

Conducting the Ballet Orchestra

AN INTERVIEW WITH M. LEO HOFMEKLER

A Jewish Symphony Orchestra?

AN important part of any ballet is undoubtedly the orchestral co-operation, and in the past there have been many famous musical conductors who have specialised in this form of work. Those who have attended the brilliant performances of the Ballets de Monte Carlo now showing at the Empire Theatre, have been particularly impressed by the fine work of the orchestra, under the baton of M. Leo Hofmekler.

In a short space of time this young conductor has been able to turn a group of local orchestral players into a fine musical combination to accompany a delightful series of classical and other ballets.

M. Leo Hofmekler is a member of a famous Jewish musical family. He was born in Vilna, where his father is a well-known cello player. The children were brought up in a musical atmosphere and young Leo started his career in the government musical college at Vilna, concentrating on piano-forte. On finishing his studies, he proceeded to Leipzig where he studied theory and counterpoint.

During the next few years, he made a close study of the operas of the various countries, especially devoting himself to the style of Italian opera, of which he is a recognised expert. Later he became associated with the famous conductor, Emil Cooper. Hofmekler was then invited to return to Lithuania and conduct the Government opera.

During the last few years he has built up a name for himself as a highly competent conductor of opera, ballet and symphony music. In conversation with a representative of the *Zionist Record*, Mr. Leo Hofmekler said that he was pleased with the progress which local musicians were making, under his conductorship, in so short a time.

"If these men were members of a permanent orchestra," he said, "they would form the basis of a good symphony orchestra. I would look upon it as a privilege to be associated with any such movement here. There must be a large number of good musicians whose ability is wasted by temporary musical engagements."

M. Hofmekler said he and the members of the company found South Africa a delightful country and the remarkable progress made here interested them.

"I notice," he said, "that our people progress here commercially and industrially. I have not yet seen many signs of artistic development. It would be a fine gesture if a few wealthy Jews in this country would initiate the establishment of a symphony orchestra and make this their own distinct contribution to the cultural life of South Africa. There is the talent here, but financial means are necessary. Such an orchestra would be an inspiration to the youth and generally improve musical education in this country."

The conductor was unable to give more time to our representative as he was called



M. Hofmekler.

upon to take over the orchestra for an important rehearsal.

There is no doubt that in M. Leo Hofmekler there is now in this country a striking musical personality. It would be a pity if he were to leave South Africa without some opportunity being given him to conduct away from the ballet orchestra.

"I would like," he added finally, as he rushed off, "to conduct a big Jewish choir with the accompaniment of a symphony orchestra. We have many Jewish literary and musical treasures which such a choir and orchestra could well interpret."

Visit of Mrs. Miriam Krol

YEMINITE HANDICRAFT.

There has arrived in South Africa an interesting Palestine personality in Mrs. Miriam Krol. This lady has brought with her a consignment of original handicraft work made by the Yeminite Jews of Eretz Israel. The goods comprise embroidery articles, jewellery, wood carving, filigree work and many other articles. All this work is produced by the human hand and is full of delicacy and rare charm.

It is the intention of Mrs. Krol to create a market for Yeminite work in South Africa. She states that the Yeminites—both men and women—are very fine needle workers. Depots for the sale of Yeminite goods have been established in England, Holland and other countries and Mrs. Krol feels that a depot should be formed in this country.

All women who are interested in home industries will look forward to the display of these goods which Mrs. Krol is arranging and which will shortly take place.

WOMEN'S BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

The annual general meeting of the Johannesburg Jewish Women's Benevolent Society took place at the Jewish Guild Hall on Tuesday, October 27.

Zionist-Socialist Party Activities

On Saturday night, the 24th inst., the regular fortnightly social of the Party took place at the premises of the Club. A fair audience attended. Mr. M. Lazar presided. Mr. I. Rabinowitz read a paper entitled "Dos Letzte Wort," by C. N. Bialik. Mrs. Ethel Miller sang several songs in Jewish, Italian and English, and she was ably accompanied by Miss Minnie Penn. Cantor Goldwasser (accompanied by Miss S. Malkin) sang several Jewish folk-songs, which were well received. Mr. Poliva from the Ballet Orchestra, played on the banjo.

The next fortnightly social will take place on Saturday, the 7th prox. Prominent artists will participate whilst an orchestra will provide the music for the dancing.

"THE WHITE ANGEL" AT THE COLOSSEUM.

Made by the producers of "The Story of Louis Pasteur," "The White Angel" — the current attraction at the Colosseum Theatre — is a magnificent picture telling of the life of the immortal Florence Nightingale. In the leading role as Nurse Nightingale is Kay Francis, and she is supported by a large cast including Ian Hunter. The supporting programme is enhanced by the first appearance of Charles Manning conducting the Colosseum Symphony Orchestra.

Top-Liners at Boxing Match

THE Transvaal National Sporting Club has organised a most attractive programme at the Wanderers on Saturday evening. Spike Robinson, the Irish Champion, will be seen in his first contest in this country, and will meet the hardy hitter in Phil Zwick.

There will be a return contest between Vernon Cormier of America and Geo. Anderson of South Africa. It will be recalled that Anderson got the decision at their first meeting.

Added interest is lent to the promotion by the appearance as a professional of Charlie Caterall, the South African Olympic champion. There will also appear on the same programme George Modirich, hitherto known here as a wrestler. This is his first boxing contest in South Africa and a large crowd of fans is expected.

ZIONIST SOCIALIST PARTY (Johannesburg).

Arrangements are complete for the "Mock World Jewish Congress" which will take place on Sunday, the 8th prox., in the Club. The evening will be a humorous one in every respect, and the "delegates" will represent all phases of Jewish thought, including Revisionism, Mizrahi, Ideology, Liberal Judaism, Communism, etc. S.A. Jewry will be represented by two "delegates."

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