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INSTRUCTION IN MUSIC

By

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In instruction in music, as in other related fields, the outstanding feature of the biennium 1916-1918 is the interference or readjustment occasioned by the European War. On the whole, although there has been some serious disarrangement, the direct or indirect benefits overbalance the losses. In the present rapid summary it will be convenient to mention (1) one or two lines of disturbance from war conditions; (2) several directions in which these conditions have induced novel efforts; and (3) certain points of discussion or progress not connected with war conditions.

DEPLETION IN THE NUMBER OF TEACHERS AND PUPILS.

Depletion in the active staffs of music schools, both independent and affiliated, in the large body of music instructors in public schools and in the host of private teachers, has been notable during the past two years. The drain has come not only from direct enlistment or drafting into military service, but from the manifold demands for indirect service. Institutional faculties have been much affected by calls to members to give up their usual forms of work for temporary activity in other directions. The same causes have operated to produce a decided decrease in many instances in the total number of students, both in institutions (except public schools) and under private instruction. Pupils have been considerably influenced by the economic stringency of the war period. The small private teacher and some of the detached music schools seem to have been the most affected. Some individuals have suffered badly.

SOME DECREASE AMONG INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS.

A considerable number of the independent music schools have ceased to exist during the past two or three years. It is not clear whether or not this is due to war conditions. But the fact is noticeable enough to call for a word of comment.

There is no accepted criterion as to what constitutes a "music school." Ten years ago, when Dr. Arthur L. Manchester prepared for the Bureau of Education his bulletin on "Music Education in the United States" he was constantly confronted by this problem of definition. The name of a "school" is occasionally claimed by an individual, or a married couple, or some casual combination of two or three. It is common when a larger number agree to pool expenses and exchange clientage. A surprising proportion of the "music schools" of the country are not much beyond this rudimentary stage of organization. Comparatively few have a curriculum, or require anything from students except regular attendance and prompt payment of bills. The large majority of these students would in any other analogous professional institution be classed as "specials" or "irregulars."

But all small and loosely organized schools are in competition with two other kinds of institutions. One is the strong conservatory in the large city, drawing students from a wide area, with a numerous and diversified faculty, offering many collateral advantages in the way of recitals, concerts, and lectures, and having traditions that favor breadth of training so as to gain some degree of general musicianship. The other is the department or school in a college or university system, where the organization and spirit of the total institution naturally control the work of each constituent part. Both of these types offer much that small and isolated private schools can not give. It appears that the stress of war conditions has heightened this contrast. Of course, a small school is not to be disdained because it is small. Some such are efficient and useful. There is also no objection to cooperative unions of teachers for business reasons. The criticism is to using the name "school" for that which has no clear scholastic purpose or policy. If the pressure of war conditions is reducing the number of these institutions, the progress of musical education will not be much damaged.

THE TRANSFERENCE OF MUSIC TEACHERS INTO ARMY WORK.

A conspicuous effect of the war has been the widespread summons to teachers of singing, particularly supervisors in the public schools, with many instrumentalists as well, into constructive musical work at army cantonments, with the forces abroad, or in public situations related to these. The basis of all this has been the recognition by the Government of the recreational and moral value of music in life, and the parallel recognition by the Young Men's Christian Association and similar organizations engaged in welfare work among soldiers and sailors. The effect of all this has been twofold—the effect upon those thus called as individuals, and the effect upon those among whom they have worked.

It is clear that the army experience of the scores of teachers thus drafted into novel service will be of lasting benefit to them personally. Those who came from the public schools, and many others as well, had been dealing almost wholly with children or adolescents, and more with girls than with boys. In their new work they were confronted by throngs of grown men. This experience has been wholesome and broadening, since the work must justify itself to minds of a critical and impatient order. No doubt in most cases the authorities regarded musical drill mainly as a means of intensifying martial ardor, while the men themselves accented merely jolly goodfellowship and heedless diversion. Yet every serious musical worker has seen the chance to turn even camp music into a real educational force. Particularly has this been stimulated in some situations across the sea, where American troops have been in close contact with French or Italians, and could catch from them a readiness and delicacy of artistic appreciation that is rare in this country.

