

*'Musicke bye Voice and Instrument':  
Patrons and Players in Late Medieval and Early  
Modern Wales*

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The title of this article derives from a letter written in 1597 to John Wynn (1533–1627), head of the great Welsh house of Gwydir in the Conwy Valley.<sup>1</sup> Wynn's attorney, Thomas Martyn, and his brother, Ellis Wynn, had recently been exploring the matter of a suitable English school for the eldest Wynn son (also John), and were now commending Bedford.<sup>2</sup> Here the curriculum included not only classical and modern languages (Greek, Hebrew, Latin grammar, French and Italian) and 'the preceptes of religion', but also 'musicke bye voice and Instrument' – evidently the full gamut of accomplishments required of a young gentleman at the end of the sixteenth century. With English by now enforced as the language of justice and administration in Wales, a good English schooling of this nature had also become virtually *de rigueur* for the landed Welsh. A spell at one of the universities or the Inns of Court often followed, and a number of gentlemen returned home to Wales with a passion for English culture in all its manifestations, including music. Several Welsh households accordingly set out to acquire viols, lutes, virginals, and books of music from England; some even took pains to engage resident English music tutors and English instrumentalists.

The model of musical patronage in early modern Wales is nevertheless much less simple than it might appear, for in spite of these pronounced

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<sup>1</sup> Many of the themes addressed in this article — particularly those relating to patronage and the copying of bardic sources — are explored more fully in Sally Harper, *Music in Welsh Culture before 1650: A Study of the Principal Sources* (Aldershot, 2007). See also Sally Harper, 'Music in the Welsh Household c. 1580–1620', *Welsh History Review*, 21 (2003), 621–45, and three invaluable pioneering articles by John Gwynfor Jones, 'Cerdd a bonedd yng Nghymru 1540–1640: rhai argraffiadau', *Welsh Music*, 6 (1981), 22–33; 7 (1982), 25–40; 8 (1983), 30–47.

<sup>2</sup> The letter survives as NLW MS 9052E, f. [1], transcribed in *Records of Early Drama: Wales* [hereafter *REDW*], ed. David Klausner (Toronto, 2005), 67–8. See also *Calendar of Wynn (of Gwydir) papers, 1515–1690, in the National Library of Wales and elsewhere*, ed. John Ballinger, (London, 1926), 24.

Anglophile leanings, several affluent Welsh households continued to support a much more distinct indigenous musical culture well into the seventeenth century. This native music may loosely be defined as 'bardic', and its delivery relied on highly-trained professional instrumentalists, who worked in close partnership with the Welsh strict-metre poets. Musician and poet alike were regarded as skilled craftsmen, and were sometimes styled *gwŷr wrth gerdd* (literally 'men at their craft'); they followed a broadly comparable (and lengthy) apprenticeship, and belonged to the same hierarchical bardic order that shared some parallels with the craft guilds of the medieval trades. Professional craftsmen of this type made their living by travelling between the homes of the *uchelwyr*, the Welsh nobility, and in many cases, the partnership of patron, player and poet took on vital importance. A number of patrons took an active interest in music and poetry, attempting to master the complex rules of metre and measure, and in some cases copying out bardic lore.

By far the most significant witness to this indigenous (as opposed to imported) 'musicke by voice and instrument' patronized by the great Welsh houses is a manuscript of harp music written out in a highly concise – and unique – letter tablature by the Anglesey harper, Robert ap Huw (c.1580–1665), in about 1613.<sup>3</sup> It uses graphic icons to represent the many different types of idiosyncratic figuration required of the player (who used both fingertips and fingernails), and often resorts to abbreviated verbal instructions rather than giving the notation in full. Welsh instrumental music of this type seems always to have relied very largely on oral rather than written transmission, and it is doubly fortunate that the manuscript survives: the associated tablature system was probably devised no earlier than c.1560, and the popularity of the repertory itself had declined sharply by 1600. Robert ap Huw may even have compiled the anthology largely for the purposes of preservation rather than to play from it himself.

The term for this elevated bardic music was *cerdd dant* or 'the craft of the string', whose status was further underlined by its relationship with contemporary strict-metre poetry, known as *cerdd dafod* or 'the craft of the tongue'. The instruments of *cerdd dant* were the small portable harp with horsehair strings, often fitted with small pegs or brays (*gwrachiöd*) at the bottom of each string that produced a distinct buzzing sound, and the *crwth*, a form of bowed lyre, generally fitted with six strings. The *crwth* became

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<sup>3</sup> British Library MS Additional 14905. Two facsimiles are available: *Musica neu Beroriaeth: B.M. Additional MS 14905*, with preface by Henry Lewis (Cardiff, 1936), and *Musica: Llawysgrif Robert ap Huw / Musica: the Robert ap Huw Manuscript*, with preface by Wyn Thomas (Godstone, 1982). See also Osian Ellis, *The Story of the Harp in Wales* (Cardiff, 1991), 11–43, for a very clear discussion.

associated almost exclusively with a much lower class of musician during the later seventeenth century and eventually became obsolete, although it is currently enjoying something of a revival.<sup>4</sup> A finely-carved Welsh representation of both instruments survives on an early sixteenth-century cupboard front that probably originated in the household of a highly significant patron – Sir Rhys ap Thomas (1449–1525) of Carew Castle, Chamberlain and Justiciar of south Wales.<sup>5</sup>

