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News from Switzerland

GENEVA HONOURS FRANK MARTIN

One of the most eminent Swiss composers, Frank Martin, has recently celebrated his eightieth birthday. Born in Geneva, he is now, however, living in Holland. To honour its illustrious citizen, the city of Geneva organised a special symphony concert, inviting Frank Martin to conduct some of his most famous works. Critics and audience alike were unanimous in their admiration of the vitality of the octogenarian conductor.

WAKING TO ORDER

In Switzerland, the land of punctuality, some 30,000 to 35,000 people are woken by telephone every day. In order to reduce the work of telecommunications staff, use has been made since 1953 of a waking system automatically executing orders, after recording by an operator. The automatic reception of orders marked a further step forward in the rationalisation of the making system; the instructions recorded on a perforated tape are transferred by an operator to an automatic transmitter. Recently, the Swiss town of Solothurn put into service the first fully automatic waking service in the world, which receives and executes orders without any human intervention. The telephone subscriber can use this service occasionally whenever required or for a specific period of time; a user who has asked to be awakened at a precise time each day can very easily cancel this order if exceptionally he wishes not to be called on a particular morning.

The Solothurn installation, made by a specialised Swiss firm, handles 350 orders daily; it has had such success that it is planned to extend it to other towns throughout the country.