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Switzerland

MONITOR
PRESENTS

SCHOTTISCHES
LÄNDLER
WALTZES
POLKAS

THE LÄNDLER BANDS
OF
JOST RIBARY
AND
HEIRI MEIER

DESIGN: DAVID CHASMAN, PHOTO: SWISS NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE



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monitor

MFS 353

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MONITOR
PRESENTS

SWITZERLAND

SIDE ONE

1. AECHT VOLKSTUMLIED *In Folksy Style (Schotch)*
2. ALPENVEILCHEN *Violet Of The Alps (Ländler)*
3. GLUCK MUESCH HA *One Must Have Luck (Schotch)*
4. S'KÄTHY IM TRÄCHTEL *Kitty In Her Costume (Ländler)*
5. MIT SANG UND KLANG *With Song And Music (Waltz)*
6. GWÜRTZ MIT RASSE *Seasoned With Poise (Schotch)*
7. ALTI ZYTE *Old Times (Polka)*
8. NÜT MODERNS *Not Modern (Polka)*

Ländler Band conducted by HEIRI MEIER

SIDE TWO

1. A DER LANDSGEMEIND
At The Country Gathering (Schotch)
2. AM AGERISEE *At Lake Aegeri (Ländler)*
3. GROSSVATER TANZT *Grandfather Dances (Polka)*
4. ALTMÖDISCH *Old Fashioned (Schotch)*
5. S'SCHWYZEROERGELI *The Swiss Organ (Waltz)*
6. EN ALTE SCHWYZER *An Old Swiss (Ländler)*
7. FROEHLICHE MUSIKANTEN *Gay Musicians (Schotch)*
8. MORGESUNNE *Morning Sun (Ländler)*

Ländler Band conducted by JOST RIBARY

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LÄNDLER MUSIC IN SWITZERLAND

THE EXTENSIVE ALPINE territory in which it is located, as well as the absence of large cities, have given Switzerland a unique character. Although the country is keeping pace with modern civilization, many of the old traditions and characteristics have been preserved. This holds true, specifically, of the mountain regions.

The inhabitants of the separate Alpine valleys have individual cultural characteristics which are recognizable in their dialects, in their customs and also in their architecture and music. The typical dance music of the Swiss Alps is generally known as "Ländler" music.

In this "Ländler" music, which was developed in olden times far from the urban cultural centers, is found the true character of the Swiss mountaineer. He leads a hard life. He spends most of his time in the open, exposed to the inclemencies of the raw, ever-changing climate. In brief succession, he may experience blue skies and storms, rain, often snow, and biting cold. His is a continuous struggle against nature. As long as the sun shines, there is work to be done by the peasant. Perhaps it is just this hard life which explains his strength, endurance and his enjoyment of life.

A clarinet, a Schwyzer organ and a bass fiddle — that is the simplest, the classical cast of a Ländler band. It is a small band; yet it is complete. The clarinet should sound vigorous. Virtuosity is not required. It should be spontaneous music making. As the folk music of the Swiss Alps has its own characteristics, so has the Schwyzer organ, an accordion which was created for this purpose. It is built from wood and is much smaller and lighter than ordinary accordions. It is used exclusively for Ländler music. Its sound is exceptionally bright and expresses warmth as well as strength. Its sound, for the most part, merges with that of the clarinet, which it accompanies. The bass fiddle, with its dark sound, supplements two high pitched instruments. In short, sharp strokes, the bow moves across the strings.

The term "Ländler music" is not confined to typical motives and melodies, but also includes the manner of this original, strong and uninhibited music making.

The population in the mountains is extraordinarily music loving. If someone is particularly fond of Ländler music, it may happen that he begins to study an instrument. He learns by listening to his elders. He does not have to read music. He gains his training by following the example of the others.

Ländler music is played only at particularly festive occasions, at the dedication of a new church (Chilbi), for example, and at various other very special events.

Each kind of music, especially folk music, has its own atmosphere. There is a small room or a hall in rustic style, with walls of wood. A clarinet player and Schwyzer organ player make music, perhaps also a bass fiddler. The weather-beaten faces still remain unmoved. There is little talk. More and more people appear but hardly anyone leaves. Excitement mounts steadily. Someone lets out a joyous shout, then another follows. No one able to dance can sit quiet any longer. Nobody considers returning to his home until dawn arises. Even then many do not feel tired. The perseverance of these mountaineers is boundless. I can remember how Ländler bands, have played, almost without any interruption, till the following midday or even the following evening. Frequently, farmers leave in the early morning to milk their cows and do their chores in the stables — and then return! In more remote valleys, where there is no distraction or entertainment for many months, such festivities can extend for three or more days.

Sepp AMBÜEL

This recording is also available monaurally: MF 353

For complete catalogue of music from many lands write:

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Cover Design: David Chasman

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