

NOVEMBER 7, 1895.

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL EXAMINATIONS.

The annual farce of the Adelaide University — the examinations in music—is now being performed at that institution, to the intense satisfaction and delight of the proud papas and mamas of the candidates who pass, and the great glorification and pecuniary benefit of the teachers of music who cater for this absurdity. Surely the public, even those who know very little about music, must see that it is supremely ridiculous for *one man* to pretend to examine in theory of music, piano playing, organ playing, singing, the violin, cornet, trombone, flute, Jew's harp, bagpipes, penny whistle, and in fact anything which may be included under the comprehensive heading of "Playing upon orchestral instruments" as stated in "The University Calendar." Now, joking aside, QUIZ is perfectly well aware, as no doubt the public is, that the majority of candidates present themselves for examination in theory of music and piano playing, with a respectable number for singing, and a few for the organ and violin; and allowing Professor Ives to possess all the requirements necessary to examine in theory and the organ, has he ever been heard to perform on the piano in public? QUIZ thinks not. Who has heard him warble, and how long did his hearers survive it? Now, QUIZ undertakes to say that it would be very difficult to find any one man, even in London, thoroughly competent to examine in *all* these subjects, and seeing that the *invariable* practice of the great examining bodies of music in London—the Royal Academy, the

Royal College of Music, the College of Organists, Trinity College, and many others—is to have a Board of Examiners, which is often a large one, and consists of men of first-class reputation and ability, usually an expert in each branch of music being included, the public must see that the objections urged are not without foundation. Again, at the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, London, and other places where the examination is almost entirely on the theoretical side of music, notwithstanding that the resident professors are men of world-wide reputation, such as Sir John Stainer, Dr. Villers Stan-

ford, and Ebenezer Prout, the services of at least one, and frequently two, examiners are always called in.

Another objection may be urged against the present state of things. QUIZ believes that the practical examinations generally last about a fortnight. Now, imagine what a state of utter weariness and mental exhaustion any man must be who has spent 12 or 13 days listening to immature performances of the works of the great masters; and is that person fit towards the end of the examination to give a fair and impartial judgment on these performances? QUIZ again thinks not. Judging from the large number of candidates who pass (from, say, 250 to 300 a year), the tests cannot be by any means stiff, and it seems as though the University is rapidly degenerating into a money-making, certificate-selling institution in musical matters. And, lastly, brethren (as the parson saith), this means that every year some 250 or more persons of very questionable musical attainments are let loose on the public possessing these really valueless certificates, a large number of whom immediately proceed to teach the divine art, with, of course, the most disastrous results. It appears to QUIZ that this state of things might easily be remedied. We have several musical men in this colony at present, as well qualified as Professor Ives, indeed more so, to judge such subjects as piano playing, organ, violin, and singing, and there would be no difficulty in arranging for a competent board of examiners, say of four or six professionals, with Professor Ives as chairman. In the event of any one of these examiners having pupils up at the time he was on the board, that gentleman could leave the room during

that particular examination, and to prevent this becoming a clique of the "scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" order, the board could be varied so as to change almost its whole personnel each year. Also occasionally one or two competent men could be got over from Victoria.

Now, having unburdened his mind on this subject QUIZ will say "Amen," merely observing that he will shortly in "a spirit of truth and love" proceed to enquire more particularly into the working and *results* of the Mus. Bac. course under Professor Ives at the Adelaide University.