

Advertiser 7/4/97

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL
EXAMINATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Noting the good effects of the correspondence you were kind enough to allow in your columns last year on the above subject, I trust you will again lend the profession your aid to obtain further improvements and concessions, especially as the University is now in funds. The point I wish taken up is, that considering the large amount contributed yearly in fees by parents for examinations, they have up to now got no just return. A case I now quote I think will apply to hundreds of disappointed parents, and I trust some of them will have public spirit enough to relate their experiences with teachers. Mr. X. had a daughter taught music for five years, fee £3 3s. per quarter, at a leading ladies' college. They reported quarterly, "pupil most talented, great natural gift," &c. The girl took her First-class Junior and First Senior in Practice, and First Junior and Second Senior in Theory, played at school concerts, and was the pride of her parents. She has left off music lessons for two years, and now cannot play anything. The gorgeous Beethoven sonata is a dreadful thing to listen to. She cannot after all the expenditure of her parents play a little dance of any kind for home amusement; and as to the graceful drawing-room music of the type of, say Fabian Rose's "Amorette," she cannot teach herself the spirit or swing. The pater naturally asks why is this? Teachers may howl, but the principal reason is that children are not taught to count their time aloud and learn every division and accent of their bar to sufficiently easy music for at least two years. Teachers say reading at sight is a gift. What is gift? A child should be kept carefully counting aloud, and should never play a piece that he or she cannot nearly master at one lesson. There is plenty of good, easy, tuneful music, which, properly played, teaches music and a love of music. But, no; you look through each child's repertoire of tuneless effusions—Bach, Cramer, Bennett, Gale, Hartmann, Grieg, Jensen, Reinicke, Reinberger, &c., and to the question do you like your pieces I, with rare exceptions, get but one answer, "I hate them." The clever professional is always at least honest about the question of time, and invariably tells the pupils that their time is bad and must be corrected, but says—"Buy a metronome and teach yourself." The reply perhaps is—"I won't count my time all through a lesson and turn myself into a walking metronome." The dishonest teacher, of whom there are many, does not say a word, curls himself up on the sofa, goes to sleep, but collects his £3 3s. punctually. To stop all this sort of thing parents should give their fullest support to any University which will protect them by adopting the following reforms. We want a competent examiner for the piano. An organist is with few exceptions a bad pianist, and what is worse is fully imbued with the idea that his own bad style, funny ways, and wiggle-waggles is the best form in the world. Let three-fourths of the test-piece list be struck out, all the more difficult ones altogether. An easier type of piece better taught and better played would do more good to music. An absolute guarantee from the examiner in all points of curriculum, especially time and easy sight-reading. On the same lines a good and efficient examiner for violin and singing separate from the theory and organ. Parents want their children taught so that they may give some practical pleasure at home. The present system gives no pleasure to any one. The bottom level of the second class in all divisions of theory and practice is far too low; 65 per cent. at least of full marks given should be required for a pass. The first class of Senior Practice is, on the other hand, far too high. It is a great encouragement to pupils to feel that there is chance of a first; cutting it to three passes is a complete damper, and I consider that in the new Primary it is more important than ever that a competent violin player should examine. It absolutely requires the eye of the trained player to judge the early results of good training in a baby violinist.

Professor you might or might not detect an embryo Joachim, but about the manner and style a beginner should be trained in he knows absolutely nothing. Every leading teacher of the violin in Adelaide, bar one, is dissatisfied. Surely that ought to have some weight with the Musical Board. Give us a proper examiner, and we will give you at least thirty candidates this year. My name is at anybody's service.

I am, Sir, &c.,

PROFESSIONAL.

REGISTER

7/4/97

DR. WILLIAM GARDNER.

DIES AT NAPLES.

A STROKE OF PARALYSIS.

London, April 7.

Dr. William Gardner, of Melbourne, and formerly of Adelaide, succumbed to a stroke of paralysis at Naples.

The deceased, who had been on a trip to the old country, was returning to Melbourne.

Dr. Gardner was the eldest son of the Rev. John Gardner, formerly of Chalmers Church, and now of Victoria, and was about forty-eight years of age. He was born in Adelaide, and educated at Mr. J. L. Young's Institution, Stephens-place. Leaving school he was engaged in the English and Scottish Bank for several years. Having expressed a desire to study for the medical profession, he was sent to the Melbourne University, where he had a brilliant course. Thence he proceeded to the Glasgow University. Subsequently in the attainment of the M.D. degree of that University a thesis was necessary, and he chose for his subject one in which he had always been distinguished as a specialist—hydatids. The thesis, of which he did not keep a copy, was forwarded to the University, and it was so highly appreciated by the professorial staff that he not only secured the degree, but the gold medal for the year—a rare and enviable distinction. On his return from the Glasgow University to Adelaide he was appointed Junior House Surgeon to the Adelaide Hospital in 1875, the late Dr. J. Davies Thomas occupying the position of Senior House Surgeon. On the latter's retirement to enter private practice Dr. Gardner was unanimously elected to the higher office, which he held with success to the institution and credit to himself for a considerable period. On his retirement he entered into private practice, and very shortly afterwards received the appointment of Hon. Surgeon to the Adelaide Hospital. It was then that he obtained the reputation of being one of the cleverest surgeons in Australia, his greatest contemporary being Mr. Fitzgerald, of Melbourne. He was sent for from Melbourne to perform a very difficult operation—extirpation of larynx for cancer of the throat. The operation, which he successfully performed, attracted a great deal of attention, not only in the colonies, but in Europe, the Emperor Frederick of Germany suffering at the time from a like complaint, which in spite of the best skill available in Europe terminated fatally. Five years ago Dr. Gardner left Adelaide for Melbourne, and since then his services had been on several occasions in request in Adelaide for the performance of intricate surgical operations. Dr. Gardner married the eldest daughter of the late Dr. R. W. Moore, formerly Colonial Surgeon, and has no family. His brother is Mr. Gavin Gardner, of this city. He left Melbourne a year ago for an extended trip—partly on account of ill-health and partly to prosecute his studies.