Swiss Mercantile Society

Objekttyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): **- (1927)**

Heft 298

PDF erstellt am: **29.03.2024**

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REVONS A GENEVE.

By Sophie Wyss, the Swiss Soprano.

Let us dream for a minute that we are in Geneva!

I imagine that most of us would not be slow to exchange London for Geneva for two or three weeks, if that were possible. And particularly so those of us who are interested in music, for the *Exposition Internationale de la Musique* began there on April 28th and will last until May 11th.

Yes, I should have dearly loved to have arrived in Geneva on April 28th. It would have been amusing to imagine that I was once again a student at the *Conservatoire de Musique.* I should have made my way on foot—for one counted the sous then, and my luggage in those days was never much more than a dozen songs and a toothbrush!—past the imposing Post Office, over the bridge with the Rhone sparkling in the sun, and up the incline to the same old *pension.* The very first evening there would be a Concert at the Victoria Hall with the orchestra of the *Conservatoire de Paris* giving some César Franck, Berlioz, d'Indy, Dukas, Debussy and Ravel. And Cortot himself as pianist! The next two evenings would have been spent at the Opera. The Company of the Opera Comique gave Dukas' *Ariane et Barbe Bleu,* with Madame Balguerie as *prima donna.* She is indeed a fine artist for modern French music; I heard her sing *Quand la Cloche Sonnera* in Basel, and she made an uneffaceable impression. M. Wolf will direct the orchestra. He gave a splendid concert in London last summer with the Pasdeloup orchestra, which rather distinguished itself by being forty minutes late in beginning! The next day there will be *Pelleas et Mélisande,* with Mary Garden and M. Wolf (I hope he was not late again!) Then comes the turn of Italy. Molinari himself brings the Augusteo orchestra from Rome to play Vivaldi, Respighi and the Eighth Beethoven Symphony. A few days later Holland descends upon the scene. Mengelberg, whom so many people regard as the greatest living Director of Orchestra, coupling his name with that of Toscanini, gives the Heroic Symphony and Heldenleben of Richard Strauss. And lastly there is a Concert entirely given over to Beethoven (Egmont, Fourth Symphony, Violin Concerto in D Major.) Fritz Busch, who was expected to go to Vienna when Strauss left, will direct, and Adolphe Busch, who is known to Londoners, is the violin soloist.

Then apart from this excellently devised series of international Concerts there is a *'concours de sonorité entre violons modernes,'* and (rather daring this!) a Competition for Pianists, and a prize of 5,000 francs (Swiss, I hope!) One can well imagine this leading to a lot of discussion, and how we students would have argued!

So much for the evenings. And the mornings and afternoons can fill themselves easily enough in Geneva. There is the Exhibition itself, showing apparently every brand and mark of piano, gramophone, 'player,' and instrument of string, wind and percussion; and also, for the more historically minded, there are on show the manuscripts of Wagner, Liszt, Strauss, Berlioz and many others of the great. Added to which there are brass band competitions and a lottery worth 4,600 francs.

Monsieur W. H. Draber is the general organiser of this feast of musical interest. Behind the scenes he is one of the most important men in musical Europe, and he has been for some time the Secretary to the Society for New Music, of which I believe the British Music Society is supposed to be a branch. Monsieur Draber has lived for some time in Morcôte; he is always kindness itself, and has done my sister and myself many good turns, the best of all being the introduction to Sir Henry Wood, whose Secretary he once was in London. Two months ago he was over here with Sir Henry, but whether there was any talk of arranging an English Concert at the Geneva Festival, with Elgar, Holst, Smyth, etc., to be given by Sir Henry, I cannot say. It would certainly have added to the brilliance and variety of the series.

Yes, I should dearly love to be in Geneva! And not entirely for Monsieur Draber's magnificent Festival. For I would like to creep silently and invisibly to the apartment of Monsieur de la Cruz, my first singing master. (It is surely quite permissible for a Soprano to have a certain catch at the heart when she thinks of the alternate enthusiasms and despairs of the first lessons and the first 'master') Then I would go to the Salle du Conservatoire to dream that I was once again singing for all I was worth to please Monsieur de la Cruz, and confound his remorseless enemy! Lastly, the most touching of memories, would be the Salle de la Reformation, where I would hope to see the ghost of a pale-headed Eurydice, white with fear as she made her first note for the big world behind the footlights.

