

Jascha Heifetz on Palestine

Interview to S.A. Jewish Chronicle.

Jascha Heifetz, probably the world's most celebrated violinist, whose arrival in Cape Town on Monday has created a stir in musical and social circles, is on his fourth tour round the world, and has arrived in Cape Town direct from Paris.

Heifetz was in Palestine as recently as February of this year, and had much to tell of the development of the country since his last visit in 1926, when interviewed by a representative of the "S.A. Jewish Chronicle" this week.

"The upbuilding work in Palestine," he said, "is proceeding steadily. The people there don't seem in any way discouraged—in fact I don't think they can become discouraged. They have youth there and energy, and the spirit of the country is wonderful. Tel-Aviv has changed considerably and has become a good sized city. There are lots of buildings, and many improvements in every respect. Musically too they have grown. Their music schools are perhaps not always what they want, but they have managed somehow. In a small way we have tried to encourage them, and to rouse their interest in music. This did not require very much effort, for the interest has always been there."

Jascha Heifetz Fund.

Questioned with regard to these latter remarks, Heifetz explained that during his 1926 visit he had arranged that the proceeds of his concerts should be set aside as a nucleus for a fund to foster musical development in Palestine, by means of loans to talented persons unable to afford tuition, scholarships etc. This was known as the Jascha Heifetz Fund. To-day the fund stood at about £2,500 and there were seven scholarships in all—three in Tel-Aviv, two in Jerusalem and two in Haifa. He wanted the Jewish people to contribute to that fund and had hoped on his last visit to be able to raise a certain amount. But he had found that times were too bad at present.

One of the differences, said Heifetz, which he had noted on this last visit, was that in his audiences. They had lost a little of the obvious enthusiasm which had previously characterised them and this was in a way a good thing. It showed they were settling down, becoming more calm. This feature he had noticed particularly in Jerusalem.

Asked whether he still favoured the idea of a Jewish conservatoire in Palestine as keenly as he had some years ago, Heifetz replied in the negative. "I am keener," he said, "on having schools, on providing the opportunity for those who have talent to study. Whether they study in a room or a conservatoire makes no difference. A conservatoire means an enormous expenditure—even in building alone—and before we can embark on any such scheme we should prepare the ground carefully."

Musical Talent in Palestine.

He thought there was decidedly musical talent in Palestine. Certainly he had heard the performance of people who were very talented indeed. In answer to the question as to whether he thought a distinctive Jewish music was being developed there, however, he stated that this was very problematic. "Before one can start developing one's own style," he said, "one has to know

every style that exists." It was true that Palestine consisted of a cosmopolitan community, each member of which brought into it something of the musical culture of his native country, and it was probable that something distinctive would develop as a result. But as yet he had seen nothing that could be called distinctive or outstanding.

"Of course," he added, "there has not been time yet. It is such a short while since the work of national upbuilding was started, that one could not expect to see anything of this sort yet. But they are striving towards it, I think."

Asked finally as to whether he intended visiting Palestine again, Heifetz said he certainly hoped to. "I promised them faithfully when I was there that I would come again and that I would not wait as long as six years on this occasion. I hope by the time I revisit the country times will be more normal and that I shall be able to help the fund—shall be able to bring to it something of my own financially, as well as contributions I may be able to collect in America and perhaps in other countries."

Jewish Associations Call.

During the week representatives of both the Dorshei Zion and Bnoth Zion Associations called on Heifetz. Both organisations were desirous of giving a luncheon in his honour, but owing to his numerous engagements Heifetz was unable to accept. It is hoped that on his return to Cape Town from the North it will be possible to arrange such a function.

(Continued from Third Column).

Heifetz is fortunate in having as his accompanist Mr. Isidor Achron, who is in every way a sensitive and accomplished pianist. His performance, as for instance of the orchestral parts of the Lalo Symphony, was outstanding.

Brilliant Performance by Heifetz.

A GREAT VIRTUOSO.

In the presence of an immense audience which included their Excellencies, the Governor-General and the Countess of Clarendon, Sir Herbert and Lady Stanley, and many prominent musicians of the Peninsula, at the City Hall on Wednesday night, Heifetz gave his first recital in this town. To an audience who had become familiar with his name as one of the most brilliant living violinists, who had heard his numerous gramophone records with increasing wonder and admiration, he played as exquisitely as only a great virtuoso could. He is a perfect technician and his performance contained a warmth often unsuspected in his records. His interpretations were in every way beautiful and artistic and his reception was overwhelming.

