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HENRY BAUD
conducts the "Orchestre Colonne" at the
Royal Festival Hall.

The Royal Festival Hall which is certainly one of the six finest concert halls in the world has become a great centre of real music lovers just as the old and dear Queens Hall was. The public is not the one you meet at the Albert Hall and the test both from the point of acoustics and critics is a hard one.

After a Season consecrated entirely to British Orchestras it was decided to invite one or two from abroad and the first to have this honour was the "Orchestre Colonne", so well known on the Continent but which has not been heard for many years here. They came under the direction of a Swiss conductor, Monsieur Henry Baud. Born in Lausanne, he commenced his musical studies at an early age; he founded the "Quatuor de Lausanne" and was its leader; this ensemble gave numerous concerts both in Switzerland and abroad. It was, however, only after the war that Baud found his real vocation as a conductor and his first success was in Paris where he conducted the "Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire". His popularity grew and soon he was to conduct four Concerts — some relayed by the Radio Diffusion Française — with the famous Orchestre Colonne. The programmes ranged from Mozart and Bach to the modern French composers amongst whom the musical world counts the Swiss Honegger with whom Henry Baud has very closely collaborated.

Henry Baud and the Orchestre Colonne gave three Concerts in this country, two at the Royal Festival Hall and one in Leicester which arose indeed very great enthusiasm.

The first Concert took place on the 25th of September and the soloist then was the Hungarian born *Livia Rev*, who played Chopin's E. minor piano concerto with beautiful clarity and distinguished command. The "Times" in a long and favourable article — an honour not often known by Swiss musicians — spoke of "the decorative arabesques that dropped like jewels through her fingers" which describes exactly what the audience felt. The Orchestra which had opened the first part with Schumann's Symphony No. 4 in D. Minor, a very strange and perhaps difficult piece to play in that Hall, played in the second part Mozart's Symphony No. 35 (Haffner) and ended with Ravel's Symphonic Fragments. By then the Orchestra (which had only arrived an hour before the Concert) had settled down in this beautiful, strange Hall, and its acoustics which expose the slightest shortcomings; the audience quite obviously was enjoying the characteristically bright tone of this French performance which was full of finesse. The rendering of Ravel was brilliant at times and made many people regret that not more French composers should have been included in the Programme.

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This was to be somewhat rectified in the second Festival Hall Concert two days later. Obviously the very favourable critics (it does exist!) had made an impression because it was a *full House* which came to hear the foreign visitors. The soloist was the distinguished French violinist *Jacques Thibaud* who was celebrating his 71st birthday. He received a grand ovation which no doubt contributed to his moving rendering of Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5. At this age indulgence is usually required but on that Thursday evening Thibaud showed that he had lost none of that clarity of play nor that delightful *élégance* which have made him probably the greatest French violinists. The atmosphere in this great Hall was really one of the "grand jours" and the pleasure of its audience seemed to inspire Orchestra and Conductor, being at the same time a severe test for the latter. Again Schumann (Overture de Manfred) — beautifully rendered in a way perhaps not often heard here — had opened the Concert followed by Mozart. The second part of the evening was at last consecrated to Honegger, Debussy and Ravel. The Symphony for Strings and Trumpet of the Swiss composer requires almost perfection and we felt the Conductor — who directed without score — was really one with this orchestra. Every detail was clearly heard. The best performance was, however, the rendering of the "Prélude à l'Après midi d'un Faune" which earned a real ovation to Henry Baud and his players. There is no doubt that French music has become extremely popular here and that the acoustics of the



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Festival Hall are particularly suited for this fine music. Ravel's "La valse" was played with great brio and charm and seemed a fitting finish; Henry Baud was recalled not less than six times and this still young and modest conductor shared with his delightful Orchestra a triumph which was certainly well earned.

Of our compatriot "The Times" said: "The Orchestra did some fine spinning in the Mozart symphony, notably in the Trio of the Scherzo. Monsieur Baud's experience as a string player was obviously responsible for the finesse of the phrasing throughout... Monsieur Baud secured all he wanted from his orchestra which included, among other qualities here and there in the programme, brilliance in Ravel's Daphnia and Chloë". And the "Daily Telegraph" after regretting that we had not been treated to more French music said "Henry Baud made the impression of a highly gifted conductor in the making, one we should be most happy to hear again".

The critics of the Concert in Leicester are extremely complimentary, but the serious music lovers will no doubt be guided by the critics always so severe of the two papers mentioned and feel therefore that our compatriot has every reason to be both happy and satisfied with his débuts in London, in this great Festival Hall which even distinguished conductors find a real test. We hope, with the "Daily Telegraph" that Monsieur Henry Baud will soon come to London again where the musical British public will be delighted to hear him conduct perhaps not so much the familiar music he knows but the French music they love.

R.

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ALBERT FERBER RECITAL.

On September 26th, our compatriot, Albert Ferber, gave yet another of his pianoforte recitals and treated his audience to some very excellent playing. He opened his program with four Italian pieces, partly solemn, partly light, very pleasant music to listen to. He continued with a Beethoven Sonata, the B flat major Opus 22, and as I expected, it was a brilliant performance. The same must be said also of a Schubert Sonata, the C. minor (posthumous) which was played with the vigour as well as the grace and charm it requires. To me these two sonatas were the best pieces of the evening, but, probably, Albert Ferber intended the Preludes by our compatriot from Geneva, Frank Martin, to be the *pièce de résistance*. These 6 preludes were a first public performance in England and I consider one must hear them more than once to form an adequate judgement. They are extremely difficult to play, thus Ferber rose to the occasion with his wonderful technique and gave us a masterful performance which called for full admiration of the performer. Someone called it "severe music" and I fully agree with this description. I should like to hear these preludes again — I should like to find out for myself what the composer wishes to convey. Mr. Ferber terminated his recital with L'Accueil des Muses by Roussel and Chabrier's Bourrée Fantasque; the latter is indeed fantastic and our friend gave us a spirited, a perfect performance. His audience was not lacking with warm applause which was richly deserved and which Mr. Ferber acknowledged with various encores. Our compatriot must indeed be grateful to his many English friends in the audience; if he had to wait for Swiss friends, he would still be waiting, for only two of us managed to support the artist who usually gives his services free to the Swiss Colony!

EPD.

NEWS FROM THE LEGATION.

The Swiss Chargé d'Affaires and Madame E. Bernath, gave a cocktail party, on Monday, October 8th, at the Legation, in honour of a Swiss Press Delegation at present in this country as guests of the British Government.

The names of the members, numbering six, are: Messieurs Nicole, Editor-in-chief "La Suisse"; W. v. Greyerz, Editor of "Der Bund", Hürlimann, Foreign Editor "Volksrecht"; Reber, Publisher "Vaterland"; Hartmann "Basler Nachrichten" and Mlle. Colette Muret of the "Gazette de Lausanne".

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