### Patronage and hospitality

A great deal may be gleaned about the role of the noble patron as promoter and sustainer of the bardic crafts from the poets themselves. Iolo Goch (c.1325–c.1398), for instance, lavished praise in a famous *cywydd* on the court of Owain Glyndŵr at Sycharth, not far from Oswestry on the Shropshire border. For Iolo, this household was the epitome of order and refinement: it had its own vineyard, mill, bakehouse and fishpond; the content of its wardrobes matched the shops of Cheapside, and its cellars were stocked with best beer from Shrewsbury. Poets and musicians were welcomed here regularly, apparently in groups, and eight of them could be accommodated in four well-lit lofts crowned with tiled gables.<sup>6</sup> The mansion of Bachellttref in eastern mid-Wales, home to another liberal patron, Dafydd ap Cadwaladr, was also feted by two fourteenth-century poets for its universal welcome. Dafydd Bach ap Madog Wladaidd, also known as Sypyn Cyfeiliog (fl.1340–90), recalled the free-flowing liquor and sweetly-seasoned food served there each Christmas, when noble pedigrees were praised and ‘customary songs sung aloud’ to the sound of the strings,<sup>7</sup> and his near contemporary Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig similarly observed that this was a place worthy of the sound of harp

<sup>4</sup> Witness the CD recordings by Bragod, *Kaingk* (Robert Evans and Mary-Anne Roberts, privately produced, 2004), and Cass Meurig, *Crwth* (Fflach, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> The carving is now at Cothele House in Cornwall: it probably left Wales when the widowed daughter-in-law of Sir Rhys ap Thomas married her second husband, Piers Edgecombe of Cothele, in c.1524. See Peter Lord, *The Visual Culture of Wales: Medieval Vision* (Cardiff, 2003), 268–9, for reproduction and comment.

<sup>6</sup> ‘A’r pedair llofft o hoffer/ Yn gydgwplws lle cwsg clêr; Aeth y pedair disgleirlofft./ Nyth lwyth teg iawn, yn wyth lofft’ (‘And the four lofts of loveliness/ coupled together where the clêr sleep;/ the four bright lofts turned, a very fair nest load, into eight lofts’). Dafydd Johnston, *Iolo Goch: Poems* (Llandysul, 1993), 38–42 (parallel text version).

<sup>7</sup> ‘A llef gan dannau a llif gwirodau./ A llafar gerddau gorddyfnedig’; *Gwaith Dafydd Bach ap Madog Wladaidd ‘Sypyn Cyfeiliog’ a Llywelyn ab y Moel*, ed. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth, 1998), no. 1.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Lle gwir y telir talm dros gerddau./ Lle teilwng llef telyn a phibau’: *Gwaith Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen*, ed. D. R. Johnston (Aberystwyth, 1998), no. 1. See also the discussion of both poems in Patrick K. Ford, ‘Performance and Literacy in Medieval Welsh Poetry’, *The Modern Language Review*, 100 (2005), xxx–xlvi (xxxvi).

and pipes, where money was paid for songs.<sup>8</sup> Neither were liberal patrons of this nature invariably secular: Iolo Goch also praised the late fourteenth-century court of Ieuan, bishop of St Asaph, for its splendid poetry and harmonious *cerdd dant*, which he was able to enjoy from his privileged place as a guest at high table in the bishop's fine hall.<sup>9</sup>

But nowhere is the vital place of professional poet and musician within the noble household crystallized more clearly than in a retrospective account of the splendid Garter celebrations hosted by Sir Rhys ap Thomas at Carew Castle in April 1507.<sup>10</sup> Dinner, 'seasoned with diversitie of music', was taken in the spacious great hall, hung with Arras cloth and tapestries, while 'bardes and prydydd's (*sic*) accompanied by the harp' sang 'manie a song in commemoration of the virtues and famous achievements of those gentlemen's ancestors there present'. This public eulogizing of the nobility and their forebears at Carew neatly summarizes the task of virtually every professional bard in late medieval and early modern Wales, for a great deal of the surviving verse serves primarily to affirm pedigree and status by direct reference to the patron's genealogy and generosity. Indeed, that pride in Welsh ancestry, where pedigree was regarded as an indicator of true gentility, continued to shape the nature of patronage in Wales until well into the seventeenth century. Patrons were celebrated in eulogies, elegies, and greetings, all delivered in an environment where harp and crwth clearly provided an essential musical framework. One master crwth player, James Eaton, even left 3*s.* 4*d.* to his 'host' Robert ap John ap Kinnerike in 1570, and a further 12*d.* to the host's servant Katherine.<sup>11</sup>

### The intertwining of poetry and music in Wales

Little is known for certain about the practical partnership of voice and instrument in bardic circles, although Welsh vernacular poetry itself has strongly aural qualities, and most of it was evidently designed for performance before an audience rather than for private reading. In some instances the poet declaimed his own work while accompanying himself on the harp (as we know from the great Dafydd ap Gwilym, who describes the process of creating verse and music together at the harp in his *cywydd* 'Y Gainc'). However, professional reciters or *datgeiniaid*, who were paid to learn the poet's work by

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<sup>9</sup> 'Cerdd dafod ffræth hiraethlawn./ Cerdd dant, gogoniant a gawn' ('I would get eloquent, nostalgic poetry, string music, splendour'): Dafydd Johnston, *Iolo Goch: Poems*, 70–5. The bishop in question is probably Ieuan Trefor II, who held office from 1394 to 1404.

