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THE PASSING OF AN ORCHESTRA.

Just over two years ago the Swiss Orchestral Society found it necessary to discontinue rehearsals of the Orchestra for lack of interest and support among its active members. Although the Committee hoped that at a later date, perhaps, new playing members could be found to keep the Orchestra alive; such hopes did not materialise up to the end of 1951. It was therefore decided to proceed with the liquidation of the Society.

The Orchestra came into being over forty years ago as a section of the then prosperous Swiss Institute. It continued its work all through the 1914/18 War under the conductorship of Mr. Luder. The latter left for Switzerland in 1919. Mr. E. P. Dick, the Orchestra's Pianist, was then invited to take over the conductorship. For the Piano part a most excellent pianist was found in Mr. A. Steiner who remained with the then called Swiss Institute Orchestra for many years.

In the nineteen-twenties it became more and more difficult for the young Swiss to come over here for any length of time, a fact which contributed largely to the gradual disappearance of the Swiss Institute. Thus from 1928 the Orchestra had to fend for itself. The name was changed to Swiss Orchestral Society. The Leader of the Orchestra, Mr. W. Pellet, was chosen as its President, the leading Trumpet, Mr. W. Wagner as its Hon. Treasurer, and the Conductor, Mr. E. P. Dick as its Hon. Secretary. These three Swiss remained at the helm to the end.

The Fête Suisse and the First of August Celebra-

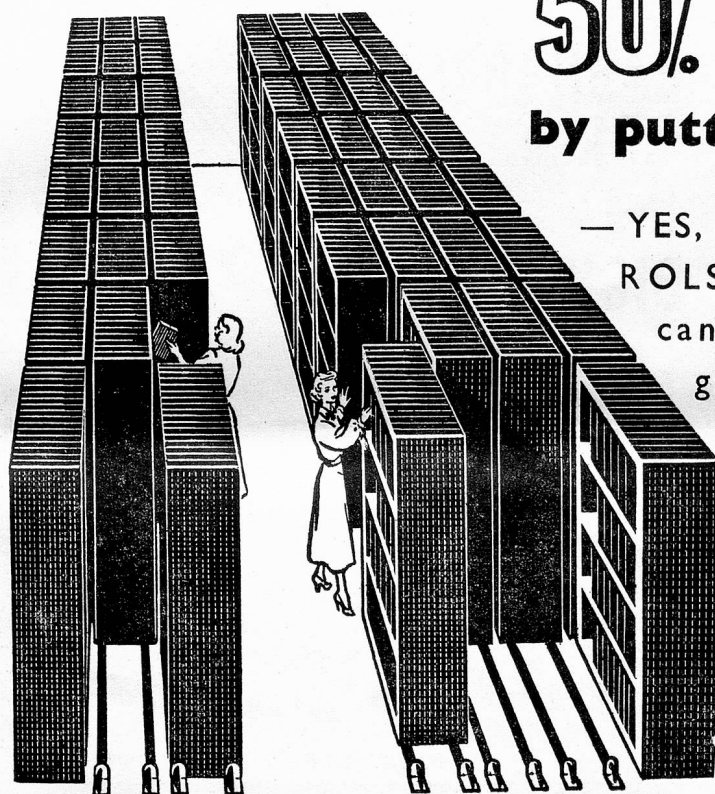
tion saw the Orchestra on the respective programs year after year. Many successful concerts were arranged in conjunction with the N.S.H. under whose auspices many well-known Swiss soloists were brought over.

In 1939 World War II came and with it the tune of the siren; one could not be expected to attend rehearsals while London was being "blitzed". The Society suspended activities after the 1940 First of August concert.

It was a very different Orchestra we met in 1946. It took the Conductor four years of really hard work to keep it together trying to establish the fine pre-War standard. It was in vain. The Swiss, bar four or five, had left or were absorbed in other interests. Many an active member had left the fiddle in a cupboard far too long. The performances gradually grew less interesting and so it came that in the autumn of 1949 the Conductor called a halt. Later attempts at revival failed utterly. This, finally, led the Committee to the decision to liquidate. The assets were divided between the House Purchase Fund of the Swiss Church and the Swiss Benevolent Society to the tune of £30 and £26 respectively.

The Committee have asked me to state here that they wish to take this last opportunity to give thanks to all those many friends and wellwishers of the Swiss Colony in London who, with their generous and continuous moral and financial support, made it possible for this happy band of amateur musicians to continue their Orchestra for so many years. I am sure we all regret the passing of this, "our" Orchestra.

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