Register 11.7.23. (Contd)

"THE STRUCTURE AND GROWTH OF MUSIC."

LECTURE BY PROFESSOR DAVIES.

Music is not only an art. It is more than this. It is first of all an utterance, rising out of human need; and, after that, an art; subject, it may be, to laws, but to laws from within.

This was the text of an eloquent and highly informative lecture which was delivered by Professor E. Harold Davies, Mus.Doc., on Tuesday evening, at the Prince of Wales Theatre, University. It was the first of a series of three addresses on "The Structure and Growth of Music," to be given on consecutive Tuesday evenings. The syllabus consists of "Melody," "Ecclesiastical Polyphony," and "Harmony." Last evening, instrumental illustrations were interspersed to stress certain points. In leading up to the first subject, the lecturer said he would like to preface his remarks with a few words upon a certain important aspect of musical education. Musical education might be directed in three ways:—To the training of performers, either players or singers; to the training of composers; and to the training of hearers. With the first they were sufficiently familiar. Its presented a fairly wide, though limited, field of operation, and its fruits were various. With the second—the making of composers—there was at first sight, far less scope for a teacher's activity, and that was true in the fullest sense of creative ability. It was only given to very few to write great musical works. But there was a deep interest and the suggestion of wide possibilities in training children to make their own tunes—and this work was now being pursued—as many of them knew—throughout the schools of Wales, with extraordinary results.

Fostering Love of Music.

All music had evolved out of the single line, i.e. melody—and it was strongly led by the leader of that movement that, in stimulating children to creative effort along that path, a truly musical race must of necessity be fostered. The third way of musical distinction, i.e., the training of hearers—was practically neglected. Their audiences were composed of large numbers of people who were instinctively, and (he was happy to say) incurably fond of music—but were, nevertheless, without the power intelligently to interpret its sensations, to understand its meaning, or even how it had come to be. Many of them in youth received a smattering of some instrument—generally the piano—and after a few years of five-finger exercises and elementary pieces, lost their enthusiasm as performers, and gave it up quite gladly. But as some one had said, playing the piano in that fashion had as little to do with music, as operating a typewriter had to do with literature. On the other hand, it was easy to teach the great majority of people to listen to music, not mere sensuously, but with keen discernment, and real appreciation, and that, quite apart from any skill in performance. Dr. Davies said he could wish that such a training were incorporated in their school curricula. After all, the development of faculty was the highest ideal of education. Some one had defined education as "what is left when we have forgotten all that we ever learned." Certainly it was true that, for all of them, the ultimate test of education lay in their ability to interpret intelligently the evidence of their senses. "Blind seeing" and "deaf hearing" were the commonest of all failings. In training people to listen to music with perception and discrimination, the obvious advantage would be a constant stimulus to both composers and performers. The demand would surely react upon the supply, and an all-round higher standard would inevitably result. At some future time the lecturer hoped to give a course of lectures on "Listening to music." The present course along evolutionary and historical lines was designed to give them first of all, an idea of how music had come to be.

Australian Folklore.

The scope of the three lectures would be limited to the condition of music at the end of the eighteenth century, continued the speaker, culminating, rightly, in the works of Beethoven, which might be regarded as a fairly mature stage of development. But from the beginning of music to the choral symphony was a far cry, not less distant than were the rude ejaculations of a cave dweller from the splendour of a Shakespearean drama. Their objective was to trace the growth of the art between those two parts, and, in following its development, they must be impressed with the wonders of its achievement. They must bear in mind that there was nothing in the world around them to remotely suggest a Bach Fugue or a Beethoven Symphony. Those strange structures of sound had no objective counterpart, and were wholly from within—wholly the creation of man and a form of utterance akin to language. They were a growing up like language from the simplest symbols into the loftiest literatures. At the outset, continued the professor, he wanted his listeners to get away from the idea that music was only an art. It was more than that, it was, first of all, an utterance rising out of human need, and after that an art—subject, it might be, to laws, but to laws from within. Two widely contrasting view points were then practically demonstrated. The first was a movement from the Mozart string quartet, and the second an Australian corroboree. The latter was one of many records obtained by Sir Baldwin Spencer in Central Australia, and represented a culture possibly of 15,000 years ago. The air played was "the Great Snake Corrobbree" of the Arungi tribe, and all the intervals of the scale were heard.

Melody the Precursor of Music.

