

Art and Music in Johannesburg

PAINTINGS BY IRMA STERN

Mrs. Millin Opens Interesting Exhibition.

IT seems peculiarly appropriate that South Africa's foremost woman writer should open an exhibition of pictures by South Africa's foremost woman painter. Certainly this idea must have occurred to many present at the opening of the exhibition of Miss Irma Stern's pictures by Mrs. Sarah Gertrude Millin on Thursday morning, 15th October, at the Carlton Hotel, Johannesburg.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Millin herself protested her unfitness. "When Miss Stern told me," she said, "that she would like me to open her exhibition, I warned her that I was not a fit person to open a modernist exhibition. Though I admire Miss Stern's work and wish to dissociate her from my remarks, I am not such an admirer of modernism as I used to be."

When first modernism broke upon us, continued Mrs. Millin, we thought that whatever was not bright and clear was no better than a piece of linoleum. We built houses that looked like stacks of dominoes and we bought furniture that looked like the entrails of machinery.

Those who painted old Cape houses and sunned apples all followed an Italian, a Hollander and perhaps four Frenchmen. Young men declared that Negro sculpture was better than Michael-Angelo. An artist on seeing children's work declared that many modern painters would be proud to paint like that. "I asked," said Mrs. Millin, "whether Shakespeare would be proud to write like a child of six. That was the beginning of my backsliding."

"I told Miss Stern that I was going to say things she might object to," added Mrs. Millin, "but she said she would not mind. I must say that I think Miss Irma Stern is the most original, intellectual and psychological painter we have in this country. When others were doing houses and purple mountains, she showed the meaning of Africa through the native. I feel that she teaches me something in her paintings."

Mrs. Millin pointed out several pieces by Miss Stern, worthy of special note. She remarked on their sculptural form. "When you look at them, you are not surprised that Miss Stern is a sculptor. She has the urge to create in every artistic sense of the word."

AN exhibition of paintings by Miss Stern is always an event of great interest and artistic importance. The large and distinguished gathering of artists and art lovers present at the opening bore special witness to this. But what gives greater significance to the event is that since her last exhibition here in Johannesburg, Miss Stern's work seems to have gained both in refinement and depth.

A comparison between some of her old work and the new, shows that her colour schemes are still vigorous but not so startling. In "Wild Strelitzias," the rich effect is produced by subtle use of black and white and by delicate tinting. In "Camelias" there is clever contrast of flowers and vase. In "Magnolias" there is powerful use of the whiteness of flowers against the darker fruit tones. Miss Stern still shows particular distinction in her flower studies and it is "Carnations" and "Flowering Gums" that linger most in the mind.

The all-round excellence of Miss Stern's charcoal drawings of Bantu figures, the striking effect of the subdued tones and strong groupings of "Fruit Packers," and the increased attention to landscape of which "Bamboo" is a particularly effective example in composition and perspective, all confirm the established reputation of Miss Irma Stern as an artist of outstanding achievement and national importance.

The pictures will be on view for some time.

D.L.S.

A VIOLIN RECITAL

Performance by Miriam Stein

The recital given by Miriam Stein at the Selborne Hall on Wednesday evening was well patronised and a programme of fine classical music was rendered. Miss Stein showed herself to be the complete master of her instrument and there is a vividness and artistry in her playing.

Besides rendering a number of excerpts from the great composers of violin music, the artist was heard in a number of her compositions. These show a fine simplicity and beauty which Miss Stein rendered in an attractive manner.

Madame Olga Ryss assisted the recitalist in a number of soprano songs and these were rendered in the usual gifted manner expected of so fine and experienced a singer. Mr. Heinz Hirschland accompanied Madame Ryss in excellent style and Miss Anne Stein was the accompanist for the violinist.

Next Broadcasting Concert

Mr. George Tobias to Conduct.

The next concert of the Broadcasting Corporation on Tuesday next will be conducted by Mr. George Tobias, of Capetown. This young musician is the conductor of the Capetown Wireless Orchestra, which has built up a great reputation for itself during the last few years. Mr. Tobias is well-known as a gifted violinist and pedagogue. He received his early education in Capetown and then went overseas to further his studies at the Royal Academy, where he became a sub-professor.

On his return to South Africa, Mr. Tobias was associated with the Capetown Municipal Orchestra under the direction of Mr. Theo Wendt. In his first debut as a conductor in Johannesburg, Mr. Tobias has chosen a most interesting programme.

Mr. Michael Dore

After completing a two years' engagement as conductor of the Colosseum Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Michael Doré, the well-known musician, has decided to make his home in South Africa. This decision will be received with pleasure by the musical world in Johannesburg, of which Mr. Doré has become a distinguished member. He is shortly to give a violin recital with Cav. L. Danza, the well-known pianist. It is to be hoped that Mr. Doré will also be seen from time to time with a baton conducting one or another of our orchestras.

Mr. Doré has opened a studio at 17 Melville Mansions (corner de Villiers and Claim Streets). Previous to coming to South Africa, Mr. Doré, who is Russian born, spent twenty years in England and was for a number of years an orchestral conductor for the Paramount Organisation.

"A Bantu Medley"

A Bright Entertainment.

Miss Bertha Slosberg is to be congratulated on having got together a fine company of Bantu artists who presented last week-end some excellent entertainment at the Darragh Hall. The best part of their work was undoubtedly the rendering of spirituals. Only negroes are able to interpret this delightful music in the correct manner. The present native company of dancers and singers are the cleverest group of this kind to give performances in Johannesburg. Owing to the success of the first performances, there will be repeat concerts to-night and to-morrow at the Darragh Hall.

SOUTH AFRICAN SINGER RETURNS



An Impression of the Artist in "Aida."

Operatic Success of Miss Mabel Lewin

A young singer who has achieved operatic honours in Europe is returning shortly to her home in Oudtshoorn. She is Mabel Lewin, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. I. B. Lewin, who has adopted the professional name of "Mabella Penetto."

Miss Lewin was a student of the South African College of Music for some years and gained the open Van Hulsteyn scholarship for singing. On her arrival in Europe, she studied opera in Germany and made such excellent progress that a few years later she undertook important contralto roles in opera.

On leaving Germany, Mabel Lewin publicly appeared in Vienna where leading Austrian newspapers expressed enthusiastic opinions about her work and predicted a great future for her. Later she obtained an engagement at the Zurich Opera, where she sang for several seasons with great success.

The gifted singer, who is due to arrive in this country in November, will spend a holiday with her parents in Oudtshoorn. During her stay here the musical public in South Africa will be given an opportunity of hearing her give operatic excerpts.

Master Louis Nicholaeff

During the recent tour of this country by Mr. Benno Moiseiwitsch, the world-famous pianist, he listened to a young lad, twelve years of age, who played to him and he was deeply impressed with the boy's performance.

The youngster, Louis Nicholaeff, is on the way of being a musical prodigy. Recently he won a bursary at the National Eisteddfod in Johannesburg, and also passed the higher Cape examinations, obtaining a further bursary. In the last six years, Louis has obtained twenty-six diplomas, five medals, and the Alexander Cup for his musical performances.

In February next, the young player is to be Barmitzvah. In celebration of this happy occasion, he will give a public recital of pianoforte music. The lad is a pupil of the Isador Epstein Pianoforte School.