Reg 17/7/25

MUSIC TEACHERS' CONFERENCE.

Addresses and Recitals.

There were four items arranged for Thursday's two sessions of the Music Teachers' Conference at the Elder Conservatorium, of the Adelaide University. Evidently, prepared to make an illuminative week of it, there was another large attendance of country teachers, and also a few of the town fraternity. The Director of the Conservatorium (Dr. E. Harold Davies) opened the morning proceedings yesterday, with a splendid address upon "Form in Music." At noon, Miss Ada Wordie, A.M.U.A., was the vocalist at a recital in the Elder Hall; in the afternoon a return was made to the south hall to attend a lecture on "Orchestral Instruments," by Mr. W. H. Foote, A.R.C.M., and subsequently at 4 o'clock, Miss Maude Puddy, Mus. Bac., and Mr. Charles Schilsky were associated in a piano and violin recital is the big hall. Mr. H. R. Othams, the secretary to the conference, had all the arrangements in splendid order.

"FORM IN MUSIC."

Dr. Davies, in his address, said that there were two words they sometimes used in antithesis. They were "chaos" and "cosmos"—the one meaning confusion and disorder, the other an ordered creation. They would all remember the opening words of the book of Genesis:—"In the beginning . . . the earth was without form and void; and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Then all those wonderful and progressive stages of evolution commenced, which had gone on continuously through the ages that had since elapsed; at the outset a weltering and seething mass of raw materials, then the mind of the great Architect at work shaping, moulding, and reducing all to order; giving it meaning and beauty. So in that general way they could realize what form was. It might be expressed as order, symmetry, design; or, more comprehensively, as the principle of mind in relation to matter.

The Origin of Music.

The first great essential, therefore, was unity, proceeded the speaker, and with unity, or relatedness, came variety, the two together being equally evident in all created things, whether in the world of Nature, or the world of art. But their immediate concern was to learn something of form as applied to music; and more especially, to appreciate those distinctive features of form which music demanded, because of its peculiarly transient nature.

The lecturer dealt with the raw materials of which music consisted. They were:—(1) All available sounds, varying as to pitch, duration, intensity, and quality, and (2) all possible rhythms, or orders of movement in time. If they went back to the very beginning of things it was easy to imagine that sounds were at first vague and uncertain. The earliest attempts at song by their savage ancestors consisted of rude shoutings, with only a very uncertain realization of two or three fairly simple intervals, such as the fourth, the fifth, or the octave. But there was no definite pitch until some one discovered that a stretched piece of gut, or a reed, would give out a musical sound; and from then it became easy to discover further that pipes or strings of different length would produce correspondingly different sounds.

The Power of Rhythm.

The next principle of order they must notice was that of rhythm or pulse, continued Dr. Davies. Music only existed in time; it had no spatial property, and its progress could only be regulated through measured periods of time. The human instinct which underlay rhythm was this sense of regular movement, or the desire for unanimity. They could imagine again, far back in the history of the race, two savages trying to adjust their steps or gestures in some primitive dance. An old warrior sat watching their futile endeavour, and, suddenly seizing a couple of pieces of wood, began to beat them together with recurrent accent. The steps now fell simultaneously, the gestures were timed, and thus the principle of rhythmic movement became established. And just in that way the bounds of what they called tonality had been constantly enlarged; the simplest melodies, formed it might be on the five notes of the pentatonic scale, or the seven notes of their major scale, growing out into more complex relations, modulating first into near keys, and then into far keys, as the musical mind developed, and brought into close association sounds which at first seemed far apart. Similarly the feeling for rhythm extended itself over ever-widening areas; the accent of the bar merged into the accent of the phrase, and the phrase into the sentence, until, out of a single pulse-unit, there grew the manifold structure of a complete movement—it might be of fugue, sonata, or symphony. It needed only to take a few simple melodies, or tiny movements, such the they found in Schuman's "Album for the Young," to discover all the elements of perfect form in music (concluded the speaker). Dr. Davies then practically demonstrated his points upon form.

A VOCAL RECITAL.

