

Music and the Home

MUSIC STUDY NECESSARY IN PRACTICAL EDUCATION

Music is absolutely essential in "practical education." It supplies elements that must be had, without which there is no complete culture. The emotional, the spiritual and the esthetic stimulus it provides are imperative for the complete development of the individual. Moreover, with its time divisions and its marvellously constructed harmonics it brings into use mathematical and intellectual faculties on the most minute discriminations. In performance it calls for muscular activity of a most precise and accurately regulated nature. It requires a co-ordination of eye, mind and muscle that must result in splendid nerve training and bring about a fine general acuteness of perception in the individual. It demands a place in the general curriculum, and most modern educators admit its right to a place, and an important place. But it is not regularly admitted. The world gets its musical training unconnected, to a large degree, and for the most part unrecognized by those in charge of general education.

WHAT KEEPS MUSIC OUT OF SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The thing which most stands in the way of the acceptance of musical instruction as ordinarily practiced by the modern educator for inclusion in his work, is the lack of real system and seeming abhorrence of standards. There are no fixed points anywhere. The practical educator literally does not know where to find it, and therefore he is at a loss to know where to place it in his scheme of practical education. Hence the ordinary music teachers find themselves left out and naturally complain. For example, most of the enlightened teachers of the country are in favor of credits in schools for music work, and many doubtless are mystified at the seeming reluctance of the average practical school board to take up with this obviously valuable and progressive idea. But if any lengthy investigation is made the teacher quite soon finds himself facing a question of this character, "what do you call music instruction?" and becomes quickly enmeshed in a discussion which reveals his ideas of instruction exasperatingly vague in comparison with the precise definitions, accurate steps and well understood measurements and processes of testing which make up the ideal of the practical educator.

In fact, the typical "music teaching" is so imbued with the personal element, both on the student and the teacher side, and the factor of "individualism," personality or character has been allowed to so overwhelm all other considerations, that it is as a rule, from the scientific educator's point of view at least, almost without form, and perhaps void. So he says he can't use it, because it is not available in the proper form.

BECOME A LEADER

Many projects languish because of the lack of a competent leader to set the pace. Has community singing been tried in your town? No?

Then become a leader by planning a "get-together" meeting, and start something.

Is choir and chorus singing a failure? Then seize the opportunity to bring order out of haphazard effort.

Is a competent organist needed? Then devote yourself to a season of study and grasp the chance.

Is your community without a band?

It is easy to interest the boys and young men in such a proposition. Get to work.

Is there an orchestra in the town? No? Then speed the day when you have gotten an interested group of players together making a name for yourself, and conferring a blessing upon the people in general.

Do people occasionally talk of intro-

ducing public school music? Then talk the matter still more, get the school board interested, see what can be accomplished by taking the initiative.

Whatever the opportunity, remember that some persons are always waiting to be led. Success is assured to the musician who is capable and willing to set the pace.

A MORAL IN THIS STORY

Yvette Guilbert, the celebrated French chanteuse, was once singing in her early days, at Lyons. She was little known, and the audience not understanding her art, hissed her off the stage. Her manager flew into a rage, and vented his anger and disappointment on the singer. Far from being discouraged by an experience that has been the end of many a promising career. Yvette retorted, "Patience, mon ami! Some fine day you will be offering me ten times the money you are giving me now, and you will be very lucky if you can get me to sing at that price." She was then receiving twenty dollars a night. A short time later she had increased this to the sum of two hundred a performance. To-day Guilbert is a wealthy woman, and her original art is known the world over.

She had confidence in herself and in her ability to succeed. How much this one characteristic has had to do with her great success it is hard to say, but the chances are, that, had the singer given way to the despair natural to her Lyons fiasco she would never again have had the opportunity to sing in public.

MUSICAL CONTRASTS

Once in a while and thanks to our modern teaching methods, more so these days than formerly—we see good editions of sensible music on an upright piano, but mostly they attract the songs with brilliantly colored title pages.

Then there is the dear old square piano found in homes where the old folks still linger. And don't they match the feeble souls and the sweet tinkle of the keys? What music do we hear now? The soft strains of the good old hymn tunes and those pieces that were in fashion when grandma was young.

But best of all, now comes our superb grands, baby and concert. What wonders we can now perform! For we have sweetness, richness and brilliance at our disposal, waiting only for the right touch and temperament to give us just the effect we desire.

VAUDEVILLE PIANISTS

It may seem a bold assertion, but one often finds vaudeville pianists with left hand technic and accuracy which would put to shame that of the average teacher. Possibly the reason is that it is a kind of act in itself to startle the audience, by left hand solos.

Schumann's famous remark, "by the basses one recognizes a musician," does not apply to composers only. The pianist who has a left hand that limps pathetically is hardly likely to attain any very high position in the musical world. We know of one teacher who had her pupils play the scales, keeping the left hand going continuously and inserting the right hand only with every alternate octave. She claimed that this produced surprising independence with the left hand and it really seemed to do so.

THE DEMOCRATIC ART

Music is the most democratic of all the arts used by man because it does not depend upon anything exterior to itself. It is felt and understood by everybody, of every race and every condition, and so becomes a great unifying principle working among the discordant and antagonistic elements that make up human life.



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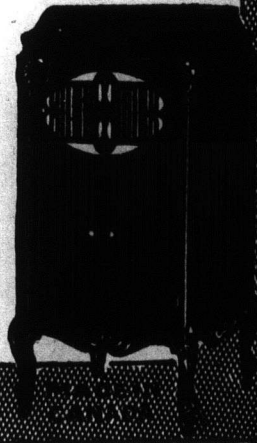
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