

"WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY?"

Interview With A Pianist From Palestine

A CONCERT will be given in the Wellington Town Hall on Saturday, October 13, which will be re-broadcast by Station 2YA. It will be the first big orchestral concert since Ignaz Friedman was in Wellington two years ago, and once again there will be a distinguished visiting artist—Pnina Salzman, the young Palestinian pianist, who takes part by arrangement with J. and N. Tait. The NBS String Orchestra and 2YA Concert Orchestra, augmented with additional players, will be conducted by Andersen Tyrer, and Miss Salzman will play the Tchaikovsky concerto in B Flat Minor. "The Listener" was told about the coming concert, and sent a staff reporter round to see Miss Salzman. This is what she told us.

MISS SALZMAN was resting on her bed when I called. Would I mind if she stayed there?

"Last night I had no sleep at all. I was at a party after the concert, and I had rationed food."

"Rationed food?" I asked, a little bewildered.

"Russian food. To-day I am not well. But what do you want me to say? The audience is the same everywhere. The scenery is different, but the audience is the same. They are most warm and spontaneous. It was a nice public here."

Miss Salzman answered my questions very briefly. She was so silent that I had difficulty in thinking what to ask her.

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One being made in Britain is called *The Mystery of Smugglers' Cove*, while another very enthralling serial dealing with the capture of horse thieves by a group of children is called *Bush Christmas*, and is being produced in Australia. A series of children's travel films are in hand, and special attention is being paid to the Dominions. It is hoped that some very interesting pictures of Australia will be taken in the near future.

Art and the Classics

Two children's feature films are being made, one in Canada and one in England. The British-produced one is particularly interesting. It is called *The Little Ballerina*, and deals with the life of London's stage children. We're hoping by means of this picture to introduce children to the ballet as a living and exciting art. If this proves successful we should be able to go ahead, and by putting the right stories into the right setting we should be able to arouse the children's interest in other great arts, such as music, painting, sculpture, and the drama.

We are always being asked if we are making screen versions of the great children's classics. We are certainly hoping to do so, if the stories lend themselves to film treatment. But we must remember that good films tell their stories in action, while many good books rely on telling their stories in words or by conversation, and therefore do not make good film material.



PNINA SALZMAN and two koalas

"The Palestine orchestra is the only one in the world where all the players are soloists. They were all picked by Huberman. They came from all over Europe. Polish, Russians, Hungarians, Germans. Now they all speak Hebrew."

"Hebrew is your language?"

"Yes. My first language. I speak it with my mother."

Miss Salzman did not look at me. While I tried to think of another opening, she gazed at the window, at the masts of ships, and the moving cranes.

"Afterwards I go back to Australia; then to Palestine for a few months. Then to England, and then to America."

I asked her what she had seen of New Zealand. She had seen Rotorua, but she made no comment. Somehow she got on to Wellington and its qualities.

"I have no sleep with this terrific noise you make here with your wind. And then the receptions, and the hand-shaking and smiling. Oh!"

Yes and No

But no question I could think of would start Miss Salzman talking. She would wait until I put a question that needed only a yes or a no, then give me yes or no. She was tired, and ought to have been asleep.

I took up her book of clippings. A very thick volume represented the Australian tour and the present tour of New Zealand.

"Do you do all this pasting and clipping?"

"It's no work. Only one clipping every day or so."

Miss Salzman has been photographed in many poses. There was the one with the koalas (it is on this page). The one in Red Cross uniform with a hand at the salute. That was a comical one. There was another with a saucy look in the eyes and a cigarette held at a rakish angle in the corner of the mouth.

Miss Salzman has also been spelled in a variety of ways. She has been—in the clipping books I saw—Nina, Phina, and even Pnina. She has been Saltsman, Salzmann, Saltzman, and even Salzman. I got her to write it herself, in our alphabet and in Hebrew, to be quite sure of avoiding errors. It is reproduced here. The Hebrew reads from right to left.

"The Same in the End"

There were more photos—in bathing suit; with the Duchess of Gloucester at a reception after a concert in Australia; with Dr. Malcolm Sargent conducting; a coloured one from the cover of an Australian paper.

"I was never like that. They made me look so Spanish and romantic. And with such complexion — like a healthy butcher."

Miss Salzman has a sallow complexion.

Then I said, thinking I might start something:

"Do you ever get tired of playing Tchaikovsky in B Flat Minor?"

"Never."

I went on looking through clippings.

"That's the trouble with you travelling pianists," I said. "You get so much publicity that by the time *The Listener* gets hold of you there's nothing new to be said."

Miss Salzman nodded.

"And even if there was," she said, "you have to be polite, so it all comes out the same in the end, doesn't it?"

N 3PS 2110
Pnina Salzman

Programme

2YA Saturday, October 13,
8.0 p.m.

THESE are the items which will be heard (not necessarily in this order) at the concert mentioned on this page:

TCHAIKOVSKI CONCERTO
No. 1 in B Flat Minor, Op. 23;
Overture, "Euryanthe" (Weber);
Choral Prelude for String Orchestra—"Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring" (Bach); Symphony in B Minor (Unfinished) (Schubert);
Tone Poem "Finlandia" (Sibelius).

PIANO SOLOS BY PNINA SALZMAN:

- (a) Rondo Capriccioso (Mendelssohn)
- (b) Mephisto Waltz (Liszt).

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