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Music in the training colleges of England and Wales 1872–1899: perspectives from HMI

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In 1872 John Hullah was appointed Inspector of Music in Training Colleges and his first act was to introduce a practical examination for each of the students. Each year he visited all of the colleges receiving financial aid from the Government to examine the students after which he wrote up his findings in a report for the Committee of Council on Education. These reports, and those of his successor John Stainer, give a unique account of music in the training colleges in the period 1872 to 1899.

Introduction

Surprisingly little has been written about the training college curriculum of the 19th century, even less about the content of the music course. The standard texts (Rich, 1933; Dent, 1962, 1977) give good accounts of the origins and developments of the training colleges but say little about what was taught in them. In 1872 John Hullah (1812–1884) was appointed Inspector of Music in Training Colleges, a post he held for ten years until his retirement in 1882 when he was succeeded by John Stainer (1840–1901) The report of the Inspector for Music in Training Colleges was included in the annual Report of the Committee of Council on Education from 1872 until 1899 (the publication of these reports was discontinued in 1900 when the Board of Education took over from the Committee of Council on Education) and it is these reports that form the basis for this article, giving as they do a unique insight into the state of music in the training colleges at this time.

Although this article concentrates exclusively on the content of the training college music curriculum, it must be remembered that the training colleges did not exist in isolation. The purpose of the training colleges was to train teachers to work in the elementary schools up and down the country and the number of students entering the training colleges with a particular interest in music could reasonably be expected to reflect the country's interest in music in general terms. As such, some background information about music in society and its elementary schools will provide the context for the main focus of the article.

The rise in the popularity of sight-singing classes during the first half of the 19th century was the result of the work of singing masters such as Joseph Mainzer (1801–1851), John Hullah (1812–1884) and John Curwen (1816–1880), who was in turn greatly influenced by the work of Sarah Glover (1785–1867). Singing schools were established up and down the country and resulted in massed performances of most of the large-scale choral works popular at the time. Singing was encouraged in schools but the choice of material used

often left a lot to be desired. In his belief that there existed no home-grown manual the great educational reformer James Kay (later Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth) set about obtaining copies of the manuals used in countries where singing was a positive feature of elementary education. His preferred work was that of the French musician G. L. B. Wilhelm and in 1841 he approached John Hullah and asked him to adapt Wilhelm's method for use in English schools.

The Committee of Council on Education published the first part of Hullah's manual describing the exercises and songs that it contained as 'comprising those portions of a course of elementary instruction in vocal music, which a master of moderate skill may easily succeed in communicating to an ordinary elementary school' (Committee of Council on Education in Hullah, 1842, p. viii). Hullah was a talented musician but unfortunately he favoured a system that was fundamentally flawed. Wilhelm's manual was based upon the use of a fixed doh instead of the moveable doh proposed by Glover and Curwen. This meant that while the exercises remained in the key of C major it was relatively straightforward, but as soon as another key was introduced, complications arose.

The problem was further compounded by the fact that as the Committee of Council on Education had sponsored the manual it was the method expected to be used in the training colleges receiving financial support from the Government. The difficulties teachers faced associated with the use of Hullah's manual meant that it was little used in schools. Matters came to a head when music was omitted from the Revised Code of 1871. This caused a public outcry and so a compromise was reached whereby the grant for other subjects would be reduced by one shilling per head if singing was not taught satisfactorily. The requirements to keep the full grant were, to say the least, minimal. All that the schools had to do was to prepare a few songs learnt by ear in preparation for the Inspector's visit.

