

MUSIC IN POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION

(By Maxwell Fernie.)

MUSICAL education received in secondary schools and colleges is for minds that have already absorbed fundamentals and are therefore able to receive training in the development and exploiting of these elementary studies.

The previous article on this subject of music in schools stressed the necessity for absorbing four specified fundamentals. The use of the voice as a medium of interpretation in musical training is excellent and it is the best method for learning these fundamentals which should be limited to primary school tuition.

Senior children are apt to become bored more quickly when learning basic principles, and, as stated above, their minds are more alert to possible developments and embellishments. This is especially true with music, and the writer has seen music teachers, who should have known better, taking first-year senior children in work specially written for juvenile minds. Such a procedure is most detrimental to the mind of a senior child and nothing kills interest and enthusiasm more quickly than a completely wrong approach.

Post-primary school problems also include the difficult one of adolescence, concerning which much has already been written. Adolescence in males affects the voice—that is common knowledge. The voice «breaks» and can be controlled only with great difficulty and, in some cases, control is almost impossible.

Eventually the male voice «settles» to a level an octave lower than in boyhood. Female voices, contrary to many beliefs, are also affected but in quality more than in actual control.

However, a suggestion is made that easy instrumental training in some form should be taught in the first year at college or secondary school. At this point the bogey of finance appears, but with judicious choice of instruments, the financial outlay required to equip a class should not be heavy and well worthy of the invest-

ment, both from the practical musical results and from the viewpoint of training and experience.

As an example, a class could be formed into a complete recorder ensemble—there being three main pitches of this early type of flute—soprano or treble, alto and tenor—the three providing a pleasing and satisfying trio of parts.

These instruments are not expensive and can now be made in plastic as well as the conventional hardwood. They are hardwearing, accurate in scale and easily played. They have a range of two octaves chromatically and the three types have the same fingering, so that to learn one type is to learn all. This advantage is an invaluable aid to rapid class tuition.

The recorder is not a child's toy, but a recognised musical instrument that blends well with other modern instruments and it can be a beautiful thing indeed in the hands of a virtuoso. Gramophone recordings of recorder ensembles can be imported and they should be heard in order to appreciate the beauty of this modernised «flute-a-bec» or early English flute.

Great strides have been made in England by using the recorder in classwork and there is every indication that this once forgotten flute will pave the way for a greater general interest in group music. The music of Purcell and Handel is particularly suited to this instrument.

The family of stringed instruments comprises of course the ideal orchestra but, unfortunately, they are usually costly. It is never advisable for a person to learn on a cheap and inferior violin, viola or violoncello. Often, too, the violoncello is too large