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MUSICAL EXAMINATIONS.

PROFESSORS DISAGREE.

DISSATISFIED CANDIDATES.

A discordant note has been struck in connection with the examination of the harmony papers for the third year course of the Mus. Bac. degree at the Adelaide University. The examinations were held in the middle of November, and the adjudication on the work of the candidate was in the hands of Professor Ives, Elder Professor of Music at the university, and Mr. W. H. Wale, of Sydney, an additional examiner for the final year. Professor Ives, in his report on the papers of the six candidates, allowed a "pass" in regard to four of them, but the Sydney examiner characterized all the efforts as unsatisfactory, and in an adverse report said that so far as he was concerned all the candidates had failed. In the circumstances, on the suggestion of Professor Ives, it was decided that the papers should be sent to Professor Peterson, of the Melbourne University, who had agreed to act as referee. That this gentleman should have a perfectly open course, Professor Ives commenced to clean the papers of marks that had been made upon them, and afterwards left them in care of the registrar of the university, Mr. C. R. Hodge, to have the work completed in the office, and the clean papers forwarded to Melbourne. They were, however, sent on without this being done, and accompanied by the report of Mr. Wale, but without that of Professor Ives, who learned what had been done two days later, and immediately telegraphed to Professor Peterson:—

Please do not open papers; obliged to withdraw my consent to your acting, owing to certain improper actions.

He also sent the following communication to the registrar of the Adelaide University, dated December 7, 1901:—

Dear Mr. Registrar—I am astonished to hear that you have sent Mr. Wale's report along with the examination papers, and without a report from me. It was understood that the papers were to be sent for a fair, unbiased opinion thereon, and in justice to the candidates this could only be obtained in the way agreed upon between you and myself. I therefore withdraw my consent to Professor Peterson seeing the papers, and I have telegraphed to him accordingly.—Yours truly, J. Ives.

The reply given by the registrar was as under:—

With respect to your letter of even date, I endeavoured to see you yesterday, and telephoned to Glenelg to ascertain if you wished to make any observations to Professor Peterson regarding Mr. Wale's report and memoranda. As I informed you this morning, I am still ready to forward any observations you may desire to make. The university has obtained Mr. Wale's consent to the reference you proposed to Professor Peterson, and it is too late for you now to withdraw it. Your withdrawal would have the effect of taking away the chance of your students passing in this examination.

On receipt of this communication Professor Ives wrote to Mr. Hodge the following letter:—

Dear Mr. Registrar—If you had wished me to forward a report yesterday, you know that I lunch at Kindermann's. Of what use would it be to do so now? My letter could not reach Professor Peterson until at least 48 hours after Mr. Wale's, and when his mind has probably been influenced. And how can I write a report without the papers to refer to? I still decline to alter my decision to withdraw my consent under these strange circumstances which the chancellor has brought about. If, as you say, my students have no chance of passing, I shall leave others to draw their inferences from the whole affair.

Notwithstanding the objection raised by Professor Ives to the reference being persisted in nothing seems to have been done by the university to stay the examinations, for on December 14 Mr. Hodge wrote:—

Dear Professor Ives—By direction of the council I have to inform you that the referee, who was appointed at your request, has reported unfavorably. The council regret that all the students in the third year for the Mus. Bac. degree have failed. I am further directed to request that you will at once forward to the council your returns for the first and second years.

To which Professor Ives replied as follows on December 16:—

Dear Mr. Registrar—Your letter of the 14th inst. duly received. It is rather a sad state of affairs when the correspondence of an institution like the Adelaide University has to be conducted on a foundation of ingenious subtlety and thinly veiled inaccuracy. As you are well aware, I withdrew my consent to Professor Peterson acting because of the obviously purposeful action of the Chancellor. I have but to repeat that when the examination for the Mus. Bac. degree has been completed to my satisfaction I shall issue the pass lists in the usual way.