The clear sympathetic soprano tones of Miss Ada Wordie's fine voice did justice to the exacting list of items programmed for her recital at noon yesterday. Beginning with Handel, the vocalist presented numbers of great contrast that included popular compositions by Schumann, Schubert, Dvorak, Rachmaninoff, Massenet, Sinding, Sullivan, and Hook-Corder. Two operatic arias and an excerpt from Purcell's last work, "Don Quixote" — from "Rosy Bowers" — were also rendered. Throughout the progress of a musical treat, the listeners punctuated the pauses with hearty applause. Mr. Harold Wylde again revealed his very great gift in the realm of the accompanist. The detailed programme was as follows:—Recit., "Ne' trionfi D'Allessandro," aria, "Lusinghe Pui Care" (from the opera "Allessandro" by Handel); "Tune thy strings, O gipsy," "Songs my mother taught me," "Hark! My triangle" (Dvorak); "The green hat" (Schuman) "The wild rose" (Schubert); "Lilacs" "Ah, night," "Into my open window" (Rachmaninoff); cantata, from "Rosy Bowers," "Don Quixote" (last composition of Purcell); "Ouvre tes yeux bleus" (Massenet); "Sylvelin" (Sinding); "Neath my lattice ("Rose of Persia"), (Sullivan), "O, willow, willow" (Traditional), sung by Desdemona in "Othello," and "The blackbird" (Hook-Corder).

"ORCHESTRAL INSTRUMENTS."

The afternoon session was signalized by an address upon "Orchestral instruments" by Mr. W. H. Foote, who, during the past four years, has done so much to inculcate interest among students in wind instruments. Remarkable knowledge was revealed concerning the various instruments discussed by the lecturer, not only theoretically, but practically also. It is seldom that one demonstrator can so skilfully play such a different rage of brass and wood-wind, but Mr. Foote was never at a loss, and some brilliant solos were included in his demonstrations. He began by reference to the various instruments, and it was from these that the organ was built up. During the demonstrations, Miss Lozelle Foote supplied the orchestral part at the piano.

Before speaking of the evolution and modern development of the various wind instruments, Mr. Foote observed that if this country were to be known musically, it must wake up and advance in the knowledge of musicmaking—particularly instrumental. At present they had not very far advanced beyond the stage of brass band playing, which was the most elementary form of harmonized sound. The ability to render classical music was naturally limited on account of technical difficulties. So, to get away from this monotony of brass band playing, they must produce tone colour, and to produce tone colour must employ the variety of instruments which were at their disposal. The French have, more than any other nation, employed the great variety of wind instruments. Primitive man, in searching for means to express musical sounds, used the horns of animals, reeds from the bamboo, and even the shells of fish.

The Flute, Oboe, and Other Instruments.

"The earliest known example of a Roman flute," continued Mr. Foote, "is in the British Museum, and is made from a thigh bone. The Egyptians, however, used the bamboo, as do also the Chinese; but we have gone further in construction, using highly seasoned wood. As a wind instrument, it is probably more popular than any other. The oboe is one of the most ancient, as also the most charming instruments of music; the ancient Egyptians used it in a somewhat different manner than at present, in that they played it after the style of a bagpipe. The cor anglais, although generally accepted as a relative to the oboe, is derived from the horn of an antelope. The clarinet is quite a modern instrument compared with the oboe, and is a modification and improvement of the ancient chalamean, a kind of horn. The bass clarinet is an octave lower than the ordinary instrument in B flat, possesses a rich, sonorous tone, and is generously used in big orchestras. The bassoon, or fagolt, as it is known on the Continent of Europe, is an indispensable instrument in the orchestra, by virtue of its tone, versatility, and extreme compass as a bass instrument. Ancient Egypt knew it as the zummarch or balsine, and it was made from a rather large size bamboo. The French horn is a most fascinating and difficult instrument, its tone strange to say, being a mixture of brass and wood. Orchestrally it blends better with the wood-wind, and is used in conjunction with this department more frequently than with the strident trumpets and trombones. The trumpet, most ancient of brass instruments, is the legitimate brass. It has no connection with the cornet, so popular in brass bands, but unsuitable for the orchestra. The trombone, or sackbut, as it was known to the ancients, is still used in its original form—by the use of a slide, which lengthens or shortens the tube according to the note. The orchestra uses three kinds, the alto in E's, the tenor in B's, and the bass in G. The tuba is the pedal tone of the brass, and produces a depth of tone unattained by any other instrument, excepting the contra fagotto. It is more commonly used in sounding the lowest notes, which require great skill to produce."

