

CHAMBER MUSIC AT ELDER HALL

Conservatorium Quartet Series

By Alex. Burnard

Again there was a highly appreciative audience to hear the Elder Conservatorium String Quartet—Peter Bornstein, Kathleen Meegan, Sylvia Whittington, and Harold Parsons—in their fourth programme of the Tuesday afternoon series of nine recitals. The Haydn work—Op. 54, No. 2, in C—possessed several remarkable features. The opening allegro, solid and foursquare, but instinct with variety, was at times reminiscent of Bach in the decorative material for the first violin. The short adagio, again with free expressive arabesques for the top part, against dignified progressions from the three others, passed without break into a tremendously alive minuet, and thence, most unusually, into a final adagio. This, from its simple, monodic character, was perhaps inherently the least interesting movement, though the playing was beautifully level. During its course an extremely busy little episode was interpolated, whose phrasing was strongly reminiscent of the preceding minuet.

In the Mozart E flat quartet (the third of the set of six dedicated to Haydn), we had, as Mr. Parsons pointed out in his remarks, various manifestations of happiness and content all through. The first movement was one sunny smile, tinged perhaps with a certain underlying tenderness, and the andante, full of exquisite harmonic effects, drifted along like Ben Adhem's "deep dream of peace." So perfectly in accord were the players that one entirely forgot them—the ultimate criterion of artistry. They brought out the lovely piquances of the minuet and trio with a rare restraint, and brought the work to a brilliant conclusion by their remarkable virtuosity in the vivace.

ADY. 25-5-32

OUR PUBLIC LIBRARY

DETERIORATING FOR LACK OF FUNDS

To the Editor

Sir—The value of the Public Library to South Australia, and the appreciation by South Australians of its value, are well illustrated by the exhibition of fine art books which has attracted hundreds of visitors during the past ten days. There is at the service of the people of this State a beautiful little Library, most efficiently managed by an exemplary staff. This Library is a boon and a necessity to thinking people in every section of the community; it is essential to our efficiency and culture; it is the coping-stone and, in a sense, the justification of our system of public education.

Adelaide has reason to be proud of its Public Library; but, unfortunately, it has reason also to be alarmed for its future. For the Library is being starved. The chairman of its finance committee (Mr. Roach) has permitted me to secure some figures which I use with his approval—I may say with his blessing, although naturally he has no responsibility for my selection and interpretation of them. A glance at these figures shows a diminution in recent years of the sum available for the purchase of books. Taking the four months February to May in successive years, the sums approved for the purchase of books (at English prices) are:—1929, £259 2/11; 1930, £255 16/2; 1931, £125 5/10; 1932, £78 7/4. In March of this year the amount voted for book-buying was the noble sum of 13/6!

Taking a wider view, one does not find the prospect any more encouraging. In 1930-1 the expenditure from all sources on books, periodicals, and binding, was £2,356; in 1931-2 (with one more month of the financial year to run) it has been £1,791. This is little more than the sum spent in 1904-5, and considerably less than the sums spent in many of the pre-war years. At the same time, while both the output of valuable books and the number of persons needing them has increased, the number which one can buy for a given sum of money has (in Australia) diminished.

A further analysis of the figures would show that, whereas in the past the Government grant has contributed considerably to expenditure on books, periodicals, and binding, at present the only funds available for these purposes come from the Morgan Thomas Bequest. And when we deduct the amounts devoted to periodicals and binding, it would seem that there is this year barely £600 for books—and next year, if the present trend continues, there will be far less.

For a cultured and progressive community this is ludicrously inadequate, especially when exchange and primage duty are taken out of the money voted

for books. We all know only too well the financial difficulties of South Australia; but, as a community, we simply cannot afford to let the Public Library deteriorate. The effect on efficiency and culture is out of all proportion to the saving made.

This letter is in no sense a criticism of the Public Library Board, which has had to make the best of the resources available. It is perhaps a criticism of the community which has been content to let the board struggle with an impossible task. But I believe (and this is the reason why I have ventured for the first time into your correspondence columns) that, once the community realises the position, its pride and its intelligence will move it to seek a remedy.—I am, Sir, &c.,

W. K. HANCOCK.
The University, Adelaide.

News 25-5-32

PUBLIC LIBRARY "STARVED"

"Not Enough Money for Books"

FOR 10 years the Government grant to the Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery Board has been too small to enable the library to buy enough books to keep it up to date, reports of the board reveal.

The chairman of the board (Mr. B. S. Roach) said today that the board had to rely on private bequests to buy what it wanted for the institutions.

"Prof. Hancock's complaints of the inadequacy of the grant are quite justified," Mr. Roach said. "The grant this year has been cut down to between £13,000 and £14,000, and as salaries of officials at the Museum, Library, and Art Gallery absorb more than £12,000 there is little or nothing left to buy new books.

"The imposition of a sales tax on books for the library is a great hardship. Such an impost is unheard of in any other civilised country."

"STAFF BADLY PAID"

For years the board, in its reports, has pointed out that paucity of funds has seriously interfered with the educational work of the Public Library. The institution is largely used by scientists, manufacturers, merchants, working men, University students, and many other people who want to increase their mental equipment.

The Government grant is said to be wholly insufficient to enable the library to keep up to date with the advancement of knowledge. Members of the staff, the reports say, are inadequately paid, compared with similar officials in public libraries in other States. Often books are asked for that are not on the library shelves owing to lack of funds to purchase them.

Attendances at the library increased from 118,855 in 1919-20 to 232,104 in 1930-1, and during the current year they have been large.