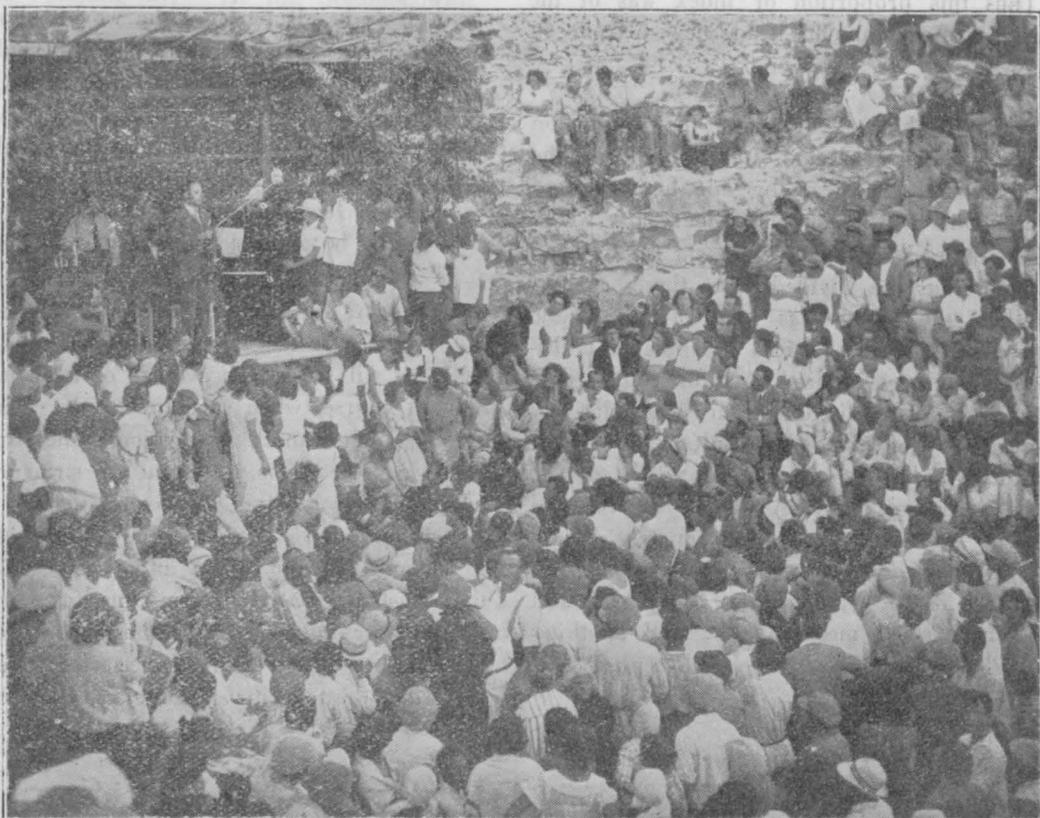
The first item on the programme was the Chaconne by Tomaso Vitali of which Heifetz gave an extremely fine rendering. Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole*, which came next, was brilliantly played and the climax was reached with the fourth movement, which roused the audience to genuine enthusiasm.

After the interval came a group of shorter pieces of which "Hora Staccato" (Dinicu-Heifetz) was perhaps one of the outstanding features of the concert. In his rendering of this most delightful selection, Heifetz was brilliant and was compelled to repeat the performance.

The Bach Air on the G string, a Schubert Rondo, Debussy's "La fille aux Cheveux de Lin"—all in turn were treated with beauty and sincerity and with perfect finish. The group was completed with Manuel de Falla's "Jota."

Joseph Achron's "On Wings of Song" was the first item of the final group and this, as did Caprice No. 24 (Paganini), required and received a particularly fine technical performance. As encores Heifetz played a Brahms Hungarian Dance and Sarasate's brilliant "Zapateado."

(Continued in Second Column).



A Scene in Ain Harod, Palestine, where Heifetz played to about 10,000 people in February last. The shed was built in a natural amphitheatre, the piano being carried thirty miles by bearers to the concert platform.