

James Churchill Fisher: Pioneer of Tonic Sol-fa in Australia

Robin S. Stevens
Associate Professor
School of Social and Cultural Studies in Education
Deakin University — Melbourne Campus
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood, VIC. 3125

Email: rstevens@deakin.edu.au

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Introduction

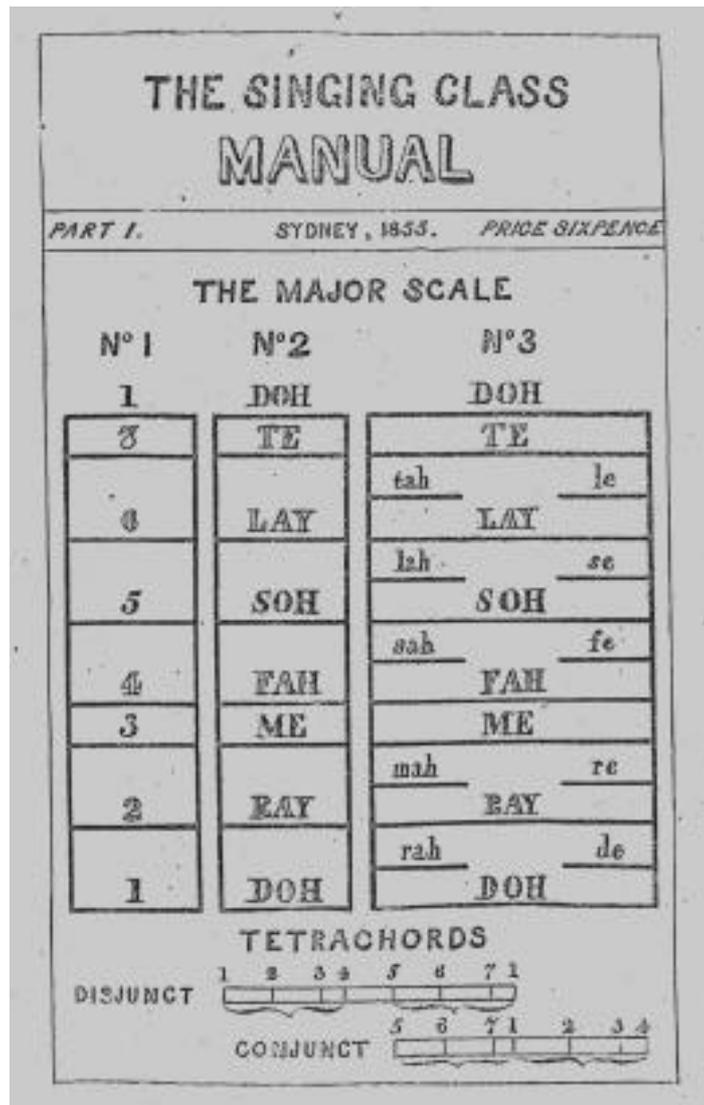
The English clergyman the Reverend John Curwen (1816-1880), founder of Tonic Sol-fa, developed his method from several indigenous and continental sources from about 1841. However, it was not until the 1850s, after his early publications—*Singing for Schools and Congregations* (1843) and its enlarged version *The Grammar of Vocal Music* (1848), the first issue of the periodical *The Tonic Sol-fa Reporter* and Curwen's publication of a series of music lessons in Cassell's *Popular Educator*—that the Tonic Sol-fa method emerged as a serious competitor to "Wilhem's method" which was then being promoted in England by John Hullah under the auspices of the Privy Council's Committee on Education. Even by 1853, one estimate put the number of Tonic Sol-fa-ists in England at a mere 2000.¹ Yet, in the same year, Tonic Sol-fa was being used to teach public singing classes in Sydney in the colony of New South Wales by a newly-arrived immigrant, James Churchill Fisher.

