

Register 19th Nov^r 1890.

UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION LIST.

The following have passed in the examination in the theory of music for the senior division:—

FIRST CLASS.—Ethel Cooper (College of Music), Constance Cruickshank (Hardwicke College), Mattie Dawson (Hardwicke College), Mabel Charlotte Hinde (College of Music), Helena Josephine Nichols (Mr. W. R. Pybus), Ellen Mary Porter (Miss Stenhouse), Edith Annie Maria Raston (College of Music).

SECOND CLASS.—Caroline Grace Ashwin (College of Music), Edith Vause Birks (College of Music), Anna Josephine Bosch (Mrs. J. Loessel), Emma Elizabeth Brown (Mr. W. R. Pybus), Laura Mary Edmunds (College of Music), Evelyn Mary Fidler (Mrs. J. Loessel), Ethel Goode (Hardwicke College), Edith Grandfield (Mr. W. R. Pybus), Margaret Kay (College of Music), Lucia Marie Louisa Loessel (Miss Püttmann), Edna Richards (Hardwicke College), Mary Ann Sprod (College of Music), Florence Tuck (Hardwicke College), Florence Wainwright (Hardwicke College), Alice Emilie Louise Wendt (Mrs. J. Loessel), Charlotte Elizabeth Wright (Messrs. Stevens & Mortimer).

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MUSICAL EXAMINATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY.

Music is evidently becoming increasingly popular as a subject of study in South Australia. That this is true may be seen from the extent of the University lists in music which have been published in our columns during the past few days. Last year it became the pleasing duty of the University Council to announce that although the Professorship of Music, established only for a term of five years mainly through the exertions of Sir W. C. F. Robinson, had not been again subsidized by private subscriptions, the courses and examinations had become so popular that the office was already self-supporting. A year ago certainly the figures were, for a comparatively small population such as that of South Australia, very satisfactory indeed. The numbers of passes were:—For the junior practical examination, 76; for the junior theoretical, 92; for the senior practical, 29; and for the senior theoretical, 19. This year the corresponding numbers are 75, 91, 34, and 23. In regard to practical pianoforte playing and other branches of the art of an executant musician it is difficult to estimate the exact extent to which the establishment of the Professorship has been instrumental in raising the standard of general excellence. Pianoforte playing was taught—and very well taught—in Adelaide long before music was ever thought of as a University subject. But it is in regard to the theory of music that the greatest effect is noticeable. The pupils of the rising generation are being taught to bring an enquiring mind to the study of the art. They must not be satisfied to strike a note or a chord merely because it is written before them. They must know and understand “the why and the wherefore.” They must analyse the piece before them and give intelligent reasons for the beauties which it exemplifies.

All this is progress in the right direction. The study of form and design is as necessary in music as in any other branch of art. If music is to have its full effect in elevating the conditions of our home and public life it is necessary that each piece should be studied in relation to the composer's intention and his various modes of expression. Music from a gymnastic point of view may be wonderful, and, to the vulgar mind, even awe-inspiring. But until it involves mental effort of the highest quality it is not worthy to be called music in the true sense of the word, so that in point of fact any person who merely aims to match the played sound with the written note is not really studying music at all. His efforts may be classed either as gymnastics or as legerdemain, but other branches of physical training would be more beneficial to himself and less objectionable to his neighbours. Theory should always go hand in hand with practice in this as in every other art, and it is to the former branch that the University examinations have been chiefly instrumental in drawing the attention of students and their teachers. More correctly, perhaps, we might say "teachers and parents," because in the vast majority of instances the teacher is obliged to work to the standard set by his employer, who is usually his pupil's parent. By providing the parent and teacher alike with an authoritative standard the University has done a good work. The teacher is no longer liable in some cases to be judged by his ability to facilitate the acquisition of showy pieces to be fired off in the presence of "company," but by a far truer standard of conscientious instruction, and he may well exclaim with the soldier in Hamlet, "for this relief much thanks."

At the same time it cannot be denied that various complaints have from time to time been urged against different features of the present system. It has grown up in so short a period that there has been but little opportunity for the application of that thorough test which experience alone provides. For example, it has been a very frequent practice among examining bodies in various parts of the world to appoint Boards of Examiners in all subjects in which there is much room for difference of opinion as to the merits of an answer or of a performance. In such a subject as music, in which the element of taste is so large a factor of one's power of judgment, this precaution is peculiarly necessary. But in the University of Adelaide the professor has to conduct the whole of the examinations practically single-handed. He has accomplished this work with marvellous success, but the present arrangement is not one that should be looked forward to as a permanency. In theoretical music there may be but little hardship involved, but in practical playing or singing the plan adopted is pretty sure to result sooner or later in a restricted standard of taste, and ultimately in a loss of that individuality which is the essence of art in its highest developments. There are few men who would care to undertake the judging even of a number of recitations at a Literary Society without the co-operation of other persons besides themselves.