

One hundred years of Fete Suisse

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ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF FETE SUISSE

One hundred years ago the first Fête Suisse was held in London. On 8th May the 86th Fête will take place at the Central Hall, Westminster. The Wars brought interruptions and for the last two years no Fête was organised because the Committee felt unable to incur the large expense of bringing some group of musicians over from Switzerland without being assured of the support by the Colony. It was soon evident, however, that there was a real need for a gathering on a large scale, and the Committee took up its work again with renewed vigour in order to create a festival worthy of its grand predecessors. The dynamic Chairman, Mr. Alfred Renou, resigned a few weeks before his sudden death, and Mr. R. Thomas took over the presidency.

The programme of this year's big Swiss get-together promises to be an outstanding success. Not only shall we enjoy some first-class entertainment, but it will give us an opportunity to meet old pals and to bring along some of our English friends to share in an evening of Swiss atmosphere.

In the true tradition of the Fête Suisse, local talent is included. Who better than the CORALE OF THE UNIONE TICINESE would qualify? For a good number of years this group of singers has entertained the Colony on many occasions. The CORALE, too, has gone through a crisis, but just recently its numbers have been increased considerably and the choir in its picturesque costumes will appear in new strength at the Fête Suisse. I understand its repertoire has been added to by some more attractive tunes from the Ticino and we can be sure of spending a happy twenty minutes listening to songs reminding us of the beauties of Southern Switzerland like this picture showing the Lake of Lugano with the famous church of Morcote.



CORALE UNIONE TICINESE



CABARET RUEBLISAFT

This picture shows two members of the CABARET RUEBLISAFT in one of their numbers making fun of some of our democratic institutions. This is not the first time the Colony has the pleasure of hearing this group of gifted artists. Under the auspices of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique they gave a performance at the Theatre of the French Institute in Kensington in 1954. Since then their reputation has grown, and the critics say that the RUEBLISAFT is the only cabaret in Switzerland which still deserves the name of "cabaret". At last, it is claimed, there is another group which reminds one of the famous Cabaret Cornichon which was famous not only in Switzerland but also abroad. The RUEBLISAFT will perform mostly in French and Schwyzerdütsch, with a word in English here and there.

The next picture shows the Zurich Guildhouses "Rueden" and "Zimmerleuten" on the bank of the river Limmat with the twin spires of the "Grossmünster" in the background. From this, the largest Swiss town, hails the MÄNNERCHOR ZÜRICH. One hundred and forty singers are coming over specially to take part in the Fête Suisse.

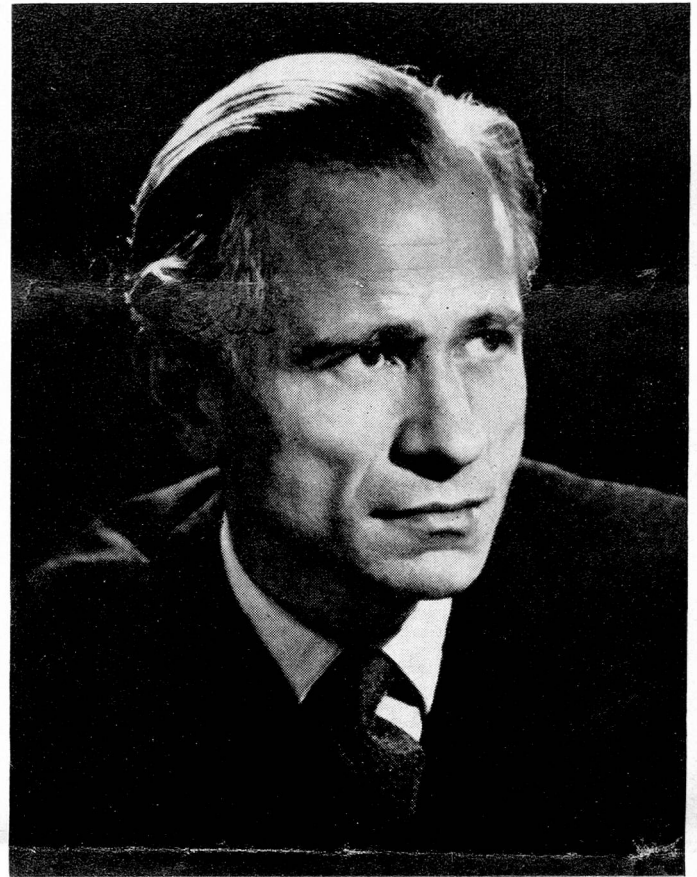
The Choir has a reputation going back to 1826 when Hans Georg Naegeli, the father of all Swiss male choirs, founded it. He was the first of a number of distinguished conductors, amongst them Wilhelm Baumgartner, composer of "O mein Heimatland"; Karl Attenhofer; Volkmar Andrae; Hermann Hofmann; and since 1962 the well-known conductor of the Beromünster Radio Orchestra, Kapellmeister Erich Schmid. Its President is Councillor of States E. Vaterlaus. The Choir's reputation has gone beyond the frontiers of Switzerland, and several first performances of famous works are to its credit.

On the occasion of their stay in London they will appear at the Festival Hall during the Red Cross Centenary Celebration in the presence of H.M. the Queen. They will also be received by the Lord Mayor of the City of London. Their participation in the Fête Suisse promises a great treat.

MAENNERCHOR ZUERICH



But this is not enough — to complete the treat the Committee of the Fête Suisse has secured the well-known pianist, our compatriot, Mr. Albert Ferber, who has kindly agreed to give a recital. The Colony has reason to be grateful to Mr. Ferber, who in spite of his many commitments as an artist of international repute has again and again put his art at the disposal of his fellow-countrymen. He has a reputation of being a specialist in French music and his is the distinction of successfully recording Debussy's piano music in France — rare indeed for a non-French artist. It will be a great pleasure indeed to hear Mr. Ferber at the Fête Suisse.



ALBERT FERBER

The Committee has tried hard to organise a Fête which would retain its original character whilst bearing regard to present-day requirements due to a changed Colony. Due heed has been taken of criticism voiced in the past; so the speeches have been cut down to a record minimum; and special attention has been paid to catering arrangements. A novel idea will be realised in as much as picnic bags at 3/- will be on sale. This will eliminate bottlenecks and queuing and allow for easy circulation and unhampered gathering of friends during the interval.

Details of admission and time will be given on the enclosed leaflet. As to the programme no effort has been spared to make the evening a success. It will be a special occasion for young and old, fellow-countrymen and British friends, and the evening promises to be an outstanding event.

Mariann.

(Photographs by courtesy of Swiss National Tourist Office.)

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