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SWITZERLAND IN BRITAIN'S CULTURAL LIFE

Monola Asensio the Swiss ballerina whose profile was published in the August 1976 issue of the *Swiss Observer*, will again dance leading roles including Odette/Odile, "Swan Lake", in the London Festival Ballet's summer season at the Royal Festival Hall. She will have returned from the United States where she performed with London Festival Ballet in New York and Washington. Besides dancing leading roles in "Romeo and Juliet" and "Giselle", she was chosen by Rudolf Nureyev as his partner in his first performance of "Scheherazade". Monola Asensio also appeared in Salzburg in June with Rudolf Nureyev in "Le Cosare".

Heinz Holliger was born in Langenthal in 1939. He began to play the recorder at four followed two years later by piano lessons and his first attempts at composition. He showed interest in the oboe at an early age but was not able to start lessons until the age of 11. Up to the age of 19, while still at grammar school, Holliger studied simultaneously at the Berne Conservatoire, specialising in the oboe and composition. He spent a year at the Paris Conservatoire, where he first met Messiaen, and at the same time began to study composition with Pierre Boulez in Basle. Shortly after leaving the Conservatoire in 1959 he won first prize in the Geneva competition, subsequently joining the Basle Orchestra, of which he remained a member until 1963. His career as an international soloist developed rapidly after he won the Munich competition in 1961, with annual visits to Japan and engagements throughout Europe, the U.K., U.S.A. and Scandinavia. Holliger is one of the most progressive musicians alive today and is arguably the world's leading exponent of the oboe. He is an avid experimenter with both the technique of the oboe and his own compositions but is equally interested in the repertoire and styles of the baroque and classical periods. Many leading contemporary composers have been attracted to write books for him and for the oboe and harp duo which he has with his wife, Ursula.

Heinz Holliger has appeared frequently in recent years in Britain and was soloist at two Promenade concerts in 1976.

Karl Anton Rickenbacher, the Swiss conductor whose profile was published in January 1978 issue of the *Swiss Observer*, was appointed in October 1977 principal conductor of the B.B.C. Scottish Symphony Orchestra. He took up his post on 1st January 1978 and has conducted the orchestra on many occasions in Scotland. Several lunch-hour concerts were broadcast live on Radio 3. The two concerts at the Promenade Concerts are his débuts in London with the orchestra.

Tamas Vasary, born in Hungary, began his musical studies at the age of six. His first public appearance was at the age of eight, and the following year he gave his first solo recital in his native city. Not long thereafter he was introduced to Dohnanyi, who supervised Vasary's early studies in both piano and composition. Vasary gained his diploma at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest at the age of 20, and in the same year was made assistant professor to Kadarly.

In 1956 Vasary left Hungary to settle first in Belgium and then in Switzerland. He made his London débüt in 1961 and soon gave concerts in most of the major European cities. He began a series of tours which have taken him to every continent. He has visited the major festivals such as Salzburg (during the Golden Jubilee Year), Edinburgh and Berlin and he has played with many eminent orchestras and conductors. He made his conducting débüt in Paris in 1973 and in Britain in 1975. Tamas Vasary and his wife are both Swiss citizens; they are now resident in London.

DIARY DATES

Until 29th July — Stills Gallery, Edinburgh — *Photography in Switzerland from 1840 to Today*.

Friday, 28th July — Wigmore Hall, 7.30 p.m. — Tamas Vasary Piano Quartet plays Mozart and Schumann.

Wednesday, 16th August — Royal Albert Hall, 7.30 p.m. — Heinz Holliger is the soloist in Mozart's oboe concerto K.314 and Britten's Six Metamorphoses after Ovid with the B.B.C. Northern Symphony Orchestra under Raymond Leppard.

Monday, 21st August to Friday, 8th September — Royal Festival Hall, 7.30 p.m. (Saturdays 3 p.m.) — Monola Asensio dances leading roles with London Festival Ballet in "Swan Lake" (including Odette/Odile on 24th and 31st August), "Greening" and "Bourrée fantasque".

Saturday, 26th August and Monday, 28th August — Royal Albert Hall, 7.30 p.m. — Karl Anton Rickenbacher conducts the B.B.C. Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

From 26th August — Third Eye Centre, Glasgow — Art brut: Aloise, Müller and Wölfl exhibition.

29th and 31st August (L'Orfeo), 1st and 4th September (Il Ritorno di Ulisse in Patria), 3rd and 5th (L'Incoronazione di Poppea) — King's Theatre, Edinburgh, 7.30 p.m. — Zürich Opera present their widely acclaimed cycle of Monteverdi operas.

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL 1978

Zürich Opera will bring their much acclaimed cycle of Monteverdi Operas to the King's Theatre, directed and designed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle and arranged and conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt. There will be two performances each of "L'Orfeo", "Il Ritorno d'Ulisse" and "L'Incoronazione di Poppea". Casts include Philippe Huttonlocher, who recently made his British débüt at the English Bach Festival, as Orfeo, Reingard Didusch as Euridice, Werner Hollweg as Ulisse, Ortrun Wenkel as Penelope, Rachel Yakar as Poppea and Eric Tappy as Nerone.

This forthcoming visit, which is being sponsored by the Pro Helvetia Foundation and a number of Swiss companies, firms and banks, will be the first time the company has ventured outside the European mainland. Already this year the Zürich Opera has scored notable successes, accompanied by excellent reviews from the press. This was at the Hamburg State Opera last January and in Vienna in May. Immediately after the Edinburgh Festival the company will visit Berlin. Further engagements include Milan, Florence, Wiesbaden and Belgium.

Switzerland's
constant share
of the world's
trade

The total value of international trade increased by 13 per cent in 1977, according to the first estimates, to total 1,150 billion dollars, the rate of increase being similar to that recorded in 1976; in real terms, the growth fell to barely four per cent compared with 11 per cent in 1976. With regard to both imports (43 billion francs, i.e. +16.7 per cent) and exports (42.4 billion francs, i.e. +13.8 per cent), Switzerland set new records: the increase in real value was 10.1 per cent and 11.8 per cent respectively. Switzerland's economic existence depends to a large extent on international trade, for the part played by exports of goods and services in the gross national product as a whole is very large and is expected to be slightly more than 35 per cent in 1977, according to the first estimates. Switzerland's share of world trade therefore (1.6 per cent in 1977 compared with 1.5 per cent in 1976) remained practically unchanged.