

Fight In Adelaide For Music Pupils

Conservatorium Competes With Private Teachers

By MR. JOHN DEMPSTER (former City Organist of Adelaide; Hon. Conductor, Adelaide Women's Choir.)

THE musical life of Adelaide is at a standstill. Many students of musical affairs claim that the faulty constitution of the Conservatorium is largely to blame, and that the Conservatorium has not contributed one iota to the progress of music in South Australia.

There is evidence to support this contention; but the weight of facts leans the scales of justice slightly to the opposite opinion. There have been, and are, musicians on the staff of the Conservatorium, who have been a source of inspiration to students and public alike, and he would be a biased critic who belittled the labors of those teachers. But they, like the students they produce, are caught in the mesh laid by those who framed the constitution of the Conservatorium as a primary and secondary school of music, instead of an institution for the higher branches of musical study only.

Since 1884 the Adelaide University has provided a chair of music for matriculated students who desire to study musical composition. Had the University extended that school of music to include only the very highest branches of musical study—for gifted students only—a great boon would have been conferred on the community, the musical profession in particular.

Had the gift of £20,000 of Sir Thomas Elder to the University of Adelaide been used in this manner, the present distressing state of affairs in Adelaide might have been avoided.

As the Elder Conservatorium is organised at present, no director or teacher can be faithful to University interests, and to the community at the same time. One or the other must suffer. The Conservatorium is expected to pay, not in artistic results or benefits achieved for the good of music, but in hard, good coin of the realm.

The commodity traded is musical students, and a teacher is considered successful only according to the degree he or she attracts the patronage of aspiring students. There are so many teachers at the Conservatorium for some subjects that there has not been always healthy rivalry between them. If this type of rivalry were confined to the Conservatorium, matters would not be so alarming.



Mr. Dempster

Unfortunately, the goodwill and feeling towards the University of many successful musicians among the "outs" is seriously disturbed. Many of them having received their training at the Conservatorium, and naturally expecting to find their Alma Mater proud of their achievements, are staggered to find that a metamorphosis has taken place, and that they are no longer regarded as fellow artists, but as serious rivals, whose activities are not to be further encouraged, and, if possible, curtailed.

The fight for pupils has widened its sphere of action. It is felt that a teacher of the staff of the Conservatorium has a great advantage over those teaching "outside." At the back of such a teacher is the prestige of the University and the attractions of its corporate life. Further, a certain number of teachers are engaged at a fixed salary, which again gives the Conservatorium teacher a sense of security, which his brother outside does not possess.

Few persons will fail to realise that much indignation is felt because often University prestige and influence are used to secure positions for Conservatorium teachers outside the University sphere of influence; positions which, naturally, the musicians not connected with the University, feel should be filled from their ranks.

Too often it is found that a Conservatorium teacher is attempting—and successfully—to secure a position for an erstwhile student! Is it any wonder that to many musicians the name University is anathema?

However, there are extenuating circumstances which in fairness should be stated. Instead of organising a School of Music for a selected number of advanced students under a few highly specialised teachers, the University has thought fit to engage a large number of teachers who

work entirely on a commission basis. The danger to University prestige is obvious, for these musicians in endeavoring to augment their fractional earnings, clash with interests outside.

University to Blame

The University is blamed for this position, and rightly so. Retaliation is natural. No University activity receives any support from the majority of the musical profession.

The constitution of the Elder Conservatorium should be altered, and a school of advanced students only brought into being, as is the case with the schools of medicine, law, and arts.

Under the direction of the professor of music, a staff of two singing teachers, two of pianoforte, one of violin, and one of violoncello could do all the work required, plus an experienced teacher of organ playing; thus returning to the staff as constituted at the beginning of this century.

These teachers might well be selected from the ranks of those on the staff of the Conservatorium. It is possible that occasionally there would be no students of sufficient ability to keep some teachers occupied—but what matter that? They would be there ready to teach those sufficiently advanced to deserve such expert tuition.

These teachers would be engaged at an adequate salary, and, like other professors and lecturers at the University, should not be permitted to feel that their term of office depended on multiplicity of mediocre students.

Affiliated with the University School of Music could operate the South Australian Music Teachers' Association, from whose ranks exponents of chamber music could be drawn to perform in the Elder Hall.

Under the auspices of the Teachers' Association opera could be produced; and an orchestra, now in very truth a South Australian Orchestra, organised with every teacher in South Australia an active agent working for its well-being. The association, being affiliated with the University School of Music, would sponsor students' concerts in the Elder Hall, which would become the home of all musical activity in South Australia.

