

## Edgar Evans (1912-2007)

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Edgar Evans was discovered singing Loch Lomond in a pub in London whilst on a rugby trip. After securing singing lessons with a teacher from the Royal College of Music he went on to break records for playing more roles than anyone at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.



Born in Cwrtnewydd, Cardiganshire in 1912, the son of Margaret and William Evans, a farmer, and the youngest - by eight years - of 13 children, Edgar heard the voice of Enrico Caruso over the radio at the age of eight. From then on his only and all-embracing ambition was to be a singer, despite his father's ambitions for him to become a banker or an architect.

Completely untaught, Edgar practised both 'preaching' in the declamatory 'Welsh chapel' style and singing in a barn-cumboilerhouse on the farm.

As a boy, he was always being told that he sang too loudly. Only his mother encouraged him to sing by saying that his voice had a 'ring' to it unlike those of the rest of his family - and, indeed, anyone else in his home community in Cwrt Newydd.

Having failed dismally as a singer in the local Eisteddfod when aged 11, Edgar - then aged 17 - improved enough to steal the show at an end of term concert at his secondary school.

He went on to win various prizes at local Eisteddfodau as a baritone.

The opportunity to take up singing professionally came when this, by now, artiled pupil to the County Architect was heard singing 'Loch Lomond' in a pub, called The Irish House, Piccadilly, while on a rugby trip to London in 1935.

The 'talent scout' took him by taxi to The Odd Spot nightclub in London's West End, from where he was referred to Arthur Fagg, conductor of The London Choral Society, who knew Dawson Freer, a singing teacher at the Royal College of Music.

One week later, Edgar became a pupil of Freer's - who began by telling him that he sang too loudly!

In all, he sang some 45 roles - most of them major ones - at Covent Garden from 1946 - when, as one of its three principal tenors, he became a founder member of the Covent Garden Opera Company - to his retirement in 1975. In that time, he sang more roles and more performances at the Opera House than any other artist.

He is best remembered for creating the role of Hermann in

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