Fisher's Early Years in Sydney

Fisher was born at Portsmouth in the south of England on March 22, 1826, the son of James Fisher (whose profession was described as "Professor of Music") and his wife Louisa, née Churchill.² Emigrating from Liverpool in 1852, James Fisher (the younger) arrived in New South Wales later that year and within two years had established himself in Sydney musical circles as conductor of the Sydney Choral Society and as occasional lecturer in music at the "Royal Polytechnic Institute".³ It was from about this time that Fisher appears to have formed a close professional relationship with two famous contemporaries, William John Cordner (1826-1870) and Charles Sandys Packer (1810-1883).⁴ Cordner came to Sydney in 1854 and, although a Protestant, was appointed as organist at St. Mary's Cathedral in Sydney where he was responsible for establishing a fine standard of choral performance.⁵ Packer, who had been transported to initially to

Norfolk Island and then to Hobart as a convicted forger, had attended the Royal Academy of Music in London where he had studied composition, piano and singing. He arrived at Sydney in 1854 (after gaining a conditional pardon) and, despite a later conviction on a charge of bigamy, Parker achieved considerable success as a composer and choral conductor in Sydney.⁶ This "trio" of musicians, having arrived at Sydney at about the same time, appear to have developed close personal and professional ties and, particularly during these early years in Sydney, assisted each other in their production of musical performances.⁷

However, it was as a music educator that Fisher was to achieve prominence in New South Wales. Fisher brought with him from England a knowledge of both Hullah's "fixed doh" method and Curwen's "movable doh" method.⁸ He employed Tonic Sol-fa in his teaching of adult singing classes in Sydney in 1853 and, to assist with his teaching of a singing class at "Mr. Beazley's Chapel, Redfern", he produced what was undoubtedly the first Tonic Sol-fa publication in Australia—*The Singing Class Manual*—in 1855.⁹ This manual of eight pages, lithographed by Fisher himself, included brief notes and diagrammatic explanations of theoretical aspects such as the major scale (represented in terms of numerals, movable doh solmisation and fixed doh solmisation), tetrachords, staff notation (both pitch and rhythm), metre (both staff and Tonic Sol-fa notation), the Tonic Sol-fa modulator, keys and key signatures, the minor scale and its representation in Tonic Sol-fa syllables, and basic dynamic markings. In addition, the manual included six hymn tunes in staff notation and harmonised in four parts which presumably the singing class at Mr. Beazley's chapel learnt with the aid of Tonic Sol-fa.



Fisher's *The Singing Class Manual* (1855)

In an application in 1856 for the position of singing master for the four model schools established in Sydney by the Board of National Education, Fisher expressed his opinion of Tonic Sol-fa in the following terms: "it is not only the easiest and cheapest method of teaching a large public class, but ... it is also the most natural, and, consequently, the most perfect that has yet been introduced [Fisher's underlining]".¹⁰ Although unsuccessful in this application, Fisher gained a position as an untrained generalist teacher in the National School system in 1856 and appears to have completed a period of teacher training at the Fort Street Normal School by 1859.¹¹ He included singing in his class teaching at Mount Marshall National School using Tonic Sol-fa—the first reported instance of Tonic Sol-fa being introduced to schools¹²—and, after a period as an assistant teacher at Fort Street Model School,¹³ was appointed as headmaster of Paddington Model School at the end of 1862.

The following year, the Board of National Education decided to give the Tonic Sol-fa method a trial to determine its suitability and Fisher was instructed to employ Tonic Sol-fa in classes at Paddington school and also to take over Saturday morning normal classes in singing for teachers which had previously been taught using Hullah's method.¹⁴ By 1863, Fisher was able to report that teachers attending his classes had acquired sufficient knowledge of Tonic Sol-fa to enable them to teach "upwards of 600 children ... by that method in their respective schools".¹⁵ Fisher made use of the Elementary and Intermediate Tonic Sol-fa Certificate examinations which, by then, were being administered by the London-based Tonic Sol-fa School.¹⁶ The requirements for Tonic Sol-fa certificates were used by Fisher as the basis for his Saturday morning normal classes and were more formally adopted as the curriculum for Vocal Music in the 1867 "Course of Studies for Teachers".¹⁷ Fisher awarded thirty-three certificates in 1864 and fifteen in 1865, with an average of about eight certificates per year between 1867 and 1874.¹⁸

The early success both of the Tonic Sol-fa method in National Schools and of Fisher's teacher training activities appears to have sufficiently impressed the new Council of Education (which came into being in 1867) that Tonic Sol-fa was adopted as the official music teaching method for use in public schools in New South Wales.

