

Registered 24th Aug 07.

THE MUSIC TRADE AND THE CONSERVATORIUM.

To the Editor.

Sir—In view of certain paragraphs which have recently appeared in your columns, I feel it my duty to bring to your notice the circumstances which, in my opinion, explain the whole situation. To be explicit, it is necessary to go back some years—that is, to the period in which I occupied the position of acting director of the Conservatorium. It was during this particular year that steps were taken to form the Conservatorium Orchestra on a permanent basis; and, for what were considered good and sufficient reasons, a certain member of the music trade, who is also an instrumental performer, was not included in the combination. A good deal of unpleasantness was, I believe, caused by this individual at the time, and much prejudice has since been shown towards the institution, the orchestra, and certain members of the teaching staff. Anonymous letters have been published, and garbled and distorted accounts of even the most ordinary and perfectly legitimate and honourable transactions have been circulated against the Conservatorium and its staff. Happily, I have no axe to grind with the music trade, with the majority of whom I am on terms of intimate friendship; but a strong sense of duty impels me to ask you to publish these facts, and thus unmask what I believe to be the cause of an agitation which is altogether unfair, and might leave a false impression in the public mind.

I am, Sir, &c.,
FREDERICK BEVAN.

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

THE MUSIC TRADE AND THE CONSERVATORIUM.

A committee of the University council has investigated allegations which were referred to in "The Advertiser" of July 27, as to the teachers of the Conservatorium trafficking in music and musical instruments, to the detriment of the music trade. Four music-sellers, who substantially repeated these allegations in letters to the council, were invited to furnish particulars of any instances in which they had cause of complaint. We are informed that they were unable to supply any.

As to the sale of musical instruments the teacher of the violin who was specially mentioned absolutely denied having sold instruments to students at prices ranging as high as £70 and £120, and affirmed that he was not interested in any way in the sale of violins, or in any music-seller's business. He said that during the last three years he had sold two instruments only, both of which were his own property. One was a high-priced instrument, bought for his own use, and sold at the buyer's urgent request; the price was £35. The other was a cheaper instrument, purchased to relieve a person in distress.

As to the sale of music, when the Elder Conservatorium took over the work of the Adelaide College of Music, the principal, Mr. Reimann, who had been in the habit of providing music for his pupils, had a stock worth about £200, and the Board of Musical Studies, not wishing to engage in business of the kind, did not purchase Mr. Reimann's stock, the understanding being that he could dispose of it to students or others. He still has about £70 worth on hand. In addition he has ordered for students music from Germany not obtainable in Adelaide, to the amount of about £7 a year.

The committee are satisfied that there have been no sales of instruments or music other than those above specified. They report that the complaints made are without justification, and that except as stated above the teachers of the Conservatorium have refrained from competing in any way with music-sellers.

Registered 21st Aug. 07.

THE MUSIC TRADE AND THE CONSERVATORIUM.

To the Editor.

Sir—Mr. Bevan's letter in The Register on Saturday evidently refers to me, as I am the only one in the music trade connected with orchestras who has not played with the so-called Conservatorium Orchestra. The majority of that orchestra are not Conservatorium students, and are paid the magnificent sum of 5/ a night. Mr. Bevan appears to be drawing a herring across the track to hoodwink the public. No one knows better than he the plain facts of the trouble. Four leading Adelaide music firms have written to the Adelaide University Council objecting to certain members of the Conservatorium staff giving testimonials to pianoforte dealer and selling other instruments and music which is detrimental to the music trade. If Mr. Bevan were now a piano dealer he would be the first to agree with the music trades' complaint. He forgets that the University is subsidized by the South Australian Government, and that the staff are practically civil servants. While on this subject, may I ask why he is engaged to act as judge at country musical competitions, thus competing with musicians not connected with the Conservatorium? Mr. Bevan's letter reads well to those who are not in possession of the true facts; but it is a misstatement of facts. It was Professor Ives who organized the Conservatorium Orchestra, in connection with Heiricke's Grand Orchestra, and this orchestra gave 11 concerts in the Town Hall, Adelaide, under my management, when Mr. Bevan made his first and only appearance in Adelaide as a vocalist. Later on a sum of money was granted to Professor Ives to engage an orchestra to perform his symphony during the Duke's visit. The professor engaged me to organize the orchestra. I did so. There was a squabble at the Conservatorium, and the grant was taken from Professor Ives. I claimed a fee to cancel the order, and, after considerable trouble, was paid. An orchestra was engaged by the Conservatorium, which cost about double the original amount granted to perform the symphony. At no time have I ever expressed a desire to join the Conservatorium Orchestra. After reading Mr. Bevan's wild statements I have come to the conclusion that he is aspiring to write something original. Concerning his remarks re "false impressions" I leave the public to judge.

I am, Sir, &c.,
CHAS. CAWTHORNE.

THE MUSIC TRADE AND THE CONSERVATORIUM.

We have been supplied with a report to the following effect:—A committee of the University Council has investigated the statements which appeared recently in the daily press concerning the teachers of the Conservatorium trafficking in music and musical instruments, to the detriment of the music trade. Four musicsellers who substantially repeated these allegations, but in more general terms, in letters to the council were invited to furnish particulars of any instances in which they had cause of complaint, but failed to supply any. First regarding the sale of musical instruments, the teacher of the violin who was specially mentioned in the paragraphs in question absolutely denied having sold instruments to students at prices ranging as high as £70 and £120, and affirmed that he was not interested in any way in the sale of violins, or in any musicseller's business. During the last three years he had sold two instruments only, both of which were his own property. One was a high-priced instrument bought for his own use and sold at the buyer's urgent request; the price was £35. The other was a cheaper instrument purchased to relieve a person in distress. Relative to sales of music, when the Elder Conservatorium took over the work of the Adelaide College of Music the principal, Mr. Reimann, who had been in the habit of providing music for his pupils, had a stock worth about £200; and the Board of Musical Studies, not wishing to engage in business of the kind, did not purchase Mr. Reimann's stock, the understanding being that he could dispose of it to students or others. He still has about £70 worth on hand. In addition, he has ordered for students music from Germany not obtainable in Adelaide, to the amount of about £7 a year. The committee are satisfied that there have been no sales of instruments or music other than those above specified, and report that the complaints made are without justification, and that (except as stated above) the teachers of the Conservatorium have refrained from competing in any way with musicsellers.