With some justification many questioned the wisdom of paying for singing by ear. Pressure grew and eventually led to the Code of 1882 which paid one shilling per head for singing by note but only six pence for singing by ear. From this point on, the central feature of school music lessons was learning to sing at sight. With the introduction of a grant specifically for music, it was logical that a specialist music inspector be appointed. An obvious choice for the Committee of Council on Education was Hullah, and he was appointed Inspector of Music in Training Colleges in 1872. Hullah had many supporters but not everyone was happy with his appointment. In a letter to *The Times*, John Curwen protested 'most earnestly against the appointment of Mr John Hullah as Inspector of School Music under the Education Department' (*The Times* 2 April 1872 quoted in Cox, 1993, p. 23). Curwen's objection was simple: Hullah advocated the use of the fixed doh system which was in direct conflict with his tonic sol-fa which used a moveable doh. His letter continued 'no-one whose name is publicly known as the advocate of a particular method should be made the judge or ruler over his educational antagonists'.

The reports of John Hullah

During his first year in office Hullah visited all of the training colleges receiving grants from the Committee of Council on Education (43 in total) and examined individually 1,518 students. This was the pattern for the next ten years and at the end of each examination period he wrote a report for the Committee of Council on Education. Music was a

Table 1 *Source: Hullah Annual Report 1872 pp. 378–379*

1872	Excellent	Good	Fair	Total
Male	4%	21%	34%	59%
Female	1%	22%	38%	61%

compulsory subject, and all students were required to sit an examination in music at the end of their course. That examination, however, had previously been entirely theoretical. There was no test of practical skill. Hullah's first act as Inspector was to introduce a series of practical tests.

The students were required to: (a) sing together, under the direction of their musical instructor, two or three pieces of choral music which they had studied previously; (b) sing together at sight a piece of choral music chosen by Hullah; (c) sing on their own at sight; (d) where applicable play on an instrument; (e) on a voluntary basis, sing at sight various passages which included common modulations and rhythmical patterns. This last test was used to revise or confirm Hullah's opinion of a student's level of ability. In subsequent years the collective test of sight singing was abandoned. Hullah gave as his reason the fact that two or three good readers with strong voices could carry a class and give a false impression of the overall ability. In later years, the students were also required to sing on their own songs that they had prepared in advance. The results of the first examination are given in Table 1.

Pitifully few students were considered to be excellent, although there were several colleges where the proportion of excellent students was as high as 10% (e.g. York and Homerton). The number of students considered to be good in some of the colleges was an encouragement to him (over 80% at Swansea, 50% at Bangor, 39% at Battersea and 38% at Derby). If such standards were possible in these colleges they should, with time, be achievable in others.

His visits to the training colleges revealed more than just the ability of the students. The existence of single sex colleges was not favourable to the study of choral music. In such colleges there could only be what he termed an imperfect choir; in other words, a choir consisting only of sopranos and altos or tenors and basses. The music available for such choirs was limited and not of the same quality as that for the standard SATB choir. Furthermore, it was impossible for the students to become acquainted with choral works by Handel and 'the best glees and part songs of contemporary composers' (Hullah, 1872, p. 363).

The colleges had attempted to overcome this problem by getting male students to sing the soprano and alto parts an octave lower, and female students to sing the tenor and bass parts an octave higher. Such practice was, according to Hullah, likely to be 'injurious as well to the voices as to the ears of those who are concerned in them' (ibid). In the mixed colleges there were examples of high quality work. Cheltenham was singled out for particular praise and the work done there was described as both 'admirable' and having a 'refining' influence on the students involved in it. (ibid)

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The amount of time devoted to music was 'quite insufficient.' (Hullah 1872 p. 366) To make matters worse it was common practice to withdraw students (up to a fifth of the student body at a time) from the singing class to spend time in the practising school (a school attached to a training college in which the students would spend time teaching while being observed by their lecturers). Hullah made the point forcibly that while it was possible to 'get up' a lesson on some fact based subject in a few hours it was not possible in music as it required 'a sympathy of eye and ear that can only be attained by long cultivation.' (Hullah 1872 p. 367)

Perhaps the most serious problem was the lack of musical skill possessed by the students before they entered college. This was commented on by the college Principals: 'in no subject do students enter our college so ill-prepared as in music.' (Hullah, 1872) This was the same for students coming from areas such as Lancashire and Yorkshire which were renowned for the richness of their musical heritage.

