

Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau:
Wales' National Anthem – its history and how to sing it ☺

An illustrated lecture presented by Dulais Rhys, Ph.D

It is said that a national anthem is a reflection of the country and its people: the revolutionary fervor of France's *La Marseillaise*, the dramatic nationalism of Italy's *Inno di Mameli*, the historic passion of *The Star-Spangled Banner*. But what of *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*, the national anthem of Wales?

One advantage of *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*, compared to other anthems (such as *The Star-Spangled Banner*) is that it is among the easiest to sing. Some anthro-musicologists also believe (and who am I to disagree?) that *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* is the anthem that's always sung *con gusto* - with the greatest passion, fervor and emotion. Even those who do not speak Welsh are not unmoved by the inherent power and sentiment of singing the words of one of Europe's oldest living languages: *Cymraeg*.

This presentation outlines the history and development of Wales' national anthem; from its humble beginnings as a song, written in 1856 by father and son Evan and James James of Pontypridd, to its increasing popularity and eventual acceptance by Welsh people as a superior and more relevant replacement for the era's existing 'national anthem': *God Bless the Prince of Wales*.

While *The Star-Spangled Banner* is performed in a variety of styles, versions and arrangements, *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* is almost always performed in one 'traditional' way. But even Welsh musical purists appreciate Welsh rocker Tich Gwilym's 1978 electric guitar version of the anthem, which paid homage to Jimi Hendrix's famous Woodstock rendition of *The Star-Spangled Banner*.

Though (to date), never officially adopted as its national anthem, *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* is accepted and performed worldwide as Wales' national song; except, disgracefully, when *Cymru* has no choice but to 'participate' (such as at the Olympics) under the 'Great Britain' or 'United Kingdom' banner and endure the tediousness and irrelevance of *God Save The Queen*. The fact that this is also the anthem of England speaks volumes ...

If you've ever wanted to sing *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau yn Gymraeg*, here's an ideal opportunity to learn how to say and sing the words from a Welsh-speaking professional musician, so that you too can experience the thrill, passion and emotion that every Welsh person feels as s/he sings: 'O bydded i'r heniaith barhau.' [May the old language live forever]

You'll never 'do a John Redwood' again! (to be explained)

DURATION: c1 hour

FEE: \$275.00

EXPENSES: a contribution toward travel costs is appreciated.

Thank you for considering my proposal and please contact me for more information.

Sincerely,

Dulais Rhys, Ph.D

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REFERENCES, RECOMMENDATIONS & REVIEWS

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