

City Swiss Club

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CITY SWISS CLUB.

**Albert Ferber at the Soirée Familiale,
Dorchester Hotel.**

There is no doubt that the recent railway strike seriously interfered with the attendance at the "Soirée Familiale" of the City Swiss Club, which took place at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1., on Tuesday, June 14th, only about 80 members and ladies being present.

It was a great pity, especially as the committee had invited on that occasion, Albert Ferber, the well-known Swiss pianist, to be the principal guest of the evening.

Somehow, the misleading idea that the City Swiss Club is nothing short of a "Jass Club" has been circulated around, partly due to the not very amusing nor tactful reference to this Club in the programme of the "Rüeblihaft" cabaret, which performed here some months ago. These performers not being resident here, were hardly competent to judge on the merits of Swiss institutions.

It is not the place or the time here to go into details of the history of this Club, which is celebrating next year its centenary, but it might be appropriate to mention that through all its 99 years of existence the City Swiss Club — which by the way — has never claimed to be more than a "social" club, has played an unique and important rôle in the life of the London Colony, both in its social and cultural sphere.

Eminent personalities in all walks of life have visited, or addressed the club in the past, especially during the last war, and thus became a very useful link between the two countries.

This recent "Soirée Familiale" has proved that card-playing is not the only feature the Club indulges in.

After cocktails had been served in one of the ante-rooms the company adjourned for dinner to the Orchid Room, which as usual was richly decorated with flowers. The dinner again was excellent, and was much enjoyed.

Shortly before coffee was served, the President, Mr. Chas. Gysin proposed the toasts to H.M. the Queen, and to "La Suisse", he then extended a hearty welcome to all those present, mentioning that unfortunately the Swiss Minister, and Madame Daeniker, were prevented from attending owing to a last minute's engagement. Mr. Gysin voiced his pleasure at seeing so many members of the Swiss

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Legation, with their ladies, present, namely Dr. E. Bernath and Dr. R. Faessler, Counsellors of Legation, Messieurs P. Thevenaz, E. Valotton, A. Albertini, Secretaries of Legation, and Mr. J. Huber, Consul, and then warmly greeted the principal guest of the evening, Albert Ferber, telling him how delighted the members of the City Swiss Club were to have him once again in their midst.

"The company tonight is rather small", he said, "but what is lacking in quantity is made up in quality." (Laughter.)

Albert Ferber had chosen for his recital a conventional and well balanced programme, playing works by Beethoven, Schubert, Mozart, Brahms, Chopin and Debussy — formidable names indeed. —

He started with 10 Variations on an air from the opera "Falstaff" by Salieri, Beethoven, these were played in a warm and serene tone.

The most remarkable item to my mind was the rendering of Schubert's Impromptu in F minor, op. 142, No. 1, it was full of brilliance and evocative poetry.

His touch on the keys in the Sonata in F major (K.V. 332) in three movements by Mozart, produced a pleasing tone at all degrees, and the timing and shaping of his phrases revealed a highly musical personality.

He made Brahms's Intermezzo in E Flat minor op. 118, No 6, and Rhapsody in E Flat major, op. 119, No. 4, sound healthy as well as effective.

In Debussy's Prélude, Aarabesque No. 1, and L'isle j'oyeuse, Albert Ferber showed his brilliant

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technique and extreme delicacy of tonal nuance, revealing him as a reliable, sensitive musician.

This mixed programme showed that he has a true feeling for his instrument, it was piano playing of an all-round excellence, yet hall-marked by a very distinguished individuality, his interpretations were always imposing.

Long and enthusiastic applause were given after each item, and at the close of his recital he received a vociferous and spontaneous ovation. The evening was indeed a memorable one, and I heartily associate myself with the appropriate words of thanks expressed by the President, who said that by his brilliant performance he has taken us all away for some fleeting moments from the drabness of everyday life into a higher and nobler sphere, into the realm and to the summit of divine music. *ST.*

SWISS ART IN LONDON.

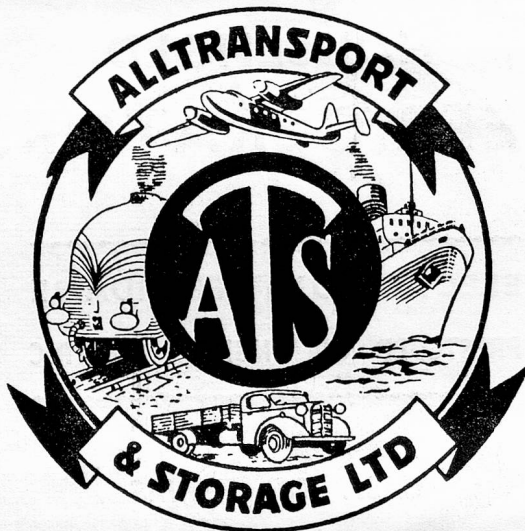
Apart from Angelica Kauffmann at Kenwood there are no fewer than four Swiss artists, all still living and of our generation, to be seen at present in London exhibitions. A real plethora of Swiss art seems to have descended on the British capital. There are three one-man shows, while at the Summer Exhibition of the Royal Academy six works of a Swiss painter, grown up in England, and already an Associate R.A., are to be seen. It is Robert Bühler, who is in the early forties, showing four interesting and most competent portraits as well as two landscapes from Essex. One of the portraits has been purchased by the Royal Academy. It is good to know that even

to-day the original association of two Swiss painters, Fuseli and Angelica Kauffmann, with the Royal Academy is carried on by a Swiss artist.

The light-hearted colourful watercolours of our friend Richard Weisbrod, born in Zürich and living in Blackburn, are an annual event at the Leger Galleries, always a source of delight to all those who share his evident pleasure in the fleeting impressions of natural scenery wherever he and we go: in Lancashire, Scotland and London, in Paris, Basle and Zürich, and on all the beautiful beaches of Europe.

More problematical and bewildering is the very comprehensive Exhibition of the works of a Swiss surrealist, Alberto Giacometti, at the Arts Council of Great Britain in St. James's Square. His bronze figures are all and sundry so emaciated and elongated as to look more like misshapen beanstalks than figures of the human race. You have to look at them from high above, if you could get there, to observe a reasonable approximation to mankind in perspective. A photograph in the catalogue taken from such an angle has to convince you of the reality of this so-called sur-realism. And many drawings and paintings, less far removed from what an ordinary mortal is capable of recognising as belonging to this queer world of ours, reveal something of the tortuous processes by which God's creatures become shapeless knobly sticks with a gash and a hump here and there to indicate one or the other of our features. Evidently these transfigurations mean something to some people who hold Giacometti high in the inner temples of the addicts of modern art. But to the uninitiated these sur-realists appear more like impostors on the gullibility of all those too far removed from nature to trust their own eyes rather than the nightmarish vision of what an international conspiracy of dupes reveres as modern art.

What a delight it is to turn to another sculptor, born and living in Zürich, Emilio Stanzani, whose works can be seen at the Beaux Arts Gallery. He also strives after new forms of expression without however becoming shapeless and incoherent. The figure of a harlequin in coloured bronze is the proud possession of the Kunsthauus at Zürich for which the world must envy it. A jockey, a rider on horse-back, a reclining female, several busts — all exude a living potency which cannot fail to impress itself on the fastidious while delighting even the ordinary viewer with a deeper comprehension of life as it is. *E.*



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