

Dr. Eric Blom †

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DR. ERIC BLOM †

We deeply regret to announce the passing away, at the age of 70, of Dr. Eric Blom, the well-known music critic and author.

Eric Blom was born in Berne in 1888 of partly Danish descent (his mother was Swiss). He was educated privately, and also at the *Gymnasium* in Berne, where he was in the same form as the writer. Apart from being a school-fellow of his, I was also a distant relation — on his mother's side. I was privileged to enjoy his friendship for over 60 years. His departure is thus ending a companionship which was particularly dear to me.

He started his career with the "Buchhandlung A. Francke" in Berne as librarian, after which he left Switzerland for the "Konservatorium" in Leipzig, coming to this country at the beginning of the century, and starting work with a firm of music publishers. Soon he came before the public first as a writer, along with Mrs. Rosa Newmarch, of programme notes for Henry Wood's concerts. His first post as a critic was with the *Manchester Guardian*, for which, from 1923 to 1930, he wrote notices of London musical events. In 1931 he moved from that journal to the *Birmingham Post*, where he remained for 15 years till 1946, when he returned to London, chiefly in order to edit the fifth edition of Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

He resumed newspaper work for *The Observer* in 1949, and though he relinquished the reporting of musical events a couple of years ago he continued to write for it regularly till his death.

Another piece of journalism in which his scholarly mind was particularly valuable was his editorship of the quarterly periodical *Music and Letters*.

As an author Eric Blom had a dozen books, an encyclopædia, and several translations from the German to his credit. His chief love was given to Mozart, and his short biography in the *Master Musician* series is about as good as a book of that size could be. He followed it many years later with a selection of Mozart's letters for *Pelican*. If he never wrote a big book, it was because he devoted his vast learning to dictionaries — Dent's *Everyman* that will go into a coat pocket and *Grove* which runs to nine stout volumes. He was the first of the editors who succeeded Sir George Grove to make that monument of human learning a systematic work of reference.

Eric Blom, although frail in physique — he was deformed in his shoulders — which accounted for a certain shyness, was a delightful companion, and I remember with intense pleasure and much sadness the many hours spent at his or my fire-side, or at the Garrick Club, when he often recalled the days of our youth spent in Switzerland. He was public-spirited in his voluntary work for the art, which included the chairmanship of the Central Music Library and membership of several advisory panels. For these distinguished services to music he was made

C.B.E. in 1955, and awarded a D.Litt. by Birmingham University in the same year. His wife, whom he married in 1923, died before him, but he leaves a sister — at one time a noted singer — living in Berne. He also leaves a son and a daughter, the latter being the wife of his *Observer* colleague, Paul Jennings.

An intensely successful life has now come to its journey's end, and in these sad hours of departing I wish to thank him, beyond the grave, for a friendship which will for ever remain one of my most treasured memories.

ST.

1st SWISS HORTICULTURAL EXHIBITION 1959 IN ZURICH.

From 25th April to 11th October both shores of the Lake of Zurich will burst into bloom in a veritable florists' paradise. On grounds totalling over 1.6 million square feet the first Swiss Horticultural Exhibition will unfold an ever-changing pattern of colours and forms, running from spring through summer and into autumn. Many a European tour this year will pass through Zurich to take in this unique attraction.

And wherever you go in Switzerland, you will find all kinds of flowers: from the hanging gardens above Ticino lakes and the subtropical vegetation of the isles of Lake Maggiore to the red-red carnations adorning Engadine windows. In Berne you will look down on to "French gardens" modelled after those of aristocratic 18th-century Paris. In many resorts you will come across lovely gardens in the style of the 19th-century England, while mountain railways will carry you through lovely springtime fragrant narcissus fields and summery alpine gardens.

With this exhibition the people of Zurich hark back to the romance of the 18th century when horticulturists created "poets' gardens", "philosophers' gardens" and "lovers' gardens". Sculptures will add a further artistic touch, and in the evening, special lighting effects will lend enchantment to the whole. Music and theatre performances, fashion shows, ballet, musicals, and cabaret performances will be added attractions, and a long list of delicious Swiss gastronomic specialities will make this first Horticultural Exhibit a meeting place for gourmets. Swinging high over the busy boat traffic below, a chair lift will be there to carry you across the Lake of Zurich.

The Horticultural Exhibition will be a place to relax. . . a place where you can forget your everyday cares. Whether you are a professional gardener or "merely" a lover of beautiful colours and forms, you will find the flowers, fruit trees, and ornamental shrubs in their various combinations a perfect delight. To add to your enjoyment, the exhibition will feature changing exhibits, special shows, and a permanent industrial fair — special attractions that bid fair to make your visit most worthwhile.