

Music and Art in Johannesburg

Contemporary Music Society

An Interesting Lecture Recital.

THREE modern Jewish composers of different nationalities, Respighi, Milhaud and Mahler, figured on the programme presented last Saturday night by the Contemporary Music Society, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Karnovsky, in Houghton. The occasion was a recital of modern songs by Madame Anny Lambrechts.

The singer was in excellent voice and did full justice to the two beautiful songs by Ottorino Respighi, one of which was a haunting "Maria" song and the other a melodious effort in the Italian folk song manner. It was surprising that Mr. Rodriguez-Lopez, in his prefatory remarks did not mention that Respighi was a Jew as well as an Italian, for his sympathetic understanding of maternal anguish and the intense feeling of a religion not his own (as displayed in the "Maria" song) is all the more noteworthy. Respighi wrote much under the influence of Gregorian music and his compositions have very little Jewish flavour, though it is interesting to record here that investigators have found much resemblance between ancient Hebrew and early Christian church music.

There is strong Jewish material in the songs of Darius Milhaud, from whose "Hebrew Poems" Madame Lambrechts chose three. The sentiment of the "Chanson de Nourrice" with its message of racial courage and pride and its berceuse lilt and accompaniment was admirably conveyed by voice and piano. But it seemed that the singing of the "Chanson de Forgeron" lacked the ecstasy which should surely inspire the smith who is making horse-shoes for the steed of the Messiah and the interpretation seemed inadequate against the energetic background of the piano accompaniment.

Gustav Mahler's "Kindertotenlieder" have become well known to music lovers by hearsay, if not by performance and Madame Lambrechts has on a previous occasion given a sample of their style and appeal. The rich quality of her contralto voice lends itself admirably to the demands of these exacting songs of death and mourning. If there was a hint of monotony in the rendering, it was largely due to the strain and quality of the five lengthy numbers. The singer faithfully expressed the emotional intensity and subjective nature of the whole conception.

The programme also included two intensely rhythmic songs by Hector Villa-Lobos, full of primitive strength and exotic mystery. Madame Lambrechts brought out to the full the striking vitality and strange power of the South American Indian music, the knowledge of which the composer used with tremendous effect.

Mr. Rodriguez-Lopez made helpful comments on each item and again proved himself an accompanist of outstanding ability.

D.L.S.

Harold Samuel Recital

The noted pianist, Mr. Harold Samuel, is giving a recital at the Colosseum Theatre on Sunday evening. The recent series of lectures which Mr. Samuel gave attracted large audiences throughout the country. These lectures were illustrated by pianistic excerpts and his many admirers have persuaded him to give a programme of selections from Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Debussy, Ravel and others. The concert on Sunday evening should attract a large number of music lovers.

On Wednesday, Oct. 14, Mr. Samuel will give a recital, under the auspices of the Johannesburg Musical Society, at which he will play selections from Bach, his favourite composer, and of whom he is the greatest exponent in the world to-day.

Miriam Stein Returns

Concert by Gifted Violinist.

At the Selborne Hall on Wednesday, the 21st inst., an interesting recital will take place. Miss Miriam Stein, the well-known violinist, who has been away from South Africa for a number of years (and who has now returned here on a short visit), will be heard in an attractive programme. There are many who still remember the fine work of this artist.

Miss Stein will have the co-operation of Madame Olga Ryss, the talented singer, who will be accompanied by Mr. Heinz Hirschland at the piano.

An added attractive feature of the recital will be the playing by Miss Stein of a group of her own compositions. The booking is at Mackays.

Recital by Miss de la Porte

A BRILLIANT SINGER.

The concert at the Selborne Hall on Tuesday evening was a notable one. It was the first public appearance since her arrival to South Africa of Miss Betsy de la Porte, a South African lady who has made a great reputation for herself as a gifted singer abroad. She has had the distinction of singing at the Covent Garden Opera, in London.

Miss de la Porte is the possessor of a magnificent voice. That she was able to use it with fine control was demonstrated in her interpretation of a series of songs in different languages. Perhaps her Afrikaans items were the most unique of an interesting programme, whereas her lieder were supreme interpretations in the art of song.

The artist was sympathetically accompanied throughout by Miss Suzanne Margolis, who also played a few piano solos from the great masters. Her performances show Miss Margolis to be a pianist of genuine talent.

D.

The Rev. Nathan Levine

Rev. Nathan Levine, after serving for eleven years as Minister of the Hebrew Congregation at Brisbane, Australia, has resigned from this post on account of his wife's health.

A farewell dinner was given to him by the local community, at which representatives of all sections of the business and professional life of Brisbane were present. Tributes were paid to the retiring minister for his loyal and devoted work. The toast to his health was proposed by the Governor, Sir Leslie Wilson.

It will be remembered that Rev. Levine occupied the post of Minister of the Port Elizabeth Hebrew Congregation.

S.A.B.C. Symphony Concert

The thirty-ninth symphony concert of the South African Broadcasting Corporation's orchestra was held at the Jewish Guild Hall on Tuesday evening, the 29th ult. The programme began with the well-known overture "Midsummer Night's Dream," by Mendelssohn, which was played in fine style. Then there was Mozart's "A Little Night Music," which pleased.

An interesting and striking performance of Elgar's "Enigma" variations was given by the orchestra. This is a masterly work and gives splendid opportunity for orchestral strings on which the players were able to bring out the great beauty of a composition which stamps Elgar as one of the greatest of modern composers.

The conducting of Mr. J. Schulman was all that could be desired. He has fine control of his musical combination. D.

Simchas Torah Social

A most enjoyable function is promised in the form of a Simchas Torah Social at the Jewish Guild, Von Brandis Street, on Saturday evening next, the 10th inst. An attractive programme has been arranged in which Dr. A. Birnbaum, Mr. W. Rybko, Miss Ray Spiro and Mr. Edgar Bernstein will participate. Hebrew songs will be sung, to be followed by dancing. Admission is free to members.

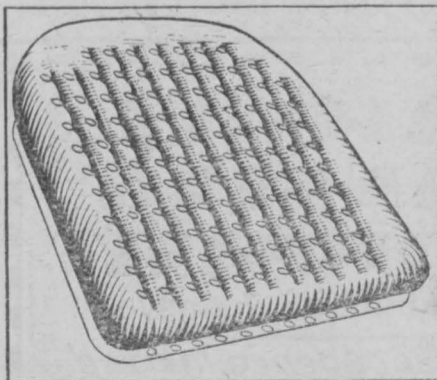
A BRIDGE AFTERNOON.

A bridge afternoon in aid of the Jewish National Fund is being organised by the Doornfontein branch of the Women's Zionist League on the 14th inst., at the residence of Mrs. M. Stein, 33 Houghton Drive, Houghton, at 2.15 p.m.

Pretoria Women's Zionist League

At the monthly "at home" given by the Women's Zionist League, in the Memorial Hall on the 29th ult., a symposium was held in which Mrs. S. Leftwich, Mrs. J. Freedman and Mrs. H. Phillips participated.

The hostesses were Mesdames M. Balzam, Seligsohn, S. Katzen, D. Shlom and M. Friedman. Miss B. Hamburg rendered pianoforte solos. There was a record attendance. Mrs. Ivan Solomon proposed a vote of thanks to the speakers.



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