

**THE MUSICAL EDUCATION OF
THE CHILD: SOME THOUGHTS
AND SUGGESTIONS FOR
TEACHERS, PARENTS AND
SCHOOL**

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The Musical Education of the Child: Some Thoughts and Suggestions for Teachers, Parents and School by Stewart Macpherson

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STEWART MACPHERSON

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SOME THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS
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AND SCHOOLS

BY

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PREFACE

THE following pages represent in the main the substance of various lectures, addresses and articles delivered or written during the last few years, on certain aspects of the musical education of the young. In preparing them for issue in their present form, I have thought it best to preserve the informal style which best fitted the conditions under which they were originally presented. I quite realize that if one had intended in the first place to set forth, in book form, the thoughts herein contained, they would often have been expressed somewhat differently.

Feeling, however, that to alter their manner would tend in all probability to destroy whatever directness they might possess, I have ventured to leave them virtually as they first appeared, merely adding a few fresh points which seemed to drive home more completely the arguments advanced. It will doubtless be noticed that some overlapping of idea occurs from time to time in the course of these essays, and that a topic developed in one is referred to, possibly at some length, in another.

This has been inevitable owing to the fact that more than once it has been necessary to approach the same subject from different sides, and in relation to circumstances which in their nature vary considerably.

I can only hope that any apparent verbal redundancy may be compensated for by additional clearness, and by the emphasis thus laid upon certain matters of fundamental importance.

THE AUTHOR

LONDON, 1915

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

PART ONE

SOME AIMS IN MODERN MUSICAL EDUCATION

"The whole development of true art is devised to engage more and more of the finer mental qualities . . . and one of its greatest joys is to find that it helps the imperfectly provided mind to attain fuller measure of the finer qualities."

SIR HUBERT PARRY

We hear to-day much talk about the "educational ladder," and the necessity of setting up some sort of machinery by which an intelligent relationship may be made to subsist between the various stages in the educational process. The cry is all for a clear road from Primary School to University. Whether we all agree, or not, with the desirability of encouraging what, on the face of it, seems in the majority of instances to be of very doubtful value — namely, the hope of University success in the minds of those who, in the main, are as little likely to reach that goal as to reach the moon — we must all heartily endorse the axiom that every step in true education should bear some conscious relation to every other step, and be pursued with some definite end in view. In other words, any part of a child's education that is undertaken without some distinct object — not necessarily, let us hasten to add, a utilitarian object — is practically wasted energy, for it inevitably leads to a *cul-de-sac* no less disastrous in its own way than the many "blind-alley" occupations which are so familiar a phenomenon in modern life.

If we apply this thought to the teaching and learning of music,¹ how does it all work out? What is the net result of all the vast amount of effort — honest, dogged, painstaking effort — that has been and is being expended throughout the land in connection with the child's lessons in music? For that the majority of music-teachers are some of the most

¹ I am referring exclusively to the general musical upbringing of the child, and am leaving out of consideration specialized music-study as pursued at our great musical institutions.