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ERNEST ANSERMET CONDUCTS THE HALLE.

FROM DEREK MEAKIN.

It was praise all the way when Ernest Ansermet, veteran conductor of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, visited Manchester for the first time since the 1930's to take over the Hallé Concerts from Sir John Barbirolli, now recovering from an operation.

Two of the concerts were devoted entirely to the works of Mozart, of which Ernest Ansermet is one of the world's most admired conductors.

His interpretation of Mozart's last three symphonies — No. 39 in E flat major, No. 40 in G. minor and No. 41 in C ("Jupiter") was described by the *Manchester Evening News* as masterly and superb, by the *Evening Chronicle* as a triumph and by the *Daily Dispatch* as a magnificent display of co-ordinated speed and power.

The venerable *Manchester Guardian* said: "The depth of his love and understanding of the Mozart scores was shown by the strength, sympathy and insight which he brought to the performance of the three works — an insight that made the music take on a new richness of aspect while adhering to complete integrity of style."

And the "Jupiter" Symphony, said the *Guardian*, was conducted with vigour and wit and scholarly knowledge of its period.

This is the second time Ernest Ansermet has conducted the Hallé Orchestra. The previous occasion he shocked his audience when, annoyed that one of the players had made a mistake, he insisted on a completely fresh start.

But there were no complaints this time. Said the white-haired conductor: "The Hallé is the most sensitive orchestra I have heard in England these last years."

And he was proud to tell visitors of a time many years ago when he conducted the orchestra of the Diaghileff Ballet and one of his cellists was a young man named John Barbirolli, then 20 years old and on the threshold of a great career.

CONCERT NEWS.

Ruth Huggenberg, Swiss pianiste, who is well-known in our Colony, was the soloist at a concert given, on Monday, April 30th, by the Wimbledon Philharmonic Orchestra, Leader Dennis East, Conductor, Kenneth Tucker, at the Town Hall, Wimbledon, and we are delighted to report that she received a very warm reception from an audience, where, unfortunately her compatriots were conspicuous by their absence.

She played with complete artistic proficiency the piano scores in Beethoven's concerto for piano and orchestra in C major, opus 15, and Brahms's concerto for piano and orchestra in D minor, opus 15.

Miss Huggenberg revealed herself by her brilliant playing — especially in the Brahms's concerto — as a really fine artiste, and we are wishing her continuing success in her career.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

The *Swiss Observer* makes it a practice to publish only such contributions as have a bearing on matters relating to Switzerland and to the Swiss at home or abroad. This practice also applies to literature and books submitted for review in these columns.

Among the books recently received are some that can scarcely be described as possessing a Swiss background. If to-day two such books are mentioned, it is because both of them, widely different as they are from each other, may claim a slight connection with Switzerland, one dealing with Dr. Buchan's Moral Re-Armament Campaign, the headquarters of which are situated at Caux near Montreux and in which many Swiss are keenly interested; the other being a special edition, reserved to members of "La Guilde du Livre" of Lausanne, of an American work of fiction in a French translation.

"The World Rebuilt" by Peter Howard, (Blandford Press 2/6 net) follows the pattern of his previous publications of which it is said that three quarters of a million copies have been sold in Britain alone within the last ten years. It outlines, once more, the principles and the ideology of the Moral Re-armament movement, formerly known as the "Oxford group", claimed to be the answer to Communism and offering the promise of a new and better world.

Peter Howard was a well-known journalist before he joined the movement. His brilliant, practiced pen is one of its greatest assets and it is impossible to remain unimpressed by the sincerity and the stimulating logic of his writing.

The other book: "Benito Cereno" by Herman Melville, most skilfully translated into French by Pierre Leyris, is a sea-story and describes the adventures of a derelict Spanish Ship in the Pacific Ocean. It is a lurid tale of violence and bloodshed, mutiny and murder; and of negro slaves in revolt, ending with an account of the trial and execution of their leader.

Herman Melville was the leading sea-writer of America a hundred years ago. His adventure-stories, largely founded on personal experience, had a great vogue and his most popular work, "Moby Dick", is to this day widely read.

Why "Benito Cereno" should have been selected for the entertainment of Swiss readers is best known to the organisers of "La guilde du livre."

J.J.F.S.

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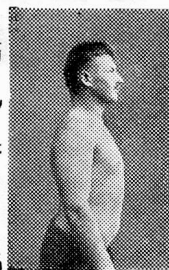


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