

Advertiser, Aug. 2nd

1909

Register, Aug. 25th, 1909

UNIVERSITY ARTS ASSOCIATION.

The annual dinner of the Adelaide University Arts Association was held in the Old Exchange Cafe on Saturday evening. There was a good attendance of students, past and present, of the arts school, and the chair was taken by Professor Mitchell, the president. The following toasts were honored:—"The King," proposed by the president; "The University," by Mr. J. R. Fowler, responder Professor Naylor; "Our predecessors," Mr. F. K. Barton, responders Mr. W. R. Bayly and Dr. A. J. Schulz; "The Arts Association," Professor Henderson, responders the president and the secretary (Mr. O. Rischbieth). A number of students' choruses were sung, two quartets were rendered by Professor Naylor with Messrs. Allen, Simpson, and Coombe, Professor Naylor and Mr. A. W. Gordon contributed songs, and Mr. W. H. Ifould read the words of a song written for the Arts Association by Mr. O. Rischbieth.

Advertiser, Aug. 10th

"STABAT MATER."

—A Sombre Masterpiece.—

To hear the first production in this State of Anton Dvorak's "Stabat Mater" there was a crowded audience in the Elder Hall on Monday night. His Excellency the Governor, Lady Bosanquet, and the Misses Bosanquet were among the audience. The work was performed under the hand of Mr. Frederick Bevan by the University Choral Class and the Conservatorium Orchestra. This masterpiece of Dvorak, the Bohemian, is an inspiration in sombre majesty. It is extraordinarily distinctive; and, while breathing the very essence of the tragic poem, it is altogether unlike the setting of Rossini. Said the greatest of British press critics concerning the Dvorak work:—"He is not an easy master to interpret. He has ways of his own, and there are pitfalls for those who do not walk them warily. . . . Many have complained, not without some show of justice, that the well nigh unvarying shape of the sections in his work is a mistake. I am not very sensible of that myself, and it may be said on the other side that the composer's plan assures perfect balance and clearness of structure. A hearer of this work always knows where he is at any given moment, and can give his full attention to another great feature—the development of a comparatively small number of themes. This I take to be the most marked characteristic of the 'Stabat,' and a very interesting one it is. I have known mere repetition called development, but here we have something very different, for the whole structure, while preserving its form, is ever glowing with changeable figures and colours, which keep far away any consciousness of monotony or sense of tedium. I know no modern work in which the advantages, the virtues, of two epochs (the ancient formal and the modern progressive) are more happily secured."

The pitfalls were there, and it was obvious that Mr. Bevan's assiduous rehearsing had marked them plainly. He led the way along the path of interpretation, and his soloists and chorus followed with scarce a false step. It cannot be honestly said that the orchestra so generally or consistently held to the way of safety and success. Technically, there were patches, a want of smoothness, no fine shading, an occasional flaw in attack. Nothing aggressive, but a general suggestiveness of not quite rising to the occasion. There was undoubtedly more surety—it is fair to state—about the stringed section, under the firm leadership of Miss Sylvia Whittington. The choral class performed excellently, for the dolorous harmonies rang with just the thrilling culture of a choir of chosen soloists. The half-dozen individual voices sounded pleasingly, and, best feature of all, with a marked depth of religious feeling. The opening quartet and chorus "Stabat Mater Dolorosa" thrilled with the very intensity of the portrayal of sorrow; and the individual voices were those of Miss Muriel Cheek (soprano), Miss Olive Bassett (contralto), Mr. Alexander Cooper (tenor), and Mr. Francis Halls (baritone). In the majestically sacred quartet "Quis est Homo" the voices of Miss Doris Wylie (soprano), Miss Elsie Riggs (contralto), Mr. Walter Wood (tenor), and Mr. Halls blended beautifully, and they were backgrounded by superb orchestration. Truly Dvorak wrote in the mood of inspiration. One wished to hear it all again and again; but few parts more eagerly than the chorus "Eia Mater," with its stirring, voluminous scoring for basses.

Mr. Halls displayed, with his fine mellow mid-range, a deep sincerity in the solo lines "Make my heart glow in loving Christ the Lord," and beneath the vocal lines there lay lovely orchestral phrases. Then there entered the rolling depths of the organ (Mr. Aubrey Fry playing), and the rich religious harmonies of the chorus. It was too good for applause; too sacred. Again, in the "Tui Nati vulnerati" chorus, one heard the magnificent blending and flowing of the parts. Mr. Walter Wood employed in the solo "Fac me vere tecum flere" an ideal tenor quality, and a large gift of interpretation. His smooth, mellow voice sounded splendidly with the male chorus for shading. After the partly unaccompanied chorus "Virgo virginum" the voices of Miss Ethel Ridings and Mr. Harold Savage were heard in the soprano and tenor duet "Fac ut portem" with a special word for the sweet clarity of the soprano voice. In the ensuing contralto solo, "Inflamatus et accensus," Miss Bassett used her emotional gift. Misses Ridings and Bassett and Messrs. Cooper and Halls were associated in the final quartet and chorus "Quando corpus morietur." Here was a magnificent climax, worthy of a heavenly choir. The chorus and the orchestra responded to the uttermost, and burst with vibrant volume upon the "Amen." One cannot but record again the sensation of having listened to the masterpiece of a genius, and in doing so thank Mr. Bevan for the achievement of its production.