It was not, however, all bad news. Hullah was pleasantly surprised by the number of students who were able to play an instrument. Most of the performances he heard were on organ, harmonium or piano but there were also some on violin, 'cello, flute, clarinet and trumpet. What was a cause of concern for him, however, was the limited number of instruments in each of the colleges available for use by the students. He cites the example of Borough Road College in which there was just one harmonium for 128 students.

At the end of his first report Hullah made 11 recommendations:

(1) first and second year students should be taught separately;
(2) a minimum of two hours per week should be allocated to music;
(3) music should be practised on a daily basis;
(4) less time should be spent learning part songs for future performances and more time on teaching singing at sight;
(5) every music practice of the second year students should include sight singing;
(6) the practice of singing parts an octave higher or lower should be stopped;
(7) where possible male and female colleges should meet together for combined practices or, failing that, the missing voices should be brought in from outside;
(8) first year students should not be allowed to take part in concerts or exhibitions unless they had proven ability at sight singing;
(9) students in the second year should no longer be withdrawn from music practices;
(10) instruction should be given to every student who could play a musical instrument;
(11) more attention should be paid to 'beating time'.

The extent to which these recommendations were acted upon, and the consequent improvements in provision, is charted in his subsequent reports.

Time allocation

The following year, 1873, Hullah reported that real progress had been made with regard to the amount of time spent on music in the training colleges. First and second year students were taught separately and 'more time was given to musical instruction and practice' (Hullah, 1873, p. 287). Furthermore fewer concerts were given by the students at the majority of the training colleges. This meant that less time was spent on learning pieces

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for a concert and more time on teaching the students to sing at sight. The practice of withdrawing students from music practices had been reduced but not stopped altogether. Much had been achieved but Hullah wanted more. In 1877 he wrote 'more time than formerly, though still not always enough, is given to musical instruction and practice, and more of the practice is in reading 'at sight'' (Hullah, 1877, p. 657). This was one area in which Hullah's appointment clearly had a positive impact.

The imperfect choir

Progress may have been made with regard to the amount of time allocated to music but his suggestion that neighbouring single sex colleges should meet together in order to give their students the experience of singing in a perfect choir had not been taken up. Several of the colleges, however, had come up with alternate ways of getting around the problem. At Peterborough a class of boys in the practising school had been used to provide the treble and alto parts for the college choir and at Liverpool the tenor and bass parts were played on a harmonium while the accompaniment was played on a piano. In 1875 Hullah again urged the colleges to make arrangements with neighbouring colleges in order to give students the opportunity to sing in a perfect choir. He repeated his concern that the 'quantity of good music for the exclusively male or exclusively female' was 'very limited' (Hullah, 1875, p. 494). His frustration that the students were not given the opportunity to sing in a mixed choir was evident in 1875: 'I regret to say that my recommendations have been so far without effect, save in a single instance' (1875, p. 495). In one area, however, he did have some success. By 1876 he was able to report that the practice of singing soprano parts an octave lower in the male colleges was 'nearly extinct' (Hullah, 1876, p. 729).

Lack of previous knowledge

The standard expected of the students in the practical examination was not very high. It could not be as so many of them had done little or no music before entering college. The majority of the students had been pupil-teachers and, as such, music should have been a part of their apprenticeship. There were two reasons why this was not the case: the pupil-teacher apprenticeship started at the age of 13 years, the very time at which a child's voice began to change and, secondly, 'a good many masters cannot at present properly prepare their pupil teachers in music for entry into the training colleges' (Hullah, 1874, p. 282). Hullah considered that it was only possible for students to make up for this 'neglect' by a 'sustained application' of which few were capable and a 'sacrifice of time' that fewer could afford (Hullah, 1874, p. 281). Table 2 shows the extent of the problem.