<sup>10</sup> An account of the tournament is found in the Life of Sir Rhys ap Thomas (c.1449–1525) written by his direct descendant Henry Rice (c.1590–c.1651). See *REDW*, 256–67.

<sup>11</sup> NLW, St Asaph Probate Records 1569/R.2, transcribed *REDW*, 182.

heart and declaim it publicly under his instruction, were also commonplace. The competence of such reciters varied: some (referred to as *datgeiniaid pen pastwn* or ‘stick-end declaimers’) seem only to have marked time with a staff, although others evidently acquired basic instrumental accompanying skills on the harp or crwth.<sup>12</sup> Some idea of the manner of poetic declamation may perhaps be gleaned from a late sixteenth-century representation of an Irish poet and musician performing before a patron, apparently accompanied by the professional – if thoroughly vulgar – ‘wind-players’ (*braigetoiri farters*) that flourished in medieval Ireland.<sup>13</sup> The music that accompanied such poetic declamation remains elusive, although it was probably very simple: it may have involved little more than the constant repetition of a simple pattern of chords, which provided a steady metrical ‘beat’ underpinning the natural accents of the poetry itself.<sup>14</sup> More complex solo pieces (including the majority of those in Robert ap Huw’s manuscript) were perhaps reserved for performance between poems or the sections of a poem, and were evidently played by specialist instrumentalists (of much higher status than the self-accompanying *datgeiniad*).

The formation of a more sophisticated independent musical repertory for harp and crwth may indeed have been encouraged by one of the most significant developments in Welsh vernacular poetry – the first flowering of the *cywydd deuair hirion*, that staple genre for poets of the Welsh nobility from the era of Dafydd ap Gwilym right up to the demise of the bardic order in the seventeenth century. The *cywydd* seems to have had a particularly close relationship with the musical craft, and the mid fourteenth-century poet Gruffudd Fychan ap Gruffudd ap Ednyfed, in seeking a harp from his patron Rhisiart ap Sir Rhosier Pilstwn, was even moved to exclaim:

Beth, ddifyr felenbleth ddynd,  
 A dalai wawd heb delynd?  
 Ba ddelw gellir, wir warant,  
 Ganu’n deg onid gan dant?  
 Cenais, pan ryglyddais glod,  
 Cywydd sengl, cuddiais anglod.

<sup>12</sup> For a description of the declaimer-instrumentalist, see *REDW* 164 (translation 354); the role of the *datgeiniad pen pastwn* himself is discussed in more detail in Siôn Dafydd Rhys, *Cambrobrytannicae Cymraecaeve Linguae Institutiones et Rvdimenta Accurate* (London, 1592). See also Gwyn Thomas, *The Caerwys Eisteddfodau* (Caerdydd, 1968), 64–7.

<sup>13</sup> John Derricke, *The Image of Irelande* (London, 1581; STC no. 6734). There are two facsimile editions: Edinburgh, A. & C. Black, 1883; Belfast, Blackstaff, 1985.

<sup>14</sup> This issue is explored more fully in Sally Harper, ‘Dafydd ap Gwilym: Poet and Musician’, *Dafydd ap Gwilym new edition*, ed. Dafydd Johnston, <http://dafyddapgwilym.swansea.ac.uk/>

[What, O yellow-plaited beauty  
Is a song without a harp to accompany?  
Truly, how can one even think to sing  
Without the weaving of her lovely strings?  
I sang a *cywydd* – a solo piece  
But instead of praise, I earned disgrace.]<sup>15</sup>

In due course the *cywydd* seems to have acquired its own associated musical repertory, for there are several tantalizing references from the later fifteenth century to a series of stock melodies called ‘main tunes’ or *prifgeinciau* (now surviving only as titles), which the *datgeiniad* was required to use when declaiming *cywyddau*.<sup>16</sup>

### The bardic lifestyle: circuiting between patrons

Many professional bardic craftsmen evidently travelled great distances between the houses of their patrons – a practice known as ‘circuiting’ (*clera*). The circuits of the poets themselves can often be mapped easily enough from their verse – Dafydd ap Gwilym, for instance, celebrated not only the house of Ifor Hael at Basaleg in south east Wales, but also locations in Cardiganshire, Anglesey and the Welsh Marches, while more than two centuries later, Rhys Cain (d.1614) kept a list of every house that he had visited in Flintshire and Denbighshire between Christmas and the feast of Corpus Christi, and the sum that he had been paid there.<sup>17</sup> Circuiting was governed by specific rules agreed between patron and bard, and a detailed account of good practice survives in that remarkable sixteenth-century tract known as the Statute of Gruffudd ap Cynan, which tells us a good deal about the bardic lifestyle.<sup>18</sup> In theory, no household was to be visited more than once every three years within one of the three official circuiting seasons: Christmas to Candlemas (2 February), Easter to Ascension, and Whitsun to ‘Relic Sunday’ (the first Sunday after 7 July), while Lent was set aside as the main period of bardic instruction, when apprentices remained with the master. There was also a set scale of fees (*rhoddion*),<sup>19</sup> and visits were organized with careful reference to a patron’s income. Although it was acceptable for a large group of entertainers to

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<sup>15</sup> *Gwaith Sefnyn, Rhisierydn, Gruffudd Fychan ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed a Llywarch Bentwrch*, ed. N. A. Jones and E. H. Rheinallt (Aberystwyth, 1995); no. 11; translation from Patrick K. Ford, ‘Performance and Literacy in Medieval Welsh Poetry’, xxxvii.