The Publisher will be pleased to forward free specimen copies of "The Swiss Observer" to likely subscribers whose addresses may be supplied by readers.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

Education Department.

The Annual Dinner and Dance of the Students of Evening and Day Classes was celebrated on May 6th last in the large hall of the First Avenue Hotel, the attendance being nearly 200, including the Education Committee and Guests. Mr. B. Bretscher, Chairman of the Committee, was in the Chair.

After a refreshing repast the Chairman welcomed the gathering, in particular Dr. Rezzonico and Mr. Hilfiker, of the Swiss Legation, to whom thanks were expressed for their continued interest; the Trustees, who as the Governors of the Bank of Education, were represented by Messrs. G. De Brunner and W. Gamper, the former being especially mentioned as the 'Ancient Mariner' in matters of navigating the S.M.S. "Progress." Unfortunately Messrs. Schupbach, Barbezat and Eichenberger were prevented from attending the function.

Warm appreciation was expressed, on behalf of the Committee, to the Teachers of the Evening Classes, of whom Mr. A. Levy and Mr. H. Brocard were present, and to the forces of the Day School, Mr. O. Ph. Masterman-Smith and Miss Mann.

A short review of the activities of the Education Department indicated further progress, the daily number of students approaching 180. If this progress should be continued, within a measurable period of time our Swiss House would prove inadequate and larger premises would be required, the Chairman suggesting the 'Corner House,' where a goodly number of our students are already feeling very homely.

The President of the S.M.S., Mr. A. C. Stahelin, in addressing the Students on behalf of the Society, appealed to them to further the S.M.S. movement in their future sphere of activity in favour of the less fortunate young Swiss who have to rely on the S.M.S. establishments at home in order to acquire some knowledge of English.

Dr. Rezzonico was pleased to take the opportunity of assuring the Committee and friends of best support and fullest consideration from the Legation. Mr. A. Levy, the Senior Teacher of the Evening Classes, responded on behalf of the Teachers of that establishment.

Mr. O. Ph. Masterman-Smith, in his very able manner, spoke of the splendid opportunities the Day School is offering, not only to the Students individually but to Commercial Switzerland itself, and referred to the duties this establishment has to fulfil.

Mr. Pierre Jacot, as spokesman of the Day-class students, thanked the Committee in general and the Headmaster in particular for the very painstaking and efficient manner in which this institution is conducted.

The dance programme was no less appreciated and made full use of, with an occasional national song in between to keep limb and voice in trim. Very few were the departures before midnight, the official and irrevocable closing hour, which fact goes to prove that the evening was a thoroughly enjoyable one. C.M.

In connection with the scholastic programme the following lectures were given by the students during last week:—

Miss Susanne Carey, Bern: "Goethe in Italy." Miss Ruth Stämpfli, Interlaken: "Description of 'The Letter,' an English Play." Miss Andrée Montandon, Neuchâtel: "Bernard Shaw." Mr. Henri Strasser, Wiedlisbach: "Habits and Customs in Old Egypt." Mr. Yves Jéquier, Neuchâtel: "Languages (II)." Mr. Karl Rau, Basel: "Napoleon I." Miss Edith Beckert, Lugano: "The Application of Truth, Love and Harmony in Daily Life, and its Influence on Human Beings." Mr. Rudolf Märkle, Grindelwald: "The Swiss Hotel Industry and its Origin." Mr. Otto Menzi, Marbach (St. Gall): "The Cultivation of the Memory." Mr. W. Rheiner, St. Gall.: "The Development of Banking." Mr. H. Büchli, Basel: "A Few Examples of Napoleon I's Diplomacy." Mr. H. Stieger: "Nationalism and Internationalism."

The debating classes dealt with the following subjects:—

"Should Alsace Lorraine be French, German, independent or a canton of Switzerland?" For Germany, Mr. L. Haas, Zurich; For France, Mr. C. Suter, Lausanne; For Free State, Mr. M. Luescher, Muhen; For Switzerland, Mr. E. Bantli, Duebendorf-Zch.