Can the University and music profession alike, grasp that vision, and work for it?

Musicians have been heartened to know that a system by which Conservatorium teachers examine not only their own students at public music examinations, but also those of their competitors, may soon be abolished as the result of representations from the South Australian Music Teachers' Association. They are hopeful that the greater problem, that of the constitution of the Elder Conservatorium, will now receive the earnest consideration that association and of the University Council and Senate.

Adv. 15-1-35.

The Late Sir Horace Lamb

"OLD OXFORD" sends me this cutting from "The Times" (London), which he says "gives evidence of the dear old professor's sense of humor":—

Lamb knew far more about the history of his science than most of his colleagues, and his knowledge extended in some degree back to its Greek sources. One comment thereon is worth citing as an example of his dry humor. When presiding over section A of the British Association at Cambridge in 1904, he observed:—

If any one scientific invention can claim pre-eminence over all others, I should be inclined myself to fret a monument to the unknown inventor of the mathematical point, as the supreme type of that process of abstraction which has been a necessary condition of scientific work from the very beginning.

An eminent engineer subsequently told him that if the scale of subscriptions was to be appropriate to the dimensions of the object to be commemorated, he would gladly head the list!

News. 15-1-35

Prof. A. E. V. Richardson, director of the Waite Agricultural Institute, who is a member of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, has gone to Melbourne to attend meetings of the Australian National Research Council and the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science. He also attends a full meeting of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research to be held in Melbourne next week.

Prof. Richardson

Mr. C. R. Badger, who took several classes for the Workers' Educational Association, will leave England on his return to Adelaide this month. Mr. Badger has been studying at the London School of Economics.

News. 15-1-35.

WAS PRESIDENT OF SENATE

Sir W. Kingsmill Dead

SYDNEY, Tuesday.—Sir Walter Kingsmill, President of the Senate from 1929 to 1932, died early today at his home in Elizabeth Bay after a short illness. He is survived by Lady Kingsmill.

Son of the late Mr. Walter Davies Kingsmill, a South Australian pastoralist, Sir Walter was born in 1864 at Glenelg, and was educated at St. Peter's College and the Adelaide University, where he took his B.A. degree.

Mining was his chosen profession, and after private practice as a mining engineer he entered the service of the State Geological Department. Western Australia offered more attractive prospects, and he settled there in 1888. He turned his attention to politics in 1897, and was elected to the Legislative Assembly to represent Pihbarra, which seat he held until 1903. He then entered the Legislative Council.

During his membership of the West Australian Parliament he held several portfolios. Later he transferred his activities to the Federal sphere, and was returned for the Senate in 1922.

Adv. 16-1-35

DEATH OF SIR WALTER KINGSMILL

Former Senate President

SYDNEY, January 15.—Sir Walter Kingsmill, President of the Senate from 1929 to 1932, died at his home at Elizabeth Bay shortly after 2 a.m. today.

Sir Walter Kingsmill, who was born at Glenelg, South Australia, in 1864, was educated at St. Peter's College, Adelaide, and graduated B.A. at the University of Adelaide. In 1883 he went to Western Australia, and in that State he was elected to the Legislative Assembly for Pihbarra in 1897, and again in 1901. He was Minister for Works in the first Leake Government in 1901, Commissioner for Railways in the second Leake Government in 1902-2, and Colonial Secretary and Minister for Education in the James Watson Government in 1902-4, and in the Rason Government, 1905-6. He resigned his seat in the Legislative Assembly in 1903, and was elected to the Legislative Council of Western Australia for the Metropolitan-Suburban Province, and took over the leadership of the Upper House. He was Chairman of Committees from 1906 to 1919, and member of the Legislative Council from 1919 to 1922. He was elected to the Senate in December, 1922, and was chairman of the Federal Public Accounts Committee from 1927 to 1929.

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State Funeral

CANBERRA, January 15.—The Commonwealth Government will accord a State funeral to the late Senator Sir Walter Kingsmill. The Government will be represented by the Postmaster-General (Senator MacLachlan).

In a message to Lady Kingsmill today the Prime Minister (Mr. Lyons) said Senator Kingsmill's public service would be remembered gratefully by the people of Australia.

"The death of Sir Walter Kingsmill is a great loss to the Commonwealth," said the leader of the Government in the Senate (Sir George Pearce) today.



Sir W. Kingsmill



Sir W. Kingsmill

"He was a strong President of the Senate with a great knowledge of parliamentary procedure. His death was a great shock to me, for when I left Perth a few days ago there was no hint of such a possibility."