Aside from Fisher's own work in propagating Tonic Sol-fa, much of the credit for the method's adoption in New South Wales must go to William Wilkins, the first Inspector of National Schools who became the secretary to the new Council of Education. Wilkin's role in the adoption of Tonic Sol-fa was explained in a report of a speech made by him at the Tonic Sol-fa College in London in June 1870 and originally published in *The Tonic Sol-fa Reporter*:

Mr. Wilkins said he thought that they [the meeting] would be glad to hear how it came to pass that Tonic Sol-fa was adopted by the government of New South Wales and incorporated with their system of undenominational schools ... Having ... decided to teach singing in every school, the question arose which method shall be used? He had himself been one of Hullah's earliest pupils and was well acquainted with his method, but when watching the work of it in schools, he found it uniformly unsatisfactory, as well as unattractive to the children. Casting about for another system, he found one of the teachers, Mr. Fisher, who was well acquainted with Tonic Sol-fa. He placed himself under this teacher and the result of his studies was that he found our system to be easy, adapted to children, cheap and founded on true principle. All this he reported to the Council and they decided in its favour.¹⁹

Fisher's Appointment as Singing Master

In September 1867, Fisher was appointed as Singing Master to the Council of Education at an annual salary of £300 "for the purpose of disseminating the knowledge of the Tonic So-fa method"²⁰ His duties included teaching music to candidates at the

Fort Street Training School as well as to pupil teachers and public school teachers who attended the Saturday morning normal school classes, undertaking inspections of class singing in public schools, and the preparation of examination papers and conducting of examinations for teachers in "Vocal Music—Tonic Sol-fa Method".²¹

During his period as singing master, Fisher became involved in publishing school music materials. The first of these was his *Manual of the Tonic Sol-fa Method* (1869) which was reported as being specifically designed to facilitate private study of Tonic Sol-fa.²² The manual was undoubtedly compiled to assist those teachers in the more remote rural areas of the public school system who were unable to attend the normal classes in Vocal Music held in Sydney. However, opposition to this publication was to come from a somewhat unexpected source. In August 1871, Robert Griffiths, then secretary of the Tonic Sol-fa School, informed Fisher that his manual was in violation of John Curwen's copyright on textbooks explaining the Tonic Sol-fa method.²³ Having warned Fisher on a previous occasion that he had infringed Curwen's copyright, Griffiths threatened legal action and, with little other option, Fisher capitulated and withdrew the offending publication from sale.²⁴

One of the major problems facing Fisher in his propagation of the method was the lack of music in Tonic Sol-fa notation. When taking over the Saturday normal classes under the Board of National Education, Fisher proposed lithographing song sheets in sol-fa notation for distribution to schools in order to overcome the problem. The plan was approved and funded by the Board. However, as the need became greater with Tonic Sol-fa becoming more widely used in schools, Fisher took the opportunity to compile a small book of songs and submitted it to the Council of Education for its approval.²⁵ The book was intended as an interim measure to fulfill the need for school song material while proper sol-fa type, ordered from England, was being shipped to the colony. Apparently mindful of its guardian ship of secular instruction in public schools, the Council took exception to two hymns and one of the songs, but otherwise sanctioned the use of the songbook in public schools. *Songs for Home and Schools—Tonic Sol-fa Edition* was published late in 1868 by J.J. Moore of Sydney²⁶ and, when reviewed in the *Australian Journal of Education*, was praised for its clear type, convenient form, size and price (it being "within the reach of children") and was strongly recommended as "the first successful attempt at the publication of a work of this kind in the colony".²⁷ It is interesting to note that this songbook reflects one of the major revisions to the Tonic Sol-fa method which Curwen was to make in his 1872 edition of *The Standard Course*—the use of Tonic Sol-fa notation only, as opposed to Curwen's previous use of Tonic So-fa notation in conjunction with staff notation as a mnemonic aid. The entire repertoire of songs in Fisher's songbook was apparently printed in Tonic Sol-fa notation

only and thus pre-dates or at the least parallels Curwen's decision to dispense with staff notation as part of his method.

