

A Series of Talks on Music

By Prof. C. C. Laughter, Mus. Bac. Toronto.

VIII.—Early Training in Music. All teachers are aware of the need for the best possible drill in life. The idea one so often hears expressed is: since my child is only beginning her studies, my teacher will do.

If such a man is about to build a house, shall we hear him say: since I am only laying a foundation, any kind of trashy material will do, but when I get to the roof I will engage the finest roof makers in the world. Then we will agree that just as the husbandman carefully prepares the ground before he puts in the seed so does the teacher, for the teacher will confine himself to one thing at a time.

A true teacher will think more of his pupils musical development than of the class he is likely to obtain, it is certainly up to the teacher to make it interesting not amusing. The child who is destined for a musical career should receive as much musical instruction in early life as is compatible with the child's health and receptivity.

Children learn far more rapidly than adults, the child's power of absorption in music study between the ages of eight and twelve is simply enormous, between twelve and twenty it is less and still less between twenty and thirty and lamentably small between thirty and forty. There are yet exceptional cases of astonishing development late in life to the enormous ambition and industry.

Someone separates a child's musical education thus: 20 per cent, teacher, 60 per cent, mother, and 20 per cent, just plain child, from this it appears that mother controls the majority, if the mother exerts her majority, lucky will be the child.

It is plainly observed that to obtain dexterity of the hands and the mechanical side of the instrumental performer, one should start young and should certainly make the study of technique the most important. Technique is like money in the bank, a good thing to draw on when you need it but it is unlike money in the bank in this respect, that you cannot exhaust it by drawing upon it freely and frequently.

During the period of practice the major and minor forms will be dealt with and it does seem strange that one should feel that the major and minor are opposite for they both present the same force, now more joyous, now more serious, and a mere touch of the pen suffices to turn the one into the other.

An examiner once said to a candidate, you play very nicely, but why did you omit the two measures in the second line, also the middle section of the second page? Oh, said she, Pa cannot bear the minor parts and I always leave out those bits in order not to distress him when he is tired.

It is needless to add that this is wrong, for the major and minor must be heard in contrast. Major and minor—contentment and discontent—joy and sorrow—light and shade. These things make variety in music and by them you may remember some one piece that stands out from all others.

Often some incident which happened in your young student life will have a lasting influence on you. I remember reading of a little boy who's first attempt at instrumental music was with the bass drum, for when as a boy Haydn was studying in Hamburg it happened that his boy friends were invited to church in a grand procession, but the drummer was missing; one boy suggested Haydn, so he was lined up and we can assume that he acquitted himself finely.

In after years he often recalled that he never recalled a prouder moment than when scantly clad and half starved, he marched proudly among his boyish friends beating the bass drum.

Acquiring musical knowledge should be a pleasure, because it comes naturally and should help to cultivate and improve our affections.

The Irish Race and Music. In peace or war the Irishman is in the forefront. England's battles have been fought and won to Irish music, writes George Marion Barker. "In the late world war the British army marched to 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary' and 'Dear Old Dublin Bay,' for the Irish songs touch the hearts of the singers and inspire them to valorous deeds.

The Irish people are their own historians. Their songs are free from guile and pretence, and tell of the loves and hates, longings, aspirations and ideals that are in the singer's heart. In the time of Elizabeth, Shakespeare honored the Irish melody by weaving them into his immortal dramas, and Spencer, the historian, who hated the Irish, upon his visit to the Emerald Isle in 1581 and 1584, wrote interesting facts about

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the native music, especially the customary ornamentation of simple melodies, and declared an Irishman dare not displease his neighbor for fear of being made infamous by the mouths of men in song.

Talented Composer's Escape. Granville Bantock, the gifted British composer, was intended for the Indian Civil Service but his health broke so he was sent to study to be a chemical engineer, and when he was 21 he decided for himself to be a musician.

He was trained for his career at the Royal Academy of Music, won the Macfarren scholarship and the first prize and while he was still a student formed in London, The Fire Worshippers, Ballet Suite from Rameses second, Caedmar, Wulstan, and extracts from other compositions. So it can be seen how he must have worked.

Bantock was editor and proprietor of a musical magazine and conductor for a light opera company. That was how he came to America in 1884. He tells about his experiences in America in his book, "Around the World with a Gaiety Girl." After that he worked hard for the music of his native land founded the New Brighton Choral Society and gave concerts of British music on the continent. Later, he was appointed to the Peyton Chair of Music in the University of Birmingham as successor to Sir Edward Elgar.

Plays Piano Four and a Half Days. Announcement comes from Crofton, England, that Albert Kemp, of that city, recently broke all records for continuous piano playing when he "pounded the ivories" for 110 hours without interruption. The previous record was 105 hours, held by a New Zealander.

When one figures that 110 hours covers a period of more than four and one-half days, he realizes that this was "some stunt." Kemp sat down at the piano early on a Tuesday morning and quit playing late Saturday night. He ended with the British National Anthem.

Education Incomplete Without Music. The teaching of music in schools lays a foundation for the culture of later life. Such is the constitution of society at the present day that no education can be called complete which does not embrace some knowledge of music. For the acquisition of its principles the period of school offers the greatest facilities. The mind is then plastic and in its most receptive state, the emotions, sympathies, are in full play. Voice and ear so obedient to external impressions are flexible and susceptible to cultivation. If there be any lack of musical ear it may now be overcome. It frequently happens that children apparently deficient in ear and voice rapidly attain both under suitable training. A great mistake is therefore committed in excluding any child from the benefits of musical instruction on this account.

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Lithuania has asked for a postponement of the proposed plebiscite in the Vilna region. Ontario winter fair at Guelph had an attendance larger than any since 1914. C.M.A. calls meeting to hear engineer discuss Niagara power possibilities. No leniency will be shown the players and gamblers found guilty in the baseball scandal.

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