<sup>16</sup> One such list survives in NLW MS 17116B (Gwysaney 28), f. 70; see *REDW*, 280.

<sup>17</sup> NLW MS Peniarth 178, pt. ii (Hen MS 376), pp. 56–62. See *REDW*, 106–10 and 339–42, with notes on locations on pp. 414–6).

<sup>18</sup> The Statute survives in several different redactions. Two versions of the text are readily available in modern editions: BL MS Add. 19711 (*REDW*, 159–65; translated 349–56), and NLW MS Peniarth 158b, pp. 81–9 (copied c.1587) (*REDW*, 172–6, translated 360–4).

<sup>19</sup> Three examples of schedules of fees are given in *REDW*, 165–7, 182.

descend on the most affluent households, no more than one bard was to attend those of limited means. Musicians and poets received identical fees, although they varied in accordance with experience. A master craftsman or *pencerdd* might expect to receive 1s. on circuit and his apprentice 8d., although a lowly novice was entirely dependent on the patron's goodwill for reward. Annual payments were also made to all bards four times a year, and there were set rates for attending weddings, producing *cywyddau* or preparing pedigrees.

Little direct evidence of the circuits made by the musicians themselves survives, although in many cases player and poet clearly travelled together in pairs or groups. Indeed, it seems to have been commonplace for a mixed group of *gwŷr wrth gerdd* to descend on a patron over Christmas and stay for a few days. During the mid sixteenth century for instance, the master harper (and poet) Wiliam Penllyn (fl.1550–70) was welcomed at households as far apart as Kidwelly and Moeliwrch, the second located a few miles west of Oswestry. Wiliam arrived here with eight or nine other musicians (a mix of harp and crwth players) one year 'when Christmas Day fell on a Friday' (probably 1562).<sup>20</sup> A group of five craftsmen similarly attended the great house of Lleweni – home to one of the most influential families in Denbighshire – over Christmas 1555, while a group of thirteen entertained the same family in c. 1595 (discussed in the final section of this article).<sup>21</sup> The 1555 gathering comprised two poets and three musicians, who between them received a total payment of £2. 8s. 8d., perhaps reflecting a *séjour* of some ten days (bearing in mind that a master craftsman received 1s. for a single visit). A slightly later set of accounts – covering the full circuiting season from Christmas 1594 to 5 February 1595 – also survives from another household, that of Prysaeddfed, near Bodedern on Anglesey.<sup>22</sup> This reveals craftsmen mostly operating more modestly in pairs: John Phillips, poet, and Richard Humffrey Gogh, harper, worked together on 4 January; Ryse *datgeiniad* with John Mers, harper, on 10 January; and Hugh Penant, poet, with William ap Ednyfed, *crythor*, on 27 January. Every one of the poets listed was partnered by an accompanying musician, although the most generous payment (3s.) went to a crwth player called Gwas Tew who apparently worked alone. At the other end of the scale 'a boye of llan ythysante bing harper' received just 6d.; this lad was almost certainly the harper-copyist Robert ap Huw, then aged about fifteen, who grew up not far from Prysaeddfed. Robert ap Huw also appears in the records of the Great Sessions in 1600, though in less auspicious circumstances. This time he seems to have been on circuit in the Vale of Clwyd, but had fallen foul of the

<sup>20</sup> NLW MS Peniarth 103, p. 66, transcribed *REDW*, 157 (translation 347).

<sup>21</sup> NLW MS Wynnstey 92, f. 97v; *REDW*, 152.

<sup>22</sup> NLW MS Add. 14918, f. 9v (*REDW*, 52–3); see also Dafydd Wyn Wiliam, *Robert ap Huw (1580–1665)* (Dinbych, 1975), 28–9.

law on several counts; he had stolen a petticoat and some cooking pots from one house, and abducted the patron's daughter elsewhere.<sup>23</sup>

### Eisteddfod patrons

Earning a living as a professional bardic musician was far from straightforward, for musician and poet alike were in constant danger of being undermined by casual minstrels and strolling entertainers who also circuited between houses from at least the fifteenth century. As a result, rigorous structures were introduced to bolster the quality and continuity of the traditional crafts, enforced by public eisteddfodau designed to bring discipline and rigour. As is well known, eisteddfodau of great significance were held at Carmarthen in about 1452 and at the small town of Caerwys, Flintshire in 1523 and 1567 respectively. All three were sponsored by noble patrons, emphasizing that continuing role of the gentry as champions of the bards.

The 1523 eisteddfod was of particular importance, and it was apparently for this event that the Statute of Gruffudd ap Cynan was compiled. The Statute addresses not only the rules of circuiting and payment outlined above, but also includes detailed requirements of the musical or poetic repertory that defined the progression of bardic apprentices. Further, it names the five commissioners who presided at the eisteddfod that year – a group comprising three prominent noblemen and two poets who provided 'personal counsel'. There was no specialist musician, although one of the poets, Tudur Aled (c.1465–c.1525), was allegedly a skilled harper in his own right. The senior eisteddfod commissioner, Richard ap Howel ab Ieuan Fychan, was squire of the great house of Mostyn not far from Caerwys, and evidently selected his committee with care: Sir William Gryffydd of Penrhyn was father-in-law to Richard's son, Thomas Mostyn, while Richard's daughter, Janet, was married to the second poet-commissioner, Gruffydd ab Ieuan ap Llywelyn Fychan (c.1485–1553) of Llannerch, near Denbigh. The Mostyn family also donated a still-extant silver trophy known as the *ariandlws*, which was to be awarded to the best harp player; the existence of this harp-shaped badge was known even to John Leland, who mentions it in his *Itinerary* of 1534–43,<sup>24</sup> and it was subsequently re-awarded at the second Caerwys eisteddfod of 1567.

