

Swiss artists in Great Britain

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

A SOIREE FAMILIALE WITH A DIFFERENCE

The City Swiss Club entertains

Before the war, the City Swiss Club used to arrange "Cinderella Dances" — happy get-togethers with a good meal, no speeches and plenty of dancing until midnight. When social activities came into their own again after the end of hostilities, the Club started "Soirées Familiales" which gave the ladies a chance to make an appearance. These gatherings have proved very popular, and the one organised for Tuesday, 22nd March, was no exception.

About seventy-five members and friends met at the pleasant Park Suite of the Dorchester Hotel for an excellent dinner in congenial atmosphere. The President, just back with his wife from a tour of South Africa, welcomed members and friends, amongst them Mr. and Mrs. Charles Chapuis, loyal as ever, the new Swiss Defence Attaché Colonel Wilhelm Frei and his wife and daughter, Dr. Max Homberger, an old friend of the Colony, in London *de passage*, and last but not least, the Head Chef of the Dorchester, Mr. E. Kaeufeler to whom much of the evening's culinary enjoyment was due. Mr. Bonvin also welcomed Mrs. A. Stauffer who, together with her late husband, has a special place in the Club's affections, and the Editor of the "Swiss Observer". He thanked the two gentlemen, too, who were responsible for organising the *Soirée*, Messrs. E. Tobler and H. Jauslin.

As is the custom at these gatherings, some form of entertainment is provided, either by a speaker of repute or an artist, and this time it was a conjurer. Mr. Mac Wilson, M.I.M.C., not only entertained the company, but his wizardly performance literally kept everybody spell-bound. He may be a civil servant by profession, but there was nothing amateurish about his art. Trick followed trick, and whenever one thought one had discovered how it was done, disappointment followed immediately, and what seemed the solution was just another trick, and we were none the wiser. Mr. Wilson certainly proved that he had earned his qualification as a Member of the International Magicians' Circle. What made his performance even more attractive was his Scottish humour and his unassuming charm.

I suspect that I was not the only one that evening thinking that a little bit of magic would be welcome to help us along in our daily worries. The "Swiss Observer" could certainly do with a magical operation which would suddenly produce new readers and advertisers, make subscribers who are in arrears pay up at the swish of a wonder-working wand. But then, all said and done, magic is only the *pretended* art of influencing the course of events by occult control; we have to deal with realities. However, Mr. Wilson's inexplicable make-belief cast a happy spell on the evening, and a happy memory is magic, too.

MM

PRESS RECEPTION

The Swiss Press in London were the guests of the Swiss Ambassador and Madame B. de Fischer at a Reception at 21 Bryanston Square, W.1, on 18th March. There are about forty correspondents of Swiss newspapers and periodicals in this country, of whom a dozen are Swiss nationals.

SWISS ARTISTS IN GREAT BRITAIN

The Swiss community in the British Isles have had more than the average dose of Swiss artists performing over here during March. It began with Mr. Paul Kletzki conducting at the Festival Hall; his appearance in London is frequent and successful.

Another Swiss artist, no newcomer to this country, who was well received, was Mr. Guy Bovet. He gave organ recitals in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, St. Albans and Bangor, Edinburgh and Dundee as well as Dublin.

The Zurich Chamber Orchestra under Mr. Edmond de Stoutz gave concerts in Whitehaven (Cumberland), Sunderland, Leeds and Folkestone, and they made their London *début* with a concert at the Festival Hall on 7th March. They, too, had a good Press; "The Times" said that the playing of the Swiss visitors had nothing to fear from comparison with the best English Chamber Orchestras, and that the precision of their rhythmic ensemble was exemplary, their tonal balance almost as good, and that they gave performances which were taut and fully alive from beginning to end under the vivid direction of Mr. de Stoutz.

Mr. Ruben Lifschitz, born and bred in Berne, gave a successful piano recital at London's Wigmore Hall on 26th March, and he, too, was given good reviews. "A gentle giant among pianists" "The Times" critic called him.

Incidentally, neither Swiss Embassy nor "Swiss Observer" were notified in advance of Mr. Lifschitz's concert, as was the case with Mr. Hansheinz Schneeberger (violin) who gave a concert with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra on 15th February.

Just for good measure, two of our Swiss pianists mainly resident in this country, also gave recitals at the Wigmore Hall. Miss Huggenberg's and Miss Weisbrod's concerts have been mentioned separately in the columns of the "Swiss Observer". (See next issue for Miss Weisbrod.)

We should also mention here Friedrich Dürrenmatt's "Hercules and the Augean Stables", the satire on democracy or rather on the impossibility of heroism in a world of narrow-minded bureaucracy, performed with success at Ealing's Questors Theatre.

Finally, we should add "Santa Cruz" by Max Frisch, performed by the Radio Stage Company at the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith.

PERSONAL

Mr. John Frei and family, of 33a Orchard Avenue, Shirley, Croydon, are most grateful to their friends for the kind and comforting messages of sympathy and floral tributes received in their sad bereavement.

* * *

We wish to congratulate Miss Jacqueline von Gunten, daughter of Mr. H. E. von Gunten, 12 Oakway, Raynes Park, S.W.20, on her marriage to Mr. William Burgess. We wish the young couple every happiness for the future.