

Register 22<sup>nd</sup> Aug. 07.

# THE ASPIRING MUSICIAN.

## COMPETITIONS AND EXAMINATIONS.

### OVERSEA AND LOCAL SCHEMES.

Professor Franklin Peterson, Ormond Professor of Music in the University of Melbourne, and Director of the University Conservatorium, came to Adelaide on Wednesday. Before returning to Melbourne on Saturday he will adjudicate in the musical competitions section of the Adelaide Women's Work Exhibition. Mr. H. A. Thomson, organizing secretary of the amalgamated scheme of musical examinations between the Universities of Adelaide and Melbourne, accompanied Professor Peterson to Adelaide, and, with Dr. Ennis (Director of the Elder Conservatorium), Mr. Thomson will leave for Western Australia to-day to conduct the first examinations in that State under the amalgamated scheme. A representative of The Register interviewed Professor Peterson at the York Hotel on Wednesday.

#### —The Use of Competitions.—

"What is the educational value of competitions such as that in connection with the Women's Work Exhibition and literary societies' contests?"—"Well, they are useful in stimulating local effort, so long as they are conducted along proper and well-organized lines. But, you see, there are obvious disadvantages in the element of competition which enables only one candidate to gain a first prize, and in the ad captandum character of the programmes and in the arrangements generally. Such competitions are much less effective than examinations conducted upon a quasi-university basis by responsible bodies either in the old country or here."

"How do you mean, responsible bodies?"

"Those like the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and of Adelaide and Melbourne, or bodies possessing royal charters like the Royal College and the Academy of Music, which render them directly responsible to government. The position of bodies like those enables them to insist upon a certain standard to which candidates must attain—not, as in other cases, forcing them to accept a standard more liable to the pressure of other considerations."

#### —Melbourne and Adelaide Combined.—

"It is a fact, is it not, that the University of Adelaide has joined with Melbourne in its scheme of local examinations in music?"—"Yes; the scheme came into force at the beginning of last month. When I undertook the duties of the Ormond Chair in 1901 I found that the University of Melbourne had no control over secondary musical education in Victoria. Local examinations were conducted by outside bodies—a duty which I thought pertained to the university itself. A suggestion to avail ourselves of the scheme of the associated board of the London College of Music and the London Academy was considered by the Melbourne University council, which decided to take the matter into its own hands from the start. The success of that venture has encouraged the University of Adelaide to fall in with a suggestion that at the termination of its agreement with the Associated Board it should throw in its lot with the scheme of its sister university in Victoria. At the celebrations of the jubilee of the Melbourne University the amalgamation was decided upon by a joint meeting of delegates from the universities of the two States. The objects of the amalgamation so appealed to the assembled delegates from all the Australasian universities that a resolution was unanimously upheld. It read:—"That co-operation between the universities of the Commonwealth and New Zealand in the conduct of public examinations in music is desirable, such co-operation to be on the general lines of the proposed agreement between the universities of Melbourne and Adelaide." For many years, as you know, the University of Adelaide has availed itself of the co-operation of the Associated Board, but having decided to stand in with Melbourne in an 'Australian examination for the Australian musician' scheme, it decided not to renew its agreement with the Associated Board, which had in the meantime expired by effluxion of time. The University of Adelaide has made no mistake thereby. Six years ago Melbourne inaugurated its own local scheme, and the results have been gratifying."

#### —Rapid Popularity Predicted.—

"How far have the entries for the local examinations justified the departure?"—"Naturally there has been a serious falling off when one considers the aggregate last year and the moiety of patronage attracted by the University of Adelaide this year; but the University has no reason to be discouraged by the actual numbers of entries, and has every reason to be encouraged by the signs of interest and the absolute certainty of general support. In Victoria we began five years ago with a modest entry of about 400. Last year the entries totalled 1,500; and I am sure that the Adelaide scheme will in the same period show a proportionate increase."

#### —Why Local Scheme is Better.—

"What are the particular advantages of the local scheme over such a good scheme as you describe that of the Associated Board to be?"—"The first consideration alone will, I think, appeal to every one. The profits gained in the Australian scheme are gained by Australians for Australia. Examiners as expert as any that England can send us, trained in the same schools, with far more experience, and with a knowledge of local conditions to which outsiders cannot pretend, will be placed at the disposal of the Universities of Melbourne and Adelaide. And from the funds of the examinations a sum of money will be spent, under the direction of the authorities, in the general interests of musical education. Last year students of the University Conservatorium of Melbourne enjoyed all the privileges of musical education which the large sum of £553 was able to procure for them. It is surely better that such a sum should be spent under the supervision of the university than at the dictation of one single body in a distant land!"

