

"Gemütlicher Abend" Swiss Male Choir

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"GEMUETLICHER ABEND" SWISS MALE CHOIR.

Friday, March 7th, 1952, at the "Schweizerbund".

There is very little reason nowadays to feel happy and content about the present world situation, where things are still topsy-turvy; and wars are still waging in various parts of the globe, and the spectre of a new major clash is ever looming on the political horizon.

In order to — what the French say — *changer les idées noires*, the Swiss Male Choir, invited their members and friends to a "Gemütlicher Abend" on Friday, March 7th at the "Schweizerbund", 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

This, of course, means a "congenial evening", and so it was, forgotten were, for at least a few hours, the troubles and tribulations of everyday's life, and one was transferred into the realm of music and gay laughter. It does one good to get away from the daily toils and cares to mix with happy people, and those who proclaim, that festivities are out of place in view of the situation and hard times ahead, are wrong. A little joy and pleasure, within reason, makes all the difference, we are in this world but for a short span of time and it is nowhere written, that we shall not have some pleasure whilst it lasts. Did not our famous national poet, Gottfried Keller, write:

"Wohl wird man edler durch das Leiden
Und strenger durch die herbe Qual;

Doch hoch erglühn in heissen Freuden,
Das adelt Seel' und Leib zumal."

Evenings, such as the one that took place on March 7th, bring back memories of perhaps better times, and songs which praise the beauties of our beloved homeland awaken in us always untold memories of our youth or of visits to that God blessed land which we proudly call "La Patrie".

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About 100 members and friends sat down to an excellent little dinner, which was a credit to the *cuisine* of the "Schweizerbund", and Mr. A. Finger, the steward of the Club, is to be congratulated on his *début*.

Mr. F. G. Sommer, the popular and genial President of the Choir, after proposing the usual loyal toasts, extended, later on, a hearty welcome to all those present, mentioning the following official guests: Mr. & Mrs. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer", and Mr. and Mrs. A. Gandon, Leader of the Swiss Accordeon Group. He expressed his pleasure at seeing amongst the company Mr. and Miss Schübeler, and in conclusion paid a warm tribute to the Ladies, who by their presence always add greatly to the success of any function.

It goes without saying, that everyone expected the Choir to render a few songs from their large *repertoire*, and to begin with they sang very feelingly the "Chant du Printemps", by E. Lauber, it was a very appropriate song too, are we not all looking forward to springtime? That song was followed by Jos. Bovet's "La Montée à l'Alpage", which brought happy memories back to me, it was in September of last

year, that I heard this melody on the Stelvio Pass, sung by a choir from Lausanne; surrounded by giant peaks and awe inspiring scenery this lovely song made a deep and lasting impression on me, and hearing it again it made me feel very happy and yet a little sad.

Then came the time for our accordionists, under the always efficient leadership of our old friend Mr. A. Gandon to play, with much vigour, a March.

That the Swiss Male Choir has amongst its members a number of fine singers was proved, when Mr. G. N. Ross sang very beautifully "Oh Maiden, my Maiden" from the operetta "Frederica" by Franz Léhar, which earned him well deserved applause.

Another member of the Choir, Mr. Anguish, gave us a very enjoyable north country Monologue, of little Albert, who, on a visit to the Zoo was devoured by a lion. A Swiss function, without at least a Yodel, is almost unthinkable, and therefore Mr. E. Luterbacher, with his own accompaniment, rendered some of his famous yodling songs which deservedly literally brought "the house down".

A short interval was then introduced after which the Choir rendered two more songs, namely: "Mein Dörflein", by H. Ackermann, finely rendered. It is a lovely piece of music, and by the way, one of my favourite songs, the tenor solo was sung by Mr. Ross with his customary brilliancy, and "Le vieux Chalet", by Bovet, sung with great tenderness.

Mr. E. P. Dick, the untiring conductor of the choir, is heartily to be congratulated on his efforts to make this choir so well worth listening to.

Once again the accordionists appeared, and Mr. G. N. Ross sang "Phyllida" by H. Fischer, followed by a further monologue in Lancashire dialect by Mr. Anguish, who is quite a remarkable comedian. Mr. E. Luterbacher again gave us some yodeling songs and as a finale the Choir sang the well-known "Ranz de Vache."

The Hall was then cleared ready for dancing, the music being provided for by Mr. A. Gandon's clever accordionists, who, untiringly played a number of waltzes and "Ländlers" with perfect rhythm.

Shortly before midnight this most enjoyable "Gemütlicher Abend" came to a close and I feel sure, that all those who were present, left 74, Charlotte Street, with the feeling of having spent a lovely evening in jolly company.

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