During the mid 1870s, Fisher produced another two school songbooks entitled respectively *Elementary School Song-Book: A Collection of Songs for the Junior Classes in Schools* (1876) and *Advanced School Song-Book: A Collection of Songs for the Senior Classes in Schools* (1877). These were published by J.J. Moore of Sydney and, perhaps as a way of placating Curwen after his earlier infringement of copyright, Fisher dedicated the *Advanced School Song-Book* to John Curwen "in humble acknowledgement of his earnest, indefatigable and self-denying labours for the promotion of the popular study of music". Indeed in the Preface to the second songbook, Fisher specifically recommended that teachers should refer to *The Standard Course* "which is and must long continue to be the textbook of the Tonic Sol-fa method" as well as to Curwen's then recently published *Teacher's Manual of the Tonic Sol-fa Method* and to a series of tracts on "Musical Theory" being published by the Tonic Sol-fa Press. Like *Songs for Home and Schools*, the entire repertoire of songs in both of these songbooks was printed in Tonic So-fa notation only, there being no use of or reference to staff notation whatsoever. The *Elementary School Song-Book* included one hundred and thirty-three songs, of which twenty were composed by Fisher, and the *Advanced School Song-Book* consisted of sixty-seven songs, with eight being by Fisher. Those songs not composed by Fisher were drawn from other contemporary school songbooks and included well-known nursery, folk and patriotic songs. Most of the songs included in the *Elementary School Song-Book* were in two parts and those in the *Advanced School Song-Book* were generally in three parts. In the preface to the latter, Fisher stressed that his songs had been intentionally arranged "for children's or *equal* voices", which he further explained as follows:

Here are no tunes for two sopranos, with an "ad libitum" bass—that objectionable system by which a clumsy two-part harmony is eked out by an extra part intended to be sung by the male teacher, should one be available. To say nothing of the very unsatisfactory effect of a solitary bass (or perhaps tenor) voice struggling to make itself heard against an overwhelming multitude of first and second voices, such an arrangement is calculated to prevent that self-dependence on the part of children which is so essential to their success in part singing, and which it should be the constant aim of the teacher to cultivate.²⁸

In the preface to his *Elementary School Song-Book*, Fisher provided some sensible advice (even by today's standards) for teachers conducting singing lessons:

1. Avoid teaching [singing] by ear. "Our object should be to enable our scholars to sing from musical notation ..."
2. Use the modulator regularly and systematically. Explain all difficulties and correct all errors by reference to it ...
3. Always pitch the Key-Tone or Tonic of the tune you are teaching by means of a Tuning-fork and as soon as possible teach the children to pitch the key for themselves ...
4. Discourage loud and boisterous singing ...

5. Divide each lesson into topics such as Modulator Practice; Tune Exercise; Sol-faing from books, the blackboard or from memory; Vocalising; Singing to words & c.; and do not weary your pupils by dwelling too long on one subject ...
6. in Infant Classes, the Tonic Sol-fa Notation may be introduced to the elder children with ease and success ... (Fisher's underlining)²⁹

Both of these extant publications clearly establish Fisher's competence not only as a composer of children's songs but more importantly as a music educator. The songs had been carefully chosen or composed with the suitability for children of both the words and music in mind, the collections having been skillfully compiled as a progressive vocal music course for use in schools.

Fisher as Composer and Conductor

From his first years in Sydney, Fisher had taken a prominent role in the city's musical life, having been the conductor of the Sydney Choral Society at least as early as May of 1855.³⁰ From the mid 1860s, Fisher was involved with the Sydney Tonic Sol-fa Society³¹ as well as being conductor of several "Juvenile Musical Festivals"—for which William Cordner was the pianist on at least one occasion.³² By the end of the decade, Fisher was the conductor of the Sydney Harmonic Society.³³

However, although prominent as a choral conductor, Fisher's major contribution to the musical life of Sydney—aside from his work in school music—was as a composer. Fisher produced several school cantatas and as well as two secular cantatas. The first of his secular cantatas, *Under the Holly* (words by Robert P. Whitworth [1831-1901]) was published in 1865. The work was written specifically for the Sydney Tonic Sol-fa Society and may well have also been published as a Tonic Sol-fa notation edition.³⁴ *Under the Holly* was first performed in 1866 by the Sydney Tonic Sol-fa Association, presumably with Fisher conducting.³⁵ The plot for this cantata, which the composer described as "a framework whereon to hang an number of Musical Pieces", is as follows:

Francis Norman and his friend Henry Mortimer, having returned to England from Australia after an absence of three years, arrive at their native village on Christmas morning, and are welcomed as strangers by a party of peasants, who are, in accordance with ancient custom, going round to their friends with the compliments of the season. Whilst they are so employed, the Lady Alice Polwarth, who had been engaged to Francis before he left England, and with whom he had exchanged vows of constancy, is seen approaching, accompanied by Sir Richard Trevelyan, a suitor for her hand. Francis refused to meet her, and the Lady declines to listen to the suit of Sir Richard, pleading her previous engagement, although he informs her that her lover is supposed to be drowned at sea.

