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THE SWISS MALE CHOIR AT THE 1950 WEMBLEY MUSIC AND DRAMA FESTIVAL.

On Saturday, 25th of March, the Swiss Male Choir competed in Male Voice Choir singing at the Assembly Hall, Town Hall, Wembley, before Mr. Edric Cundell, C.B.E., Principal of the Guildhall School of Music, the Adjudicator.

Although our Choir did not win the Wembley Corporation's Challenge Cup they did win the Festival Certificate, earning 80 points as against 83 points of the Cup Winners. Many were the compliments paid to the Swiss Choir by the Adjudicator and these are another feather in Mr. Paul Dick's cap, the Choir's Conductor, who again has done a very good job.

The set test piece was the music set by Grieg to the Norwegian Saga "Landeserkennung". This was followed by the Choir's own choice "Zieh mit mir in den Lenz hinein" by G. Angerer. A large and appreciative audience gave our Choir hearty and prolonged applause.

The Adjudicator praised the imaginative quality. He enlarged on this by saying that it was refreshing to hear a choir whose conductor subjected the given piece to his imagination as against ideas being strictly subjected to the music as written. He praised the Baritone solo (sung by Mr. G. N. Ross) but added that this should be somewhat less disjointed, saying that the texture must be kept up. Mr. Cundell regretted that loss of pitch marred the Choir's singing in two places and told them to consolidate pitch on every note as here and there, there was a parlando approach. He said that the singing had warm quality of tone, but the first tenor needed more support to their vocal line, there being a definite thinning-out in the upper register. (Unfortunately one of the tenors was unavoidably prevented from being present which accounts at least for part of a thin top line.) The final remark was that the Swiss Choir sang the songs artistically but must get their technical achievement up to their imaginative achievement.

Here I wish to add that the Choir was most ably assisted by Miss Ruth Huggenberg, the well known pianist, whose accompaniment to the test piece was colourful and energetic and the technical difficulties easily overcome in a masterly way; indeed, Miss Huggenberg earned the Choir's full admiration and gratitude for her valuable co-operation.

As the Adjudicator turned to the criticism of the winning choir, the Swiss choir was given as an example for the singing of various triplets in the test piece as well as for imaginative execution.

I wish to turn now to something else which is of interest to the Swiss Colony and if some of the above technical parlance is not readily understood, the Wembley test piece will be sung by our Choir at a concert to be given on Wednesday, 3rd of May, at 7.30 p.m. at Queen Mary Hall, Central Club of the Y.W.C.A. in Great Russell Street, W.C.2 (one minute from Tottenham Court Road tube station). Please reserve this date; full details will be given in the next issue of the Swiss Observer.

And now, Boys of the Swiss Male Choir, take courage from your achievement at Wembley, pitch up a little, good luck and good cheer!

F.S.

PIANO RECITAL — ALBERT FERBER.

Once again we had the pleasure of hearing our distinguished Swiss pianist, Albert Ferber, at the Wigmore Hall, on March 16th. We are glad to say that, in spite of the various important concert events, which took place on the same evening, the hall was very well-filled.

The setting-up of Mr. Ferber's programme was a new departure and we consider that it was extremely well-chosen, showing his versatility in his power of interpretation, from the classics to the romantics. The recital ended with Debussy. The Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen — Bach — Liszt were played with great brilliance, followed by Minuet in G Major by Mozart. A great impression was made by the interpretation of the Sonata in C minor, Op. 10, No. 1 by Beethoven and the first part of the programme was rounded off with the Davidsbündler Dances Op. 6 by Schumann, which earned him great applause.

The second part of the programme consisted of: — Sonatina in D flat major and Sonatina in A major by Sibelius, Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48 No. 1 and Mazurka in C sharp minor, Op. 50 No. 3 by Chopin and Voiles, Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest, La fille aux cheveux de lin and Minstrels from Preludes Book 1 by Debussy. We admired the terrific force developed in the Chopin Mazurka, contrasted with the ephemeral and delicate playing of the "Voiles" by Debussy. We need not speak of the enormous technical mastery of Mr. Ferber, which was so evident, but congratulate him chiefly on his deep musical understanding and on his courage in presenting to us such a difficult programme. He well deserved the great ovation to which he responded with two beautifully played encores.

P.A.M.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, April 14th, 1950.

We take this opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations, over and above, their subscription: J. H. Meyer, O. Roethlisberger, J. Wanner, L. Jobin, W. Graf, A. Vaterlaus, F. Conrad, J. E. Margot, A. Hinderling, H. Hafter, J. Häusermann, W. O. Bosshard, J. H. Ungricht, Mrs. A. Rietmann, A. Burckhalter, M. E. Lichtensteiger, Mrs. B. Hossack, G. Marchand, P. Bucher, G. T. Groats, Miss M. Paly, R. J. Keller.

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