waters on an eternal journey  
In the hours of the sunset and in the flames of the fire