During the festivities which take place in the evening at Polwarth hall, Francis appears, and charges Lady Alice with inconstancy—an accusation which she repels,—and declares her unwavering affection for him. The cloud is removed, and the remainder of the evening is passed in joy and festivity.³⁶

The music for this cantata was reported as being "... of a most pleasing character, but without possessing much claim to originality".³⁷ Nevertheless, two of the songs

obviously proved to be sufficiently popular for them to be published as sheet music (in staff notation) for voice and piano. The first of these was "The Land of Gold"³⁸—the first major song of the opening scene of the cantata (sung by Henry Mortimer)—describes the country (Australia) that Francis and Henry have just returned from. The song was popularised by one of Sydney's leading male singers, John Fairfax, whose name appears on the title page. The other song from *Under the Holly* that was published separately was "I've Waited and Watched",³⁹ a ballad which is sung by Alice towards the end of Scene I as a declaration of her "constancy" with her vow to Francis. Again, this song was published in sheet music form for voice and piano, and was dedicated—with permission—to the Countess of Belmore. The fact that it reached a second edition indicates a certain degree of popularity at the time. However the musical quality of the work, while being criticized for its lack of conformity to the tenets of harmonic writing, nevertheless appears to encourage Fisher's stylistic adventurousness:

It is scarcely fair perhaps to judge of a Cantata by one of the ballads which it contains; but we may say that, without presenting anything strikingly original, there is a boldness about the style which is hopeful in the extreme. The melody of the song before us is well adapted to the words; and there are some harmonies (the end of the 6th and the commencement of the 7th bar, for instance) which show a laudable desire to escape from mere commonplace. Mr. Fisher seems so thoroughly in earnest that we are sure that he will thank us for saying that even in a simple ballad, it is better to avoid such fifths as occur between the bass and the treble, in passing from the last bar of page 2 to be first bar of page 3. The Sydney papers have already apprised us of the success of the Cantata from which this song is taken; and although the slight specimen of the work which has reached us cannot, as we have said, enable us to know whether this success is deserved, we hope that something has been done towards proving that the composers as well as teachers are gradually asserting themselves in our Colonies.⁴⁰

The second major work composed by Fisher was another cantata entitled *The Emigrants* to words by "Australie" (the pseudonym of Emilie Matilda Australie, 1845-1890)⁴¹. This work was produced about 1879-80 and first performed by the Petersham Musical Society on October 21, 1880, with Fisher as conductor. A somewhat longer work than his first cantata, *The Emigrants* consists of two acts—the first of four scenes and the second of three. The setting of the first act is an English city in winter and then a sea voyage to Australia; the second act is set in Sydney and then in a pastoral district. The main characters are a young woman, Nellie, her betrothed Robert, Nellie's mother and father, and the sea captain of the "Briton". The plot of the cantata is as follows. Nellie and her parents are suffering the privations of life in an English city and, when her parents decide to emigrate to Australia—"The Land of Promise"—Nellie is torn between staying in England with Robert or emigrating. She reluctantly decides to go with her parents. Despite the death on board of one of the passengers—an infant—and a storm at sea, the emigrants arrive safely in Sydney, renewed in body and spirit. Robert, who was unable to remain in England, had sailed for Australia on the next ship which arrived a few hours ahead of "Briton". He is waiting for Nellie at the quay-side and, after a

joyful reunions, Robert claims her as his bride. The next scene is at a pastoral homestead with Nellie, her parents, Robert and a chorus of stockmen. The final scene is outside a bush church with general rejoicing of the emigrants in their new land mixed with feelings of nostalgia for their homeland.

None of the musical score has survived, but the libretto indicates that this "dramatic cantata" was a balanced arrangement of arias, songs, recitatives and duets sung by the main characters interspersed with choruses sung by emigrants, sailors and stockmen. Although the plot is simple—in fact almost the reverse situation of *Under the Holly* (where the emigrants returned home)—the cantata appears to have enjoyed considerable success and, with the earlier cantata, gained for Fisher the reputation—according to W. Arundel Orchard—of "a worthy and enterprising musician".⁴²

Fisher's Rise and Fall as Singing Master

With the support of William Wilkins (secretary of the new Council of Education), Fisher had been appointed as Singing Master in September 1867 and appears to have made an immediate impact on the teaching of music in public schools. The occasion of the visit to Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh to New South Wales early in 1868 certainly provided Fisher with an opportunity to achieve a degree of public recognition for his work. Planning for a major musical demonstration had begun in October 1867 when Fisher submitted proposals to the Council of Education for an outdoor performance of the National Anthem and other patriot songs.⁴³ He proposed that children from Sydney schools accompanied by military bands should perform on the lawns in front of government house with the bank of trees behind forming a natural sound reflector. After several weeks of rehearsals, the performance was given on the day of Prince Alfred's public landing and was highly praised in press reports the following day:

