

Toscanini and Palestine's Orchestra

By

Bronislaw Huberman

THE project for a Palestine Symphony Orchestra has captured the imagination of many people throughout the world. Special attention has been focussed on the project on account of the decision of Arturo Toscanini, the world-renowned orchestra leader, to conduct its first concert in Tel-Aviv at the end of October.

PALESTINE has needed a symphony orchestra. There is a consuming thirst for fine music that possesses the Jew in Palestine to a greater extent than any other population in the world. Palestine's audiences are ten times as appreciative of good music as audiences in other countries.

In Germany, hundreds of my fellow artists have been deprived of the right to work. Orchestra musicians have been hit more cruelly, perhaps, than their brethren of other professions by Hitler's racial persecution. It is more difficult to save an orchestra musician than a member of another profession, for he can be creative only in concert with other musicians. His profession is a collective one. And there was no country that could absorb many orchestra players.

No country, that is, but Palestine. It was in the winter of 1933-1934, when Hitlerism was rampant, that I visited the Holy Land on a recital tour. Then it was I received the vision of a symphony orchestra for Palestine to bring together the desire of the country for music and the desire of the German musicians for a country.

Since then the plan has been enthusiastically received on all sides. When the idea spread in Germany, so many first desk men applied for membership that we are now in a position to bring to Palestine one of the most superb orchestras in the world. Twenty concert masters and solo-cellists alone, once members of the best German orchestras, have expressed their readiness to serve in the Palestine Symphony Orchestra, even if it is only in the last ranks, so long as they are enabled to escape the German Hell. Without exaggeration I can say we hope this "orchestra of concert masters" will become one of the two or three best in the world.

Aids Prestige of Jews.

CAN one imagine what it will mean to the prestige of the Jews of the world, what a blow to the ignominious lies of the anti-Semites, when in a year or two, it will be an acknowledged fact that the Jews have achieved in the shortest time what the most advanced nations obtain only very rarely and in a long process? Every performance, when broadcast through the new Palestine radio to the world, or delivered to international audiences during the proposed festivals in Palestine, or during concert tours abroad, will automatically work as the most eloquent accusation against the barbarism of the Hitler regime, as the most effective defence of the creative and constructive Jewish genius.

It was with this platform that I succeeded in gaining the support of that man whose great art mirrors his great humanity—Arturo Toscanini. He has consented to conduct the first concerts of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra at the end of October.

When I first tendered the invitation, pointing out that his support of the orchestra would constitute a historical mark both in the struggle against Nazism and in the upbuilding of Palestine, Mr. Toscanini unhesitatingly accepted. His immediate reaction was that it is the duty of every one to fight and help in this sort of cause according to one's means.



Arturo Toscanini.

Insists on Mendelssohn.

SUBSEQUENTLY, in discussing his first programme in Palestine with me, the conductor was specific that one name must be included in the programme—Mendelssohn, great composer, whose music is now barred in Germany. And so, fittingly, the maestro will include the Nocturne and Scherzo of Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream" music. In my conversation with him, Mr. Toscanini referred again and again to his keen interest in the upbuilding of Palestine. His visit there this fall, he pointed out, will enable him to observe at first hand the developments of that country.

He will arrive in Palestine during the middle of October. In preparation of Mr. Toscanini's coming, the orchestra will begin rehearsals on September 1 under the direction of Hans W. Steinberg, one of the orchestra's permanent conductors, formerly director of the Frankfurt Opera. The patronage of Toscanini, greatest living conductor, apart from obvious reasons, makes me particularly happy, because it will enable me to lead the institution in the same spirit I have been fighting and working for international understanding and brotherhood in Europe these many years.

Similarly, the generosity of many artists on behalf of the orchestra has been no less heartening. Thus, the first soloist whom I have asked to take part in the first season of the orchestra will be, not a Jew, but the violinist, Adolf Busch, that wonderful non-Jewish German artist, who in solidarity with his persecuted fellow-musicians refused to go back to Germany.

Seek "Community Culture."

WE are optimistic for the future of the orchestra. We hope it will be possible to develop in Palestine, in the field of music, as is already indicated by various symptoms in many other cultural fields, a general culture. With our orchestra, we shall work to achieve, not a class culture, but a community culture.

We intend to establish this first season ten subscription concerts and an equal number of concerts for the workers in Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, and Haifa. For the workers' concerts, there will be the same programmes, soloists, conductors as in the subscription series. The only difference permitted will be the difference in price.

Special arrangements will also be made for the agricultural population so that they may not be deprived of this source of uplift and joy. Concerts will, therefore, be given in the Emek and wherever else it will be possible to house the orchestra.