The solution lay 'in the more general teaching of music 'from notes' in elementary schools' (Hullah, 1875, p. 491). The problem was that singing from notes was not a requirement of the school Code. Hullah revisited this topic in each of his succeeding reports and made his most positive comment in his final report: 'The knowledge and skill of candidates for admission to training colleges are greater than they were some years since.' Even then he had to qualify that statement by adding 'but they are still deplorably small' (Hullah, 1881, p. 587). This was the one area over which Hullah as Inspector of Music in the Training Colleges had no direct influence and he accepted that the situation

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Table 2 *Source: Hullah Annual Report 1872–1875*

Year in which the students were examined	Total number of students examined	Number of students with no previous experience of music	That number expressed as a percentage
1872	1636	985	60%
1873	1672	923	55%
1874	1807	731	40%
1875	1964	803	40%

would never change greatly until the school Code specified that singing by ear was not an acceptable alternative to singing from notes.

Instrumental skill

In his 1873 report, Hullah gave an account of the work in the Church of Scotland Training College, Edinburgh. In this college all of the students were given piano lessons in classes of eight students. The level of ability varied from class to class but the more able students were able to play pieces such as Handel's 'The Harmonious Blacksmith'. Such work was not confined to Scotland: 'much attention' was given to instrumental music in the English training colleges and in one college, Liverpool, every student was given piano lessons (Hullah, 1873, p. 290). Some progress had been made regarding the number and quality of instruments available for use by students but there were still colleges where the instruments were 'hopelessly out of order and too few in number' (Hullah, 1873, p. 291). By 1875 he considered that instrumental music had made 'considerable progress' (Hullah, 1875, p. 493) and noted that students were often accompanied by their fellow students in their vocal solos for his examination.

Such progress was not confined to the piano. At Culham Training College a small brass band had been formed by one of the students (the son of a bandmaster). This showed what could be achieved in a relatively short period of time when 'competent direction' was available (Hullah, 1875, p. 494). Not all of the colleges were as supportive of instrumental work. In 1876 Hullah recounted the experience of one music lecturer who, having offered to provide free tuition for those students who had played the piano before entering college, was told by those in authority over him that not only would the lessons interfere with their other work but that 'it did not become persons of their station in life' (Hullah, 1876, p. 728).

In 1877 he gives an account of the work done at Cheltenham Training College where a band of string instruments had been formed and was used to accompany 'some of the simpler choruses in Handel's oratorios very creditably' (Hullah, 1877, p. 659). His report for 1879 was the last in which he made reference to instrumental work and he considered that there was 'cause for congratulation' (Hullah, 1879, p. 524). As evidence he cites the orchestral work at Cheltenham and Borough Road, the instrumental work at Culham and the piano teaching at Edinburgh, Liverpool and Bangor and the fact that 'at a large number

of colleges, male as well as female, a number increasing year by year present themselves always as accompanists to their fellow students' (1879, p. 525).

Standards achieved

Improvements in facilities and opportunities for the students were only important if they were accompanied by a similar improvement in the standards achieved. The most significant improvement was shown by the second cohort of students examined. Hullah commented that these results, 'if not yet satisfactory', were encouraging and that they showed 'a considerably increased amount of skill in practical music' (Hullah, 1873, p. 285). In 1872, 60% of the students examined had been judged to be excellent, good or fair. In 1873 that number had risen to 76%. The following year the improvement was less marked but Hullah was still able to claim that 'considerable improvement' had been made (Hullah, 1874, 280).

Direct comparison with 1873 is difficult because of the way in which the figures were presented. In 1872 and 1873 Hullah gave the number of students classified as excellent, good or fair expressed as a percentage. In 1874 he gave figures for the number of students who were awarded 60% and over and for those awarded between 40 and 60% in the final examination. It is not known why Hullah changed the way in which he presented the statistics. It might be that he was asked by the Committee of Council on Education to give percentages rather than the more subjective excellent, good and fair. It is, however, strange that he changed his method of presentation for a third time in 1877. The less generous of spirit might conclude that this was an attempt to make direct comparison more difficult from year to year. Such progress was, in any case, bound to be limited as the figures for 1874–1876 show that over 90% of students were already achieving at least 40% in the examination.

