

The jodlers & their English press

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THE JODLERS & THEIR ENGLISH PRESS

Our Swiss Jodlers have had an excellent English Press and, what is more, a large and appreciative audience at their Queen's Hall concert. It appeals to us like a "veni, vidi, vici" when we call to mind the discouraging reception accorded in this country to other Swiss "treats" which had not been arranged at such short notice. We reprint below the principal Press notices, of which we like the following from the *Daily Telegraph* (May 18th) best:—

Until last night, let it be confessed, we had not held yodelling in proper esteem. The Edelweiss Jodelclub from Switzerland came to Queen's Hall and practically told us what we have missed while for years our attention has been distracted by opera, symphony concerts, Lieder recitals, and other frivolous pursuits. It is true that even in Langham-place singers have been known to yodel a little, involuntarily perhaps; but not until these gentlemen from Lucerne sang to us of the Bernese Oberland and other delightful places and things in their own inimitable way did we know what that art can be like at close quarters.

And now we know whence Richard Strauss derived those marvellous leaping phrases in "Don Juan." Now the secret is out regarding the origin of Welsh musical art—that profound and mysterious cult. Now we know where the Tibetans get their long trumpets from (though they have improved upon the type). And the Science of semaphores? Herr Franz Hug, the Swiss champion for 1927, by his expert swinging of the national flag—more than once he threw it as high as the organ pipes and caught it again—demonstrated by simple pantomime how easy it is to convey a military (or domestic) secret by a mere gesture of the arm.

Equally good are the following three from the *Daily News*, *Morning Post* and *Observer*:—

An uncommon concert, and one of great interest, was given at the Queen's Hall last night. The Swiss Yodel Club from Lucerne, known as the "Edelweiss," sang several of their songs.

The concerted numbers were beautifully rendered with perfect ensemble and fascinating tone, and always there predominated the clarion calls of the champion yodellers.

When Mr. Franz Lotscher, champion yodeller and winner of the first prize in 1927, sang a solo, "The Jodel from the Cliffs," he created a sensation, brought the house down and was encored again and again.

Mr. Franz Hug, another champion, is both a yodeller and a juggler, for he performed wonderful conjuring tricks with the Swiss and British flags while he sang. These singers are artists, and at the same time artisans, for they are postmen, railway porters and the like, and moreover do not ask for pay, and are well worth hearing.

At the Queen's Hall on Thursday evening the Swiss Jodelclub "Edelweiss" appeared for the first time in England, and was greeted by a very enthusiastic audience. The programme given by these twelve gentlemen included a number of part-songs, the chief interest of which was the solo or double jodel after each verse. The technique of these Champion Jodellers was remarkable enough to hold the attention long after the novelty of the entertainment had passed. One soloist in particular was continually surprising us with the pure tone of his high notes.

A pleasant interlude was provided by Mr. Franz Hug, who can wave and hurl a flag as skilfully and casually as Tex McLeod can spin ropes.

Yodelling decidedly warms the heart: it warmed every heart in the Queen's Hall. As there is not much mountain air there to fill the lungs, the voices seem to tire after a little, but the crispness of attack and the clear articulation did not fail. It was a pity that all the songs had to be in two related keys, the authentic in E and the plagal in B; we got to know the yodeller's high E rather too well. The entertainment was varied by "flag-drawing"—a superlative form of flag-wagging.

If the reporter from the *Daily Sketch* (May 18th) is correctly informed one would expect our compatriots to visit foreign countries with a visible store of Swiss wines—something like the bank holiday trippers with beer bottles protruding from their pockets. If this is so it is no doubt due to the fact that Swiss wines are very poorly advertised in this country and that consequently our Jodlers were unaware that a supply of the home product—presumably sufficient for their wants—already existed in London.

By closing one's eyes last night at the Queen's Hall it was possible to imagine oneself amid the peaks of the High Alps.

The Jodelling Club of Lucerne, which carried off the championships of Switzerland last year, is celebrating by a tour to Paris and London. It is the first visit to England of most of the dozen singers, and the success they met last night encouraged them to a hope of coming back for a tour here shortly.