The carriage of His Royal Highness was stopped in front of the children's stand and on a signal from the music director (Mr. J.C. Fisher), "God Save our noble Queen" burst forth from ten thousand youthful voices ... The time was perfect, the unison faultless and the volume of sound immense. There must have been great difficulty in the way of getting so many voices into such perfect accord, but every obstacle was completely overcome and never before in this colony has the National Anthem been sung with such glorious effect.⁴⁴

A second musical demonstration was held two years later in October 1870 on the occasion of the Centenary Music Festival.⁴⁵ Fisher had organised a choir of a thousand school children whose performance was favourably reviewed in the Sydney press:

The happy singing of the children was heard with the greatest distinctness in the remotest corner of the building and charmed everyone who had the good fortune to be present. The children must have had a trying time of it, for notwithstanding that no less than twelve or thirteen pieces were down on the programme for them to sing, such was the enthusiastic delight of the audience that nearly every piece was encored ... To

much praise can scarcely be given to Mr. Fisher for the thoroughly efficient manner in which he has trained his juvenile choir ...⁴⁶

From reports such as these, school music in Sydney during these early years of the public schools system appears to have flourished under Fisher's charge.

However, from about the same period, Fisher appears to have antagonised some of the school inspectors, particularly Edwin Johnson who was the Sydney district inspector with whom he was to be engaged in series of disputes on several fronts. The first major disagreement had occurred in 1868 over arrangements for the Saturday morning normal school classes in vocal music. Outright conflict developed in 1871 when Johnston complained to the Council of Education of what he saw as Fisher's dereliction of duty. Fisher was, he alleged, neglecting his scheduled advisory visits to schools, spending an unwarrantedly large proportion of his time at the Fort Street Model School and giving too little of his time to the Council's service.⁴⁷ Fisher refuted these charges in a letter of 23 pages and 13 pages of "evidence" and cited victimisation by Johnson, problems with obtaining text books from England, and unequal distribution to public schools of teachers trained in Tonic So-fa.⁴⁸ Animosity between Fisher and Johnson continued almost unabated over several years and from reports from several sources, Fisher became increasingly unpunctual and irregular in attending to his teaching duties so that by the close of 1879, the Council of Education resolved that:

... considering the continual irregularity of the Singing Master, notwithstanding his promise to the contrary, his present engagement be terminated on 31st December next, but that he be deemed eligible for employment as Teacher of Singing to the students in training and the pupils [pupil-teachers] in the Saturday classes.⁴⁹

The Department of Public Instruction came into being in 1880 and, after a period of temporary employment, Fisher was able to secure the position of teacher of vocal music in the Examiners and Training Branch of the new Department in May 1881 at an annual salary of £400.⁵⁰ However, Fisher appears to have suffered financial and family difficulties and a major decline in morale. His disillusionment resulted in him neglecting his duties to such an extent that questions were asked in the Legislative Council regarding the matter and an investigation into Fisher's case was instigated.⁵¹ Fisher was asked to show cause why he should not be dismissed and he responded by pleading his case in the following terms:

.. during half my lifetime ... I have had to struggle with difficulties and discouragements that few but educational pioneers and reformers can adequately estimate ... notwithstanding the obstacles with which prejudice and indifference (to use no harsher term) have beset my path, I have been enable to achieve results which no other music teacher in the Australian colonies can pretend to have attained.⁵²

However, Fisher's explanation was deemed unsatisfactory and he was given the opportunity to resign without disciplinary action being taken. With little other choice, Fisher complied and officially ceased duty at the end of March 1884.⁵³

Little is known of Fisher's life or of his musical or educational activities following his departure from the Department of Public Instruction. He had married Emma Hall about 1854 and had a large family of twelve children of whom only three survived—a son and two daughters.⁵⁴ James Fisher died from "meningitis and serious effusion following an apoplexy" on March 22, 1891 at the age of sixty-five and was buried in the Congregational Cemetery at Rookwood the next day.

Conclusion

Despite the ignominy of his dismissal as the principal music teacher in New South Wales public schools, Fisher's contributions to school music education and to musical life in New South Wales were considerable.

