

MUSIC TEACHERS' CONFERENCE.

The Inaugural Session.

Music teachers from all parts of the State attended the inaugural session of a week's conference at the Elder Conservatorium of the University of Adelaide, on Monday afternoon. The primary objects of this conference are to give music teachers, throughout South Australia, an opportunity to meet together and discuss the numerous problems connected with the profession.

An Enthusiastic Opening.

There was a widely representative assemblage of metropolitan and country teachers in the Elder Hall on Monday afternoon. At 2 o'clock a reception was held. Professor Mitchell, in his capacity as Vice-Chancellor of the University, the Director of the Conservatorium (Dr. Davies), and the Registrar of the University (Mr. F. W. Bardsley), welcomed the visitors, who were announced by Mr. Othman (secretary of the conference).

The Vice-Chancellor said that all the resources of the University would be at the delegates' disposal during conference week. He then paid a tribute to music, "the universal language of emotion."

Dr. Davies, in supporting Professor Mitchell's remarks, expressed his pleasure that they were all to have an opportunity of meeting together. He trusted that they would feel they were indeed coming to their own University, and would regard it as their Alma Mater.

The lecture on "Musical education" was then given, and, subsequently, an adjournment was made to the north and south halls where afternoon tea and social chat concluded the first session.

"MUSICAL EDUCATION."

The Director (Dr. Davies) in the course of a deeply interesting and practical address, said he wished to speak to them for a little while on the important subject of musical education—though not in any dogmatic fashion, for, if they would allow him to say so, there was never a time in his life when he felt himself to be more of a learner than at this moment.

Dr. Davies suggested that for awhile, let them take the attitude of students together, discussing and questioning the best ways to train the children entrusted to them, that these pupils might first of all learn to love and appreciate music, and then perhaps, seek to make it—rather as

performers, or creators. There were three directions in which musical education might move. It might aim at the training of performers, either players or singers—that is, along more or less technical lines. They were familiar with the process; its fruits were various, but mostly mediocre. Indeed, they might think with some dismay of the thousands of students who were undergoing it, of whom only the very smallest percentage reached a high level of attainment.

Then musical education might be directed towards the actual making of music—that is, along creative lines. The lecturer said he did not suggest for one moment that great composers could be made by any purely educative means; but it was certain that children could be taught to compose delightful little tunes, as easily as they could be taught to improvise little stories.

Training the Listener.

The third direction musical education might take was in the way of training listeners, who might or might not be performers—that was, to develop the power of perception, observed the speaker. He would ask them to think what would happen if everybody were able to listen to music intelligently, and with something approaching a true sense of values.

There was a familiar Scriptural injunction which said, "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only." The best possible text they could take for a talk on musical education would be an inversion of that injunction:—"Be ye hearers of the word and not doers only"—and that, as they would presently discover, was the very crux of the whole matter—learning to hear. But, in order to get a clear idea of their subject, it would be well first to decide what music really was; then to think what education meant; and, putting the two together, it was comparatively easy to form a right conclusion as to the meaning of musical education.

"The Mother Tongue of All."

Then there was the partially right view (continued Dr. Davies) that music was one of the fine arts—perhaps the greatest of all the arts—subject to aesthetic laws of symmetry, unity, and variety that its whole influence was elevating and refining, and its pursuit a most desirable form of culture.

transcendent kind of speech, growing up side by side with language, natural, spontaneous, inevitable; voicing—as nothing else could voice—the heights and depths of human feeling. Speech and song had come from the same source; and primitive folk song bore the same relation to a Beethoven Symphony, as primitive speech bore to Shakespearean drama.

And if music were really a language, there was only one way to learn it, word by word, and meaning by meaning. Instead of that, he feared that many of them were trying to speak it parrot-like, without any comprehension of its meaning. He often met students who could give quite a fair performance of a Beethoven Sonata, yet could not distinguish between a major and minor third. It was almost unbelievable that a young man should be content to spend years in learning to play, without experiencing the simplest difference between two musical sounds.

The Fruits of Education.