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<sup>23</sup> NLW Great Sessions Gaol Files 4/11/4/14–15, c.1600, transcribed REDW, 292–8. See also Nia Watkin Powell, 'Robert ap Huw: A Wanton Minstrel of Anglesey', *Welsh Music History / Hanes Cerddoriaeth Cymru*, 3 (1999), 5–29 (Welsh, 30–53).

<sup>24</sup> 'Hoele a gentilman of Flyntshir that by auncient accustume was wont to gyue the bagge of the syluer harpe to the best harper of north walys, as by a priuilege of his auncetors, dwellith at Penrine yn Flyntshir.' John Leland, *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1536–1539*, ed. L. T. Smith, 5 vols. (London, 1906, repr. 1964), VI, 92–3;



The 1567 eisteddfod itself had an even larger team of auspicious patrons, comprising twenty-one gentlemen drawn from the five shires of north Wales. Among them were Richard ap Howel's grandson, William Mostyn MP (1521–76), High Sheriff of Caernarfonshire (who claimed specific responsibility for the 'furnytur and thinges necessary'), Sir Richard Bulkeley (d.1621) of Beaumaris, Sir Rees Griffith (d.1580) of Penrhyn, and Dr Ellis Price (1512?–94?), the Cambridge-educated doctor of law and a member of the Council of the Marches. The eisteddfod also had the official backing of a royal commission, authorized at Chester in the name of Elizabeth I, which emphasized the need to cull the ever-increasing numbers of 'vagraunt and idle persons naming themselves mystrelles Rithmers and Barthes'.<sup>25</sup> The presiding gentlemen were accordingly encouraged to draw on 'such expert men in the said facultie of the welshe musick' to assist them in awarding bardic degrees to those who genuinely deserved them.

### Patrons as copiers and disseminators of text

A bardic patron could also function as something rather more than a magnanimous sponsor or welcoming host. Some played an important role in the dissemination of bardic texts, even at a time when the circulation of written material was guarded jealously by the *gwŷr wrth gerdd* themselves, who were dependent on retaining control over their work to make a living. In this respect even the *datgeiniad* himself was sometimes not to be completely trusted, and the Denbighshire poet Wiliam Cynwal (d. 1587/8) prefaced a section of his copy of the theoretical bardic grammar with words of warning: 'I am now going to discuss rules and these should only be passed by word of mouth from teacher to teacher because many of them are secret and should not be shared among everyone'.<sup>26</sup> Some respected patrons were nevertheless privy to these 'secret rules', and were evidently allowed to copy directly from texts supplied by bards. Indeed, the earliest extant material pertaining to *cerdd dant* was copied around 1500 by an unknown patron from Breconshire, and survives in three related anthologies of poetry. The 'musical' element of each book comprises no more than three isolated inventories, each one added in the patron's rather cramped hand: NLW MS Peniarth 55 contains a list of twenty-two tune titles, while Peniarth MSS 54 and 60 both include a different version of the 'measures' of *cerdd dant* – the simple binary patterns (shown as numerical or alphabetical symbols) that underpinned the musical repertory

<sup>25</sup> The original commission is lost. See *REDW*, 170–1, for transcription.

<sup>26</sup> 'Bellach yr ysbysw'n am rrwls ac ni ddylai yrhain fod ond ar dafod leferydd o athro i athro o herwydd kyfrinach yw llawer o honyn ac ni ddylyn fod Rwnng pawb'. *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid*, ed. G. J. Williams and E. J. Jones (Caerdydd, 1934), lii.

and controlled its overall structure.<sup>27</sup> The patron also oversaw the writing-out of the poetry itself, and his three anthologies reflect that general trend apparent from the end of the fifteenth century, whereby those with a keen amateur interest in the bardic crafts were increasingly persuading poets to write out their work.<sup>28</sup> In this case, the patron seems also to have been a would-be poet himself (although not a very talented one): a group of anonymous *cywyddau* found in Peniarth 60 – all characterized by mediocrity and poor orthography – almost certainly represent his own work. Quite possibly the author was a late learner, for two marginal notes in Peniarth 54 (which contains autograph poems by reputable poets such as Rhys Brychan and Dafydd Epynt) urge the user to ‘learn’ the book. The first reads ‘This book is the book of bardic lore. Whoever would [learn] poetry should try in this and he will get it well’; and the second ‘Whoever would learn *cerdd dafod* would learn this book diligently’.<sup>29</sup> The patron’s decision to include lists of musical measures and titles within all three of his anthologies strongly suggests that the rules of *cerdd dant* were regarded as an essential part of that bardic ‘lore’; indeed, the inventories apparently serve as some sort of appendix to the poems found in the main body of each manuscript, and were perhaps intended as an aide-memoire for the patron to follow the associated music when the poems were declaimed publicly.