It is much too soon to say what will be the result of all this army work when demobilization has been accomplished. It would be foolish to expect universal or spectacular consequences. But considering that perhaps four millions of young men have been more or less touched by this musical work, it is likely that large numbers have discovered in it what they had not realized in the way of emotional uplift and also of associational value. It is probable that their attitude toward music for themselves, for their families and for their communities will be more sympathetic and enterprising than in the past. Even if the percentage of such recruits in musical interest is small, their absolute number will be large and their geographical distribution wide.

MILITARY BAND DEVELOPMENT.

At this point a few words should be said about the development of bands and band music in the Army and Navy. Not having had any extensive military establishment, the United States for half a century has given slight attention to this subject. When the Expeditionary Force was first gathered and dispatched there were neither leaders nor players nor instruments available properly to equip the various units. Yet it was speedily seen that band music was of more than decorative importance. But it could not be instantaneously created. All sorts of expedients were tried, both here and abroad. What has been accomplished was creditable, considering the difficulties. For a period Walter Damrosch, the well-known New York conductor, served efficiently in France as a center for some intensive training. But the problem has had only a partial solution. Although we need not look forward to the long maintenance of

such huge forces as during the last year or two, yet for a considerable time their number will remain larger than anything that we have had since the Civil War. For these careful provision of band music is demanded. This immediate need, with regard also to the future, will probably lead to the establishment of one or more governmental schools for training leaders and players or to arrangements with existing agencies for special instruction. Something of this sort has long existed in an imperfect form. One large New York school, for example, has encouraged successive classes of pupils from the military post at Governor's Island, and other institutions are well equipped with band facilities. Now we may hope, still further steps will be taken to develop the cultural possibilities of many permanent and well-drilled bands, to be used both in military connections and in public service.

The value of this can be seen by recalling what band music has meant for generations in the military and social life of every leading European country. Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy have been solicitous for this and have made it a real branch of popular education. It is interesting to remember that one of the forerunners of the Paris Conservatoire was the Institut National, founded in 1792, which was primarily a school for military music, and that this element was so prominent that its head, the bandmaster Sarrette, became the first director of the Conservatoire, remaining in office for 20 years. In every garrison town of Europe the military band is one of the established agencies of musical presentation. We have something analogous to this in our town and city bands, but these have not yet attained the influence or dignity generally that is possible.

CAMP SINGING AND COMMUNITY MUSIC.

At first sight the cultivation of singing in soldiers' camps and the far more general interest known as community music have little direct connection. It is a fact, however, that the efforts put forth primarily for the former have had a marked influence upon the advance of the latter. The two will therefore be treated here somewhat in combination, as has already been done by the Secretary of War in his Annual Report for 1918:

> A great deal of attention has been given to music through mass singing in camps and communities, singing on the march, competitive regimental and company singing, recreational singing in soldiers' free time, the organization of quartets, glee clubs, and choruses, and the training of company and regimental song leaders to aid the camp song leader. In order to have all the men singing the same songs, songbooks containing patriotic songs, folk songs, popular and service songs, and some hymns were published and distributed. Experiments with vocal and instrumental music in hospitals proved so effective with certain types of cases and so acceptable to the hospital authorities that the matter was

referred to the Surgeon General's Office with a view to its transfer to this department. The services of the camp song leaders have frequently been borrowed by near-by communities. Community singing—the singing of songs the soldiers have been singing—has spread all over the country, and the possibilities, as to both military and civilian morale, are highly significant. A singing nation will emerge from the war.