#### —Scholarships are not Bribes.—

"It is said that these prizes, exhibitions, are held out as bribes to attract promising students from teachers outside the Conservatorium. Is that so?"—"No. If conducted in a sense of such responsibility as is imposed on any university, these exhibitions cannot be looked upon as bribes, but as encouragements to real talent and as opportunities for talent to secure for itself as a right the very best tuition in the best schools of Australia, and later of Europe itself."

"Are there any special features of this local scheme which are likely to particularly appeal to music teachers?"—"Yes, there are. One is an integral principle of all university examinations; that is, no candidate can be 'failed' without the concurrence of two examiners. One of them at least must be an expert in the subject of the examination—a violinist for violins, a vocalist for singers, &c. Every candidate in every subject will be submitted to an expert in that subject, so that no point which deserves credit may be overlooked by a man who, however good a general musician he may be, cannot be expected to understand all the details of the technique of every instrument."

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## CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC.

To the Editor.

Sir—Referring to Mr. Cawthorne's letter in The Register of August 20, permit me to say that his statement, "Why is Mr. Bevan engaged to act as judge at country musical competitions, thus competing with musicians not connected with the Conservatorium?" is very unfair. While I have no interest in the discussion personally, as the secretary of the Gawler competitions last year, when Mr. Bevan acted as honorary judge in the vocal section, it is only fair to Mr. Bevan that I should state that he agreed to act in that capacity only after being assured that we were not in a position to pay for professional services, and that he would absolutely decline to act if he were taking the position that would be occupied by a professional gentleman if he refused. Surely the professional staff of the Conservatorium are rather doing good than harm by assisting outside educational bodies who are not in a position to pay the sometimes extortionate charges of the would-be adjudicators. Allow me, Sir, to take this opportunity of thanking the many gentlemen, professional and otherwise, who gratuitously assisted in making the competitions at Gawler such a success during my secretaryship.

I am, Sir, &c.,  
HUBERT L. LOVERIDGE.

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## "A SEVERE AND DESERVED INDICTMENT."

The Minister of Education (Hon. T. Price) has received a letter from Mr. Robert G. Leavitt in behalf of the staff of the Ames Botanical Laboratory, North Easton, Mass., in which reference is made to the lack of encouragement given by the South Australian Government to botanical interests. The writer having learned of the Premier's strong sympathy with educational movements, touches on the importance of botanical investigation. He says he understands that there is not even a chair of botany at the University of Adelaide. America is demonstrating its belief in this side of biological study "by giving it a place in its universities and colleges quite co-ordinate with other branches of science." In behalf of the science he asks favourable consideration of any movement to increased attention to this subject. Professor Stirling, C.M.G., at the request of the education committee of the University of Adelaide, commented on the letter at length. He paid a tribute to the late Professor Tate's researches during his term of office as Elder Professor of Natural History. At the time of Professor Tate's death the small modicum of systematic botany required by the medical curriculum was no longer demanded by the English Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, and the subject was dropped; but later, at the request of the Pharmaceutical Society of South Australia, an elementary course was established for the benefit of its students. This course had since been regularly given, and attended almost exclusively by students of pharmacy. "I am afraid," Professor Stirling continued, "we must admit that Mr. Leavitt's letter constitutes a severe and deserved indictment of what is undoubtedly a great deficiency in our schemes of scientific education, which it has been our endeavour to adapt, as far as our means allow, to the technical requirements of this State. . . . There is no authority in the State to whom plants may be sent for identification, such, for instance, as those suspected to be poisonous or injurious to stock. There is no one capable of undertaking the difficult problem of the investigation of the nature, life, history, and possible cure of that large class of disease due to fungoid or parasitic parasites, of which rust in wheat and the various blights are familiar examples. There is no one whose whole business it is to add to the extensive and exceedingly valuable herbarium formed by Professor Tate, and now considerably augmented by a recent gift on the part of the Government. . . . The services of a Government Geologist are rightly recognised as valuable. . . . and surely there is equal, if not greater justification for the appointment of a Government Botanist in the State, in which agriculture, horticulture, and viticulture are of primary importance. . . . As a member of the council I am well aware that it, as a body, is fully alive to the importance of the issues that have been raised directly in connection with botany, and incidentally with zoology, and that, if nothing to improve matters has been done, it has not been from want of recognition, but, to these special claims as well as to many others of importance, I am equally well aware that, as we stand at present, the University can only continue to urge its oft-repeated plea of non possumus conditioned by its exiguous means."

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Professor Ennis, of the Adelaide Conservatorium, and Mr. H. A. Thomson, of the Melbourne University Conservatorium, left by the Moldavia on Thursday for Western Australia to conduct musical examinations in that State.

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Professor Peterson has asked us to state, with regard to the interview published with him on Thursday, that his remark, "No candidate can be failed without the concurrence of two examiners" refers to the higher grades, as in the case of the Associated Board in England.