

In music the difficulty of decision is undoubtedly much greater than it is in the case of elocution. The appointment of a Board of Examiners in music at the Adelaide University will in time become an absolute necessity. Professor Ives's contention, as already published in our columns, is that the University should follow the example set by the London College and Academy of Music. But it may fairly be objected that the practice of other Universities would form a safer precedent.

In regard to the mode in which the results of the examinations are given to the public there is certainly some room for improvement. The practice of mentioning with each pupil's name that of the instructor with whom he or she has last been studying is open to grave objections on several scores. It is not seemly that in the University Calendar the pass-lists should read more like a column of school advertisements than anything else. It very frequently happens that the latest teacher of a candidate is not entitled to one-tenth of the credit due to a pass or of the blame attachable to a failure. In any case the native talent of the pupil usually has as much to do with success as any other element that could be named. It is a pity also that no distinction is made in regard to age. Young pupils are handicapped in many ways in any examination such as a trial of piano-forte playing, and it may be quite as much to their credit to pass second class as for older ones to pass first. On the other hand advanced candidates who are passing through from the lower stages of the course may feel it awkward that their names should be published in connection with an examination for which they are much more than qualified. On the whole, therefore, it will be seen that as a test of merit or the reverse a University list is a fallacious guide, and that every case of passing or failure must be taken individually in order to get at the real reasons for praise or blame. On this account it might, perhaps, be better for the University to adopt the practice now very general in other parts of the world of merely publishing the numbers instead of the names of candidates. As those who pass in the first class are all equally entitled to distinction there is but little harm in giving their names by way of honourable mention. But those who pass in the second class are surely entitled to have the publication of their names suppressed, if they so desire.

TO THE EDITOR,

Sir—Writing on behalf of some friends, candidates for the Elder scholarship, permit me to say that your very timely consensus of the opinions of some of Adelaide's most able music masters in reference to the objectionable practice in making Professor Ives the sole arbiter of awards upon examinations finds a strong echo in the voices of both pupils and the public generally. There can be no doubt, no matter how honest an examiner may try to be, he is very often influenced, possibly unknown to himself, in favor of a particular pupil or curriculum of study; but should he be prejudiced or unduly influenced then good-by to fair play. Doubtless Mr. Ives would prefer infinitely to have assistance in such important duties, and that gentleman will confer a favor upon all concerned, especially upon the pupils and their friends, by at once asking to have that assistance afforded him which is so very desirable in such an important matter.—I am, &c.,

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THE ELDER MUSICAL SCHOLARSHIP.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—I notice by a paragraph in your issue of Tuesday that the examination for the Elder scholarship at the London Royal College of Music will be held at the Adelaide University on Friday next. I cannot help saying that considering the value of this scholarship and the importance which should attach to it as a means of deciding who is the most promising among the rising musical talent of the colony hardly sufficient publicity has been given to the competition. Seeing that only once every three years does this grand opportunity—afforded by the munificence of Sir Thomas Elder—present itself public attention has not been sufficiently drawn to the approach of this the third competition. I would not say, sir, that for this the daily press is so much to blame as those to whom Sir Thomas Elder has seen fit to entrust the arrangements. If the founder of the scholarship intended, as I assume, that the competition should be as open as possible, so that the best available budding musical talent of South Australia should be selected for finishing instruction in Europe, it hardly seems that his views are being met by the somewhat hole-and-corner and indifferent way in which the arrangements for the examination have been made. The date of the competition should have been far more widely announced, for I have found that even among musical people in this city until your paragraph appeared on Tuesday there were only vague notions as to the when of the examination, and as regards the manner of it nothing is known. It is understood, however, that the whole matter has been left entirely in the hands of Professor Ives, and that he will act as sole examiner. In your article "Music in Adelaide," published also in Tuesday's issue, the objections to the professor as sole judge in connection with the annual public examinations are very clearly and unanimously expressed by the several teachers interviewed by your representative. The same objections tell with relatively greater strength against the professor being sole examiner in the more important competition for the Elder scholarship. Professor Ives seems to have profound faith in himself as a master in every branch of musical study, but it has been made abundantly clear from the opinions of our leading musical teachers, as given by you, that this confidence in his powers is not shared by them. I see that they all allow him to be a master of theory, but they are not disposed to admit that he also is a fully competent judge in the other branches of music—piano-forte and violin technique and the important study of singing for instance. Yet it appears that he does not intend to call in any musical specialist to his aid when he has to decide the difficult and delicate and highly technical points which must arise in properly conducted tests for a valuable scholarship. It would have been much better had the selection of a scholar been relegated to the board of musical studies at the University. Then that body could have selected examiners especially proficient to judge in the various branches of study. It is rare that a man who is a specialist in any one line of the art is found to have equal, or even nearly equal, knowledge in any other. Then the plan of the examination should be that the successful competitor should be required to show a sound knowledge of the rudiments, but also an exceptional aptitude in one branch. An all-round excellence without the manifestation of special promise in one line should not be sufficient qualification. In fact, the scholar sent to Europe for special training should be a specialist, not a sort of jack-of-all-trades in music, however ordinarily excellent. We should try to discover among us a composer, or a singer, or a violin player, or a piano-forte player. We must do this if the scholar sent to Europe is to derive the full benefit of special training there. I should like to see some other wealthy Australians come forward and supplement Sir Thomas Elder's munificence by providing means for specialists in each line to have the opportunity of studying under the best masters in England. It would always be very difficult, even with the most careful system of bestowing marks for each subject, to decide with accurate fairness between the merits of specialists in different branches of music—to decide, for instance, whether this one should be sent home to study singing, or that one to study piano-forte playing. Any old-world musical authority would at once point out the absurdity of expecting the same scholar to become a special star in both. In conclusion, my card, which I enclose, will at once satisfy you that I am not a music teacher, nor in any way connected with the profession of music in this colony. In all I have said I am simply and only actuated by a love of music for its own sake, and a desire to see the art become thoroughly popularised in the colony.—I am, &c.

MUSICUS.