Ralf Fischer
Vreni
Hanspeter Kung
Simone Kung
Walter Ratzek

Friday 9. march

**YODELCLUB EDELWYSS**

# 20TH. ANNIVERSARY BALL

Melb.
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Ansett



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# The Yodelclub Edelwyss

The setting — the old Swiss Club building in 161 Spring Street, Melbourne. The time — a Wednesday evening in 1953.

It was the usual picture on a Wednesday night when the old timers' would meet and would gather in small groups around tables enjoying the usual game of cards——Jass. It was one of those human reactions — the middle aged old timers who appeared to prefer the company of their own mates rather than to enlarge the circle by taking an active interest in the new arrivals. Such newcomers must have felt somewhat out of place wondering how they could ever intrude into the established circle and acquire a feeling of being "one of the boys".



There was, however, one of those old timers who was different. He, in fact, took a great interest in the young Swiss and he was always prepared to engage in a conversation to help them to find work or to assist in their other problems of accommodation and assimilation in general. His name was Rupert Hutter.

On the night in question, he paid his usual visit to the Club and was talking to a group of youngsters when suddenly, encouraged by the sound of a well-known Swiss tune which was played on the Club's record player, one of the young Swiss started following the tune and soon everyone joined into the song. This was the start of a singsong of Swiss folkloric tunes and some of them concluded with yodelling. Rupert was surprised to find himself surrounded by a small group of talented youngsters and, most important, some yodlers. Ru-

pert had tried previously to form a Yodel Group for years but had never found enough talent and there was especially a lack of potential yodlers. It was, therefore, not surprising that a Yodel Group was formed the same night. Their first performance was on the occasion of the Swiss National Day celebration at the St. Kilda Town Hall on the 1st of August.

The first two or thtree years were tough and the number of members hardly ever exceeded 5 or 6; only too often one of the members would return to Switzerland or decide to leave Melbourne. Each time such gaps were difficult to fill. It was not unusual for Rupert to drive up to 80 miles after practice night to take his yodlers home wherever they lived, as most of them could not afford a motor car.

The performances of the choir were very popular and it was, therefore, not surprising that the choir was invited to perform during the Olympic Games in 1956 in the Botanical Gardens Music for the People. The two songs were a tremendous success and, needless to say, there had to be an encore, which was entitled "Bärg Morge". This proved to be the most popular song for many years to come. It was such occasions that new friends were made and sometimes the choir even gained a new member.

One of the radio stations invited the choir to perform as guest artists and with the confidence gained the first record was produced. The news of the existence of the choir soon spread to other States and the first Interstate tripwas at the invitation of the Swiss Club of New South Wales. The Sydneyites were so impressed and inspired that they decided on the formation of their own Yodel Group and they have now a very excellent choir today.

The first trip was followed later by another visit to Sydney. Later a trip was organised to the Gold Coast, one to Canberra, one to Adelaide and the most recent one to Leeton in New South Wales where for the first time in history two Yodel Groups joined together and performed as a united choir. The group treasures great memories from all these trips and they have made a lot of friends, thus bridging the geographical gap between Swiss communities. A record which was very well received by the many yodeling fans was made in 1964. There were three editions and the third edition is sold out. At the moment an anniversary record is being prepared which should be ready early in 1973.

With the increase in migrants from Switzerland, it was not surprising that another group of song-happy Swiss decided to form a second group. In 1969 the Yodel Choir Matterhorn was formed and the members of the Edelwyss Group wish the new venture every success in their future activities.

Very often the question of the highlights of the many performances during the 20 years of activities is raised. Be it a Swiss Club function, a picnic or a Ball, a wedding, a birthday celebration or the visit of an old friend, the answer is always the same — the greatest reward for the members of the Group is the feeling that they have reached the hearts of their audience and there are occasions when some of the listeners become quite nostalgic thinking of their home country Switzerland with its mountains, glaciers and the many beautiful traditions.

It is not just a coincidence that the Group decided to hold their Anniversary Ball at the St. Kilda Town Hall, as this is the same Hall where 20 years earlier a small enthusiastic group under the leadership of Rupert Hutter performed officially for the first time.

It was decided not to mention any other names except Rupert Hutter's, the founder of the Yodel Club, who has since passed away in 1962. To mention a few others would be unfair to the many helpers and supporters who have been enthusiastic "fans" of the Yodel Club Edelwyss.

In conclusion it is hoped that the Yodel Club Edelwyss will continue along the path of success and to pursue with the goal set — to transplant the feelings of authentic Swiss tradition into the hearts of their audience.

YODEL CHOIR
MATTERHORN
MELBOURNE



SWISS YODEL
CHOIR SYDNEY



SWISS FOLK DANCE
GROUP OF VICTORIA