

IN MEMORIAM

LOUISE WITZIG

ON JANUARY 9, 1969, Louise Witzig, the famous Swiss folklorist and former member of the Executive Board of the International Folk Music Council, passed away after a long illness.

Louise Witzig was a pioneer in conserving and restoring folk costumes of the various Swiss cantons. Her *Schweizer Trachtenbuch*, issued in 1953, was a very important work in this field. A French edition, *Les costumes suisses*, was published in 1954. However, her interests were not confined to folk costumes but embraced the whole field of folk music, folk dance, and folklore in general.

As the daughter of a German-Swiss father and a French-Swiss mother, she inherited both German thoroughness and French cheerfulness. Her cheerfulness was especially noticeable in the many folk music and folk dance gatherings which she had organized and directed since 1932, later on with the help of a collaborator. She was well known, too, on an international level as she often accompanied Swiss dance groups participating in international festivals. In 1935 she attended the International Folk Dance Conference in London. In 1951 and 1955 she was present at the Conferences of the International Folk Music Council in Venice, Biarritz, and Oslo, which were combined with folk dance gatherings. As a result of her research on ancient dances and dance tunes, handed down through generations by oral tradition, *12 Schweizer Volkstänze* was published in collaboration with Klara Stern and Inge Bauer-Grau (1941). Later a second volume was published,

Volkstänze der Schweiz (1949), in which she concentrated on the “Alemannic” (the German-speaking part of Switzerland) and “Unspunnen” dances. Her *Dances of Switzerland* was issued in London in the series *Handbooks of European National Dances* (1949).

Louise Witzig was an excellent photographer, as evidenced by the many folk dance pictures in *Heimatleben*, a magazine of national costumes and folklore of which she was the editor. Her book on dances from Welsch-Switzerland (the French-speaking part) containing arrangements and restorations of old contredanses handed down in writing was unfortunately not completed, due to her illness. Mr. Emil Spiegelberg, her dance collaborator, is finishing this work now.

She had a great deal to do with the organization of the Conference of the International Folk Music Council in Basel in 1948. As a result of her work in folk music and folk dance, she was appointed to the Executive Board of the International Folk Music Council in 1947.

Now this life is over, a life that is so touchingly described in an obituary notice as “ein Leben voller Freude und Arbeit” [a life full of joy and work]. And, I might add, a life full of friends. Thanks to her cheerful and enthusiastic nature, she made many friends who will miss her dearly.

W. D. Scheepers