Lack of accommodation for books has led to congestion, and many volumes are stored on floors, where they become damaged, and difficulty in handling them occurs, with consequent delay to the staff and readers. The library contains 157,411 volumes, but comparatively few new books have been added in the last 10 years.

ADY. 27-5-32

Conservatorium Organ Recital

High artistry marked the playing of Mr. John Horner in his organ recital during the lunch hour yesterday at the Elder Conservatorium Hall. Reger's sonata in F sharp minor received masterly treatment, the charm of the middle movement being well brought out, and the instrument's richly resonant reeds judiciously used making the passacaglia finale a thing of sheer beauty.

Dr. Bairstow, the organist of York Minster, was drawn upon for a scherzo. This vivacious trifle, neatly registered and admirably phrased, proved particularly pleasing. In effective contrast came "Coronach—A Highland Lament" (Barratt), a remarkable composition in which this young Scottish organist has succeeded in suggesting the haunting charm of Gaelic mysticism in a simple yet musicianly manner. Vierne's second symphony allegro, brilliantly played, ended the recital.

Miss Iris Hart's vocal contribution was "Air de Lia" (Debussy), to which Mrs. Horner played a piano-forte accompaniment.

At his recital on June 3, Mr. Horner will present a Bach programme including the minuet and polacca from the first Brandenburg Concerto.

DENTAL EXAMINATIONS

QUALIFICATION BY LEGISLATION

To The Editor

Sir—Examinations are being held today to admit persons to practise dentistry by Act of Parliament. The injustice of it, as far as dental students at the University are concerned, is that these persons have not been required to do any course of training whatever. Their only qualification for being allowed to sit for an "examination" is that they acted as unqualified assistants to dentists, who, if they had wished to employ assistants to operate on patients, should have employed legally qualified ones.

In 1917 a batch of political dentists was admitted to practice, and now we have another batch about to be admitted! Is it in the best interests of dentistry and public health that dentists should be made by Act of Parliament, or in a University course of training?

Dental students at present have to go through a five years' course at the University; and, when they graduate, they have to compete with people, who have done no University course and whose training has cost them nothing, because they earned wages whilst employed as unqualified assistants to dentists.

This state of affairs, coupled with the inadequate practical training which students receive at the present time at the Dental Hospital, is responsible for a feeling of great discontent amongst them, because they feel that they are doing routine work at high speed, whilst they are able to get little instruction in modern dentistry, and they have to pay for this privilege of acting as unpaid civil servants to work for all and sundry, who receive treatment at the Dental Hospital. I am, Sir, &c.,

GRADUATE

News 26-5-32

DR. S. A. Smith, of Sydney, who arrived in Adelaide today, will deliver the Listerian Oration at the Prince of Wales lecture theatre, University, at 8 o'clock tonight. The oration is given annually under the auspices of the South Australian branch of the British Medical Association.

ADY. 28-5-32

PUBLIC LIBRARY FINANCE

HOW THE PUBLIC MAY HELP

To The Editor

Sir—Professor Hancock's letter on the financial position of the Public Library will have opened the eyes of many who, like myself, were aware that it was suffering from the effects of the present depression, but had no inkling of the gravity of the position. Our Public Library is an exceedingly good one, and I have often been surprised to find in it books which I had not expected to find in Adelaide at all. Indeed, I have often wondered how the librarian has managed to make his limited funds go as far as he does. He has, undoubtedly, done wonders in the past, but he cannot continue to do wonders with less than a third of the funds previously at his disposal. The Government, although it could certainly do more than it is doing at present, cannot give the same help as it has given in the past. The problem, therefore, resolves itself into the simple question: Do the people of Adelaide care sufficiently for the cultural standards of their city to maintain it for themselves?

There is one way, I believe, in which they could do it. In England there exist a number of societies, such as the Friends of the National Libraries and the Friends of the Bodleian, whose aim is, by means of their annual subscriptions, to build up funds to fill the gaps in the national collections, and to purchase rare and important works, beyond the limited means of the institutions themselves, as they come into the market. A body of Friends of the Public Library, formed on similar lines, could not only help our library through the present crisis, but, when better times come, could also do very important work in extending its scope and usefulness.

The need for some such action is a pressing one, for every librarian knows that no gaps are so difficult to fill as those which ought never to have occurred. And surely there is a sufficient number of people in Adelaide who are grateful to the Public Library for supplying them with information inaccessible elsewhere, and who feel that it is vital that such information should be kept up to date and accessible, to prevent the usefulness of the Public Library from becoming impaired.—I am, Sir, &c.,

R. C. BALD,
University of Adelaide.

Society to Help Library May be Formed

TO help the Public Library to buy books, a proposal is put forward by Dr. R. C. Bald, lecturer at the Adelaide University, to form a society on the lines of the Friends of the Bodleian Library Society at Oxford, England.

It is hoped that such a society would with money raised in subscriptions and donations, be able to help the library to keep up to date.

The proposal was enthusiastically received by Prof. W. K. Hancock.

The chairman of the Public Library Board (Mr. H. P. Moore) said tonight that his board would welcome any scheme to assist the library.

The Adelaide Public Library is seriously inconvenienced by the Federal book taxes. It has found it impossible to keep up with the advancement of literature as has been done in previous years. The library is a State centre of culture and learning, and is often referred to as "everyman's university."

If the scheme of Dr. Bald receives good support it is intended to call a meeting of those interested.

The Friends of the Bodleian Library Society was formed in 1925. It has greatly helped the library since its formation and is supported by a large number of subscribers, who include many of the most prominent leaders in all branches of thought in Great Britain.