PIANO AND VIOLIN RECITAL.

Proceedings closed on Thursday with a joint recital by Miss Maude Puddy and Mr. Charles Schilsky. The numbers submitted were of a high order of accomplishment, and both the pianiste and violinist justified the ovations they received. Brahms's "Sonata in D minor," Opus 108, was chosen for the big, collaberative work, and was interpreted with thoughtfulness, and an ease that gave no indication of the difficulties of its passages. The four movements were full of rich harmonies, and a brilliant climax was reached in the final Presto. Miss Puddy then made a solo appearance in Schumann's "Papillons," Opus 2, a delicate web of sound, full of fluttering rhythm, and eminently suited to the beautiful, velvety touch of the pianiste. Mr. Schilsky added his share to the solo portion of the programme, with a bracket that indicated his mastery of the violin. The "Meister singer paraphrase" (Wagner-Wilhelmj) and "Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso" (Saint-Saens) were given with an intellectual intensity typical of all Mr. Schilsky's playing.

Adv. 17.7.25

CONFERENCE OF MUSIC TEACHERS.

THE GROWTH OF MUSICAL FORM.

The Conference of Music Teachers was resumed yesterday morning when Dr. E. Harold Davies (Director of the Elder Conservatorium) read a paper on "Form in Music," which was illustrated by examples from Schumann's "Album for the Young."

There were two words, said Dr. Davies, they sometimes used in antithesis. They were "chaos" and "cosmos," the one meaning confusion and disorder, the other an ordered creation. They all remembered the opening words of the book of Genesis, "In the beginning . . . . the earth was without form and void; and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Then all those wonderful and progressive stages of evolution commenced, which had gone on continuously through the ages that had since elapsed; at the outset a weltering and seething mass of raw materials, then the mind of the great Architect at work shaping, moulding, and reducing all to order; giving it meaning and beauty. So in that general way they could realise what form was. It might be expressed as order, symmetry, design; or, more comprehensively, as the principle of mind in relation to matter. Certainly without form there could be no understanding. They could only mentally grasp the thing that might be classified, or brought into some sort of relation with other things. The first great essential, therefore, was unity, and with unity came variety, the two together being equally evident in all created things, whether in the world of Nature or the world of Art.

Their immediate concern was to learn something of form as applied to music, and more especially, to appreciate those distinctive features of form which music demanded, because of its peculiarly transient nature. A symphony was a glorious and bewildering series of fleeting impressions, each of which vanished, even as it appeared. To grasp the form of music they must remember, and in order that they might remember things of importance must be repeated. For this reason they said that repetition was the first factor in musical structure. Melodies or themes must recur, or a principal key must at least be re-established, so that they might properly realise their tonal "whereabouts."

There was a point of psychology which might be mentioned. It had an important bearing on the need for variety, which was a purely human requirement. They recalled the familiar saying, "a change of occupation is as good as a holiday." Repetition, constant and unrelieved, meant fatigue and inattention. So in music the phases of recurrence must be interwoven with phases of contrast, and in this way they obtained the impression of both unity and variety. And when a leading theme reappeared after a period of digression, it was doubly welcome for the very pleasure they experienced in its recognition. They might then proceed to the more detailed discussion of form in relation to their art, and he would ask them first to realise the raw materials of which music consisted. They were, first all available sounds, varying as to pitch, duration, intensity, and quality, and, second, all possible rhythms, or orders of movement in time.

The Development of Pitch and Rhythm.

If they went back to the very beginning of things it was easy to imagine that sounds were at first vague and uncertain. The earliest attempts at song by their savage ancestors consisted of rude shoutings, with only a very uncertain realisation of two or three fairly simple intervals, such as the fourth, the fifth, or the octave. But there was no definite pitch until someone discovered that a stretched piece of gut or a reed would give out a musical sound, and from then it became easy to discover further that pipes or strings of different length would produce correspondingly different sounds. Thus, with the invention of primitive instruments of music pitch became fairly constant. And the attainment of these more definite pitch relations showed them the that was, of form, in the world of musical sound. They might not then discuss the scientific basis of these relations, but they knew quite surely that it was a natural basis.