The immediate educational influence of the soldiers' singing has been widely recognized. Although the grade of music attempted has not often been specially good, to many men it has been a revelation that they could sing, that choral music has a singular fascination and power, and that music thus produced is worth working for. Chorus practice is always impressive as a practical illustration of cooperative effort—as a demonstration of democracy in action. Hence, in addition to the artistic development that it brings, it has important social reactions. The universal testimony is that the system that has been put in force in all cantonments and camps has been immensely valuable. One reason for its success is that many leaders of superior quality have been secured, that they have served under authoritative commissions and with the full support of the commanding officers, and that from the first their efforts have met with enthusiastic welcome by the majority of the men.

Directly radiating from this camp music have been two or three undertakings outside. One has been the supervision to some extent of the recreational opportunities in the neighborhood of cantonments and camps, including both musical and theatrical features. The musical importance of this has probably not been great, except in the exclusion of some inferior performances. Another, which is of decided significance, is the organization of so-called "liberty choruses" in towns and villages generally. Comprehensive statistics about this are not yet available. But in Connecticut, which was more or less a pioneer in this work, some 90 choral centers were established last summer in the space of about three months. Many of these seem likely to continue active for a long time, perhaps even to grow into permanent choral societies. This line of effort is so promising that it is now being supervised and systematically promoted by a commission called the War Camp Community Service (f Madison Avenue, New York City), conducted by the Playground and Recreation Association of America for the War Department and Navy Department Commissions on Training Camp Activities. Besides a general director there are State directors already in service in a large number of States.

All this has obvious relation to every other enterprise that looks toward the stimulation of community music. Such music has been promoted more or less for a considerable time. The methods used have varied much according to circumstances. In some cases rather

large community choruses have been set up, with regular rehearsals and some concerts, occasionally with soloists and orchestra. In other cases neighborhood "sings" of a much humbler variety have been the goal. Municipal orchestras and bands, supported by public authorities, are growing more common—slightly resembling in function the old "Town Musicians" that once flourished in Germany. A number of cities maintain regular series of free organ recitals by a resident city organist. The most comprehensive plan just now seems to be that of Flint, Mich., which has appointed a city director of music on a liberal salary, expecting him to devote his whole attention to developing community music in every possible form.

Here reference should be made to the fact that more than one of the State universities is giving special attention to this subject. The University of Illinois announces that one of its main objects in carrying on its large and well-equipped department of music is to encourage and uplift the plane of community music. This university has for years made a specialty of band music, and its bands circulate more or less through the State for educational purposes. The University of Wisconsin has long emphasized the holding of local singing assemblies—distantly related to the old-fashioned "musical conventions"—and the training of teachers competent to act as leaders in popular music. The opportunity for this sort of influence is beginning to be recognized by some independent music-schools, as well as by an increasing number of private teachers.

The movement is still very much in its infancy. It has no tradition behind it and not yet an organized momentum. Many would-be supporters are in the dark how to proceed. In some places there is a lack of suitable leaders. Everywhere there is a lack of varied music for singing. A few small collections of "familiar" pieces have been put forth, which are good enough as far as they go, but they do not go far. The circulation of much material of present interest is hampered by copyright restrictions. Our American population really has no body of traditional songs. This is partly due to our racial and national complexity. And the custom of singing has not been general among us, nor that of frequently gathering for the hearing of music. Yet what has always been affirmed by thoughtful musicians is being demonstrated more and more: that there is latent in people generally a large capacity both for song and for appreciation, provided that the proper opportunity can be supplied. It is increasingly clear that difficulties will be overcome and that true community music will spread throughout the Union.

This movement has a vital relation to formal education in music. The latter can never safely allow itself to become exclusively professional. Advanced musical culture cannot be supported except on a basis of popular interest, and it will be unhealthy in quality

unless it refreshes itself by contact with the unconscious and even homely sources of all universal fine art.

