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Re-musical
education for
blacks

56 Canada House
President Street
Johannesburg.

June 20. 1940

Senator J. D. Rheinallt Jones,
University of Witwatersrand
Johannesburg.

Dear Sir, In accordance with
your request yesterday, I beg to
submit the following for your
information:

" For the past three years I have
acted as Adjudicator for the Bantu
Schools ^{Annual} Music Festival, organised
by the African Teachers' Association.
This festival is conducted in the
Central area (Johannesburg), also
on the East Rand (at Benoni),
and West Rand (at Krugersdorp).
In consequence of what I heard
of the music work done by
the Bantu Schools throughout
the Rand area, I made certain
criticisms in connection with
the singing and general musical
knowledge of the choirs and
conductors. Following last year's
festival I made certain
recommendations to the Managers
of the Native Affairs department

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in Johannesburg (Mr Ballenden).

I pointed out, in the first place, how remarkable was both the interest and enthusiasm of the Bantu scholars in choral singing and music - evidenced by the fact that in 1939 one hundred and thirty one ^{School} choirs were heard by me - representing nearly five thousand singers. In the second place the singing reached a high standard of enthusiasm and musical interest. In fact, I arranged special broadcasts of the five winning choirs.

But I was impelled in my comments to point out how a lack of technical knowledge & (musical science and vocal use) detracted seriously from the value of the work presented.

As a result of my experience, I recommended strongly that something should be done to give the teachers concerned some technical guidance in music and singing.

Mr Ballenden at once strongly supported my views, and he immediately arranged for me to give a series of twelve lectures to all teachers concerned.

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with the training of school choirs in the central area. Teachers from both the Western and Eastern areas were invited to attend, but these found the expense of coming to Johannesburg too high.

Following on the Johannesburg lead the teachers of the West Rand made representation to the Municipalities of Krugersdorp, Randfontein and Roodepoort and these three municipalities have now agreed to my giving the lectures in Krugersdorp for the Western section on the same terms as in Johannesburg.

The East Rand Teachers will make the necessary representation in Benoni, Brakpan and Springs this coming week for a similar grant for the lectures to be given in Benoni & Brakpan (Here the first four lectures have been given). The central area lectures started at the beginning of May, and West Rand starts during the first week of August.

The reasons why the East and West Rand teachers insisted upon the lectures being given in their own areas were

- (1) To avoid the individual expense of travelling to Johannesburg. (Bantu Teachers simply cannot afford to meet such an outlay).
- (2) They felt that if the Central Area had teaching and guidance in connection with choral singing and fundamental principles of music, this centre would have an undue advantage in the annual competitive festival which takes place during November and December.

This will explain why I am now lecturing and teaching in the three centres.

There is of course, the problem as to what is to happen when the twelve lectures have been given?

In the limited period of twelve lectures I will endeavour to cover as much ground as possible, but the knowledge that I can impart in the time must necessarily be only of an elementary nature. I must tell you, however, that I have found the Bantu teachers very keen, attentive and

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intelligent, and I feel that the teaching so far has been well absorbed. Among the subjects taught in the first four lectures were Staff notation, note values, time, tempo and rhythm (the Bantu races have a remarkable sense of basic rhythm) with the related subjects; also the technique of conducting.

The second four lectures will build upon the knowledge gained to include writing and facility in both Staff notation and Tonic Solfa, and transcription from one medium to the other.

The final lectures will be entirely concerned with further study and application of the principles of

- (a) voice production
- (b) voice training
- (c) breathing & breath control
- (d) choral class management
- (e) diction and word pointing
- (f) Phrasing and interpretation

You will notice that the subject of musical science, as we regard it, can hardly be touched upon - apart from the elementary knowledge

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of scale formation and tonality which forms part of the fundamental study of Staff notation.

Then arises the question of the practical application of the subjects taught. I feel that the music work in the schools should have some measure of supervision. I need hardly stress the educational, cultural and disciplinary value of this kind of school activity.

Also I have had many requests from the teachers to give them some instruction in pianoforte-playing - an essential element in song accompaniment. I have so far not replied to these requests. I do not at the moment see how the necessary facilities can be made available.

Yet I feel that something further should be done to allow this enthusiasm for music study to continue towards a wider and more definite knowledge. Among the Bantu races the musical material

is surprisingly good. Most of the teachers are quick in comprehension and all seem to be highly susceptible and responsive to the finer things in music.

I shall be glad to discuss the subject with you whenever you think it necessary.

A report of my experience and conclusions will be sent to you when the course of twelve lectures has been completed. This will be about the end of October next.

Yours truly
C. W. Duggan

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