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ANOTHER SWISS PLAY TO SEE IN LONDON

“EDGE OF REASON” by MAX FRISCH

Never before our generation has Switzerland produced one dramatic author to achieve international fame such as is lavished at present on two of them at once: Peter Dürrenmatt and Max Frisch. And — what is particularly gratifying to us Swiss in the United Kingdom — the English theatre and public have taken to them as readily and flatteringly as any other country. If their themes are usually tragic, somewhat cynical and despairing, they reflect only too clearly our terrifyingly confused age of increasing mastery of matter and decreasing peace of mind. But both of them, Dürrenmatt and Frisch, apply themselves with consummate dramatic skill to showing up the grotesque weaknesses and failures of modern society in coping with the perverse and criminal propensities of man bereft of the moral restraints and physical limitations of the past. Both our compatriots have joined the front rank of serious playwrights of our age, not as prophets of doom but as warners and mentors. Both have had their most important plays performed on the London stage and on television and radio with increasing success.

After Frisch's “Fire Raisers”, played at the Royal Court, heard in the Third and seen on TV, and the magnificent performance of “Andorra” at the National Theatre (Aldwych) the enterprising group “Stage Sixty”, who have scored repeated triumphs at the Edinburgh Festivals and elsewhere, are now presenting his “Graf Oederland” under the title “Edge of Reason” at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, in a most attractive production. It is a play chiefly about the violent consequences of unresolved inner tensions produced in empty human minds by the monotony and restraints of respectability of their all too secure mode of existence. But it is also a play about the gullible stupidity and cowardice of society falling victims time and again to eruptions of power mania in their midst where one courageous act before it is too late could avert the impending tragedy. The obvious prototype of Count Oederland is Hitler, though Frisch eschews any political motivation to the rebellion in the mind of a public prosecutor, bored by his dutiful existence like the bank clerk he has to bring to justice, and impelled by unreasoning impulse to seize an axe and fell whichever guardian of the dreary order of things may bar his way. The insane murderer finds a following of other maniacs looking for a leader, is vainly pursued by indolent defenders of the established order and finally not only accepted but positively invited and persuaded to become the new ruler of their soulless state.

The play is running for four weeks to October 17th. No one should miss it or shun the effort of the journey to Stratford-at-the-Bow in the East-End, taking barely twenty minutes from Oxford Circus by Central Line.

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HOW TO JOIN A SWISS SOCIETY

The Editor is occasionally asked by newcomers to the Swiss Community in Great Britain why the “Swiss Observer” does not carry a list of all the Swiss Societies and their activities. Seeing that there are two score and more, it is not possible to include such a list in the limited space available. Anybody interested should apply to the Editor who will be happy to give the necessary information.

THE EDITOR'S THANKS

The Editor wishes to thank all those readers who kindly send in interesting items of news or draw her attention to special events, anniversaries and deaths. She regrets she is unable to thank everyone individually, but she would like to assure readers that she greatly appreciates their interest and is most grateful for such information.

NOTICE TO SOCIETIES

In order to prevent any clash of meetings and other functions, the Societies are asked to inform the Editor as soon as possible of all forthcoming events, even though they may not be open to outsiders. Dates are regularly published under “FORTHCOMING EVENTS”, and this should be of great help to societies and individuals.

OUR NEXT ISSUE

Our next issue will be published on Friday, 23rd October. We shall be glad to receive reports and articles not later than Wednesday, 14th October. Short news items only can be accepted later. Delays have occurred in the past recently, and it is advisable to send off articles and reports in really good time.

Nouvelle Société Helvétique

London Group

Tuesday, 20th October, 7.45 p.m.

at the Swiss Hostel for Girls

9/11, Belsize Grove, N.W.3

OPEN MEETING

A talk in English by Mr. A. KELLER

U.K. Manager SWISSAIR,

on

“SWITZERLAND AS AN INTERNATIONAL AVIATION CENTRE”

and a showing of SWISSAIR films

All Swiss and their friends are cordially invited.

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11 Belsize Park, London N.W.3.

(Nearest Underground Station: Belsize Park)

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