M. Franz Hug, the individual champion jodeller of the year, who gave a wonderful solo exhibition, explained to the *Daily Sketch* afterwards

that jodellers can only keep themselves in voice with the aid of their own Swiss wine, of which they brought a supply with them.

Their picturesque costumes, their wild Swiss cries, their fine, unaccompanied singing of their folk songs, and the "flag-waving" feats of Mr. Franz Hug, who showed how a large flag could be manipulated, flung aloft and caught like a dumb-bell, all contributed to an unusual entertainment; but most spectacular of all was the great alphorn on which the unnamed champion performed a solo recital.

The *Daily Mail* (May 18th), which also published a suggestive cartoon, tries to introduce a comic note by extolling the dormant talents of the London milkman, who is, of course, a familiar figure with some of the newspaper staff!

Music of the Alps—jodelling and airs on the cow-horn—were heard last night at Queen's Hall.

The visitors were a party of "Merry Swiss Peasants"—the "Edelweiss" Jodel Club of Lucerne—in embroidered jackets and well laundered white shirts. The Swiss peasant is by tradition merry, but he hides his merriment under an impassive countenance. At least the choir last night sang songs both merry and sentimental with the most strictly serious expression.

The songs themselves were but the pretext for a great display of Jodelling, principally by one expert, Mr. Franz Lotscher, the 1927 champion of all Switzerland.

Jodelling—a vocal exercise in falsetto—has romantic associations for all who have spent happy holidays in the Alps; while to the stay-at-home Londoner it is suggestive of the early morning milkman.

The milkmen of London should have been at Queen's Hall in their thousands last night to hear how the thing should really be done. There is undoubted talent among our milkmen, there are maybe potential champions. But the best are the veriest tyros compared with Mr. Lotscher.

What milkmen have we who could face a Queen's Hall audience like him, and earn applause such as Kreisler gets after his cadenzas? Something should be done about it. Are the British Olympic Games Committee asleep? If Mr. Lotscher could be induced to stay on and train our best talent, London areas at 7 in the morning might be as musical as the Matterhorn.

The Alpine horn was also played by a champion. The instrument is nine feet long and is best suited to the Alpine solitudes. England has too crowded a population. A third Swiss champion, Mr. Franz Hug, gave a display of "Fahnen-schwinger," or flag-wagging, with the Swiss national standard—a display that was nearly one of conjuring. Everyone enjoyed this evening of Alpine sports and thanked the champions heartily.

Decidedly unkind and totally at sea is the *Sunday Times* (May 20th) with its reference to the "Southern German and his Swiss imitators":—

These people—a dozen in number—gave us an innocent sort of entertainment at Queen's Hall on Thursday, their programme mostly consisting of part-songs in that vein of cooing sentimentality that is so dear to the Southern German and his Swiss imitators, and of an exhibition of jodelling by the "champion jodeller" of 1927. This latter was an interesting demonstration of all that can be done in the way of jodelling, which isn't much; anyhow, this sort of thing loses its romantic associations indoors. Another gentleman gave us a specimen or two of his virtuosity on the Alphorn. But by far the best thing of the evening was the flag-throwing and catching of "the Swiss Champion for 1927." This was really remarkably clever. I came away with the feeling that what we want at Queen's Hall is a bit more of this sort of thing and a bit less music.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

	BONDS.		MAY 22		MAY 25	
Confederation 3% 1903	82.25	82.25		
" 5% 1917. VIII Mob. Ln	102.00	101.50		
Federal Railways 3 1/2% A-K	86.15	86.30		
" 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	102.37	102.00		
SHARES.						
	Nom.	May 22	May 25			
Swiss Bank Corporation	...	500	825	823		
Crédit Suisse	...	500	945	941		
Union de Banques Suisses	...	500	742	737		
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	...	1000	2720	2705		
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	...	1000	4575	4595		
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	...	1000	3910	3955		
S.A. Brown Boveri	...	350	621	625		
C. F. Bally	...	1000	1570	1600		
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	...	200	921	925		
Entreprises Suizer S.A.	...	1000	1245	1247		
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	...	500	520	522		
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THE COMMITTEE.