In the periods separating them examples were given of the three definite stages of development. First, there was the growth of melody, the restropective duration of which could only be guessed. Then came the age of ecclesiastical polyphony, from the tenth to the sixteenth century. The third period presented the growth of modern music under secular influences, and more especially the rise of harmony as a ruling factor of its composition. It was remarkable that current musical idioms should be of such recent origin. Even if they regarded the second stage as a vital part of the third, the fact remained that any attempt at combining two sounds of different pitch only dated back about 1,000 years. Thus music, as they understood it, was a very youthful art, though its precursor, melody, was as old as language. Discussing the development of the art of melody, the lecturer said that, in common with other types of growth, that of melody was marked by a gradual evolution from homogeneity to heiterogeneity. The first impulse to expression was succeeded by the instinct to design, bringing a rude elemental utterance into the semblance of order and unity. A single idea was related to another, as cell was joined to cell, and so the process went on. Furthermore, the structure of melody afforded an example in embryo of the main organic principles which were found in the largest musical forms, and its salient features were entirely relative to natural human instincts. The speaker then proceeded to detail the folk songs from the most elementary type to such a perfect tune as the familiar "Londonderry air." Many illustrations were made use of during the evening to stress such points.

In concluding his lecture, Professor Davies spoke of the relation of melodic characteristics to human characteristics, and discussed Mr. Herbert Spencer's views on the origin and function of music. The constant association between the tones of the human voice and the feelings they suggested was shown. Stress was laid upon the fact that all speech was compounded of two elements, the words and the tones in which they were uttered—namely, the signs of ideas and the signs of feelings. A fascinating field of speculation was suggested in the question as to how far and in which ways the temperamental peculiarities of their races were reflected in theier speech. In this connection the speaker sought to show the far-reaching influence of song upon the formation and development of language.

Advertiser 11.7.23.
Sydney University

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

ASSOCIATION TO PROMOTE ITS RECOGNITION FORMED.

Sydney, July 10.

The great hall at the University was well filled on the occasion of the formal inauguration of the Australian English Association. The objects of the association as set out in the constitution are to promote due recognition of English as an essential element in national education, to encourage and facilitate advanced study in English literature, and to unite all interested in English studies, also to bring teachers into contact with one another and with writers and readers.

Lord and Lady Forster, the State Governor, and Dame Margaret Davidson, and the Chancellor and Lady Cullen, were appointed patrons, and all those present formed themselves into a committee to help the movement under the chairmanship of Professor R. Holme. After business had been transacted, Professor W. J. Meckail (formerly Professor of Poetry at the Oxford University) delivered a fine address on Shakespeare.

Advertiser 11.7.23

THE GROWTH OF MUSIC.

LECTURE BY PROFESSOR DAVIES.

The first of a series of three extension lectures on "The Structure and Growth of Music" was delivered by Professor Harold Davies, Mus. Doc. (Director of the Elder Conservatorium), at the Prince of Wales lecture-room, University, on Tuesday evening, before a large audience.

As leading up to the subject, the lecturer said he would like to dwell briefly upon a certain important aspect of musical education. Musical education might be directed in three ways—first, the training of performers, either players or singers; secondly, the training of composers; and thirdly, the training of hearers. With the first they were sufficiently familiar. It presented a fairly wide, though limited, field of operation, and its fruits were various. With the second—the making of composers—there was at first sight far less scope for a teacher's activity, and this was true in the fullest sense of creative ability. It was only given to very few to write great musical works. But there was a deep interest and the suggestion of wide possibilities in training children to make their own tunes, and this work was now being pursued, as many knew, throughout the schools of Wales, with extraordinary results. All music had evolved out of the single line—melody—and it was strongly held by the leader of the movement that in stimulating children to creative effort along that path a truly musical race must of necessity be fostered.

The third way of musical education—the training of hearers—was practically neglected. Audiences were composed of large numbers of people who were instinctively and (he was happy to say) incurably fond of music, but were, nevertheless, without the power intelligently to interpret its sensations, to understand its meaning, or even how it had come to be. Many of them in youth received a smattering of some instrument—generally the piano—and after a few years of five-finger exercises and elementary pieces lost their enthusiasm as performers and gave it up quite gladly. But, as someone had said, playing the piano in this fashion had as little to do with music as operating a typewriter had to do with literature. On the other hand, it was easy to teach the great majority of people to listen to music, not merely sensuously, but with keen discernment and real appreciation, and this quite apart from any skill in performance. He wished that such a training were incorporated in their school curriculum. After all, the development of faculty was the highest ideal of education. Someone had defined education as "what is left when we have forgotten all that we ever learned." Certainly it was true that for all of them the ultimate test of education lay in their ability to interpret intelligently the evidence of their senses. Blind seeing and deaf hearing were the commonest of all failings. In training people to listen to music with perception and discrimination the obvious advantage would be a constant stimulus to both composers and performers. The demand would surely reflect upon the supply, and an all-round higher standard would inevitably result. At some future time he hoped to give a course of lectures on "listening to music." The present course along evolutionary and historical lines was designed to give, first of all, an idea of how music had come to be. (Applause.)

