

EDWARD JONES – BARD Y BRENIN (1752-1824)

Brodor o Llandderfel, Sir Feirionnydd oedd Edward Jones, y cerddor, yr ysgolhaig, y casglwr athrylithgar a'r hynafiaethydd o Gymro y daethpwyd i'w adnabod fel Bardd y Brenin. Yn bedwerydd-anedig allan o naw o blant teulu o amaethwyr cefnog, ymroddodd yn ifanc i ddysgu'r delyn deires. Mae telyn deires yr honnir iddi gael ei saernio gan ei dad, i'w gweld hyd heddiw ymhlith creiriau Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru.

Paratowyd Edward Jones ar gyfer galwedigaeth gerddorol, ond roedd ganddo ddiddordebau eang eraill – mewn ieithoedd, barddoniaeth, llenyddiaeth a cherddoriaeth, mewn cadwriaeth, mewn casglu llawysgrifau a hynafiaethau, a chofnodi hen arferion brodorol. Adlewyrchir ei ddysgeidiaeth yn y 38 llyfr gosgeiddig, hardd a phwysig a gyhoeddwyd ganddo – gan fwyaf ar ei draul ei hun – rhwng 1778 a 1820.

Symudodd i Lundain ym 1775, a buan y daeth yn llwyddiannus yn nghylchoedd cerddorol y brifddinas, gan ennill parch ac edmygedd cerddorion amlwg ei ddydd, megis Burney, Abel, a 'Bach Llundain', sef Johann Christian Bach; ar yr un pryd daeth yn athro telyn ar amryw o bersonau bonheddig dylanwadol. Cymro arall, sef Thomas Jones (gynt o Langar, ger Corwen) oedd y Telynor Brenhinol ar y pryd, ac fe apwyntiwyd Edward Jones yn olynnydd iddo. Cyflwynwyd ei lyfr pwysicaf, sef ei 'argraffiad newydd' o *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards* (1794) i'w noddwr, Tywysog Cymru, ac o'r casgliad amhrisiadwy hwn y daw pump o'r trefniannau a gynhwysir yn y gyfrol bresennol. Pan esgynnodd George Augustus Frederick i'r orsedd, dyrchafwyd Edward Jones hefyd, a'i adnabod, o hyn ymlaen, fel Bardd y Brenin.

Fel hynafiaethydd a chasglwr brwd, roedd gan Edward Jones lyfrgell anferth a gwerthfawr, ond yn yr arwerthiant dridiau o'i eiddo a gynhaliwyd fis Chwefror 1825, fe werthwyd nid yn unig ei lyfrau, ond ei offerynnau cerddorol hefyd. Diddorol yw sylwi ei fod nid yn unig yn berchen ar grwth a phibgorn Cymreig, ond – ar wahân i'r delyn deires Gymreig ddisgwyliedig – ei fod yn berchen ar delyn bedal symudiad sengl o waith y gwneuthurwr Ffrengig Holtzmann. Dengys hyn ei fod yn wir gynrychiolydd yr oes y bu fyw drwyddi, a'i waith yn gyfrwng pontio'r agendor rhwng cyfnod clasurol y ddeunawfed ganrif, a'r cyfnod ôl-chwyldroadol ramantaidd a fodolai ddechrau'r bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg – rhwng yr hen delyn deires ar y naill law, a'r delyn bedal ar y llall. Mae'r gweithiau a gyflwynir yn y gyfrol hon yn gweddu – fel y buasai Edward Jones yn ei ddymuno - i'r naill offeryn fel y llall. Gellir eu canu'n ogystal ar y delyn geltaidd.

Edward Jones, Bardd y Brenin (The King's Bard) was born into an affluent farming family in Llandderfel, Meirionethshire. The fourth of nine children, he began harp lessons at an early age, most probably on a triple harp said to have been made by his father, and which can still be seen in the collection of the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth. Always intended for the musical profession, he nonetheless had wide-ranging interests in antiquities, languages, poetry, literature and music, and in the conservation and collection both of ancient manuscripts and of traditional folk customs. His erudition is reflected in the 38 important and elegant folio editions he published – largely at his own expense - between 1778 and 1820.

*Settling in London in 1775, he moved in the best musical circles, earning the respect and admiration of such eminent musicians as Dr Charles Burney, Karl Friedrich Abel, and Johann Christian Bach, and teaching members of several influential aristocratic families. He succeeded Thomas Jones as Royal Harpist, and his most important book, *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards*, which he describes as an 'attempt to save from oblivion the remaining vestiges of the Bards', was published in 1794, and dedicated to 'His Royal Highness, George Augustus Frederick, Prince of Wales'. When the Prince came to the throne as George IV, Edward Jones became known as *The King's Bard*.*

The sale of Edward Jones's large and valuable library, along with that of his musical instruments, took place almost a year after his death, on 7 February, 1825. The instruments sold included a Welsh crwth and a pibgorn, but especially interesting is the fact that he owned not only the expected Welsh triple harp, but also a single-action pedal harp built by Holtzmann, the eminent French harp maker. Thus, he emerges as a man of his time, and a true representative of the age in which he lived, bridging the gap between the classical period of the eighteenth century, and the burgeoning post-revolutionary romantic movement of the early nineteenth century – between the old triple harp on the one hand, and the new pedal harp on the other. The pieces published in the present volume are equally suitable for triple harp or pedal harp, and – as Edward Jones intended - can be played on either instrument. They are also playable on the non-pedal harp.

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