

EXPRESSIVE ARTS / HUMANITIES · YEAR 3–6

Corau Meibion Cymru

Welsh Male Voice Choirs — Years 3–6

The choral tradition in Wales

1

Côr meibion

Male voice choir. A tradition rooted in the industrial valleys of south Wales — miners singing together after shifts. Now found throughout Wales.

2

Origins

The tradition grew in the 19th century in the South Wales Valleys. Non-conformist chapel culture provided rehearsal space and religious repertoire. The connection between faith, community, and music was profound.

3

Treorchy Male Choir

Founded 1883 in the Rhondda. One of the most famous choirs in the world. Has performed for royalty and at major international events. Won the BBC Choir of the Year competition.

4

Morrison Orpheus Choir

Founded 1935 in Swansea. Known for television broadcasts. Performed at the opening of the National Assembly for Wales (1999).

5

The National Eisteddfod choral competition

The national choral competition at the Eisteddfod is one of the most prestigious in the world. Choirs from across Wales and internationally compete.

6

Hwyl

The Welsh word for feeling/spirit/enthusiasm — used particularly for the emotional quality of Welsh singing. A choir that has hwyl performs with genuine emotional depth.

Example: HOO-il



Welsh people sing

The cultural roots of a national

- CHAPELS: Non-conformist chapels (Baptist, Methodist, Congregational) were central to valley life. They had excellent acoustics, regular rehearsals, and committed congregations.
- COMMUNITY: the choir was the valley community in musical form. Every man in a pit village might be in the choir.
- THE EISTEDDFOD: competitive choral singing at the Eisteddfod created a culture of excellence and pride.
- FAMOUS WELSH VOICES: Tom Jones (Pontypridd), Shirley Bassey (Barry), Katherine Jenkins (Neath), Bryn Terfel (Porthmadog), Charlotte Church (Cardiff). Wales produces extraordinary voices.
- CLASSROOM SINGING: the research is clear — regular group singing improves wellbeing, builds community, and develops musical confidence. Every class can sing.
- CANEUON GWERIN: Welsh folk songs like 'Calon Lân' (Clean Heart), 'Ar Lan y Môr' (On the Seashore), and 'Myfanwy' are accessible for classroom singing.

