HONGKONG SUNDAY TIGER STANDARD, MARCH 29, 1959.

A Tale Of Two Artists

They Will Share Concert Stage

She Sings With Feeling

THIS is a tale of two concert artists One, a Chinese girl who always had a bent for singing, was born in Peking, and the other, a French violinist, enjoying international renown, grew up in Paris.

By chance they met in Paris. The Chinese girl, named Barbara Fei, went there from Hongkong in 1956 to pursue her singing studies. If that meeting resulted in anything, it decided Barbara, who was looking for a place to stay, to lodge with Brigitte H. de Beaufond in her modest flat on the right bank of the Seine.

New after all these months, Miss Fei, returning here for a reunion with her family, and Madame Beaufond are in Hongkong. And of all the delightful things to happen, they will be sharing the con-

By Ernie Pereira

Standard Feature Writer

cert stage on Tuesday night at the Loke Yew hall in a joint concert sponsored by the Alliance Francaise and presented by impresario Harry Odell.

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MISS Fei will be taking to the stage first. She will be accompanied at the piano in her recital by Moya Rea, Hongkong's noted accompanist. Not one to rave over any performer, Moya is sincerely enthusiastic over Miss Fei's voice. Hongkong music-lovers who have followed Barbara's concert career in Hongkong where she had, prior to going to Paris, given literally many recitals, are in store for a grand treat this time. A former pupil of musicologist Professor Chao Mei-pa, Barbara is singing better than ever: her voice has wonderful resonance, depth, richness and sensitivity which it never had before.

Barbara, who sings fluently in French, Italian, German, English and Chinese, likes recalling the time when she arrived in Paris, not being able to say anything in French except for words like "bon jour, bon jour." She immediately began studying French at the Alliance Francaise and spent her free time looking all over Paris for a singing teacher, Madame Lotte Schoen, whom Prof. Chao knew when he was in Europe before. It was Prof. Chao who in fact had given the madame's name to Barbara who went on a fruitless search.

From Paris, Barbara went to study at the Lyons Conservatory. There she came to know of Madame Lotte Schoen's Paris whereabouts by accident. She overheard a student mentioning this name and Barbara, after getting the address, returned to Paris, contacted Madame Lotte Schoen who accepted

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Barbara Fei with Moya Rea

Singing is not just voice but heart

Two Artists

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her as a pupil only after hearing her sing first.

Madame Lotte Schoen was polite but firm that Barbara should forget all she knew about singing and for months requested her diligent and eager pupil to sing nothing but scales. After five months of this, Barbara was allowed to sing her first song, a Brahms' lullaby.

Barbara's greatest thrill, apart from the radio, television and stage recitals she gave in Paris, was to have been invited to the Salzburg Music Festival and to sing in the Mozarteum. She will be returning to Paris in May to fulfil some concert engagements but she says with modesty, despite what she has already achieved, that "I just want to be a good singer."

Paris has also changed her.

Barbara, who came to Hongkong from Shanghai, now has more confidence in herself. If she sings with feeling, it is only because she knows what she is singing about and believes what the madame had told her that singing was not only a matter of voice but mainly one of heart.

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MADAME Beaufond, a pupil of famed French violinist Jacques Thibaud who died in a plane crash in 1954, has been playing the violin since she was five. A veteran concert performer, she is now on her seventh tour of Asia although it is the first time she is performing in Hongkong.

Her present trip has already taken her to Greece, Turkey, and India among other countries. From Hongkong, she will go to Singapore, South Korea and Japan where the people are genuinely fond of music and so eager to have autographs that, from her past experiences in Japan, the post-concert ordeal is even more strenuous than the concert itself.

It is almost traditional in French families, Madame Beaufond says, in talking of herself, for children to play some musical instrument. Her career was practically marked out for her from the time she began her studies in the Paris Conservatory at 11. She made her debut as a violinist at 17 and Jacques Thibaud, who taught her, continued to exert his influence on her playing technique until his tragic death.

Madame Beaufond began first playing in the Far East in 1949. Now she is as nostalgic for it as she is of Paris which she at present longs to return to for a while before leaving it for concert engagements for which she is solidly booked till the end of 1960.

"It's a very hard life," she says, and although she has visited many cities, she has had little time for sight-seeing. It has on the whole been from the hotel to the concert hall, then to the plane the next day, and off again to a new place for a repetition of what had just taken place. "But it's my life," Madame Beaufond says, with fervour.

Violin-playing techniques differ in the fingering and bowing. The school, of which she was an exponent, emphasised flexibility. It was difficult, she agreed, for those who didn't play the instrument to see and appreciate the differences between the French school and, say, the American school, but these differences existed.

Madame Beaufond will be soloist with the Hongkong Philharmonic Orchestra and she prefers playing with an orchestra than with an accompanist. Happy to be sharing the concert stage with Miss Fei, Madame Beaufond however confessed not to have heard Barbara sing in Paris, but she will hear her this time.