

## A NEW CHORAL SOCIETY.

### University Choir's Debut.

(By "Fidelle.")

The University of Western Australia has for some time had a Music Society, but the activities of that body have not been such as to bring it before the wider musical public. The first organisation under University aegis to touch the city's musical life in this way—the University Choral Society—gave its first concert last night at the Assembly Hall, where a fairly large audience had gathered to greet it. Mr. A. J. Leckie, Mus. Bac., is the new body's conductor and Professor A. D. Ross its president. Well over 50 per cent. of the members, as Professor Ross explained in a speech, are directly connected with the University. The total membership is about 70.

The choir succeeded in making a very favourable impression, on the whole, in the course of its interesting initial programme, and a number of its performances maintained a high level of expressive, artistic and carefully-prepared singing. Mr. Leckie has under his baton obviously an excellent company of female voices. Much charmingly fresh tone was heard, the credit for which belongs here. Serviceable material in the basses was evident but the tenor department is less effectively supplied, as was revealed by some crude tone in Stanford's "The Revenge," when this section was heard alone. This picturesque and vigorous "ballad of the fleet," a setting of Tennyson's well-known poem about Sir Richard Grenville's epic fight against the Spaniards, filled the hall (figuratively speaking) with battle-thunder and the acrid smoke of cannon, and was the choir's most considerable offering, in point of size. The performance lacked nothing in virility; there was a good deal of robust, vital singing to enjoy and even a thrilling moment or two; as in the quiet passage telling of the towering, silent galleons drawing in upon each side of the little Revenge, just before the crash of battle—a sudden change from pianissimo to fortissimo in the choir—violently breaks out.

But one's view is that the choir reached the summit of its achievements, artistically, not so much in this biggest number on their list as in some of their smaller, unaccompanied part songs. Here Mr. Leckie obtained some effects of delicacy, tenderness, and refinement that were delightful. Notably good were "The Sands of Dee" (G. A. Macfarren), "You Stole My Love" (Walter Macfarren), "Sweet Day, so Cool" (Edward German) and "Lullaby of Life" (Leslie). A very commendable performance was given, too, of Parry's eloquent motet, "My Soul, There is a Country" (a composition of greater substance than most of those enumerated)

substance than most of those enumerated) though once or twice the soprano tone fell off a little in quality, in sudden outbursts.

Miss Marcia Hodges gave an expressive presentation of the moving scene of Desdemona and the Willow Song, from Verdi's "Otello," and Miss Ethel Ewins sang uncommonly well and with great sensitiveness in Angel's Farewell, from Elgar's "The Dream of Gerontius." Miss Lulu Potter chose the florid measures of "Charmant Oiseau" (David) and Mr. H. G. Neate, after a Verdi aria, sang "When Childher Plays" (Walford Davies) charmingly.

Mr. George McClelland, whom one surmises to be not yet out of his 'teens, played the violin with an ability and musical feeling holding out the most favourable auguries for his future as an artist. His tone was beautiful and his technique clean and sure. This exceptionally promising player gave an admirable sonata by Eccles (an old-time English composer), Wieniawski's "Legende," and other pieces.

A word of praise is due to Miss Elsie Walton for her piano accompanying in "The Revenge."