Some sixty years later, another anonymous patron, apparently from somewhere in north east Wales, copied out a much more extensive collection of documentation pertaining to *cerdd dant*. This survives as NLW MS 17116B (Gwysaney 28), copied c.1562. Again the copyist seems to have been an aspiring gentleman poet, and again he probably drew on texts supplied directly by bards. He wrote a good secretary hand and ordered his material carefully: the first part of his book is taken up with a copy of the heraldic treatise, *Llyfr Arfau* and an associated armorial, while the second part is devoted almost exclusively to music, the material divided carefully according to its association with either harp or crwth. Here we find historical lore; musical

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<sup>27</sup> See *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language*, by J. Gwenogvryn Evans for the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (London, 1898–1910), I, 409–20 (Peniarth 54); 421–5 (Peniarth 55); 437–40 (Peniarth 60). MSS Peniarth 54 and 55 may also be viewed digitally at <http://www.llgc.org.uk/drych/>. All three sources are inscribed ‘liber Iohannis lewis’ (John Lewis of Llynwene, d.1616). I am most grateful to Daniel Huws for advising me on these three manuscripts.

<sup>28</sup> For a fuller exploration of this phenomenon, see Daniel Huws, ‘The Transmission of a Welsh Classic: Dafydd ap Gwilym’, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Cardiff, 2000), 84–103.

<sup>29</sup> ‘llyfr y kyfrwyddyd yw hwnn. Pwy bynac a vynno kerdd keised yn hwnn ac ef ei keiff yn dda’ (p.21); ‘Pwy bynnac a vynno dyscy kerdd davod dysged y llyfr hwnn yn ddyval’ (p.179): both cited by Daniel Huws, ‘The Transmission of a Welsh Classic’, 96.

theory; lists of pieces, measures, and eisteddfod winners; and a lengthy poetic *awdl* by Siôn Tudur addressed to one ‘Emli’, carefully marked up with the names of the various poetic metres – apparently a didactic resource drawn from a poet whom the patron admired.<sup>30</sup> The exact provenance of the manuscript remains elusive, though it may well have originated at Llannerch, home to Gruffydd ab Ieuan, one of the two commissioner-poets at the 1523 Caerwys eisteddfod; it may even have been assembled by one of Gruffydd’s two gentleman sons, drawing on material from the famous Llannerch library.<sup>31</sup>

Some of the musical material found in Gwysaney 28 was also copied into another contemporary anthology of indigenous lore, though this time one compiled by a poet – Gruffudd Hiraethog – in about 1561.<sup>32</sup> The manuscript is a typical bardic miscellany, and includes a set of proverbs, lists of the twenty-four ‘feats’ and the nine types of hunting, a *lapidarium* or essay on specific precious stones, and a vocabulary of obsolete words; there is also a copy of the Statute of Gruffudd ap Cynan and various lists of pieces and musical measures. Once again the anthology has a very direct association with a patron, despite its bardic copyist: it is dedicated to another member of the auspicious Mostyn family – Richard, grandson of Richard ap Hywel (senior commissioner at Caerwys in 1523), and brother to William Mostyn (commissioner in 1567). Richard Mostyn himself was owner of Bodysgallen near Llandudno, but resided mostly in England; Gruffudd Hiraethog’s intention was evidently that the book should prevent him (and other Welshmen similarly living in exile) from forgetting his own cultural tradition, not least at a period when English cultural practice was beginning to have an ever-increasing hold.

### The Changing Climate of Patronage: English Music and Poetry

The implications of this period of cultural change are nowhere witnessed more clearly than within the Denbighshire household of Lleweni, already noted for its bardic patronage. During the Elizabethan period Lleweni was home to the Welsh-speaking courtier and minor English poet John Salusbury

<sup>30</sup> This is the earliest known source of the *awdl*, predating the other three sources listed in *Gwaith Siôn Tudur*, ed. Enid Pierce Roberts (Bangor, 1978), ii, 740–3.

<sup>31</sup> See H. D. Emanuel, ‘The Gwysaney Manuscripts’, *National Library of Wales Journal*, 7 (1951–2), 326–43, and T. A. Glenn, *The Family of Griffith of Garn and Plasnewydd in the Country of Denbigh* (London, 1934).

<sup>32</sup> NLW MS Peniarth 155, pt. 1, pp. 2–169. For description, see *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language*, i, 938–40, and *Gwaith Gruffudd Hiraethog*, ed. D. J. Bowen (Caerdydd, 1990), cii–ciii.

(1566/7–1612), who was elected Esquire of the Body to Elizabeth I in 1595 and received a knighthood in 1601.<sup>33</sup> As we have seen, Lleweni had always welcomed *gwŷr wrth gerdd* in significant numbers, and one Christmas during the 1590s a large group of thirteen musicians and poets came to the house. Their names survive on folio 73<sup>v</sup> of the Bangor manuscript Gwyneddon 4, and it is notable that the musicians outweigh the poets by four to one. Three are labelled specifically as ‘prydydd’, four as ‘telynor’, and two as ‘crythor’, while the other four may be identified from other sources: Lewis Penmon played the crwth, while Thomas ap Richard, John Llivon and (Robert) Peilin were all harpers. Yet despite its evident proclivity for bardic culture, the Lleweni household had simultaneously been embracing fashionable English-style entertainment for at least twenty years by this period. A family anthology in Christ Church, Oxford contains two poems from an English masque devised to celebrate the wedding in 1586 of John Salusbury to Ursula Stanley, daughter of the Earl of Derby, together with an undated poem for a ‘merriment of christmas’ by Robert Chester (fl. c.1586–1604), probably a secretary or household chaplain. Both items suggest that impromptu dramatic entertainment in the English manner was by no means uncommon on special occasions.<sup>34</sup> Chester’s festive text was apparently preceded by music (it begins ‘Sheperds be silent and our musick cease’) and probably led into communal dancing: ‘a homely cuntry hornepipe; A sheapheards prety Gigg; and A madingall or roundelay’.

