

# A Chat with Pnina Saltzman

## ★ Progress of Palestine Music ★

**P**PNINA SALTZMAN'S personality combines the simplicity of the Palestinian background with a Paris education (writes a representative of the "Zionist Record") who interviewed her the other day. She is enthusiastic about the progress of music in Palestine.

"Everybody there seems either to learn or to teach music," Miss Saltzman told me.

Music is taught in the city schools and in the kibbutzim and kvutzot, where periodical visits are paid by the Palestine Orchestra. Collections of the best records are among the most prized possessions of the settlements. The standard of music is high, and the audience although a warm-hearted one, is severely critical.

"It must be remembered that the people of Palestine come from various countries, and consequently their tastes vary. Numerous concerts and a wide range of programme, however, ensure that all tastes are satisfied.

Mr. Kestenburg, the Director of the Palestine Orchestra, delivers lectures on music appreciation to adults and children, and this leads towards better understanding of various composers.

### The Orchestra

Miss Saltzman has played with the Palestine Orchestra 58 times. "It is a wonderful orchestra; Toscanini regards it as one of the three best in the world," she remarked. The violinists are particularly good. Five of the first violinists take it in turn to lead the orchestra."

### Composers

I asked Miss Saltzman whether original compositions of importance are being written in Palestine.

"The orchestra," she replied, "often performs works of Palestinian composers, and gives them every encouragement." One of the best known, she said, is Boscowitz. His style is decidedly oriental. He is now composing a concerto specially for Miss Saltzman to play with the orchestra, "and I am proud to be honoured by him in this way," she added.

"Joseph in Egypt" and "The Twelve Tribes of Israel" are two interesting symphonic suites by Shternberg, a serious composer whose home has been Palestine for many years. Mark Lavri recently wrote a striking symphonic poem, "Stalin-grad," played in Egypt at the United Nations' Musical Festival where Miss Saltzman also performed. The composition has now been sent to an orchestra in Moscow.

Kaminsky, one of the leading violinists, has written a suite on the theme of "Maoz Tsur," and Ben Chayim, a pianist, has composed a symphony and a concerto which are well thought of.

Starominsky, who studied in Paris, is the youngest of the Palestine composers with an essentially modern outlook.

"Just before I left Palestine," Miss Saltzman said, "I heard his 'Cantata for Sabbath' performed by orchestra and choir. It was very beautiful and impressive."

I asked Miss Saltzman how these musicians and composers maintained themselves. "It's a mystery," she smilingly replied.

### Active Cultural Life

Palestine leads an active cultural life. The public loves drama, ballet

and opera as well as music. The actors of the Habimah are younger than ever, and are full of energy. They are now rehearsing "Hamlet." Miss Saltzman's uncle, Mr. Barban, by the way, is a leading actor in the "Ohel" theatre, and her aunt, Casta-



lanitz has just played the principal role in "For Whom the Bell Tolls," which was a great success.

The Opera company has been praised for its recent production of "The Beautiful Helen," by Offenbach. Gertrude Kraus is Palestine's leading ballet dancer. Her performances are very popular, especially when accompanied by the Palestine orchestra.

### Frug Street

Tel-Aviv, by the way, is developing its own artists' quarter. Frug Street, named after a famous Jewish poet, is the abode of many musicians and actors. "We are all neighbours there," said Miss Saltzman.

She began her musical studies at the "Shulamith" music school in Tel-Aviv under the late Mrs. Hopenko. While on a concert tour in Palestine, Alfred Cortot was so impressed by her playing that he arranged for her to go to Paris, where she entered the "Ecole Normale de Musique." When she was thirteen years old she obtained her "Licence de Concert," and in 1938 won the "Premier Prix de Piano" at the "Conservatoire Nationale de Musique." In Paris she played with the Colonne Orchestra under the direction of Mr. Paul Paray, and gave recitals in various cities of France and Poland, Egypt and the Lebanon.

Miss Saltzman has been Palestine's wartime concert favourite and has done much

in her frequent appearances with the Palestine Orchestra to make up for the absence of the famous soloists from abroad who had been appearing in pre-war years. Typical of what Palestine's concert-goers say of her is the following comment from the "Palestine Post" on her farewell appearance with the orchestra.

"In Cesar Frank's Symphonic Variations, Miss Saltzman has always revealed the sum total of her particular gifts, and with an impeccable rendering, succeeded again in providing a wholly pleasurable experience."

Miss Saltzman has given many performances to soldiers in Cairo and the desert, where she met a number South Africans. "Soldiers make very appreciative audiences," she said.

Miss Saltzman does not play jazz, but she thoroughly enjoys it. She practices for four hours every day. This young pianist has chosen her own programmes. Her opening concert is scheduled for February 7.

### "ORT ASSUMES FRESH SIGNIFICANCE"

#### Tribute by UNRRA Chief

"With the urgency of rebuilding Axis-devastated Europe looming larger in our thoughts, the unique practicability and value of Ort assume a fresh significance—greater perhaps that even before in its sixty-three years' existence," states the Hon. Herbert H. Lehman, Director-General of UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration), in a message to the Conference of the American Ort Federation.

### Vivid Example of Resourcefulness

Mr. Lehman points out that the long experience possessed by the Ort-Oze as a technical training organisation should prove useful in turning out mechanics and farmers who will participate in the reconstruction of devastated areas. The schools which Ort is operating for refugees in neutral and Allied countries, he says, are a vivid example of the resourcefulness and ability of Ort to operate in the face of obstacles. In the occupied countries Ort leaders and experts are waiting for liberation so that they may resume their interrupted task of helping the uprooted Jewish people to become useful citizens.

"Ort merits generous support, so that it can equip itself to participate in the work that lies ahead," Mr. Lehman concludes.

**VICTORIA HOTEL, MUIZENBERG**  
(Licensed)

A Superior Establishment in a fine position near the Beach. 60 Bedrooms, large Dining Room, Children's Dining Room, Lounges, Cardrooms, Balconies. Completely Renovated and Up-to-date.

Conducted in the same manner as regards Service, Cuisine, and Table Appointments, for which we have often been commended. **WRITE AND BOOK EARLY.**

FOR AN ENJOYABLE HOLIDAY COME TO

**HOTEL IMPERIAL**

ALEXANDER ROAD - MUIZENBERG.  
Newly Built - Strictly Kosher - 48 Bedrooms - Hot and Cold Water installed in all rooms - Spring Mattresses - Large Dining-Room - Excellent Table.  
Proprietor: **B. KOSOVER.**

**RUSKINS**  
*The House of Fashion*

**FASHIONS**

for every  
occasion  
to suit  
every pocket

**RUSKIN FASHION SALON**  
KERK & JOUBERT STS.,  
JOHANNESBURG.

*The Guardian  
of your Beauty*

PHONE 35-3535  
P.O. BOX 3177  
JOHANNESBURG

**Drink the Best  
Gold Label Brandy  
Export Quality**

Product of  
**STANDARD WINE & BRANDY  
CO. (PTY.), LTD.,**  
WHOLESALE WINE AND SPIRIT  
MERCHANTS,  
26-28 Chiappini St., CAPE TOWN

**Use More Blocks  
to Illustrate your Catalogues,  
Advertisements and  
Brochures**

**PICTORIAL  
PROCESS  
ENGRAVING**  
CO. (PTY.), LTD.

SPECIALISTS IN LINE AND  
HALF-TONE BLOCKS

PICTORIAL HOUSE,  
4, Harrison Street,  
JOHANNESBURG.  
Phone 33-1817 P.O. Box 6614