The registrar of the university has been asked by the Minister of Education to supply a report on the matter, which now rests in abeyance pending the receipt of that document. Professor Ives, when seen by a representative of "The Register" on Tuesday, said that one question out of the seven set on the harmony paper by Mr. Wale was beyond the requirements of the regulations for the examination, and though for the whole paper only three hours were allowed the candidates, this question alone could not be adequately dealt with in less than from four to six. He is of opinion that had Messrs. Wale and Peterson taken account of this fact the decisions given by them would have been much in accord with his own. He had told the council of the university it was an absurdly unfair question, and could never to have found a place on the paper.

THE PROFESSOR OF MUSIC.

DR. J. M. ENNIS.

A DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE.

At the last meeting of the University Council Dr. J. Matthew Ennis, Doctor of Music of the University of London, was appointed Professor of Music and Director of the Elder Conservatorium, and he will arrive in Adelaide at the end of February to take up his new duties.

Dr. Ennis is at present in Sydney, where he has been residing for the last 18 months. He is 37 years of age, and has had a distinguished career in music. His examiners for the Mus. Doc. degree were Sir Hubert Parry and Dr. Bridge, and during their term of office Dr. Ennis was the only successful candidate at the London University for the Mus. Doc. degree. He has held appointments as organist for 21 years, and besides being an expert organist is a brilliant pianist, while he has a large acquaintance with classical and modern as

well as chamber and orchestral music. As a lecturer, too, he has had some experience, and for three years he was on the council of the Union of Graduates in Music in Great Britain and Ireland.

It is a comparatively rare event for a musical degree "exercise" to be performed at the London University, but when Dr. Ennis took his degree of Mus. Doc. the examiners, Drs. Bridge and Parry, requested that his exercise should be performed in as complete a manner as possible. The composition consisted of a setting for contralto solo, chorus, and orchestra of the 46th Psalm, and it was given in the theatre of the University of London with full orchestra and a chorus of 60 voices on February 23, 1895. The "Musical News" commented upon the work as follows:—"In the choral portion the composer has given abundant proof of his ability to fulfil the academical requirements of writing in eight parts, and also to write double fugue, with which he concludes his work. Dr. Ennis's greatest sympathies seem, however, to be with the orchestra, and this is effectively treated, the genius of the instruments being carefully kept in mind." London "Truth," in an equally eulogistic notice, stated that Dr. Ennis was only the fifth gentleman who had succeeded in breaking through the safeguards which the senate had erected at the University of London to prevent any but the very choicest of the musical elect from gaining a seat in convocation.

Since his arrival in Australia Dr. Ennis has publicly appeared in Sydney both as a pianist and an organist. Of his playing of Beethoven's "Appassionata sonata," an exchange said:—"His playing was scholarly and thoughtful, and was that of an artist who preferred to allow Beethoven's music to speak for itself, as it were, rather than to force new meanings into a classic work with which all are familiar. Dr. Ennis proved at his best in the group of Brahms pieces, of which great composer he has evidently made a special study." Of his playing of Rheinberger's "Fantasia sonata" at an organ recital given in the Sydney Town Hall, the same critic remarked:—"Dr. Ennis exhibited some fine pedalling in the finale, the many contrapuntal intricacies he manipulated clearly and well, whilst all the grandiose and sonorous effects of the terminating passages were brilliantly shown."

AN EXAMINATION TROUBLE.

THE ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY.

ADELAIDE, Tuesday.

The unfortunate condition of affairs in connection with the examination of third year students for the degree of Mus. Bac. at the Adelaide University has excited much comment in musical circles. It has been explained with reference to the complaint of students that one of the questions in the harmony paper set by Mr. Wale, Mus. Bac., was quite beyond the requirements put forth in the regulations for the degree. The students were allowed three hours in which to answer the seven questions appearing on the examination paper. Professor Peterson, of Melbourne University, to whom, owing to a difference of opinion between Professor Ives and Mr. Wale, the papers were referred, has, it is stated, reported that one of the questions was an absurd one; while, it is said, he also states that the whole paper was most unreasonable. Professor Ives is of opinion that the students were asked to do what was practically impossible in the time allotted. It is understood that Mrs. J. S. Weston, the lady superintendent of the Elder Conservatorium, has received notice that her services will not be required after the expiry of three months, and that Mr. Bryceson Trehan has announced his intention of severing his connection with the conservatorium when the term of his present engagement expires. Professor Ives has stated his intention to make some explanation of the reasons that have led to his retirement from the university at the close of the commemoration ceremony to-morrow afternoon.