Firstly, through his use of Tonic Sol-fa and the production of school music and teacher training curricula as well as several school song books, Fisher established a sufficiently prominent role for music in the school curriculum that its place was at least nominally provided for in the curriculum of New South Wales schools. Secondly, Fisher undoubtedly contributed significantly to establishing a tradition of music in New South Wales schools as well to the training of primary teachers in music. He also promoted music as an important aspect in children's lives and certainly contemporary press reports of his school music performances support this contention. Fisher also contributed to musical culture in Sydney, not only through his compositions—particularly his two cantatas—but also as a conductor of community choral groups.

Finally and most importantly, Fisher was the pioneer of Tonic Sol-fa in Australia—a method which gradually gained acceptance in several colonies until, by the close of the nineteenth century, it was the mainstay of school music teaching practice throughout Australia. Specifically in relation to school music in New South Wales, Fisher laid the foundations for an adaptation of the Tonic Sol-fa system by his successor and the first Superintendent of Music, Hugo Alpen (1842-1917), into what was known as the "movable doh" staff notation method.⁵⁵ This method was to form the basis for teaching of school music in New South Wales public schools well into the twentieth century.

Despite his professional decline from the mid 1870s, it is obvious from the following poem that appeared as an "in memoriam" notice in the Sydney press that Fisher was a much-loved and highly-revered figure in Sydney musical circles during his hey-day.

IN MEMORIUM

James Churchill Fisher — Who died
March the 22nd, 1891, on his 65th
birthday.

Son of the Muses! Sung is thy last song;
Thy baton will
No more in triumph rule the choral throng;
Thy voice is still.

But thousands live, who to thy patient care
In music's sphere,
Owe all they know of its delight, and spare
A falling tear.

Who that remember Packer, Cordner, thee
But must confess
A trio more divine could hardly be,
Though many less.

'The tuneful Nine!' What happy memories
cling
Around that band;
Two have been called, and now more sweetly
sing
"The Happiest land,"

'When evening's Twilight' closes in the day,
"Absence" shall be
The song—they favored on—by which I may
Remember thee.

S.E.W.

Ashfield, 24th March, 1891⁵⁶

Endnotes

¹ J. Spencer Curwen and J. Graham, *The Tonic Sol-fa Jubilee: A Popular Record and Handbook*. London: J. Curwen and Sons, n.d. (c. 1891).

² Death Certificate of James Churchill Fisher, Registered No. 1891/11979, Registrar General's Office, NSW; Newspaper cutting, 31 March 1891, Biography file: James Churchill-Fisher, National Library of Australia, Canberra; International Genealogical Index 4.01-British Isles.

³ *The Musical Times*, 15 November 1854, p.217.

⁴ Newspaper cutting (poem by "S.E.W."), 31 March 1891 (James Churchill Fisher Biographical File, NLA, Canberra).

⁵ E.J. Lea-Scarlett, *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 3*, pp.462-463.

⁶ E.J. Lea-Scarlett, *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 4*, p.387.

⁷ locate reference

⁸ NSWSA (New South Wales State Archives), NBNE/9, 1/372, folios 299-300.

⁹ An extant copy of this manual is located in NSWSA, NBNE/9, 1/372, folio 301.

¹⁰ NSWSA, NBNE/9, 1/372, folio 299.

¹¹ NSWSA, NBNE/10, 1/368, folio 288.