If he took a simple tune like "Drink to me only with thine eyes" and sowed it at random with accidental sharps and flats, it became sheer nonsense. They could not any longer relate the sounds. And it was because of this need for intelligible relation that through the long ages of melody-growth, various groups of sounds become naturally associated, and the various scales or keys had been formed. And it must be remembered there were as many different associations of this kind as there were systems of music in the many countries of the world.

The next principle of order they must notice was that of rhythm or pulse. Music only existed in time; it had no spatial property, and its progress could only be regulated through measured periods of time. The human instinct which underlay rhythm was that sense of regular movement, or the desire for unanimity. They could imagine again, far back in the history of the race, two savages trying to adjust their steps or gestures in some primitive dance. An old warrior sat watching their futile endeavor, and suddenly seizing a couple of pieces of wood began to beat them together with recurrent accent. The steps now fell simultaneously, the gestures were timed, and thus the principle of rhythmic movement became established. And just as a moment ago they had reduced their little tune to tonal chaos by sowing it with accidentals, so they could now reduce it to rhythmic chaos by altering the time values of the notes, and stress them in irregular ways.

At that stage he wanted them to realise how music grew, from the simple to the complex, from a single relation, it might be of two notes, or the coupling together of a strong and a weak accent, to the relation of many notes, or the grouping together of a long series of rhythmic alternations in the form of balanced phrases and sentences. In that respect it was exactly like the growth of language, beginning, as the little child began, with a single word, then two words, and so on to the complete sentence; always keeping pace with a growing intelligence which enabled it to relate the various sounds with the ideas for which they stand. And just in that way the bounds of what they called tonality had been constantly enlarged; the simplest melodies growing out into more complex relations, modulating first into near keys, and then into far keys, as the musical mind developed, and brought into close association sounds which at first seemed far apart.

Similarly the feeling for rhythm extended itself over ever-widening areas; the accent of the bar merged into the accent of the phrase, and the phrase into the sentence, until, out of a single pulse-unit, there grew the manifold structure of a complete movement—it might be of fugue, sonata, or symphony. It was all very wonderful, but very natural, and the laws were those which belonged to growth in any sphere, whether of nature or of art. Even in the very earliest stages they could still discern those principles he had enumerated, of tonal order, of rhythmic shape, of unity and variety, as exemplified in recurrence and contrast of themes and keys. They need only tage a few simple melodies or tiny movements, such as they found in Schumann's "Album for the Young," to discover all the elements of perfect form in music. So, for the rest of their discussion, they would go on to analyse several examples which would illustrate the types of structure at which composers had arrived through the centuries of musical development.

Orchestral Instruments.

A thoroughly interesting afternoon was spent when Mr. W. H. Foote spoke on the development and use of orchestral instruments. The lecture was copiously illustrated by the speaker with extracts from the great composers, and Mr. Foote proved himself a master of all the instruments. Miss L. Foote accompanied. He introduced his subject by saying if this country was to be known as a musical country it must wake up and advance in the knowledge of music making. At present people had not progressed beyond the stage of brass-band playing, which was the most elementary form of harmonised sound. Classical music had to be transcribed for brass bands, so it was simplified and condensed. The result was a monotony of tone color, which was entirely lacking in orchestral music.

The flute, one of the most popular wind instruments, was originally made from a thigh bone, and to this day flutes of this barbarous construction were used in many parts of Asia. The Egyptians, however, used the bamboo, as did also the Chinese, but we had gone further in construction, using highly-seasoned wood, such as cocus, blackwood, and maple. The oboe also was very ancient. Formerly it was played after the style of the bagpipe, but then overtones could not be secured. Now a definite method in the embouchure had been secured, a range of two octaves and a fifth was attained. It was distinctly a pastoral instrument, and it was best used in plaintive melody, and although a brilliant technique was possible, the timid and delicate tone was best suited to cantabile.

The Cor Anglais was generally accepted as a relative of the oboe, but was derived from the horn of the antelope, and originally possessed a curve. This was still noticeable to a slight degree in its present shape, the bulb at the bottom which gave it its quaint tone being originally the rest of the horn. It was pitched