As to the question of education, about which there was much misunderstanding, most of them thought of it simply

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to do things—a process rarely of instruction. But there was another and greater aspect of education than this. The very meaning of the word itself gave the clue. It was a bringing-out or developing of all that was latent within each of them of sense, or of ability. What they were, or what they became, as a result of training or experience, was the chief thing, not what they knew by the aid of memory, or what they could do skilfully as a result of practice.

Could we for one moment imagine ourselves learning to draw or to paint without developing a quick eye for outlines, for perspective, and for colour effects? It was unthinkable, and for the same reason there was no earthly hope of musical attainment apart from the progressive development of the ear. And as a natural consequence of being able to hear musically, either actually or silently, they acquired the habit of thinking musically.

The Value of Preparation.

And, having spoken of most of the things that were essential, though by no means exhaustively (concluded the lecturer) he could imagine them asking what earthly hope there was of covering such an extensive field of training, including the development of technique, in the limited space of a half-hour—or even two half-hours—weekly lesson. It was certainly a problem which called for deep reflection, and probably a good deal of reorganizing of existing methods as well. The poor, and often underpaid, teacher, however well qualified and anxious to do good work, must necessarily set a limit to his efforts.

preparation I must undergo each week before I meet my class." And he assured them that the brilliant and astonishing achievements of her children were a constant testimony to the value of that self-imposed preparation. It was not for him to weary them with maxims (added the lecturer), but, as intelligent people, they would, he was sure, find the way to constantly improve their methods.

To-day's private sessions commence at 10.30 and 2.30 respectively. At 4 there will be a public pianoforte recital.

CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT.

The Elder Hall was well attended on Monday night when the first of the evening entertainments was given before a deeply interested audience. The members of the Elder Conservatorium String Quartet repeated the splendid programme given at the beginning of last month, and were responsible for a similarly enjoyable presentation. The instrumentalists comprised:—Violins, Mr. Charles Schilsky (leader) and Miss Kathleen Meegan; viola, Miss Sylvia Whittington; cello, Mr. Harold Parsons. The repetition of the whole programme was a wise proceeding, for it was impossible to assimilate the beauty of each composition and all its tonal richness at a first hearing.

sphere—made a splendid contrast to the preceding movement. It was interesting to hear the divergent music of Mozart, Tchaikowsky, and Faure, all upon one programme, and each a masterpiece. Gabriel Faure was represented by the celebrated "Piano quartet in G minor," and the executants comprised Mr. Schilsky, Miss Whittington, and Mr. Parsons, with Mr. Harold Wylde at the piano. This classic theme was given a memorable interpretation upon its former presentation, but last night's repetition was considerably finer owing to the more amenable qualities of the pianoforte.

ADVERTISER 10.7.25

THE ELDER CONSERVATORIUM.

MID-DAY ORGAN RECITAL.

The attendance at the organ recitals, held at the Elder Conservatorium, becomes better each week. On Thursday the large and enthusiastic gathering was emphatic in applauding the playing of Mr. Harold Wylde, F.R.C.O., who gave a number of fine renderings of the organ.

ADVERTISER 10.7.25

ELDER CONSERVATORIUM.

On Monday week, July 20, in the Elder Hall, a chamber music recital will be given. The programme includes Beethoven's string quartet opus 18, and the magnificent piano quartet by Joseph Jongen, with Mr. George Pearce at the piano, together with songs by Mr. Clive Carey, Mus. Bac. Regret has been expressed that the date of this concert clashes with the second of the Kreisler performances. It has, however, been found impossible to make any other arrangement.

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ADVERTISER 14.7.25

NEW FORESTRY METHODS.

Mr. L. C. Hunkin, M.P., secretary of the Public Service Association, returned recently from a tour of the South-East with Messrs. E. Julius (Conservator of Forests), and W. J. Wainwright. The party inspected the plantations at Peneda, Blanche Forest, Mount Burr, Caroline, and Cave Range. They noted the improved methods of planting and the great reduction in cost. In one week the staff at Peneda planted 10,000 trees.