In 1877 Hullah acknowledged that there was a need for further progress but maintained that what had been achieved was 'not altogether unsatisfactory' (Hullah, 1877, p. 662). The following year he again reported 'year by year improvement' but no mention was made of progress in his 1879 report. In 1880 his comment 'improvement all but interrupted' is telling (Hullah, 1880, p. 526). He then went on to advise the Committee that further progress was unlikely until something was done to improve the teaching of singing in the elementary schools. Hullah was right to note the link between the work done in the elementary schools and the level of ability of the students entering the training colleges. However, there may have been another reason why he issued this warning. The statistics show that since 1878 there had been a small but steady decline in the standard achieved by the average student.

In his final report, the tone adopted is defensive. He states that the average marks varied from college to college and that: 'they rise in one or two instances to 29, in another they fall to 22' (Hullah, 1881, p. 587). He then gives five reasons as to why this might be: First, the ability of students depended on the region where they came from because 'certain parts of Great Britain are more favourable to music' (Hullah, 1881, p. 587). This would, however, only hold true if all of the students went to their local college, which is unlikely as an important feature of the training colleges at this time was their residential nature. Second, the knowledge and skill of the students before entering college was 'deploringly small'. Hullah had been complaining of this for many years and yet he had never implied that it

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Table 3 *Source: Hullah Annual Report 1877–1881*

Year	Number examined	awarded awarded	Maximum mark
1877	1933	27	
1878	1957	27	
1879	2018	26	
1880	1918	24	38
1881	1941	26	38

was anything but a national problem. It is, therefore, unlikely that this lack of knowledge would explain the differences between regions. Thirdly, the amount of time allocated to music in each of the colleges differed. This was a valid point. Fourthly, the knowledge and ability of the teachers in the elementary schools varied considerably. This is really an extension of his second point and, because it was a national problem, it was unlikely to be a reason for regional variation. Finally the students were not always using the method of sight-singing employed by the college lecturer. This was little more than a criticism of the students who chose to use tonic sol-fa instead of the fixed doh method which he favoured.

The reports of John Stainer

John Stainer was appointed Hullah's successor in 1882. Stainer was a musician of the highest rank (he was organist at St Paul's Cathedral) but had no experience of music in the elementary schools. To compensate for this lack of experience he appointed Mr W. G. McNaught (1849–1918) as Assistant Inspector. This was a master-stroke, not least because McNaught was an experienced teacher but also because he was a disciple of Curwen. As such, any sense of injustice felt by the tonic sol-faists was 'completely allayed' (Stainer, 1883, p. 594). McNaught's duties included deputising for Stainer when he was unavailable (virtually full time toward the end of Stainer's life) and marking the scripts of the written examination sat by the students. Stainer's first report deals with two of the issues that occupied so much of Hullah's time: the choice of method and the lack of knowledge of students before they entered college.

Method

On the question of method Stainer made it clear that he thought students should be familiar with both staff and tonic sol-fa notation. His advice was pragmatic: 'the student who possesses a practical knowledge of both systems will have an undoubted advantage when seeking employment' (Stainer, 1883, p. 594). The students were not slow to take his advice and, in 1885, he noted that a good many students, on leaving college, were enrolling for classes in tonic sol-fa. This was not the result of any strong belief in the educational value of the system but simply because a 'knowledge of it will bring more income' (Stainer, 1885, p. 472). In 1882 the New Code for schools stated that the full grant for singing would

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only be awarded if the children could sing from notes and that a lesser grant of sixpence would be given for singing by ear. The demand for teachers who could train pupils to earn the shilling grant inevitably influenced which method was taught in the training colleges and, by 1886, both the staff and tonic sol-fa systems were common. The dominance of the fixed doh method had finally been broken.

