

Concert Swiss Male Choir and Jodler Sextett Alte Sektion Zürich

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**CONCERT SWISS MALE CHOIR AND JODLER
SEXTETT ALTE SEKTION ZURICH.
SOLOIST: RUTH HUGGENBERG (PIANO).**

The musical fare which was placed before a "full house", on Wednesday, May 3rd, at Queen Mary's Hall, Great Russell Street, W.C.1, can best be described in culinary terms, the Swiss Male Choir providing the *hors d'œuvre* and Miss Ruth Huggenberg the dessert. In between, our visitors, the Jodler Sextett, Alte Sektion Zurich, provided the *pièce de résistance*.

During the last few years, the Colony has been almost inundated with "Jodlers", all of them giving excellent performances. Looking back, to the days of my youth — long since past — I must admit that tremendous progress has been made in this particular branch of music, especially where the actual quality of the singing is concerned.

There are, of course, still a good many people who strongly hold, that this kind of music should be strictly confined to the mountains and valleys of our homeland, and should be barred from the Concert Hall being the wrong environment.

They are not altogether wrong, Yodling, undoubtedly, requires a certain atmosphere, which can best be provided by the natural beauty of alpine scenery. It started in the mountains, where the "Aelplers" on a Sunday, held their local competitions. These singing bouts were very popular and were attended, not only by the village beauties but by the animal fraternity as well, cows and goats especially professed a great liking for these performances.

In transferring this special kind of music to the Concert Hall or Drawing room it is essential, that the performers should create an atmosphere which enables the hearer to forget his immediate surroundings and transfers him to the *environ* for which the singing was meant in the first instance.

This, the Zurich Yodler Sextett achieved with undeniable success, particularly in the fine rendering of "Aemmitaler Alpuuffahrt", "O Alpehorn" and in "Schwyzerblume — Schwyzerfarbe", the latter was especially effective.

It must be understood, that this kind of music has severe restrictions and lacks variety, an ordinary male or mixed choir has a much wider range, and to be able to hold the attention of an audience for almost two hours is no mean achievement.

This Sextett has splendid material at its disposal, a rich tone, beautiful blended and a fine diction, and I am sure, that the Swiss Male Choir will not take it amiss, if I suggest that they would profit by imitating our visitors in the latter.

The "Yodlerduett" singing "Berghalde Yodel" and "In Berge" received an enthusiastic reception, which was well and truly deserved, and if the audience was generous in their applause, the Sextett was no less so, giving *encore* after *encore*.

Altogether an enjoyable and remarkable performance, which will add new lustre to this already well-known choir.

The Swiss Male Choir, started the programme with Hermann Suter's "Nos Montagnes" and "Mein Dörflein" by Hans Ackermann, both excellently sung. The latter number, was rendered with great feeling.

The third and last item sung by this choir, was Grieg's "Landerkennung" from the Norwegian Saga. I was particularly interested to hear this item, with which the choir, achieved a success at the Wembley Music Festival 1950. The performance of this "Wembley Test piece" was a commendable one, with the exception of a little slip right at the end, in the ranks of the tenors, which did not however, blur the general favourable impression.

The choir is a pleasure to listen to, and its conductor, Mr. E. P. Dick, is to be heartily congratulated on his achievements.

This brings me to the performance of Miss Huggenberg, which, as usual, was of high standing. For some

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of the hardness in Chopin's Fantasy in F. minor op. 49, the piano must be responsible.

Brahms Ten Waltzes from op. 39, were delicately rendered, and proved that Miss Huggenberg is a gifted and accomplished artiste.

It was altogether a fine and successful evening, and I sympathise with all those many, who had to be turned back at the doors, owing to lack of accommodation.

ST.

SOCIETE DE SECOURS MUTUELS DES SUISSES A LONDRES. Annual Dinner.

On Thursday, May 4th, the above Society held its Annual General Meeting followed by its customary Annual Dinner.

This Society, although the oldest one in the Colony, having been founded in 1703, is perhaps less well known than many of her younger and more recent sister societies; although the aims of the "Secours Mutuels" are explained in the words of its title.

The ages of its exactly 100 members varies from under twenty to over eighty, several of the old veterans being present at this enjoyable dinner.

This Society offers its members, as far as material benefits are concerned more than most other Societies. (The Swiss Benevolent Society has a different constitution.) Apart from the many benefits in case of illness, pensions are paid out, the annual dinner is free and a bottle of beer is thrown in, and on leaving this planet, the next of kin, or the undertaker is promptly paid £20 for the funeral expenses; can you ask for more?

It is a pity that this Society, which has at its helm a young and energetic President, Mr. A. L. Gandon, is so reticent in advertising the many advantages its membership entails. Their social functions are strictly *en famille*, and outsiders are seldom asked to their sumptuous dinners, and it is, therefore, an honour to receive an invitation to attend one of them.

This year, the Society had as its guests, Pasteur C. Reverdin of the "Eglise Suisse" and Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer". After the customary toasts to H.M. the King and Switzerland, Mr. Gandon, who was in the Chair extended a welcome to the guests and members, and very briefly referred to the aims of the Society. He expressed thanks to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. W. Kilchenmann, for the efficient way in which he had organised this annual function, and also voiced his appreciation to the steward of the "Schweizerbund", Mr. L. Portman, who had served such an excellent dinner.

Mr. A. Martin, Vice-President of the Society, in a few words thanked Pasteur Reverdin for having accepted the invitation to attend the dinner, the latter in turn, very wittily replied and lastly, Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer" joined his co-invité in thanking the President and the members for having bidden him to their table, he associated himself with Mr. Gandon in expressing his appreciation for a really splendid *Menu*.

This concluded the official part of the evening and was followed by an entertaining programme of accordeon playing, again under the Presidency of Mr. Gandon, and a performance of a conjurer. A very pleasant and homely evening, which was enjoyed by all who were present.

FETE SUISSE.

This year's FETE SUISSE, to be held at the Central Hall, Westminster, on Thursday, June 8th, at 6.15 p.m., will be the 75th since its inception in 1864.

For those who do not know it, this is the annual reunion of the Swiss in or near London.

An attractive programme has been arranged to mark this great anniversary. It will include many familiar and unfamiliar items in the best tradition of our local talents. But this is not all. The Committee has been very fortunate in securing the co-operation of Monsieur Sandoz, the well-known Swiss baritone, who is coming over from Switzerland specially for the occasion.

The Swiss Minister, Monsieur Henry de Torrenté, has kindly consented to address this patriotic gathering. Moreover, it is very confidently expected that a very distinguished and highly placed member of the Swiss National Council may join us at this auspicious meeting and will deliver to us a message straight from our Homeland.

The Souvenir-programme will appear in a new design and will contain a history of the Fête Suisse from its beginning. Badges will be available to stimulate the homely, federal and cantonal, feelings. Teas and light refreshments will be provided for as usual. And remember, the Fête is held, as for so many years past, in aid of the Swiss Benevolent Society.

Admission, by ticket only, will be 2/6 for adults and children over 12. Buy your ticket in good time from your Society or Church, or apply for it by post, with remittance and stamped addressed envelope, to the FETE SUISSE COMMITTEE, Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Square, London, W.1, or at the Box Office. For children under 12, free tickets will be obtainable at the Box Office only, on the day of the Fête. All seats will be unreserved.

So, come in great numbers and join in this Jubilee celebration of our annual Swiss reunion.

J.Z.

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