A glimpse of the music that may have graced nuptial or Christmas entertainments of this type is suggested by a second scrap of evidence from Lleweni – an inventory of some eighty tunes that survives in the same Gwyneddon manuscript that records the names of the thirteen bards who visited the household in the 1590s. The list is effectively an anthology of Elizabethan musical ‘hits’: many of the best-known English ballad and dance tunes are found here, including ‘fourtune’, ‘grine slifes’, ‘donne right [downright] squier’, and ‘loth to depart’. Many of the tunes still survive in various guises in English sources, some as simple settings in amateur lute books, others in consort arrangements or as country dance tunes. One title, ‘mistres wite his choyse’, is clearly the solo lute piece written for an unknown Mrs White by John Dowland in the 1580s, and Dowland may also have been responsible for the otherwise unknown items entitled ‘the countese of lester

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<sup>33</sup> For fuller exploration of music at Lleweni, see Sally Harper, ‘An Elizabethan Tune List from Lleweni Hall, North Wales’, *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle*, 39 (2005), 45–98.

<sup>34</sup> Oxford, Christ Church MS 184, part transcribed in *Poems by Sir John Salusbury and Robert Chester*, ed. Carleton Brown, EETS, Extra Series, 113 (London, 1914). Chester’s poem appears on p. 19; the masque fragments on pp. 36–7.

dunp' and 'mistres shandoes good night'. Courtly items such as these would probably have been beyond the reach of the harp and crwth players who came to the house during the late 1590s, not least because of the limited potential of their instruments. But at the same time, we should not assume that Welsh bardic musicians ignored this new popular repertory, and several popular Elizabethan tunes of smaller range can indeed be adapted successfully to the harp or crwth.<sup>35</sup>

One other group of items within the Lleweni list also holds particular fascination – some nine or ten titles associated with the Elizabethan stage jig, performed as a comic afterpiece to the main play. This improvised song-and-dance form was popularized by that renowned comic actor Richard Tarlton (d.1588), who gave his name to two tunes in the list, 'tarlton trunke hose' and 'tarlton is buten cape'. While these titles evidently refer generally to Tarlton's characteristic clowning habit, others suggest associations with specific jiggs, whose plots were published posthumously in the early seventeenth century. 'Goe to bed sweet hart & I will com to thee', for instance, comes from a classic jig involving a landlady, and 'shifling the knave of klobes' from a tale involving a bigoted papist, Dr Cole, who embarks on a mission to Ireland to persecute Protestants. Cole is thwarted by another scheming landlady, who unbeknownst to him replaces his commission with a pack of cards, knave of clubs uppermost. The titles 'hight for my towpens' and 'the sycke manes health' similarly suggest humorous – and rather ribald – jests popularized by Tarlton and his successors. John Salusbury had surely encountered such material in the London theatres, and there is evidence that Tarlton was popular elsewhere in Wales: another influential patron, Sir John Stradling of St Donat's, Glamorgan, wrote a Latin epitaph in Tarlton's honour in 1607, together with a text in similar vein to his own bardic harper, Thomas Richards of Coety.<sup>36</sup>

English-style music of all kinds was clearly becoming the norm for other genteel Welsh households by the early years of the seventeenth century, and as we have seen, there is evidence that Welshmen began to purchase more fashionable instruments such as viols, lutes and flutes. These were often played in consort – as immortalized in that much anthologized picture of c.1596 in the National Portrait Gallery, depicting scenes from the life of Sir Henry Unton of Wadley Manor near Farrington in Oxfordshire. Centre stage is a wedding masque, where Mercury and Diana lead the entry of masquers

<sup>35</sup> Cass Meurig and Robert Evans (cwrth duet) give a convincing rendition of the tunes 'Pepper is black' and 'Half Hannikin' on Meurig's CD, *Cwrth*.

<sup>36</sup> John Stradling, *Epigrammatum Libri Quatuor* (London, 1607), bk. I, 13 and bk. IV, 148, respectively.

and torchbearers; they process around a six-piece mixed instrumental consort, comprising lute, bass viol, treble viol, flute, and two wire-strung plucked instruments, the bandora and cittern. Though few Welsh households could have had the resource to emulate this musico-dramatic feast in its full splendour, Unton's freize may offer some indication of how masques were performed at the wealthiest establishments – including Lleweni, and in due course at Chirk Castle.

The new Anglophile climate also permeated other aspects of Welsh gentry culture, and at Brynkir, near Porthmadog, a 'civil young man' from Salisbury was engaged in 1620 for a full eighteen months to teach the daughter of the house.<sup>37</sup> This 'very good musician on the base violl and virginals' had a reputation for teaching young gentlewomen; he could also 'trayne them up in their prick songes by the book, whereby they may inn a short tyme be the more apt to lerne vpon their instrumentes'. The reference to tuition 'by the book' is an important one, for it clearly involved learning to read music rather than merely playing by ear – the norm among bardic craftsmen. By 1621 the daughter of Brynkir had already learned 'her pricksonge and [to play] upon the virginals, to write a faere Romane hand .. and to reade perfect Englishe'; she was now leaving for Chester to learn to speak that language properly, and her redundant English tutor was recommended to John Wynn for the ladies of Gwydir, that they too might become accomplished 'in any of those sciences'. Lloyd Bowen's recent work on the accounts of Sir Thomas Aubrey of Llantrithyd in the Vale of Glamorgan has similarly revealed a great deal of musical activity within the Llantrithyd household during the 1620s and 1630s, not least in the record of a purchase of a bass viol for Aubrey's secretary, Challis, and a payment to one Panner for showing Challis the 'true fingering thereof'.<sup>38</sup>

