

ADV. 14.5.27

MUSIC TEACHING.

SEEING AND HEARING.

Under the auspices of the Australian Music Examination Board the first of a series of public lectures was given at the Elder Conservatorium last evening by Professor E. Harold Davies, Mus. Doc. The subject was "The Teaching of Harmony and Counterpoint." The lecturer pointed out that although the subject was a vast one there might be some suggestions which would be of help. He said he might talk the whole evening and not help them much if he did not arouse in them the feeling to help themselves. To do this was his principal object. If he gave them 500 rules for the harmonising of melodies and they remembered them all it would be of no value unless they learned to hear what they saw written in music. He illustrated his point by writing the words "mental hearing" on a blackboard. Everyone, he said, could read English, and understand the sound of them, yet without having the words spoken. He then wrote some musical chords and said it was necessary that the sounds for which they stood should be fixed in the mind the same as were the written words. It was all nonsense to say that mental hearing was a gift in music. All in the room could secure it if they went the right way about it. The principle he was outlining he contended was far more important than rules. In fact, it was the foundation of harmony that they should hear in the mind what they saw written in music. Dr. Davies proceeded to develop his subject in an interesting and chatty style and invited questions on any points on which his hearers had any doubts. The course of lectures initiated last night may be regarded as a step in the right direction in helping teachers of music to understand what is required of students who sit for examinations. The Australian Music Examination Board points out that it is now realised that the art of teaching rests on the assumption that education does not consist so much in the gaining of knowledge as in the development of faculty—in the growth of mind and spirit. It also assumes that every teacher should

know something of psychology, as it applies to that most wonderful of all studies, the unfolding of the child mind. Relating such modern views to the teaching of music it is found that learning to play an instrument by long and arduous practice of technical exercises does not always promote either a love of the art or any improvement in the sense of musical hearing. Too often the contrary is the case. Sir Walford Davies reminded a conference of teachers that a merely mechanical practising of the piano had as much relation to the appreciation of music as the working of a typewriter had to the understanding of English literature. The work of the board, besides that of examining students in all grades of practical and theoretical knowledge, has also in view definite educational activities. In Victoria and New South Wales there is an extensive scheme for giving concerts in remote country centres. Four or five leading artists go out into the country districts so that thousands of people, many of them students and teachers of music, may have an opportunity of listening to fine musical programmes. Later on it is hoped to introduce a similar enterprise in some of Australia. The next lecture will be on the subject of "Ear Training and Musical Appreciation," by Miss Ivy Ayers. The importance of this subject is recognised by all musicians, and Miss Ayers will explain the modern methods of training.