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A MUSICAL EVENING AT THE SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER.

On April 19th, an intimate musical evening attracted an audience of more than seventy members and friends to The Midland Hotel, where an unusual entertainment was given.

There was a Pianoforte Recital by Mademoiselle Annette Weisbrod, the young daughter of our member and artist Richard Weisbrod, and a Song Recital with accompaniment on the Celtic Harp by Mrs. Mary Rowland.

Since her last appearance at our Club, more than two years ago, when she was only sixteen years of age, Annette Weisbrod has studied at the Zürich Conservatoire. We were interested to see the progress made since her training in Switzerland. We were not disappointed; her technique is now much more controlled and she plays with more feeling and personality. Starting with Handel's "Harmonious Blacksmith" she followed with two sonatas by Scarlatti and ended her first group with Beethoven's Sonata in E. flat. This difficult sonata was played with understanding of the many moods, with force and boldness in the loud passages and a sustained tenderness and rhythm in the quiet movements. With Beethoven such understanding is essential.

The second part of the programme was given by Mrs. Mary Rowland and I shall deal with this in a moment.

Meantime the second group of Pianoforte Soli by Annette Weisbrod consisted of Two Mazurkas by Chopin, the Impromptu in F. Minor by Faure and Ravel's "Une Barque sur l'Océan". The playing throughout was satisfying, but I enjoyed best the Ravel's descriptive style; it seems to suit Annette Weisbrod's personality and technique and she succeeded in interpreting such effects as the movements of the boat through the waves, the rumble of the water, the splashes, the wind, the storm . . . All this was played with imagination and was a delight to listen to.

The recital by Mrs. Mary Rowland consisted of Art Songs from Seven Centuries. Already known to a few in the audience by her appearances at The Manchester Tuesday Midday Concerts as well as by her recitals in several B.B.C. Radio programmes and on Television, Mrs. Rowland caused a stir of pleasure with the very first note of her singing. The purity of her mezzo-soprano, her singing most


naturally with apparent great ease and without exaggeration or unnecessary embellishments, but with great feeling and superb mastery, were a revelation and will be remembered as an experience of the rarest delight.

She started with a 14th Century "Lauda", sung unaccompanied: "Gloria in Cielo". Indeed I might add: "Glory on Earth" with such a performer. All other songs were given with accompaniment on the Celtic Harp. I will mention only a few, notably a lively melody on the ever romantic "Night of May", then a lullaby, almost a lament, attributed to Anne Boylen whilst awaiting her execution; also a 17th Century "Hymn to God the Father", almost a recitative, full of fervour and piety, and Respighi's "Stornellatrice", a vivacious aria with a definitely Neapolitan tempo; this was sung in a lower range of voice, almost a contralto and Mrs. Rowland has shown herself suited to this as well as to the mezzo-soprano.

Mr. Ermanno Berner, as Chairman for the occasion, requested Mr. E. Kübler to move a vote of thanks to our artists. This was done with obvious appraisal and received loud and enthusiastic cheers. What would we do without the ladies? added Mr. Kübler, with reference to our two lady artists and also to the audience which consisted of ladies mostly, at least three to one.

So ended one of the most enjoyable evenings our Manchester Swiss Club has had for a long time, and our thanks go to the two charming ladies who so kindly gave of their time and talent.

H.M.



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