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ONE OF Britain's most unusual cultural exports to Switzerland is the brass band, an art form which originated in the coal mining areas in 1830 and spread swiftly with the growth of the industrial revolution.

Yet it took 125 years before it found a toe-hold in Switzerland, where it was introduced by Ernst Graf. After spending several years in Northern Ireland he returned home and formed his Brass Band Speicher.

Later contemporaries such as André Winkler, Daniel Aegerter and Ernst Eggern formed bands in different regions of Switzerland. Among the early pioneering bands were Schötz, Bürgermusik Luzern, Allianzmusik Basel, Münsingen, Eschlikon and Lommiswil.

As the movement developed brass bands from Britain went on concert tours of Swiss towns, and were greeted by wildly appreciative audiences.

An indication of the professionalism of the Swiss brass band today is vividly illustrated

Sounding brass from Switzerland

by a record just released in Switzerland, "Brass Band Berneroblerland" (*Claves, D.8006*).

The band is conducted by 34-year-old Markus S. Bach, who comes from Saanen, Canton Berne, and has been christened the Swiss Harry Mortimer.

He started playing as a boy with the Band of Saanen, first on the cornet and later on the trombone. He studied at the conservatory of Berne and then under Professor Jules Philippe Godard in Lausanne, but to get more experience in the brass band world he came to Britain, where he played first trombone with two London bands – at Hendon and Hanwell.

Today he is recognised as one of the top Swiss brass band

specialists. He founded the Brass Band Berneroblerland and the National Youth Brass Band of Switzerland. He is a member of the Swiss Army Staff Band, and is president of the Swiss Army Band Conductors' Association.

Markus S. Bach's contribution to the world of brass bands is internationally recognised. The first track on his new record – the melodic and rousing "BBO Marsch" – is in fact a 10th birthday present to the BBO from English composer Roy Newsome, leader of the famous Black Dyke Mills band. Its main theme has been cleverly adapted from the traditional Swiss folk tune, "Ds Oberland."

Principal soloist on the record

is one of Britain's top brass band players, Gordon Higginbottom, who has taken a close personal interest in the development of the brass band movement in Switzerland.

"The Swiss scene is rapidly becoming the envy of many English bandsmen," he said. "The Swiss make music for pleasure and as yet are unbiased or financially motivated. This is a fact which is evident in the rapidly improving standards of Swiss bands.

"What is more the Swiss are eager to go on learning until they reach the limits of their individual ability. There is a marked lack of complacency which, unfortunately, is not the case in England any more."

Month brings ballet, music and the law

EMINENT Swiss lawyer Professor Luzius Wildhaber is to make a lecture tour of British universities this month.

Professor Wildhaber, holder of the chair of public law at the University of Basle and legal adviser to the director of international law at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, is to lecture on "Switzerland and the United Nations" and "The Revision of the Swiss Constitution."

Also appearing in the UK this month are star of Swiss ballet Manola Asensio, conductor Tamas Vasary, clarinetist Eduard Brunner and Die Kammermusiker of Zurich.

The full programme of events is:

Manola Asensio performs

leading roles in London Festival Ballet's Christmas season of "The Nutcracker" at the Royal Festival Hall.

Friday, December 26 to Saturday, January 3. Two performances daily at 3 and 7.30pm.

Monday, January 5 to Saturday, January 14. Evenings at 7.30pm and Saturday matinée at 3pm.

Tamas Vasary conducts the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra.

Wednesday, January 21, 7.30pm, St. Cuthbert's Church, Carlisle.

Thursday, January 22, 7.45pm, City Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Friday, January 23, 7.45pm, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London.

(Tamas Vasary is also the

soloist in this concert in Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor).

Professor Luzius Wildhaber lectures on "Switzerland and the United Nations" (provisional programme).

Wednesday, January 21, 11am, University of Edinburgh.

Friday, January 23, 2.30pm, University of Kent, Canterbury.

Thursday, January 22, 5pm, All Souls College, Oxford.

Monday, January 26, 8pm, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth.

Wednesday, January 28, 11am, University of Leicester.

And on "The revision of the Swiss Constitution."

Tuesday, January 27, 11am, University College of Wales,

Aberystwyth.

Thursday, January 29, 11am, University of Leicester.

Eduard Brunner plays the clarinet in two concerts with the Lindsay String Quartet and the Medici String Quartet in programmes of works by Mozart.

Saturday, January 3, 7.45pm, Queen Elizabeth Hall.

Sunday, January 4, 3pm, Queen Elizabeth Hall (with Andras Tuszeghi, viola).

Die Kammermusiker, Zürich play in an England tour.

Saturday, January 24, Middleton Hall, Hull.

Thursday, January 29, Oxford.

Friday, January 30, Chester.

Sunday, February 1, Marlborough College, London.



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