

Unione Ticinese Variety Concert

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UNIONE TICINESE VARIETY CONCERT.

Once again the Unione Ticinese has given its services for a charitable purpose. A very successful Variety Concert was held, on Sunday, December 9th, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, in aid of the Swiss Benevolent Society.

There was not a vacant seat left by the time the concert started. Mr. Bradley Harris, the well-known entertainer, who very successfully acted as compère, introduced Mr. R. Dupraz, a former President of the Swiss Benevolent Society, who, in the unavoidable absence of Mr. A. Bon, thanked the Unione Ticinese very warmly for having arranged this function in aid of his Society. He also addressed a few words of thanks to the Swiss Minister and Madame Ruegger, who favoured the company with their presence. Madame Ruegger, on entering the Hall, which was gaily decorated with the Swiss and English national emblems, was presented with a lovely bouquet of red and white carnations by a little girl dressed in the national costume of the canton Ticino. This presentation was acknowledged by Madame Ruegger with an accolade.

The programme was rich in variations, and included well-known professionals as well as amateurs.

The Spitfire Radio Band opened the musical interlude with one of their lively tunes. They were followed by Mlle. Pauline, a very pretty young lady, who sang and danced; she was neither a Pavlova nor a Tetrizzini, but perhaps one day she may attain the polish which she lacks at present.

Billy Fordham, the comedian, who, no doubt, was known to many in the audience by his B.B.C. broadcasts, kept his audience in continual laughter.

And now from the Profane to the Sublime, Rosemary Pfändler, who is no stranger to the Swiss Colony, played three Cello Soli in her usual accomplished manner. The applause which her performance evoked was proof enough how much her exquisite playing was appreciated.

Next another Swiss artiste appeared, dressed with "Käppli" and "Chüjerchüttli" in the person of Mr. F. von Bergen. He yodelled to his heart's content, and to the enjoyment of the audience; he was accompanied on the piano by his daughter Marguerite.

Carl Carlisle, another B.B.C. star turn, gave a number of impersonations which were much enjoyed.

I have always found the number seven my lucky number, and it proved to be so again. No. 7 on the programme was a little musical comedy, called "L'Osteria" (Village Inn). It was written and produced by Mr. Carlos Valchera and the actors and singers were members of the Corale of the Unione Ticinese. The plot centred principally around two village maidens, who were in love with the village *beau*, something on the lines of Cavalleria Rusticana, only it did not end in tragedy. After the "beloved" had flirted, and kissed first one and then the other, left one and ran to the other, with floods of tears from the jilted one, he hears that he is called up on the occasion of the mobilisation of the Swiss army. He tenders a moving farewell to both his admirers who lovingly fly into his arms, and everything ends happily. Both the singing and the acting was excellent, especially the performance of the Sindaco and his beadle. A most delightful little comedy, and if I have to make

any criticism it is that it was too short. The applause which greeted the actors and singers was well deserved.

After a short interval, the Spitfire Band again performed; as an *encore* they produced three of their members dressed up as charwomen, who gave us the "Charwomen's Serenade" executed with a "Ballet." The "lingerie" of these members of a very useful profession was very much austerity; I must admit it was not a very dignified performance, at least not for Park Lane.

Joan Woodlake and Clifford Millar sang duets accompanied by Jack Palmer at the piano.

Harold Michaelson, cartoonist, known by his work in the "Tatler" and "Bystander," produced a number of highly interesting sketches at record speed; his portrait of the late Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, complete with cigar, earned great applause.

He was followed by Adrian Dante, Radio Accordionist Virtuoso, who played on his most impressive looking accordion a number of operatic melodies in grand style. He is indeed a "virtuoso" on his instrument.

Now the hitherto successful compère turned to entertainer. Mr. Bradley Harris gave us a number of "Silly Sonatas," his tunes representing various instruments such as the organ, the flute, the cello and the violin, played without the respective instruments, were excellently rendered and a pleasure to listen to.

The last number on the programme was a medley of international melodies (English, French, Italian and Swiss) rendered with much gusto. I was especially impressed with the young, tall and pretty signorina, who treated the conductor with utter contempt, but who sang like a nightingale, this time in Park Lane instead of Berkeley Square. All in all a fine finale to a fine programme.

Mr. Ferrari, the vivacious President of the Unione Ticinese, expressed the thanks to the Swiss Minister and Madame Ruegger for having honoured the function by their presence, and to all the actors for their enjoyable performance.

In conclusion special thanks should be expressed to Messrs. Valchera and Dante, who worked very hard to provide an enthusiastic audience with an enjoyable evening's entertainment, and to Mr. Anton Bon, of the Dorchester Hotel, for having put the Banqueting Hall and the staff free of charge at the disposal of the Unione Ticinese.

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SWISS MALE CHOIR.

A very important item on the agenda of the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Male Choir on November 2nd last was the decision to approach the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Paul Ruegger, to accept the Honorary Presidency of the Society, as reported in the last issue of the "Swiss Observer." I am delighted to be able to record here now that Monsieur Ruegger has very kindly consented to become our Honorary President and the members of the Choir were very pleased when the good news was given out to them at a recent rehearsal. We all feel greatly honoured and there is no doubt that his acceptance will give great impetus and encouragement to us to continue the practice of those customs which are so treasured by our people at home.

E.P.D.