

Swiss Institute Orchestra

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liberal supporters of the arts, of scientific research, they have, for instance, made possible the erection of the wonderful new Museum. Then, again, Winterthur possesses a Club House such as the Swiss Colony in London will be dreaming of possessing in another century or so—a Club House which fills English visitors with wonder, as I can testify. This, too, has only become possible owing to quiet, unostentatious munificence on the part of the partners of Volkart Brothers. And withal, the present partners, like their predecessors, I presume, are ordinary mortals, very likeable fellows, always ready to help, always conscious of the obligations the position in which Providence put them imposes upon them. And that is far more than can be said of others similarly placed. And that is why Winterthur is proud of this House of Commerce and has a deep, silent, but true affection for its heads.

Perhaps I could not do better than close this article with a quotation from a speech delivered by the late Dr. Theodore Reinhart (partner from 1879—1919) on January 2nd, 1919, two weeks before his death, at a banquet at which all the co-workers of the Winterthur house were present:

"Fellow-workers of the rising generation, who serve under the banner of Volkart Brothers and are looking forward to making your career with the firm, we partners appeal to you never to lose sight of this, whether in the office, in the go-down, or in private life, that you belong to a *corps d'élite* in the business world, and that many eyes are directed on it in every country with which we work—above all, when its members are travelling on business or are on holiday. It ought, therefore, to be a point of honour with each one of you, especially when serving the firm in distant parts out of sight of your chief or your superiors, to have always a clear conscience yourself and to be considered strictly honourable by others."

SWISS INSTITUTE ORCHESTRA.

Last Sunday's Concert at St. Marylebone Hall.
(Communicated.)

The echoes of the success which attended last Sunday's Concert will have gone well beyond the usual boundaries by the time the present lines appear in the *S.O.*, and to report here what that Concert was would be a pleasure were it not for the difficulty the writer experiences of playing his part as well as soloists and orchestra did on that occasion. Everybody appeared to have struck so well the road to success that one may be tempted to start and end quickly with a long word of praise.

First of all it was the very welcome return of that eminent baritone, Mr. Norman Blake, who has established a reputation as a singer which, one may say, few other amateurs can ever hope to attain. Mr. Blake's powerful and extremely beautiful voice is used with ease and art. His rendering of Adam's "Nirvana" and Day's "Arise, O Sun" highly delighted the audience, and he had to satisfy the insistent demands for encores by singing Allitsen's "Youth" and Eric Coates' "Our Little House," two equally pleasing songs.

In Miss Vera Gough (Gold Medallist I.L.A.M., Elocution) we had a very charming newcomer to the Swiss Institute Concerts, and it was not long before the audience realised that she belongs to a superior class of elocutionists. Her vivacious rendering of the dialogue between Sir Peter and Lady Teazle from Sheridan's "School for Scandal" (Act 2, Scene 1) revealed to us her dramatic talent and perfect control of intonation. Further recitations included Jerome's "On looking before one leaps," "He tried to tell his wife," several encores having to be conceded to an enthusiastic audience.

A very unassuming yet quite convincing performance was that of Mr. Giovanni Sandri, who played two violin soli, namely, Wienawski's "Légende" and F. Schubert's "Serenade." Mr. Sandri, who was accompanied by Mr. Dick, is a very skilful violinist, and his valuable contribution to the programme was greatly appreciated by the audience, which applauded this young artist very sympathetically.

Further good practice has given the Orchestra more steadiness; the playing was more polished, and there was a better ensemble altogether. Special credit is due to Mr. Ad. Steiner, who was called upon almost in the last minute to deputise for Mr. Chapuis, who was unable to be present. Kéler Béla's "Overture Romantique," Selection from Gounod's "Faust," Suppé's "Pique Dame" Overture, "Roses du Midi," by Joh. Strauss, were all surprisingly well performed. Whatever looseness there was on previous occasions had disappeared, and Mr. Dick, the conductor, is well on the way

