

IN DURBAN

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.

All communications for this page to "Avon," P.O. Box 942, Durban.

Durban has lately experienced a period of quiet, following upon the many events which together constituted the Durban season. Since the July Ball practically no function of much importance has taken place, the only activities being the usual meetings which form the normal functioning of the various societies in our town. Towards the New Year and afterwards, several important annual general meetings will take place but at the moment there appears to be an interval of comparative quiet.

The season this year was especially remarkable for the several Jewish artists and musicians who appeared in Durban during the last few weeks. Prominent amongst an imposing galaxy of musical talent which municipal and private enterprise has provided for the public must be included Moiseiwitsch, eminent amongst world-renowned pianists, Isadore Epstein, who is a member of that select class of great teachers of the piano-forte, Hyman Sachs, the young Johannesburg pianist who has come to the fore lately, Adolph Hallis, without question the finest pianist South Africa has so far produced, and finally, that wonder-man, Victor Chenkin.

VICTOR CHENKIN.

The contrast between Mr. Chenkin's rapturous receptions at his six concerts in Johannesburg, his equally enthusiastic reception in Pretoria, and the none-too-well patronised houses in Durban, would furnish ample material for an interesting analysis on the musical or cultural differences between the communities of this seaport and the communities of the Rand or Capetown (meaning by community, of course, all the sections which comprise it). Other artists who have appeared in Durban have frequently experienced the same indifference to fine artistry as Victor Chenkin has, despite most glowing reports in the newspapers, but Chenkin's experience is perhaps unique in considering to what an amazing extent he succeeded in arousing enthusiasm for his genius in Johannesburg.

It has been remarked upon that the audiences of five hundred odd who made up the patrons at each of this actor's performances, were as satisfactory a proportion as could be expected. Despite the undoubtedly warm response Mr. Chenkin received, however, comparison with other centres still remains most uncomplimentary to Durban's artistic taste. One outstanding feature of the concerts which Chenkin gave in this town, was the wonderful manner in which the groups of Jewish Chassidic songs were received by audiences largely Gentile. At his third concert, for instance, at which only a few of his own people were present, this success of Jewish folk songs was particularly remarkable. This appears strange when one considers that to the majority of Gentiles their knowledge of Jewish characters is largely based on types made familiar by the present, in Durban, at any rate, had ever visualised such a Jew as Mr. Chenkin brought on to the stage (a type rarely seen outside the smaller towns of Poland and Russia) yet some beautiful cord of sympathy bound them to the quaint joy and laughter of such songs as "Ai! Ai! Ai!," "What Will Happen" and "Scha! Schtill!" The response to these songs was remarkable. Probably for the first time in their lives they laughed with a Jew, cleanly, and not at a Jew, cruelly. Such is the artistry of this remarkable actor-singer which Durban has foolishly ignored as it has ignored many good things before.

YOUNG ISRAEL NOTES.

Mr. M. Goldberg reports the activities of his society in the following interesting letter:—"During the past month this society has been in recess. This was a wise step since there were so many counter-attractions during July. When our activities re-commence the committee will be able to work with renewed energy.

"The next function will be our dance on August 9. The proceeds will be handed over to the committee of the United Talmud Torah, this being the first occasion on which money will have been raised for this institution. Consequently, we are hoping to receive the fullest support. The public is reminded that the tickets are now on sale and should be obtained without delay either from Miss Korb or any of her helpers.

"Subscriptions on account of the Keren Hayesod pledged are at present coming in very slowly. Now that the season is over it is hoped that donors will remember their obligations. It is as well to remember that the Rosh Hashonah number of the "Judean" will be out on time. All contributions and applications for subscriptions should be in by August 10 at the latest.

"The camp at Warner Beach is over. Everybody seems to have had a wonderful time. The organisation was not without its faults but nevertheless we must congratulate Mr. Mendelow on the spirit in which he carried out his duties. Excursions to Durban were arranged and plenty of exercise was indulged in, while the food was strictly kosher. The requirements of the campers were on the whole, satisfactorily met, and they have gone back to their respective homes with happy memories of a very pleasant time."

SOCIAL BREVITIES.

The engagement is announced of Pauline, eldest daughter of Mr. and the late Mrs. A. Levitan of Capetown, and H. A. Smith, of the Borough Engineers' Department, Durban, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. Smith, Observatory, Capetown.

The engagement is announced of Mattie, younger daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Lewis, 167 Florida Road, Durban, to Samuel eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. H. Freeman, of Enfield, England.

Congratulations to Israel, son of Mr. and Mrs. N. Hertz, Montpelier Road, on the occasion of his Barmitzvah on Saturday, 9th August.

Mr. Victor Chenkin, the brilliant singer of international songs, who has created something of a sensation on the Rand, and Professor Mois Zlatin, were the guests of Rabbi E. M. and Mrs. Levy one evening when several friends were able to meet these artists personally. An interesting evening was spent when Mr. Chenkin discussed various phases of his work and art.

The Culture Section of the Circle was responsible for an interesting evening entitled "Doctors' Night," on Monday, 28th July, which with the interest created by the medical conference sitting in Durban at the time resulted in an excellent audience responding. The subjects treated were "Drug Fiends," by Dr. H. R. Goldberg, and "Moses—the First M.O.H.," by Dr. Zaidel, of the Addington Hospital. Dr. B. Moshal was in the chair. Both the lectures proved absorbing and evoked much discussion from the members of the audience.

The "Rosh Hashonah" number of the Circle's magazine, "Hasholom," promises to eclipse the highly successful Tenth Year anniversary annual which was issued last year. An energetic committee under the chairmanship of Mr. S. Moshal, is actively engaged in preparing and collecting material for an outstanding production.

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