Lack of knowledge

On the question of the students' lack of knowledge Stainer felt the outlook was optimistic. The introduction of the New Code promised much for the future. His optimism was, however, short lived. In his 1887 report, one can perceive his sense of frustration. Stainer, and Hullah before him, had repeatedly discussed the need for pupil-teachers to be given some instruction in music before they entered the colleges. Such advice had not been heeded, and Stainer reported that he had heard of cases where pupil-teachers were told that there was no need for them to receive any such instruction in music because of the 'admirable tuition' they would receive in college (Stainer, 1887, p. 529). Two years later little had changed: 'I have once more to point out that many pupil teachers receive an insufficient training in practical music, and on entering college prove a source of trouble and anxiety to the teachers' (Stainer, 1889, p. 528). In 1892 an examination in vocal music was introduced for pupil-teachers. This was a full 20 years after Hullah had identified the problem in his first report but at last 'this obstacle to progress' had been surmounted (Stainer, 1892, p. 212).

There were four other areas discussed in some depth in Stainer's reports: instrumental skill, the quality of the songs presented for examination, the standards achieved by the students, and the theory of music.

Instrumental skill

In his first report Stainer commented favourably on the number of students who demonstrated real ability as performers and suggested that recognition should be made of their ability by the award of separate certificates. One of the reasons for this suggestion was that some of the students were turning to external bodies for validation of their skills. This, he felt, was wrong: 'students, and especially the better class of students, ought not to find it necessary to seek guarantees of ability from sources external to the Department and their own colleges' (Stainer, 1883, p. 595). The number of students showing instrumental skill continued to grow year by year. This was not, however, always a good thing.

In 1891 Stainer felt it necessary to 'caution the music professors in college against allowing an indifferent or careless instrumentalist to exercise much influence over the studies of fellow students' (Stainer, 1891, p. 527). In their eagerness to allow the students to accompany solos or choral works, the music lecturers in the colleges had lost sight of the need for accuracy and genuine skill as an accompanist. Too many performances had been ruined by well meaning but musically lacking students accompanying their peers. Stainer concluded that 'unless the college is fortunate enough to possess a really good accompanist' it would be better to 'provide an outsider to accompany everything while the students are under examination' (Stainer, 1891, p. 527).

Quality of songs

As a part of the practical examination the students were required to sing a song of their own choice and in the early years the quality of the songs chosen left a lot to be desired. Hullah had achieved much during his time as Inspector but this was one area in which little progress had been made. Stainer was more successful. In 1885 he commented that it gave him 'great pleasure to report a vast improvement in the character and style of the songs sung by the students' (Stainer, 1885, p. 473). There was, however, still room for improvement.

Stainer accepted that it was necessary for the students to choose songs that presented no great technical difficulties and that had a limited range. There was, however, 'a large literature of classical and beautiful songs' which met both of these requirements, and he felt that use should be made of these rather than the weak drawing room ballads that were so often presented (Stainer, 1886, p. 480). The point was heeded and in 1890 he was able to report that the lecturers had 'done their best to introduce good classical songs in place of the weak and silly ballads which were passed on from hand to hand' (Stainer, 1890, p. 499).

The quality of music presented was important to Stainer because he felt that if the students were introduced to music of good quality in college they would be much more likely to use music of that quality in school. Stainer did not expect the students to use classical songs in school and it would be regrettable if such music was 'above the head of children' but that was preferable to tunes that were 'weak or silly' (Stainer, 1894, p. 207). Stainer's reason was simple: 'every tune which is thoroughly taught to a child will probably be fixed in his memory for life' (Stainer, 1894, p. 207).

In 1897 of the 2,000 songs heard by Stainer and his assistants 580 were by Mendelssohn, 235 by Schubert, 201 by Handel, 166 by Sterndale Bennett, 82 by Schumann, 35 by Beethoven and 28 by Spohr. In other words two-thirds of the songs presented were by established composers. Stainer commented that the remaining third were not 'ill-chosen or unworthy of study' (Stainer, 1897, p. 354). It may have taken 15 years but in that time the 'weak drawing room ballad' had been replaced by 'songs of a higher and healthier type' (Stainer, 1897, p. 353). If the link between the quality of songs presented for examination and those used in schools was proven, the outlook was healthy for the elementary school children well into the next century.