Before leaving the subject, brief mention should be made of one phase of the military work that stands slightly apart from what has been mentioned above. This is the development of singing in the Students' Army Training Corps. Here the men in view were mostly from schools or universities. Musical work adapted to them was hardly organized and put in motion before the signing of the armistice opened the way to their demobilization. But it is felt by those who have been specializing in this work that the response to it was so promising that a way should be found to continue it nationally. Whether a suitable method for doing so can be found is not yet clear. But if such a method is feasible, the result would be to connect the well-known zest for singing among students with the larger movement for community music.

DISCUSSIONS ABOUT STANDARDIZATION.

Turning now to matters disconnected with war conditions, there is probably no question more discussed among musical educators than that of standardization. This question especially concerns private teachers and those working in the public schools. It may progress to results that will profoundly affect the entire circuit of education in music.

A few years ago much emphasis was put by some upon the value of fixing a minimum standard of qualification by requiring all music teachers to secure a State license or certificate. This aimed at debarring ignorant and incompetent teachers from "practicing," as it is called in medicine or law. Detailed efforts to secure the enactment of such restrictive statutes were made in more than one State, but without much result except to demonstrate the extreme difficulty of the enterprise. This line of effort seems lately to be less prominent. It is to be hoped that it will not be pressed, at least in the form thus far advocated. There may come a time when some restriction of music teaching by law may be both practical and useful. That time, however, has not yet come.

Meanwhile two or three other lines of effort under the name of standardization are being actively discussed or undertaken. In general, these divide into two classes: Those that aim to standardize teaching proficiency, though not by statute, and those that aim to standardize methods of study and credits to students. Both of these are more or less before the national and the several State music teachers' associations, and some of these bodies have worked out plans that are in operation. Both are voluntary in nature rather than coercive, and both therefore appeal primarily to ambition as a motive. Whether or not either of them results in the adoption of

a system of wide application, agitation of the subject is proving profitable because it increases the thoughtfulness and precision of music teachers as to the aims and methods of their work.

In England and Canada the certification of music teachers has long been carried out with great thoroughness, especially with reference to work in the board schools, but extending by popular favor more or less to all teachers. It accomplishes nearly the same results as have here been sought through legislative action. Something parallel to it is gradually being established here. Established music schools, music departments in certain colleges and universities and many normal schools have courses for teachers that lead to certificates whose value is recognized, and applicants for some positions are expected or required to hold such certificates. Efforts have recently been made by more than one of the State music teachers' associations to set up a system of examination and certification of their own—as was done years ago by the American College of Musicians.

This line of effort is now engaging the thought of many serious musicians, and it is leading to the formulation of interesting and valuable schemes of knowledge and accomplishment to be demanded for teachers of singing, playing, and theory. Its reaction upon those who are discussing it is evidently stimulating, and also its effect as concerns those to whom it is applied. But whether it is to have large influence depends upon two incalculable factors: The number who will be moved to take advantage of it, and whether the public will value such certificates enough to demand that teachers generally shall hold them. Another practical question is as to the persistence, patience, and wisdom with which the associations pursue the matter from year to year. Dependence upon unpaid officials who shift more or less is precarious. And at present there is no State association that includes any dominant proportion of the music teachers in its territory. Though this fact detracts somewhat from the authority of such associations, the moral influence of what they undertake would be considerable if steadily and strongly exerted.

Rather more practically hopeful are the constant debates about stipulated courses of study in various musical subjects, with the marking of successive grades of attainment desired. From the nature of the public school system it follows that where music is introduced in parallel with other subjects the course of study in it must be marked out with much precision. Hence formulated courses have long been establishing themselves in public school music. Analogous conditions exist wherever music is introduced into the system of colleges or universities, though the number and variety of specific topics considered are much greater. The difficulty of the problem in higher education is obviously more serious. There seems

to be a growing conviction that formulated or standardized methods—either of the ordering of topics and material or of pedagogical presentation, or both—should be urged upon private music teachers generally, if not to a degree demanded of them. The question is in part whether private teachers should be expected to follow the system that is somewhat necessary in public schools and colleges. In part it is whether music as a subject of teaching should be made to conform in method to various other subjects. In either case, it is claimed, its methods should be standardized.