This changing pattern of Welsh musical patronage is seen especially clearly at Chirk Castle, acquired by the London Welshman Sir Thomas Myddleton (1550–1631), in 1595. Myddleton's son, also Thomas (1586–1666), spent very considerable sums on this property in the 1630s, refurbishing the chapel, installing a new organ imported from London, and commissioning a set of partbooks containing English anthems and services.<sup>39</sup> Masques were also

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<sup>37</sup> NLW MS 9057E, f. [1], transcribed *REDW*, 74–5.

<sup>38</sup> The National Archives (Public Record Office) C 106/99, 100/101, pt. 2. Lloyd Bowen (ed.), *Family and Society in Early Stuart Glamorgan: the Household Accounts of Sir Thomas Aubrey of Llantrithyd, c.1565–1641* (Cardiff, South Wales Record Society, 2006).

<sup>39</sup> See William Reynolds, 'Middleton's Household Chapel: Church Music on the Welsh Border in the Seventeenth Century', *Welsh Music History / Hanes Cerddoriaeth Cymru*, 4 (2000), 111–24 (Welsh version 125–37).

performed at the castle during this period, and two were specially devised for the Myddleton household during the 1630s, almost certainly by Sir Thomas Salusbury (1612–43), grandson of John Salusbury of Lleweni.<sup>40</sup> The earlier of the two, an ‘entertainment’ that survives in British Library MS Egerton 2623, was to be played as a series of interludes between the courses of a banquet, and concluded with communal dancing once the tables had been cleared. Cedric Brown has argued that it was almost certainly devised by Thomas Salusbury to celebrate the visit to Chirk in 1634 of the Earl of Bridgewater, recently appointed Lord President of Wales and the Council of the Marches; Bridgewater was similarly greeted at Ludlow Castle on 29 September of that same year with a performance of Milton’s masque *Comus*, for which five songs by Henry Lawes (1602–45) survive.<sup>41</sup> There is no direct evidence that the Chirk masque was influenced by *Comus*, but Brown discerns parallels with other works celebrating royal visits to country houses, especially that designed for Althorp by Ben Jonson in 1603. The banqueting framework of the Chirk masque is, however, far more unique. Its music is lost, but the text of four songs for Orpheus survives, and the work concludes with a cycle of four dances led by seasonal characters. ‘Christmas Gamboles’ dances ‘a single Anticke with a forme’; Autumn leads an ‘Anticke of drunkards’; Summer, ‘a country dance of haymaker or reapers’; and Spring, a morris dance. These ‘anticks’ or ‘antemasques’ were no doubt conventional comic burlesques, using popular dance and ballad tunes, with the morris and country dances drawing on a more specific repertory.

There is therefore no doubt that several affluent Welsh patrons schooled in the English manner – John Wynn, John Salusbury, Thomas Aubrey and Thomas Myddleton among them – were consciously promoting English music in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The surviving records from households such as Gwydir, Lleweni, Chirk and Llantrithyd all bear witness to expenditure on instruments, instrumentalists, books, and even music tutors imported from across the border. But that is still not the full story, for that earlier bardic culture was by no means completely suppressed. The poet Siôn Cain (c.1575–c.1650) for instance, whose remit covered families within Maelor, Montgomeryshire, the Vale of Clwyd, Arfon and Merioneth, was still composing genealogical tributes to patrons up to 1648, while Griffith Phillip (d.1666), regarded as the last of the professional bards, was active for

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<sup>40</sup> The complete texts for the masques are given in *REDW*, 141–6; see also David Klausner, ‘Family Entertainment among the Salusburies of Lleweni and their Circle, 1595–1641’, *Welsh Music History / Hanes Cerddoriaeth Cymru*, 6 (2004), 129–42 (Welsh version, 143–54).

<sup>41</sup> Cedric Brown, ‘The Chirk Castle Entertainment of 1634’, *Milton Quarterly*, 11 (1977), 76–86.

at least another decade. The last word, then, may perhaps be left to the Myddletons, newly-settled at Chirk. Here, as late as 1654, a joint payment of 25s. was recorded to three Welsh bards, one of them Griffith Phillip.<sup>42</sup> He and Harry Howell sang *cywyddau*, presumably in praise of the patron, while John Morgan accompanied them on the harp: enough to confirm, it seems, that even this most strongly Anglicized of Anglo-Welsh households, perched on the border between the two countries, continued to pay lip-service to a Welsh tradition that had been nurtured and promoted from at least the middle of the fourteenth century. It confirms that the traditional interplay of poet and player could still prevail on occasion, when the patron actively chose to focus on this indigenous heritage rather than looking eastwards for his diet of ‘musicke bye voice and instrument’.

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<sup>42</sup> ‘paid Iohn Morgan the harper v s. paid harry howell the bard for his cowydd x s. and to Griffith Phillip for his cowydd x s. in all.’ (13–16 June 1654). Accounts of Sir Thomas Myddleton, NLW Chirk Castle F12572, f. [74], transcribed *REDW*, 151.