Standards achieved

At the end of each report Stainer had continued Hullah's practice of including a table showing the average marks awarded to students at each of the colleges inspected. The average mark had risen steadily during Hullah's tenure as Inspector and progress continued to be made under Stainer. In the main text of his report for 1884 Stainer wrote that the results showed 'a distinct advance in the practical skill of the students' (Stainer, 1884, p. 509). He then went on to qualify his statement pointing out that the musical ability of the students varied 'from the highest to the lowest' and that 'a few actually failed to pass the easy tests to which they were subjected' and that others 'barely passed' (Stainer, 1884, p. 509).

Table 4 *Source: Stainer Annual Report 1884–1899*

	Number of students examined			Average mark expressed as a percentage	
Date	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1884	695	877	1572	76	72
1885	688	900	1588	78	74
1886	692	927	1619	82	78
1887	690	915	1605	86	86
1888	686	950	1636	86	86
1889	710	912	1622	88	88
1890	682	922	1604	91	91
1891	711	921	1632	93	94
1892	687	944	1631	92	92
1893	673	985	1658	91	92
1894	715	987	1702	90	92
1895	705	1031	1736	91	92
1896	696	1043	1739	89	92
1897	652	1061	1713	89	91
1898	710	1086	1796	91	91
1899	669	1178	1847	88	90

It would appear that Stainer had been put under pressure to raise the standard required for a pass in his examination. Stainer resisted such pressure: 'the special gifts required for making really good teachers of music are comparatively rare'. To raise the standard further would mean that a great number of students would fail. Stainer was not prepared to 'close the door' on any student capable of teaching music 'if only to a limited degree' (Stainer, 1884, p. 509). Furthermore, Stainer was aware of the fact that the training colleges did not exist to train specialists, and that music was only one of many subjects that the students were expected to master.

In 1890 Stainer made the point again that, despite the gradual improvement in standard, a range of ability existed amongst the students 'from a high level which would enable them to take a very fair position as professional musicians to the lowest level, in which a bare 'pass' with a minimum of marks has been obtained after nearly two years of hard and anxious work' (Stainer, 1890, p. 499). It may have been that Stainer had yet again been pushed to raise the standard of the practical examination. In 1898 he commented 'in many colleges the standard has probably reached a level which we can hardly expect it to surpass' (Stainer, 1898, p. 378). Stainer was not complacent. He was aware that there was a need for some of the weaker students to improve but was adamant that the standard required to pass should not be raised further. Table 4 shows the progress that had been made over the years.

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Theory of music

As Inspector, Stainer set the questions for the annual theory examination but left the marking of them to his two assistants: W. A. Barrett and W. G. McNaught. Hullah's reports made little reference to the theory examination. In Stainer's reports, however, reference is made to each examination in an appendix written by Barrett and McNaught. In 1884 the syllabus had been revised. For students sitting the staff notation version of the examination (an alternative was provided for those students who read tonic sol-fa), this included:

First year

1 **Notes.** Their position on the treble and bass staves. All the major scales. Diatonic intervals. Transposition from one major key to another.
2 **Time.** The value of dotted notes and rests. Signatures of the simple times. Accent. Content of measures (bars). Transcriptions from one time to another.
3 **Execution.** Terms relating to expression, pace and style.

Second year

1 **Notes.** Their positions on the treble, alto, tenor and bass staves. All the major and minor scales. Diatonic and chromatic intervals.
2 **Time.** The value of notes, dotted notes, tied notes, and rests. Signatures of all the simple and compound times. Accent. Contents of measures (bars). Transcription from one time to another.
3 **Execution.** Terms relating to expressions, pace and style. The compass and registry of the various voices of men, women, and children; their training with reference to production and intonation.
4 **Harmony.** Common chords and their inversions. The chord of the dominant seventh in its original position; its resolutions. A figured bass on the foregoing chords to be filled up.