It can hardly be said that the discussions of the past two years have contributed vitally to the solution of the very complicated problem thus outlined except in one direction, that will be separately treated in the next section of this survey. Yet they have been fruitful in clarifying thought. On the one hand, foolish notions of an immediate and rigid scheme that would regulate everything and everybody have been discountenanced. On the other, many rational and suggestive plans of work have been drafted, and these have doubtless served to correct the slipshod or eccentric methods of some individual teachers. There is certainly a growing understanding of the nature and elements of the problem. But there is no obvious consensus as to final details.

It is natural that the interest in this matter should have stimulated the promulgation of series of textbooks or other manuals that claim to embody a "standard" course and method of study. This idea has been often exemplified in the history of modern musical education, as in other education. It always serves to increase the store of literary contributions by what certain workers can use to great advantage, and represents the mature thought of one or more experienced authors or editors. All such publications are therefore to be welcomed. But they are liable to bring in commercial elements of doubtful value, especially when improperly promoted. It should be clear that authoritative "standards" can not be established by publishers merely as a business proposition. And, in general, the subsidizing of teachers to use "exclusive" systems is to be deprecated as demoralizing.

It is to be noted, finally, that through all discussions about standardization there runs a line of persistent objection. The basis of this is that music is not a thing nor even a precise muscular or logical discipline, but a psychological experience. It has its objective or physical aspects, of course, which can be somewhat precisely stated and can be learned or acquired like other technical matters. But these, it is well known, are external or accessory to the art itself. It is because of this that so much of musical instruction has always been individual rather than by classes, by the personal impact of a teacher upon a pupil rather than by means of impersonal textbooks. Much

of the current talk about standardization seems to overlook or minimize this fundamental peculiarity of all art education as compared with science education. And, at all events, the range within which standardization can hope to operate is small. It can do little more than fix some irreducible minima of purpose or attainment. With the reaching of the possible maxima it can have little place, since the higher the level of advance the more infinite and intricate become the paths that may be followed.[1]

SCHOOL CREDITS FOR OUTSIDE MUSIC STUDY.

In public-school music the most notable event in the past two years is the interest in plans for granting credit for music study with outside teachers. This idea is not new, but at present seems likely to be put in practice in various places and ways as soon as war conditions are over.

The elements of the case for such credit are readily understood. It is generally agreed that music study, to be educationally effective, should begin during "school age," and this is true not only for the few who may choose music as a life work, but for others. Investigation shows that a very large percentage of the boys and girls in the public schools, especially in cities, are taking, or much desire to take, music lessons while attending school.[2] If such outside work is educationally worth while, or can be modified so as to be so, pupils ought to gain credit for it toward school advancement rather than be forced to get it as an extra. With these propositions as a basis the practical questions have been two: (1) How shall the educational value of such studies be guaranteed? (2) Will the school authorities allow credit for such study thus guaranteed? The onus of defense has been thrown back and forth between the parties in interest—some musicians feeling that the schools must show cause why the innovation is not adopted forthwith, and some superintendents feeling that either all music study is frivolous or the method of it is too loose to be deserving of credit. But during the past two years there has been an increasing disposition to turn from vague presuppositions pro or con and consider soberly in precisely what ways outside study could be allowed school credit. This has forced school authorities and music teachers to combine in drafting specific plans.

The most carefully elaborated plan now accessible is one drawn up by a commission of 15, appointed by the National Education Association, most of whom are also active in the Music Teachers' National Association, and which represents the best views of both

[1] Specially useful papers upon this subject are contained in the last two volumes of the Proceedings of the Music Teachers' National Association, namely, 1916, pp. 165–185; 1917, pp. 199–226. See also further references to these volumes under next section.