to develop amongst his followers the complete *esprit de corps* so much needed in an orchestra. If our musicians continue in their efforts and earnestness, as witnessed lately, they will soon have set up the necessary organism capable of tackling more difficult problems. The day will have come then when they will be in a position to make themselves the interpreters of some of our own composers, and so add to the laurels they have already earned. The news of the success obtained last week by Gustave Doret at Strasbourg, where he conducted his *Poème symphonique* "Suite Tessinoise," has just reached these shores. Here, surely, is an interesting piece of work for Mr. Dick, when he feels his orchestra possesses the necessary strength and variety of instruments, to convene the Swiss Colony to a "Soirée classique suisse." The will is there probably, and there is no reason for not making it a paying proposition when the time comes for us London Swiss to go and hear our Native Composers. In the meantime let us thank Mr. Dick, the Orchestra, Miss Gough, and Messrs. Blake and Sandri for the very enjoyable evening they gave us on Sunday. The concert started at practically the advertised time and ended soon after half-past eight, so that everybody was able to reach his home at a very comfortable hour.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

Once again the members and friends of the S.M.S. were able to enjoy themselves thoroughly at the Annual Banquet and Ball, which took place on Saturday last at the Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras.

Monsieur Paravicini, accompanied by Madame Paravicini, favoured the gathering with their presence, the Swiss Minister taking the Chair.

It would be too tantalising to those who were unfortunately unable to attend if any detailed reference were made here to the delights of the menu, because, after all, there is only a limited quantity of "Mousse de foie gras Paravicini!"

The Swiss Minister proposed the toasts to "His Majesty the King" and "Switzerland," which were followed by the National Anthem. The President Mr. A. C. Stahelin, then rose to deliver the toast to "The Swiss Mercantile Society" and afterwards addressed the assembly, saying:—

I feel like David in the presence of Goliath, but I am not going to throw stones.

Again I have the privilege of welcoming you to our Annual Banquet, and I hope that you will enjoy this evening so much that you will come again next year and ever after.

We are proud to have with us to-night our esteemed Minister, Monsieur Paravicini, in the Chair, and Madame Paravicini. (Hear, hear.) As you know, Madame Paravicini has not been able to attend any functions for some time owing to ill-health. We are the more proud and pleased that her first engagement of this kind is her attendance at our banquet. Madame, the Swiss Colony as a whole will be happy to know you restored to good health. (Cheers.) Our Minister is a busy man, but—and that is why we like him so much—when he promises to take the Chair, he does take it. (Cheers.) I often wonder what sort of a constitution a Swiss Minister must have. He must shoot straight when he opens a rifle range, he must take a general interest in sports—our Swiss Sports—and he must eat a good many Swiss dinners which, for all we know, he would rather do without. But what puzzles me most of all is how he manages to keep his "slim line." (More lghtr.)

We have also with us to-night one of our Trustees, the men to whom we are very much indebted for giving us the benefit of their wide experience and their counsel, to prevent us from making mistakes. (Hear, hear.) These gentlemen are our Lords of the Treasury; their salary is nil, and they bear their own expenses. (Laughter.) I hope that there will be many more such willing gentlemen when we have to fill a vacancy.

Then we have also here a good many of our Contributing Members and Guarantors—the taxpayers. It is owing to their unflinching and generous support that we can carry out our aims. (Cheers.) To them, and to the contributing firms, I wish to express our heartfelt thanks.

We are on terms of good friendship with all the Swiss Societies in London, and are glad to have their representatives as our guests to-night, hoping that these pleasant relations will continue.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am going to tell you in a few words what we have done in the past year, but I had better leave out what we have not done. As you know, our activities are chiefly directed into two channels. First of all, there is our Employment Department, under the management of Mr. Pfändler. (Cheers.) On account of the general depression and the restrictions, this department "feels the draught," if I may use this expression. But Mr. Pfändler—"Jack" to his intimates, and just plain Pfändler to everybody else—(laughter)—has a stout heart—(renewed laughter)—and puts up a great fight. (Cheers.) His name has a good sound all the way from here to Switzerland and back again, and he is considered everybody's friend. (Cheers.) We had an instance of this not so