"Are bachelors a greater misfortune to mankind than spinsters? Proposer, Miss Berta Hilfiker, Rüschlikon; Opposer, Mr. W. Graf.

"Is Prohibition an advantage to a Nation?" Proposer, Miss E. Keller; Opposer, Mr. W. Vonaesch.

UNIONE TICINESE.

Our Leventinesi must be quite pleased at the unqualified success of the Concert and Dance which took place on the 5th inst. at the "Schweizerbund," 74, Charlotte Street, W.1, in aid of the District Hospital and Home for Aged Inhabitants of the Leventina Valley, in Faido. Although a foregone conclusion that accommodation would be taxed to the utmost, that the entertainment would be most enjoyable and that we would be treated to another happy reunion of a good portion of the Ticinese colony in London, expectations were surpassed all along the line.

Mr. Notari, President, rose at about 8.15 p.m. to tender a word of welcome to the audience and formally opened the concert. The various Artistes, Mr. Claud Chandler, entertainer, Mr. Cliff E. Hunter, humorous stories, Mr. Maurice Charles, cartoonist, Miss Irene Clifford, songs, Miss Swan, speciality dances, did the rest, and in so fine a way as to make one and all truly happy. Good as all the other artistes were, I think that Signor Alberto Conti, tenor (Signor Guido Conti at the piano) aroused the enthusiasm of everybody most spontaneously with the songs "E lucean le stelle (La Tosca), "La Bandiera," and "La donna é mobile" (Rigoletto), and later in the evening "O sole mio" and a few lines from "Pagliacci." The excellent and virile rendering as well as the Italian language could not fail to make a keen appeal.

Mr. Carlo Valchera, son of a distinguished compatriot of ours, who recently passed with fine success the final examination of the Royal Academy of Music, wound up the concert with a selection at the piano.

The drawing of the lucky numbers of the Tombola and of the programme prizes was immediately proceeded with, and certainly there are many who took home articles of real value. A surprise was provided by the announcement that a generous donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, had sent an original oil painting "La morte della natura" (The Death of Nature) by Spartaco Vela, son of the famous Ticinese sculptor, to be sold at auction for the benefit of the hospital. The donor will be pleased to know that the painting was eventually bought by Mr. A. Meschini, our Hon. Vice-President and most generous of the Ticinesi in London, and it will find a fitting resting place in his villa on the shores of Lago Maggiore, in the surroundings which inspired the painter.

A good number of those present then resorted to the first floor for supper while, the hall cleared, Desmond's Dance Orchestra provided plenty of exercise for the many young ladies and young men present, although quite a number of the parents seemed to be having a competition with the younger generation.

But what of the greatest entertainment of the evening, the friendly, hearty, most happy mingling of the Ticinese family? One advantage the Unione Ticinese perhaps enjoys is that such a good number of members have grown-up families, with little noticeable difference whether born and brought up here or in the Ticino. Coupled with the fact that many of the families are closely inter-related and that the colony here is principally drawn from a few limited districts of our home Canton, they make such social evenings, in an environment giving full scope to the democratic and friendly instincts of the Ticinesi, an absolute necessity. Worthy objects, to which to devote any surplus of proceeds, are never lacking.

In this instance, without making a collection, the nett profit of the evening amounts to little short of £100, and our fellow Ticinesi from the Leventina Valley, which now looks like equalling that of Blenio in keeping the Colony up to numbers, can be well satisfied with the result. As over 300,000 francs have been got together in other directions for the Hospital in Faido, it is only natural that the Unione Ticinese should have desired to do something as well towards it. The cantonal institutions of the kind are centred in the Southern Ticino, to suit the greatest bulk of the population, and it is admirable that the valleys near the Alps should strive to create centres close at hand for their own populations.

Dr. PAUL LANG, of LYCEUM ALPINUM COLLEGE, ZUOZ, ENGADINE, is ready to receive 2-3 Children, who want to restore their health in the invigorating climate of the Engadine (5,400 ft. altitude). Lessons if desired. Moderate terms.

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