[2] See a remarkable account of an investigation made in Hartford, Conn., in 1912, in the Proceedings of the Music Teachers' National Association, 1913, p. 179.

sides of the question.[1] It makes provision for special registration of the students eligible for such courses, for periodic reports from the outside teachers to the school authorities, and for examinations before credit is allowed. Data are not at hand as to how far this plan, or some modification of it, has actually been put in force. But that the idea it embodies is now meeting with extensive interest is evident, especially in the East and the Middle West.[2]

Incidentally this movement in school music is effecting some definite results in the way of standardization. The subjects that have been specially considered are the playing of the piano, the organ, the violin, or any orchestral instrument and singing. In each case it has been necessary to work out in detail a definite plan of study that shall be satisfactory at once to outside teachers and to school authorities, and this plan has had to be adhered to firmly in order to meet conditions. Every such effort does something toward erecting practical "standards" by experiment rather than by theory.

Another excellent result of this line of effort is that it brings together the interests of private music teachers and the teachers in the schools. Each group may learn much from the other, just as professional musicians generally, as a group, and the teachers of advanced music in colleges and universities, as a group, may also learn from each other. There has been too much division of the music-teaching profession into separate camps, each jealous or suspicious of the other.

OTHER POINTS OF PROGRESS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Many signs indicate that several forms of class instruction in the public schools have made decided advance during the past two years. Conspicuous among these is work in music appreciation, in advanced chorus singing, and in orchestral playing. The gain in the first two is simply in detail of method and in scope of influence. Both are well established in high schools and are being handled in many places in such a way as to render genuine artistic service. The institution of school orchestras, not as an outside feature of school life, but as in some way a part of school instruction, is more recent. But this, too, is commending itself as peculiarly valuable. This latter promises to develop in most of the larger cities. All of this mass instruction in the public schools has an evident relation to the future advance of community music. The orchestral instruction also may prove to have an interesting vocational aspect.

[1] This report, so far as relates to this subject, was first printed in the Proceedings of the Music Teachers' National Association, 1916, pp. 105-107. It is also given in the Proceedings of the National Education Association.

[2] Besides the Proceedings of the National Education Association and the Music Teachers' National Association, to which reference has been made, the Music Supervisors' Journal of the National Conference of Music Supervisors supplies many practical notes.

NOTABLE FEATURES IN PRIVATE INSTRUCTION.

The past two years have not seen many notable changes in the aims or methods of private instruction. Regarding two points, however, a brief remark may be made.

There is a steady increase in the emphasis put by intelligent teachers upon the careful training of little children. Many teachers specialize in work for them, and these have often developed methods of their own that are effective in evoking permanent musical interest and ability. And all teachers of thoughtfulness are realizing that true artistic life may begin in the child's mind before it is ready for effort of a logical or scientific order. It may be that the comparative rarity of evident musical enthusiasm or capacity in the general American public is partly due to a failure hitherto to give due attention to the education of younger children.

In the teaching of harmony there is a marked tendency to desert the paths that once were considered regular and to experiment with all the new speculations concerning musical construction that have appeared in recent years. It is evident that musical thought on these matters is passing through a period of reconstruction. Procedures that were once condemned as unlawful or barbarous are being freely used, not only by composers for effect, but by teachers for technical development. So far as this serves to break up mere academic rigidity and the notion that composition is a matter of rule, it is wholesome. But when it produces an exaggerated interest in chaotic arrangement or eccentric melody and harmony for mere oddity, it may be unhealthy. The point of general interest is that leading teachers are showing a fine balance of judgment about the subject in its present stage. They are generally ready to consider and use all of the new theories that are being proposed, but they are also conservative in believing that these theories are tenable only so far as they can be connected organically with the procedures of the past. It seems likely that in the next decade there will be many textbooks prepared that will offer judicious combinations of things old and new for the guidance of future teachers and scholars.

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