very long ago. One of our Day School pupils wanted to invest in a motor-cycle. He was asked whether he could offer any guarantee, or a guarantor. His reply was: "Why, yes, Pfändler of the Swiss Mercantile." (Laughter.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, you know that it is practically impossible for any Swiss to come over here to take up employment, and, consequently, that applications from Swiss people are decreasing continually. It speaks highly for Mr. Pfändler's endeavours when I tell you that, in spite of all these obstacles, he has managed to place about 180 Swiss during the year 1925. (Cheers.) But a still better testimonial to our Employment Department and to Mr. Pfändler is the fact that he has applications from Britishers—(Hear, hear)—and Mr. Pfändler has managed to place about 300 of them last year. (Cheers.) We all hope, for the sake of the Employment Department and Mr. Pfändler, that the much-advertised turning of the trade tide will come this year. In the meantime, he does what we all do: he invests a penny every morning in Fleet Street optimism.

In our Education Department a somewhat strange fact is that our Evening Classes have increased during last year by five classes to 50, as compared with 45 classes in 1924. The number of students has also increased from 326 to 331. If you take into consideration that the students in these classes are all individuals who are working all day to earn their living, then it makes one feel proud to be Swiss, for this is a very striking testimonial to the industry of our people. (Cheers.) As I told you just now, the immigration restrictions make it practically impossible for anyone to come over and take up employment in order to learn the language. This may not strike us as hard just now, but if one remembers that our country is dependent upon export trade, I sometimes wonder what will happen 25 years hence, when the present linguistic staffs are dropping out, and when there may not be anybody qualified to replace them. To remedy this as much as possible, we have created a Day School with three-months' or six-months' tuition, where the students may learn as much English as they can—or will. This Day School of ours is undoubtedly the "bright spot"—(hear, hear)—and I may as well add there are some "bright sparks" too. (Laughter.) The attendance during the past year has never been less than 100 a day, and as high as 145. They were packed like sardines, and our next job will be to find bigger premises.

Apart from these doings, we have held our usual meetings—nice and quiet affairs. Those who were there know all about it, and the others I would encourage to attend. I am sorry to say that we have had a nett loss of 110 members during last year, and I am afraid that this is partly my own fault for having taken certain energetic measures.

On the social side we have had our Cinderella Dances. They are very nice gatherings and an unqualified success—from the point of view of entertainment anyway. If any of you have not yet attended such a dance, your chance will come on the first Saturday in March, when we shall hold our last dance of the season.

This is all I have to tell you of what we have done in 1925.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very sorry I have forgotten to mention a very good friend of ours who is here to-night: Dr. Rezzonico. He represents our brothers-in-arms at the Legation—the Commercial Section. Another good friend of ours, Mr. Martin, is not here to-night. He is in Switzerland and, I believe, is indulging in winter sports. I suppose that, when he read "Kyburg's" articles in *The Swiss Observer*, followed up by Tom Webster's cartoon in the *Daily Mail*, he simply could not "stick it" any longer—and had to go. (Laughter.)

There is further missing to-night a very well-known face, our honorary member Mr. DeBrunner—(cheers)—who is also one of our Trustees and one of the founders of our Day School. Mr. DeBrunner is unavoidably prevented from being here. I believe he is on the Continent.

Ladies and Gentlemen, before I sit down I would like to make an appeal to you. Do not look so anxious—I am not going to touch your pockets. (Laughter.) I request you to use your influence wherever and whenever you can, in whatever sphere you are, to encourage our young people to become members of the S.M.S. and, what is more, to remain members! If you are asked, as it so often happens to me, "What do I get out of the S.M.S.?" do not attempt to answer this question. Retaliate by asking another question, "What did you get out of the S.M.S. when you were apprenticed?" (Hear, hear.) Most of us, when we were a good few years younger, have had excellent lessons at the S.M.S. schools at very little cost. In the modern strife of business life, in the hurry and rush and tear, there is not time to teach apprentices the theoretical side of business. This is what the S.M.S. does—I am not speaking of the London section only, but of the S.M.S. in general—and we are glad to do it. But to do so we must have

CITY SWISS CLUB.

CINDERELLA DANCE

at PAGANI'S RESTAURANT, on
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20th, at 6.30.

Tickets at 10/6 (incl. Supper), may be obtained from
Members of the Committee.