

# Swiss church

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# CONCERT AT THE SWISS CHURCH

On Tuesday, 21st October, the **Orchesterschule der Kammermusiker Zurich** and the **Iverson Consort, London** combined in a concert under the patronage of the **Nouvelle Société Helvétique**, held at the Swiss Church in Endell Street. The **Orchesterschule** is a successful youth orchestra consisting of gifted and earnest young artists, and they gave a number of concerts in London and elsewhere, together with a group of young, mostly Australian singers known as the Iverson Consort under the leadership of Erich Vietheer. They had already given similar concerts together in Switzerland, under the conductor of the Kammermusiker Zurich, Brenton Langbein.

elsewhere. It was the first woman speaker the Club has ever had and she proved a great success although it seemed a little incongruous that the members were not invited to bring their ladies along as well on this very special occasion. However, Mme Muret survived the ordeal as sole representative of the fair sex amongst her purely male audience undaunted and unperturbed. She was used to it, she said, and, far from complaining about it, she recognised the advantage of arousing chivalrous instincts as a woman alone amongst men.

Assuring her audience that she was no suffragette and had little taste for "woman's lib" Mme Muret described her most varied experiences first as sports reporter covering practically all the Olympiads of the last decades and ending with the tragic events at Munich. Gradually progressing through assignment after assignment, including even criminal trials and a military manoeuvre — only one, as she bashfully admitted — Mme Muret had the privilege of covering practically all fields of her profession excepting only politics and economics. Lucky woman! as a fellow-journalist among the audience remarked who cannot get away from these most exacting topics. But Mme Muret found none-the-less more than enough human stories, good causes and campaigns to devote herself to and to entertain her readers — largely in the sociological, ecologic and environmental fields — without falling into the error of most of her women-colleagues of specialising in the traditional topics of the woman's page. With scrupulous honesty in all her work, fearless presentation of her views and never shunning the indispensably hard devotion to her calling, Mme Muret found wholehearted acceptance not only amongst her readers but also, she was pleased to say, on the part of her male colleagues as an equal, which happy experience she thinks is nowadays also shared by most of her sister journalists in Switzerland as elsewhere.

The concert opened with Chausson's *Chanson Perpetuelle*. This work for strings and mezzo-soprano (sung by Patricia Conti) was like most of the French composer's, sensitive and delicate; he lived from 1855–1899 and was a pupil of Massenet and César Franck. The performance was first class, with good ensemble playing and beautiful tone colour.

Klaus Huber is a modern Swiss composer, and his *Alveare Vernat* for flute and 12 strings was most interesting and very well performed. The flute solo by Anna Katherina Graf deserves special mention as a superb performance; she was the most impressive soloist of the evening.

Next came Hindemith's *Junge Magd* for mezzo-soprano and ensemble. The young artists again accompanied the singer Susan Kessler in a most musical and well-balanced way.

The first part of the programme ended with the *Exsultate, jubilate* and *Alleluja* from Mozart's Motet K.165. The orchestra under its conductor Brenton

Langbein was at times a little heavy and sometimes on the loud side, and there was not the variation in tone and colour one would have liked from the soprano, Yvonne Kenny.

After the interval, the audience had the pleasure of hearing the earliest extant example of genuine opera in English, John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*. Blow (1649–1708) was the teacher of Purcell, and the opera is a very beautiful work, unfortunately performed all too rarely. Again, the orchestra was well controlled and displayed an excellent sense of ensemble. The musicality was undisputed, and the strings had a fine singing tone. It was a pity that at times the singers, with perhaps the exception of Cupid (Robin Liptrott, soprano) were a little weak in intonation and enunciation. (*Venus*: Carolyn Vaughan, soprano; *Adonis*: Christopher Lackner, baritone; supported by three other vocalists.)

The programme was a little on the long side, but the audience was very generous with their applause, and it was most certainly an interesting and enjoyable evening.

It is hoped that one will frequently have the pleasure of attending concerts at the Swiss Church which now has many of the facilities required and good acoustics to boot.

MM

## CHURCH NEWS

place this summer near Lucerne, had been a great success.

About a hundred and twenty people attended. They organised a jumble sale and raised over a thousand Swiss francs for the Parish. This certainly showed the importance of the Swiss church for a great many Swiss who come to stay in London for some time.

The equivalent meeting of former members of the French-speaking parish took place at about the same time at Crêt Berard (Vaud). It was attended by some sixty former parishioners and by several ex-London ministers such as the Rev. Claude Reverdin, the Rev. Jean-Daniel Hostettler and the Rev. Denis Muller. Our present parish was represented by the Rev. Raymond Renou, Assistant Minister. The gathering was told that Pastor Alexandre Nicod, who had been minister in London for many years until 1973, had suffered a heart attack. We wish him a speedy recovery.

The Rev. Francois Dubois, who was minister of the French Reformed Church in Soho Square since the end of the war, gave his farewell sermon on Sunday 5th October. Pastor Dubois had conducted his last service at the Eglise Suisse some weeks before. He was known to many members of the French-speaking parish and had co-operated with the many Swiss ministers that had come and gone during his time. The two parishes organise Sunday school in common. Mr. and Mrs. Dubois are retiring to Canterbury, where there is an ancient, if small, French-speaking parish.

Pastor Uli Stefan, minister of the German-speaking Swiss parish in London, has announced that he will be leaving London for Switzerland in September 1976. After a great many years in his London parish, Uli feels the need to enlarge his professional formation by following a course of psychology at the Jung Institute in Zurich. We admire him for his courage and wish him great success in this new venture.

Pastor Michel Languillat, Uli's French-speaking colleague, has also tendered his resignation. We understand that his departure is planned for next Autumn and that it has been made necessary by family reasons. Michel has only been in London for about two years but has already made a great many friends in his parish. We hope that the reasons behind his resignation will perhaps disappear and that Michel will stay in London for some years more.

During a service attended by both parishes at the end of September to mark the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance, Pastor Stefan, who conducted the service, recalled that the annual meeting of former members of the German-speaking parish, which took