To Create Conservatory.

ANOTHER aim to realise in the next years will be the creation of a conservatory formed in part from the best members of the orchestra, supplemented by outsiders, and headed by one of the outstanding Jews in the field of music.

TOSCANINI AND PALESTINE.

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The music academy will be called upon to solve the problem which faces every musician at the beginning of his career; the question of his general education. Considering the nature of music, which demands concentration from the age of ten to twelve years on, most conservatories proceed on the false assumption that its pupils are adults, who have already acquired a secondary education like the students of other faculties.

The result is that every responsible parent is faced with the following alternatives: either his child begins his musical studies at the proper age and remains an otherwise uneducated person, or he attends a high school first and can never catch up with his musical training. To place the secondary education first is as reasonable as placing the choice between breathing or eating and drinking before an eighteen-year-old.

I visualise a specially planned music high school with a general curriculum similar in scope to the ordinary high school, though not necessarily consisting of the same subjects, and regulated by the needs of a music education. This school and its realisation belongs in the realm of the visions of those Jews who are not content with mere transplanting of the good and worthwhile things from America and Europe to Palestine. Theirs is the greater vision of enriching the world by indigenous creations in the land. Should my plans materialise, I foresee European and American parents sending their children to the conservatory in Palestine.

Plans Tours Abroad.

YET another plan in connection with the orchestra is the creation of international theatre and music festivals, where productions of classic and modern masterpieces of biblical content will be presented on their natural scenes. Also, after the orchestra has become consolidated and proven itself artistically by several successful achievements, it should undertake from time to time concert tours through Europe and America.

These international music festivals and concert-tours, as well as broadcasts, lift this orchestra project far above a characteristic German-Jewish act of a local Zionist cultural institution and show it to us in its highest aspect, this orchestra, with its membership of about seventy per cent. German-Jewish musicians is destined with each performance, to be a continuous indictment of Nazi barbarism and its lying anti-Semitic discriminations.

To the Palestine Symphony Orchestra—long life and a bright future!

Obituary

Mr. L. BRAUDE (Salisbury).

THE death occurred on the 13th inst., in Salisbury, of Mr. L. Braude, a well-known member of the Jewish community of Rhodesia.

The deceased was a resident of Salisbury for many years. At the time of his passing, he held the position of Deputy Mayor of the town. The late Mr. Braude came to Rhodesia in 1905, and engaged in business, settling in Salisbury. He took an active interest in all Jewish affairs and was warden of the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation, and also President of the local Zionist Society. He was a keen Freemason and was a Past Master of Lodge Israel and a Grand Lodge Officer of the Netherlandic Constitution. During his work on the Municipal Council he occupied the position of Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

There were a large number of mourners at the funeral. Besides members of the Jewish community, there were many non-Jewish mourners. The Mayor (in his mayoral robes and wearing his chain of office) was present with the other members of the Council.

The Prayers at the graveside were offered by the Rev. M. Konviser, Minister of the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation, who also delivered a moving address. Others who participated were the Rev. R. Middeldorf and the Rev. J. J. Rosin. A Masonic service was also conducted.

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To be Consecrated Next Sunday.

The official opening and consecration of the new Synagogue and Talmud Torah will take place on Sunday next, at 3 p.m. sharp. The service will be fully choral. The Rev. A. M. Kaplan will officiate and preach the consecration sermon. Other ministers of the Transvaal and Free State will also take part in the ceremony. After the service, tea will be served at the Dormy House, and in the evening, at 8 p.m., a banquet will be held at the Communal Hall.

"HECHALUTZ" (Johannesburg).

The activities of the "Hechalutz" have been almost completely stopped for the past six weeks, this being due to various reasons. The committee has decided to start anew the activity of the organisation in various branches with strengthened force and has arranged a programme of work for July.

A special social will be held at the Hechalutz Hall, on Saturday, 4th July. Special entertainment items will be introduced during the course of the evening.

The "Hashomer Hazair" has been allowed the use of the Hall on special evenings during the week, all the other evenings, which will be specified in the circulars, are available for the "Hechalutz" organisation only.

ATTRACTIONS AT PLAZA THEATRE.

Over the week-end the attraction at the Plaza Theatre is "Dangerous," starring two well-known stars, Bette Davis and Franchot Tone. From Monday of next week, Plaza audiences will have the opportunity of seeing a thrilling drama entitled "Way Down East." The stars in this film are Rochelle Hudson and Henry Fonda. The programmes supporting both "Dangerous" and "Way Down East" are good.