Melbourne Age 18/12/01.

MUSICAL EXAMINATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AGE.

Sir,—Public reference has recently been made to the English craze for musical examinations, and as the Commonwealth is now being exploited by English institutions, with inferior or low-grade certificates, we would respectfully draw your attention to a comparison between the examinations of the Musical Society of Victoria and those of the English institutions referred to above. Merely premising that musical examinations were held by the local society under its old name of the Musical Association years before some of our visiting competitors came into existence, and long before any of them included Australia as a field for their commercial enterprise, unfortunately by holding examinations for advanced students only the Musical Association commenced at the wrong end, and consequently the number of candidates was extremely few, but after amalgamation with the Musical Artists' Society, two examinations of an easier grade, the "elementary" and "intermediate," were instituted as preliminary to those already in existence, and the number of candidates increased by leaps and bounds, until at the present time the increase on the early years is estimated at about 600 per cent.

Comparison of Requirements.—The Musical Society of Victoria publish half yearly a list of pieces representing a fair six months' practice. From this list the society—not the candidate—selects one or more for the examination. The candidate will therefore naturally practise the whole list of pieces systematically. This ensures comprehensive and varied study, and practically defies cramming. The visiting institutions publish a list annually from which the candidate, not the institution, selects the piece or pieces. Now, as the principal, if not the sole, aim is to obtain a certificate, the candidate will naturally practice for the whole of the twelve months, or the greater part thereof, that, and possibly only that, which he has selected to be examined on. Such a practice is absolutely bad. Psychological and physiological science condemn it as opposed to the proper building up and education of the student; it makes vice a virtue, sight reading becomes lamentably defective, the study of new work becomes more difficult, they have formed and strengthened habits, so that in all future study, when the student comes across passages bearing a resemblance, but actually different to those in some former work, the difficulties are increased a hundred fold. The force of such long continued habit is too strong, and asserts itself with patience killing persistence. By one-sided, narrow and inadequate training, the will currency from brain to finger tip is miserably starved.

Conditions of Examination.—In the Musical Society of Victoria's examinations the candidate for singing, piano, or any other instrument must also pass an examination in harmony; in those of the visiting institutions the candidate for singing, piano or any other instrument is not required to pass an examination in harmony, but may do so as a separate examination on payment of an additional fee. Now curriculum students, in all the leading colleges, schools and conservatoriums throughout the world, including two of our visiting competitors, make the study of harmony a compulsory subject, yet apparently for the sake of inducing a greater number of students to become fee paying candidates, they are content in these examinations to practically ignore the sound, wise and common sense practice of their own college or academy. Could anything be more inconsistent or more convincing of the purely commercial spirit which seems to control and influence them?

Registered 18th Dec 1901.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

HANSARD REPORT

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17.

The SPEAKER (Sir Jenkin Coles) took the chair at 2 p.m.

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL EXAMINATIONS.

Mr. DIXON asked the Chief Secretary if his attention had been called to the letters in the press in reference to the extraordinary state of affairs that prevailed at the University at the present moment in connection with the musical examinations? Did the Government propose to institute enquiries?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. G. Jenkins) said he had seen the correspondence. He would like Mr. Dixon to give notice, as he was not sure about the powers of the Government in that direction. He did not know whether they had the necessary power to take action.

Mr. PRICE asked whether it was not possible for the Government to interfere when injustice was done to South Australian students. On Wednesday he would take the opportunity of moving a motion giving the full particulars. Would the Government inform him of a way to bring the matter before the House?

The MINISTER of EDUCATION (Hon. T. H. Brooker) said that since seeing the paragraphs in the papers he had interviewed the Registrar in reference to the matter, and he believed the University would be prepared to furnish him with a report. They would call for a report and let Mr. Price see it.