The scope of the three lectures would be limited to the condition of music at the end of the 18th century, culminating roughly in the works of Beethoven, which might be regarded as a fairly mature stage of development. But from the beginning of music to the "choral symphony" was a far cry, not less distant than were the rude ejaculations of cave dwellers from the splendors of Shakespearian drama. His object was to trace the growth of the art between these two points, and in following its development they must needs be impressed with the wonder of its achievement. Let them bear in mind that there was nothing in the world around them to suggest even remotely a Bach fugue or a Beethoven symphony. These strange structures of sound had no objective counterpart. They were wholly from within, wholly the creation of man, a form of utterance akin to language and growing up like language from the simplest symbols into the loftiest literatures. At the outset they should get away from the idea that music was only an art. It was more, being first of all an utterance rising out of human need, and after that an art subject, perhaps, to laws, but laws from within, not from without.

Professor Davies proceeded to give the audience two widely contrasted viewpoints, one a movement from a Mozart string quartet, and the other a record taken by Sir Baldwin Spencer of the Great Snake Corroboree of the Arungi tribe of aboriginals in Central Austalia. In these, he remarked, they had the extremes. In the interval separating the two examples were three definite stages of development. The first covered the growth of melody, of a retrospective duration which could only be guessed. The second was the age of ecclesiastical polyphony, from the 10th to the 16th century. The third represented the growth of modern music under secular influences, and more especially the rise of harmony as the ruling factor of its composition. It was remarkable that current musical idioms should be of such recent origin. Even if they regarded the second stage as a vital part of the third the fact remained that any attempt at combining two sounds of different pitch dated back about 1,000 years. Thus music as they understood it was a very youthful art, though its precursor, melody, was as old as language.

The lecturer went on to give definitions further clearing the ground for a discussion of the development of the art of melody. In common with all other types of growth, that of melody was marked by a gradual evolution from homogeneity to heterogeneity. The first impulse to expression was succeeded by an instinct for design, bringing the rude and elemental utterance into the semblance of order and unity. The single idea was related to another idea, as cell was joined to cell, and so the process went on. Furthermore, the structure of melody afforded an example in embryo of the main organic principles which were found in the larger musical forms, and its salient features were entirely relative to natural human instincts. He also dealt with various stages in the development of folk songs, from the most elementary type up to such a perfect tune as the familiar "Londonderry Air." Many illustrations were made use of. In conclusion, the relation of melodic characteristics to human impulses was discussed.

The second lecture of the series, to be delivered on July 17, will be entitled "Ecclesiastical Polyphony."

Advertiser 11.7.23.

THE MODERN TREND.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

AN ADELAIDE PROFESSOR'S COMMENTS.

The cabled opinion of the United States Solicitor-General (Mr. Beck) that the time has come when a little healthy pessimism would be the best foundation for the reconstruction of the world, is something quite above the heads of the sport-loving picture-going public he attacks. It has not escaped the notice of professors, however, who consider a large measure of truth may be wrapped up in his picturesque but scornful references to "highbrow stuff," film favorites, and sporting kings.

"Mr. Beck seems to suggest," remarked Dr. Mackellar Stewart, Professor of Philosophy at the Adelaide University, on Tuesday, "that we are full of hope that our educational activities and democratic institutions are bound to bring about the betterment of mankind. But such effects as those to which he points should make us pause and reflect whether these institutions are not actually undermining the intellectual and moral foundations of modern life."

Professor Stewart admitted it was very sweeping to lay the blame for the world's troubles at the door of that which it prized most—its educational and other cherished institutions. "His two charges are," added the professor, "that we are not thinking and that we are becoming heated in our pursuit of pleasure. One has to admit that the majority of the people do not think, and never have done so, but it is surely safe to say that there are more people thinking to-day than there have been in any other period of the world's history. Go back to the Napoleonic succeeding Waterloo and the Napoleonic wars. Those able to think of the consequences of the war were certainly in the minority. With the extension of education during the last century an immensely greater number are equipped to think of the consequences of the recent struggle, and they are thinking of them. For example, the League of Nations could not have been established, and could have achieved anything, if it had not behind it a very large body of [illegible] and thoughtful public opinion [illegible]