



## MOISEVITCH IN TEL-AVIV

*Famous Pianist Plays with the Palestine  
Symphony Orchestra*

(By a Special South African Correspondent).

MOISEVITCH in Tel-Aviv . . . Less than a year ago I sat in the Colosseum Theatre in Johannesburg listening to the glorious playing of this great pianist; the audience was sparse and the appreciation only fair. This time it was different. Moisevitch was playing before a keenly appreciative audience, whose enthusiasm broke out in tumultuous applause as he came to the end of a beautiful Tchaikovsky composition.

Later I saw him in his room. He was surrounded by a host of admirers. Spotting me, and remembering, he called out, "How's Johannesburg?" and shook my hand warmly.

"There's a different atmosphere to-night," I remarked.

He understood. His eyes shone; "Marvellous!" he said.

Further admirers crowded in on him; he was positively carried away. As he was disappearing, he called out, "Come to-morrow."

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Coming to the concert again "to-morrow" was not easy. It was "worker's night"—the occasion after each new concert that a repeat performance is given to the workers of Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa. On the first night of the Moisevitch concert there had been an audience of three thousand people—three thousand distinguished, well-dressed, highly-cultured people—representative of the best in musical

audiences of the world, listening in rapt attention and perfect silence to Mr. Taube—the resident temporary conductor—leading his excellent orchestra of seventy-four players through the intricacies of good classical music. But the following night no seats could be booked. The three thousand seats were for the workers of the various labour organisations.

I wanted, keenly, to be present, so I called the next day at the busy office of the Palestine Orchestra, sending in my card. The magic words, South Africa, were sufficient to bring the manager out at once. He explained the difficulty of the position. The workers were very keen on the orchestra. "In that case —" I murmured. "No," he said, "Please —." And after a few minutes of conversation with one of the officers of the Histadruth, I was given a special invitation admitting me to the concert as a guest of the workers.

The sea of faces I saw in the same hall that night was very interesting, but very different to those of the night before. They were all workers and labourers—men and women, dressed simply, in the dark blue cloth of the agricultural workers. Yet what was particularly noticeable about them was that work of the hardest kind—and there is definitely nothing that Jewish labourers in Palestine have not undertaken — had not hardened

them against the more delicate things of life. I saw four Jewish policemen hurry in just before the concert started. They had just gone off duty, and had not had time to change their clothes, so they walked into the hall in their uniforms, and sat down, listening keenly and applauding lustily at the end of each item on the fine classical programme.

The performance went with a fine swing, and Benno Moisevitch played superbly. This time he seemed even more inspired. There was something poignant yet beautiful about the whole evening's experience. Here I sat from faraway South Africa, listening to what is undoubtedly one of the finest musical combinations of the world—made up of an orchestra, the members of which were all masters of the instrument they played (many had been conductors and musical directors in the countries from which they had been driven). The visiting artist was one of our own people, who for the first time in his career was playing before a hundred per cent. Jewish audience—it seemed as if a son were returning to his people—for both the orchestra and the audience were of a race that the world has had to admire for their musical culture—and the whole performance was being held in the throbbing centre of the wonderfully developing National Home.

The wonder of it all is that this splendid orchestra to which the Yishuv has opened its gates (and let me add, also, as far as is humanly possible, its pocket) was completed in the bitterest days of the disturbances of the last year.

Recently, at Nathania, that rising Jewish city of great beauty, two great Arab Sheiks and their parties were present at a performance of the orchestra, and when Moisevitch again played with the orchestra in Jerusalem, a few days later, the High Commissioner was present with his entourage.

All honour goes to Bronislaw Huberman, who had the vision and made the necessary sacrifice to build up what is to-day one of the finest achievements of the Yishuv. It must be said, too, that to some types of Jew and Jewess who have come to Palestine by force of circumstance rather than by any prompting of Zionist feeling, the orchestra has come as a God-send. Their music gives these people not only aesthetic satisfaction, but reconciles them to the new life.

With music to brighten the days, life can be full and sweet in the land of one's ancestors. . . . The orchestra is but the beginning of a new creative life for the Yishuv.

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