

Music and the Home

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leader. Among other things the Dean said: "Many pursue the antiquated plan of beginning on page one and hammering the work into the singers page by page, so that the end is reached with a sigh of relief. This hammering process usually results in a metallic, angular performance devoid of charm and well-considered contrasts. To employ it is a strategic blunder, for we injure voices by singing loudly all the time, and our singers grow restive under such a mechanical and ill-considered plan. We must remember that we are dealing with the human voice, which will not stand rough handling, and with the human temperament, which demands psychological treatment. The crucial points are to avoid fatiguing either the voice or the attention. "If you are undertaking a work that is stiff going for your singers and beyond their experience or understanding, be

by humming while notes and expression marks are in process of assimilation. Humming not only saves the voice, but improves its quality by cultivating relaxation which is so necessary to good intonation and correct voice production. If the words are eliminated, the entire attention can be focused on the music. Without being conscious of it, most singers obtain their pitch more from chordal suggestion than from staff relationship; the soft singing permits the singers to hear the harmonies of the accompaniment distinctly, and this helps them amazingly in getting their parts. Then they are also free to listen to the guiding and warning remarks of the conductor.

"Lastly, singers rarely hum out of tune. Of all the time-saving and nerve-shielding devices in chorus rehearsing, humming easily takes first place."

Who quarrels with the Well should first Make sure he will not die of Thirst.



Christmas cheer in Merry England

sure to start with the most attractive portion, so as to engage their interest and enthusiasm as early in the game as possible. When you have planned out the work for a given rehearsal, attack the most difficult parts first, while the attention is fresh. These are apt to be the climatic points. The habit of practising backward is invaluable. It is discouraging to be constantly headed from the unknown and to see pages of uncharted music looming up in the distance. Get the climax first and then back up and lead into it and note the joy and satisfaction of the singers when they get their feet on comparatively solid ground. The pedagogical principle of moving from the known to the unknown is here reversed. "It is a foolish and short-sighted procedure to allow the choristers to sing full voice throughout a rehearsal. This strains the muscles of the throat, and the loud singing tires the ear and gets on the nerves. Much fatigue and unnecessary tension may be avoided.

Took No Chance

Phelim Casey was engaged on the ridge-pole of Squire Pond's house when he lost his footing, and slid down, but he clutched the eaves-trough and hung on for dear life.

"That's right, Phelim!" called the squire, who had seen him slip. "You hang on a minute till I can get a ladder up there!"

But even as he spoke Phelim relaxed his hold and dropped to the ground.

As soon as the squire made sure that no bones were broken, and that Phelim was simply bruised here and there and shaken up, he began to berate the man in vigorous language.

"Why in the world didn't you hang on, as I told you to, you great stupid?" he demanded. "I'd have been there in a minute."

"Maybe you wud," said Phelim, suddenly, "but how did I know but the eaves would give way before you got there?"

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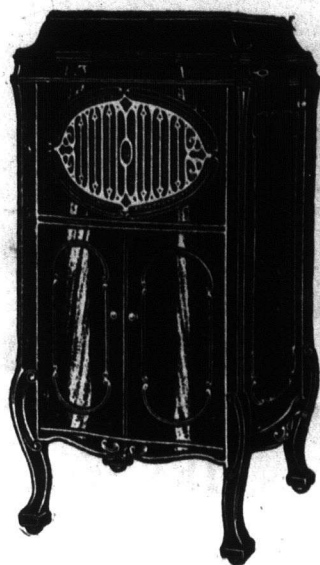
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