(Annual Report of Committee of Council on Education, 1884, p. 472)

Hullah had been keen to reintroduce harmony into the examination in 1873, and in 1874 commented that the study of harmony had 'become exceedingly popular, both among teachers and students' (Hullah, 1874, p. 282). McNaught's experience was somewhat different. For him the 'indifferent working of the harmony question by a large number of students invites misgivings as to whether the possible utility of the knowledge gained is likely to be at all commensurate with the pains of time absorbed in learning it, and whether the retention of the subject in the syllabus can be justified' (McNaught in Stainer, 1884, p. 512). Those in authority tended to agree and harmony was withdrawn from the syllabus the following year.

While it was anticipated that the new syllabus would present no difficulty to 'any well-instructed pupil' there were numerous examples of the students' lack of knowledge. Two examples will suffice. In 1885 the meaning of the term Dal Segno was given as 'sacred music' or 'place right peddle down' (McNaught in Stainer, 1885, p. 475) and in 1886 one student, in an answer to a question on school music, wrote: 'Some of the best vocal

exercises are to be found in Handel's Creation, Mendelssohn's Messiah and several other works by Haydn' (McNaught in Stainer, 1886, p. 484).

A possible reason for some of this ignorance was poor teaching technique. In 1887 Barrett commented (Barrett in Stainer, 1887, p. 532) that there was some evidence to suggest that there was too much teaching by talk alone. In the students' answers, the word metronome was variously given as metrome, monotome, mentonome and mentrometer. Similarly its inventor was said to be Malzer, Metzler, Meezles and Marzials. Barrett commented 'mistakes and misunderstandings might be cleared in future by a greater use of the blackboard in teaching so that eye and ear might be instructed simultaneously'. The examination was not intended to make great demands on the students. It was, however, important that the little that was taught was learnt accurately.

Conclusion

Hullah and Stainer brought very different experiences to their appointments. Hullah had the right credentials to be Inspector of Music for Training colleges. He had the support of Kay-Shuttleworth and had been asked to produce an English version of Wilhelm's method for use in the country's elementary schools. He was diligent in his duties and it was right that he introduced a practical test for the students in the training colleges. His criticisms of the way music was organised in the colleges did much to improve the amount of time devoted to its study. There were, of course, things that he could not change. The existence of single sex colleges meant that it was difficult for students in them to receive any real experience of SATB singing. He did, however, put an end to the common practice of women singing the tenor and bass parts an octave higher and of the men singing the soprano and alto parts an octave lower. The problems associated with music in the elementary schools (which were partly a result of his own doing) meant that the calibre of students entering the training colleges was not very high and yet, as a result of the good work done by the lecturers, Hullah was able to report year after year an improvement in the standards achieved in his practical tests.

Unlike Hullah, Stainer had no experience of teaching singing to the masses. He was, however, a musician of the highest rank and had earned his reputation by the work he had done at Oxford University and St Paul's Cathedral. His appointment came at the same time as the Code of 1882 strengthened the position of music in the school curriculum. This, alongside his appointment of McNaught as Assistant Inspector, meant that the colleges were actively encouraged to use Curwen's tonic sol-fa which greatly reduced the difficulties faced by the teachers in school. Music in the training colleges was now directly linked to the requirements of the elementary schools. His reports reflect the continued improvement in the standards achieved by the students but show that he was wise enough to resist pressure to raise the standard expected of them even further. Stainer knew that as the students were not specialists it would be foolish to expect more from them than could be achieved. The 1899 report was his last. The colleges had undergone regular inspections in music for over a quarter of a century. Much had been achieved in that time: music was taken more seriously and more time was allocated to it; students in each year group were taught separately and more time was spent on developing musical skills rather than learning music for future performances; instrumental skill was encouraged and many became competent

performers. Stainer was positive about the achievements: 'the study of music by students in training colleges seems to be well directed and steadily pursued as far as time will permit' (Stainer, 1899, p. 45).

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