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SWITZERLAND'S SUMMER OF MUSIC.

Since 1938 and 1939, when the collaboration of Toscanini ensured their resounding success, the Lucerne Musical Festival Weeks have given the summer season in Central Switzerland an entirely new and hitherto unknown character. How great was the interest which these Festival Weeks aroused abroad, where they awakened a promising echo, and to what extent they stirred the Swiss public also, can be seen from the fact that they were able to continue throughout the darkest years of war and, in doing so, to preserve their individual character.

In the two summers which have elapsed since the cessation of hostilities the standard of these Musical Festival Weeks has advanced to even higher levels; the programmes are again truly international, and the performances presented place them in the category of the outstanding artistic events of the Old World.

The success with which the Lucerne Festival Weeks met stimulated artistic forces into activity in other parts of Switzerland. The faithfulness of the Swiss to noble and immortal values played its part in this development during the years of war. At a whole series of health and holiday resorts musical festivals of distinction became permanent features in the programme of events arranged for the summer season. These musical performances were partly rooted in a tradition dating from the pre-1939 era; they sprang also in part from the personal initiative and endeavour of men and women who, by their efforts in this direction, rendered real and unselfish service to their region or immediate locality; in some few cases pure prestige may have been a determining factor.

However, it was impossible not to wonder whether so much universally demonstrated good will would lead. The cultural diversity of the country, the regional, cantonal and even purely local differences began to make themselves felt, and as the danger grew ever more acute that the individual organisers would pull at their own rope only, so to speak, instead of co-ordinating their efforts, there was an imminent likelihood that a dispersal of effort would result which could in the long run only do harm to the splendidly-conceived idea of Swiss musical festivals in the summer.

CITY SWISS CLUB

Will Members kindly note that a

JASS & BRIDGE EVENING

will be held on Wednesday, 21st May, 1947,
at Brown's Hotel, London, W.1, at 6.30 Dinner
starting at 7 p.m.

Those wishing to take part should send their application in writing to the Manager, Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1, to reach him not later than the 19.5.47.

P. A. MOEHR,
Hon. Secretary.

Happily, it is now clear that the development of the situation in the direction described has already passed its peak. Festivals which after all necessitate quite considerable expenditure can only persist and be regularly repeated if they rest on a sufficiently firm financial foundation; when, in other words, a sufficiently wide paying public supports them. In the coming summer a certain degree of selection and concentration will be in evidence as compared with previous summers. The predominant place, more or less as the peak of the musical season, will once more be occupied by the Festival Weeks in Lucerne. What distinguishes them above all and places them in a class apart from other, similar festivals is the orchestra which forms their foundations. The Swiss Festival Orchestra unites the outstanding musical talent of the country. The leading members of the various municipal and regional musical organisations — the Orchestre romand (of French Switzerland) and the symphony orchestras of Basle, Berne, Winterthur and Zurich — make their contribution to the joint effort and conjure forth performances, under the guidance of outstanding Swiss and foreign conductors, which are really worth hearing; performances which it is no exaggeration to say are equal in merit to those of the great philharmonic orchestras abroad. The orchestra has undoubtedly played a highly conspicuous part in securing for the Lucerne Festival Weeks their outstanding reputation for the high artistic level of the musical performances they offer.

Apart from Lucerne, Zurich will, as in recent years, have its summer attractions, though this year the musical efforts of Zurich will be wholly concentrated in the month of June, since by a "gentleman's agreement" with Lucerne the month of August has been reserved for the musical activities of the latter town. This chronological staggering of effort can only be welcomed, and it is to be hoped that the arrangement will continue to be adhered to in the future. Moreover, this arrangement makes it possible to unite the Theatrical Festival Weeks and the Concert Festival Weeks in the City on the Limmat within one all-embracing framework, and consequently to enhance their importance and artistic value by a programme of events devised on a lavish scale. Interlaken intervenes, between Zurich and Lucerne, in the month of July. The tourists metropolis of the Bernese Oberland had the Concertgebouw Orchestra from Amsterdam, a body of musicians renowned throughout the world, as their guests a year ago; the concerts given by this orchestra were extremely successful. These guest performances will be repeated in 1947, and there is no doubt that they will arouse interest as great as it will be well-merited.

These three large-scale musical events do not exhaust the resources of the Swiss Summer of Music. The musical festivals, musical courses, etc., such as the Upper Engadine and Braunwald Weeks, are intended rather as finishing touches to the season of a particular region of a particular holiday resort, and are addressed to a definite circle of listeners. Each of these is of significance in its own especial way, but of course they must all retreat somewhat into the background now, more than they did during the war when, on this island of peace in the midst of war-torn Europe, they also had their own cultural mission to fulfil.

S.N.T.O.