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- ¹² Fourteen Report of the Commissioners of National Education, 1861, Annex, p.61, *Votes and Proceedings* (NSW Legislative Assembly).
- ¹³ NSWSA, NBNE/10, 1/368, folio 288.
- ¹⁴ NSWSA, NCE/10, 1/824, folios 313-314.
- ¹⁵ NSWSA, NBNE/1, 1/442, folios 241-244.
- ¹⁶ Prior to 1863 when the Tonic Sol-fa School was established, the Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced Certificate in Tonic Sol-fa were presumably issued by the Tonic Sol-fa Association (established in 1853 and dissolved in 1876); Tonic Sol-fa Certificates were then issued by the Tonic Sol-fa School's successor, the Tonic Sol-fa College which was incorporated in 1875. Tonic Sol-fa certificate requirements could be examined by local examiners who issued certificates and reported the names of successful candidates for publication in *The Tonic Sol-fa Reporter*.
- ¹⁷ Progress Report of the Council of Education to 31 August 1867, Appendix A, *Votes and Proceedings of the NSW Legislative Assembly*, 1867-68, vol. 4.
- ¹⁸ Compiled from NSWSA, NDPI/3, P1748, registered letter 1880/12650.
- ¹⁹ Quoted in "The Tonic Sol-fa Method in New South Wales", *Australian Journal of Education*, 1 September 1870, pp.347-348.
- ²⁰ NSWSA, NCE/1, 1/884, folio 111, annex A (copy of registered letter 1867/2916).
- ²¹ NSWSA, NCE/1, 1/753, folio 191.
- ²² *Australian Journal of Education*, January 1870, pp.456-457.
- ²³ NSWSA, NCE/1, 1/918, folio 401. Note that, although Curwen maintained copyright on textbooks explaining the Tonic Sol-fa method, he freely allowed composers and compilers of songbooks to transcribe their music into sol-fa notation.
- ²⁴ NSWSA, NCE/1, 1/789, folios 280-291.
- ²⁵ NSWSA, NCE/1, 1/918, folios 415-416.
- ²⁶ There is no extant copy of this publication that could be located in any Australian library.
- ²⁷ *Australian Journal of Education*, December 1868, pp.432.
- ²⁸ J.C. Fisher, *Advanced School Song-Book: A Collection of Songs for Senior Classes in Schools* (Sydney: J.J. Moore, 1877), preface.
- ²⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp.iv-v.
- ³⁰ *The Musical Times*, 1 October 1855, p.127.
- ³¹ *The Musical Times*, 1 May 1865, p.298.
- ³² *The Musical Times*, 1 March 1869, p.127.
- ³³ *The Musical Times*, 1 April 1869, p.127.
- ³⁴ An extant copy of the libretto (15 pp.) of *Under the Holly: A Cantata* (Sydney: Reading & Wellbank, 356 George Street, and Elvy & Co., 321 George Street, 1865) (words only) is located in the National Library of Australia, Canberra.
- ³⁵ *The Musical Times*, 1 May 1866, p.298.
- ³⁶ J.C. Fisher, *Under the Holly* (libretto), p. 3.
- ³⁷ *The Musical Times*, 1 May 1866, p.298.
- ³⁸ An extant score (4 pp.) for voice and piano of *The Land of Gold* (Sydney: Elvy & Co., 321 George Street, 1865) is located in the National Library of Australia, Canberra.
- ³⁹ An extant score (4 pp.) for voice and piano of *I've Waited and Watched* Second Edition (Sydney: J. Reading & Co., 356 George Street) is located in the National Library of Australia, Canberra.
- ⁴⁰ *The Musical Times*, 1 July 1869, p. 151.
- ⁴¹ An extant copy of the libretto (15 pp.) of *The Emigrants: A Dramatic Cantata* (Sydney: Robert Bone, General Machine Printer, 96 Pitt Street) is located in the National Library of Australia, Canberra.
- ⁴² W. Arundel Orchard, *Music in Australia: More than 150 Years of Development* (Melbourne: Georgian House, 1952), p.92.
- ⁴³ NSWSA, NCE/1, folio 209.
- ⁴⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 January 1868.
- ⁴⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 November 1870. p.5.
- ⁴⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 November 1870. p.5.
- ⁴⁷ NSWNA, NCE/1, 1/1010. Registered letter 1875/661.
- ⁴⁸ NSWNA, NCE/1, 1/1010. Registered letter 1875/661.
- ⁴⁹ NSWSA, NDPI/3, P1748, Council's minute on letter 1879/26821.
- ⁵⁰ New South Wales, *Blue Book for 1881*, p.57.
- ⁵¹ NSWSA, NDPI/3, P1795, registered letter 1881/2174
- ⁵² NSWSA, NDPI/3, P1795, registered letter 1884/2059.
- ⁵³ NSWSA, NDPI/3, P1795, registered letters 1884/7477, 9523, 11014.
- ⁵⁴ Death Certificate of James Churchill Fisher, Registered No. 1891/11979, Registrar General's Office, NSW.

⁵⁵ See R.S. Stevens, 'Hugo Alpen - New South Wales Superintendent of Music, 1884-1908', *Unicorn: The Journal of the Australian College of Education*, vol.19, no.3 (September 1993), pp.93-96.

⁵⁶ Newspaper cutting, 31 March 1891, Biography file: James Churchill-Fisher, National Library of Australia, Canberra.