A selection from Mendelssohn's setting of Racine's tragedy "Athalie" occupied only brief space, for it flowed with the happy vigour of Mendelssohn in his moments of sacred praise. The soloists were Misses Cheek, Wylie, Riggs, and Bassett, and their work was thoroughly good. Following the brilliant overture, the chorus fell upon the vocal score with splendid effect. Solo alternated with choral passages in fine profusion, and led to an immense climax, with the sopranos ringing richly on the high C. This finale searchingly tested the chorus, and altogether proved their musicianly capacities. There was the success of the evening—and this to the complete credit of the conductor.

Register, August 15th

EXAMINATIONS IN MUSIC.

Entries for the public examinations in music, which will be conducted next month under the auspices of the Adelaide University, closed last week. Altogether 221 candidates intimated their intention to present themselves for the tests, which will be carried out at Adelaide and various country centres. This number is approximately the same as that recorded last year. It is announced that the theory examinations will begin on September 16, and the examinations in practice a week later.

THE PRIMARY EXAMINATIONS.

The annual primary examinations in connection with the Adelaide University were begun on Tuesday, when 1,092 candidates devoted attention to the subjects for the occasion. It was inspiring at the Elder Hall (the scene of operations for the Adelaide district) to see the scores of students engaged in endeavours to elucidate the problems placed before them. While some appeared to enjoy the situation, others—by far the majority—treated it with a seriousness which left no doubt in the mind of the onlooker that they were determined to spare no efforts or care to ensure their success. To them the test was a dramatically real one, full of significance, and represented an opportunity which had to be made the most of so that they might thus prove to their instructors, relatives, and friends that they had not wasted their time at school, but had utilized it to the best of their ability to store up a fund of useful knowledge. Besides Adelaide, the examinations, which will be concluded on Friday afternoon, are being held at 19 centres in South Australia—Blumberg, Crystal Brook, Gawler, Gladstone, Jamestown, Kapunda, Laura, Millicent, Moonta, Morgan, Mount Barker, Mount Gambier, Mount Pleasant, Narracoorte, Petersburg, Port Pirie, Quorn, Renmark, and Strathalbyn—a similar number in Western Australia, and at Broken Hill.

Advertiser, Sept. 6th, 1909

Mr. John Raymond Wilton, who two years ago was Fifth Wrangler at Cambridge, and who last year obtained first-class honors in Physics in the second part of the Natural Science Tripos, has been appointed Lecturer in Mathematics at the University of Sheffield. Mr. Wilton, who is a native of Mount Barker, was educated at Prince Alfred College, and is the only student who obtained first-class honors both in mathematics and physics at Adelaide University. He went to Cambridge five years ago, and is a Major Scholar of Trinity College. Mr. Wilton's grandmother, who was a daughter of Mr. John Nowill, head of the cutlery firm of John Nowill and Sons, was born at Sheffield nearly 100 years ago. His grandfather was a native of Doncaster, which is only 26 miles from Sheffield. The Professor of Mathematics at Sheffield is Mr. A. H. Leahy, of Pembroke College, Cambridge, who was Ninth Wrangler in 1881, and was in the same year won third-class honors in the Classical Tripos.

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UNIVERSITY AND BRILLIANT BOYS.

The Rev. Brother O'Dwyer (Principal of Christian Brothers' College), in replying to the toast of "Our Alma Mater" at the annual dinner of the Christian Brothers' Old Collegians' Association on Monday evening, touched the question of opening the avenues of education to all. He regretted the unfortunate lack of University opportunities for brilliant boys. It was almost a scandal that boys with undoubted ability should be deprived of the chance of going on with their studies, and rendering to their country services which might be for its lasting benefit. They were hopeful that eventually a Bill would be passed through Parliament which might not only provide a large number of exhibitions at the University, and money prizes to be awarded to those who unfortunately might not be able to continue their studies at the University at present. There were now cases where boys of extraordinary ability might win a scholarship, which would give them free instruction, but were unable to maintain themselves. That was where the money awards would tide over a great difficulty. At present only the men with means could go right on, but means did not always spell brains.