

Organ Pedals Attached to Pianofortes

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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE TONIC SOL-FA AND STAFF NOTATION SYSTEMS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—A letter from Mr. Fred. W. Wareham appeared in your last number, condemning the use of Sol-fa as an introduction to the Staff Notation, and containing the following statement: "Messrs. McNaught and Thomson, teaching students in Training Colleges, . . . are unable to get beyond their easy introductory notation in two years." It may be interesting to your readers, and instructive to Mr. Wareham, to know that at the end of every year the whole of our senior students are examined in "practical" music by Dr. Hullah, and at this examination *each student sings at sight from the Staff Notation only*. The results for 1881 have not yet been published, but I append a table of the marks gained for this sight-singing test in the four largest London Training Colleges at Christmas, 1880:—

| COLLEGE. | NUMBER OF CANDIDATES EXAMINED. | AVERAGE NUMBER OF MARKS OBTAINED. |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Battersea | 55 | 26 |
| Borough Road | 64 | 31 |
| Chelsea | 59 | 25 |
| Westminster (Mr. Thomson)... .. | 57 | 26 |
| Average marks for <i>all</i> Colleges | | 24.5 |

Mr. W. A. Barrett, Mus. Bac., Oxon., Dr. Hullah's assistant, says in his Report: "The amount of musical ability exhibited by the students at Westminster was very considerable. . . . The class-singing was much above the average. . . . The teaching seemed to be thorough, and the students earnest in their work."

The following are the tabulated results of the examination in "theoretical" music, Christmas, 1881:—

| COLLEGE. | NUMBER OF CANDIDATES EXAMINED. | PERCENTAGE OF MARKS OBTAINED. |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Battersea | 51 | 69 |
| Borough Road | 65 | 70 |
| Chelsea... .. | 55 | 70 |
| Westminster | 55 | 71 |
| Average marks for <i>all</i> Colleges | | 68 |

Mr. Wareham's statement does not harmonise well with these statistics, and it would have been better if that gentleman had ascertained the true facts of the case before making an assertion which, to say the least, is misleading and entirely unfounded.—I am, sir, yours sincerely,

R. DUNSTAN, Mus. Bac., Cantab.

Westminster Training College, May 15, 1882.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Will you kindly afford me space to deny the accuracy of the assertion in Mr. F. Wareham's letter of last month, that I was unable in my training-college work "to get beyond easy introductory notation in two years."

During the five years of my connection with Westminster College, whilst making Tonic Sol-fa the basis of my teaching, both notations have been used; and at his annual examinations, conducted (by desire) in the staff notation, Dr. Hullah has been able to award more than the average number of marks.

Among the students of these years may now be found one Mus. Bac., with others preparing for that degree, many good choirmasters, organists, solo vocalists, and past or present members of the orchestral band formed three years ago; but—above all—the majority of them are now teaching "singing by note" in their schools, *upon the system learnt at college*; it being well known that teachers

from colleges in which Tonic Sol-fa is not taught rarely, if ever, do so.

Seeing that music is but one of many studies, and the college course is two years only, it is for Mr. Wareham to show better results before endeavouring to disparage the work of those who are trying to do the duty which falls to their lot with the best tools obtainable. After more than twenty years' experience of other methods, I would express my earnest conviction that the Tonic Sol-fa offers the easiest and best, because most natural, system of learning to sing at sight, and that a practical knowledge of it removes many difficulties and smooths the path of the student to the higher branches of musical art.

I am, sir, faithfully yours,

JAMES THOMSON, M.R.A.M.

9, Rectory Road, Stoke Newington.

ORGAN PEDALS ATTACHED TO PIANOFORTES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—My best thanks are due to Mr. Alfred Spring for the very able and exceedingly favourable manner in which he has spoken in your last issue respecting my scheme of organ-pedal attachment to pianofortes, after his personal inspection of those I have in use. Everything he says of them is strictly correct, and I, like him and many other correspondents, including Miss Baily, of Glastonbury, much regret that, for reasons already stated in your valuable paper by me, they still remain in abeyance.

I had, indeed, hoped that since my letter in your number for last August they would have been patented and brought out before this; but I am sorry to say that, so far, I have received no encouragement from any firm to justify me in going to such an expense. I am, moreover, strongly impressed with the certainty that unless some house of influence in London can be prevailed upon to adopt them and bring them before the public, not much can be done, even if they are patented; and the only answer that I can get from such houses so far is that, however good a scheme of pedal attachment may be, they are not generally required, and thus alone I could not well succeed.

But this might almost have been said fifty or sixty years ago of organs even of moderate size, most of them being certainly without pedal pipes, or even pedals, their requirement not being then considered needful.

It is very evident there is a growing desire for pedals to pianofortes, provided they possess the advantages claimed by me, and fully attested by all who have seen them; and I certainly believe that if a really good and influential firm could be induced to come forward, they might be perfectly successful. Trusting that this will soon be the case,

I am, sir, yours respectfully,

JOSEPH SHAW,

Professor of Music, Organist of St. Luke's.

3, Coburg Street, Leeds, May 20, 1882.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—I have read with some surprise the remarks of several of your correspondents, to the effect that they cannot obtain a satisfactory action of organ pedals when attached to pianofortes.

I am in possession of a piano made by George Russell, and fitted with organ pedals by him; the action is very neat and reliable, and is never out of order; in which respect my experience is directly the reverse of that of your correspondent, who has had nothing but trouble and expense with his, for though I have had the piano in daily use for nearly two years (and it was not new when I had it) the pedal part has never required attention.

Indeed, looking at the action I do not see how it could be out of order except by the actual breakage of some part, which could only result from violence.

I shall be happy to show the instrument to any one who may care to see it.

I am sir, your obedient servant,

W. H. JARRATT.

12, Robert Street, Hampstead Road,
May 8, 1882.