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"Musica Helvetica"

Swiss Music Worldwide

Swiss Radio International (SRI) considers music to be a key element in the portrayal of Swiss culture abroad. But shortwave has certain limitations when it comes to broadcasting music programmes. So more than twenty years ago SRI started to make recorded music productions available to radio stations all over the world.

Within a few years SRI was supplying some 400 radio stations with recorded music, first in the USA and then in many other countries. Since then the number of clients has risen to well over 1000. The LP gramophone records originally used have been superseded by high-quality recordings on compact disc (CD). The range of recorded music now available includes specifically Swiss works, music played by Swiss artists and international music events taking place in Switzerland. Thanks to these recordings many Swiss composers and musicians have won high critical

acclaim abroad. Research carried out by SRI in 1993 showed that many of the 150 titles then available in the "Musica Helvetica" series had been broadcast several times.

Up till now these recordings were financed by SRI and distributed free of charge. In future SRI will be working to a greater extent with other organisations in Switzerland and will market selected recordings on a commercial basis. SRI believes that in this way it can uphold the integrity and independence of this cultural service. It is SRI's intention that originality and quality will continue to distinguish "Musica Helvetica" productions from the ordinary range of mass-produced music recordings. This strategy is also in line with the "SRI Selection" policy under which SRI promotes quality Swiss productions internationally.

As soon as SRI has suitable satellite channels at its

disposal and has secured the necessary financing of production and distribution, the range of music offered by

SRI will be directly available to a wider international audience.

W. Fankhauser, SRI

Several SRI music recordings on compact disc (CD) can be obtained directly from SRI at the price of 35 Swiss francs each (incl. postage and packing). If you would like any of these recordings, please complete the coupon below and send it to:

Swiss Radio International, Programme Services, P.O. Box, CH-3000 Berne 15

Please arrange payment either to our postal account or via credit card. Records will be dispatched following confirmation of payment.

PC 30-16302-5 or

___ VISA, ___ MASTERCARD or ___ AMEXCO credit card:

Card number:

Date of expiry:

Date:

Your signature:

Name:

Address:

Please send me the following record(s):

- ___ copies of CD "Dances and Tunes for House Organ, Violin and Dulcimer"
- ___ copies of CD "Musique Espérance" (Mozart, Brahms)
- ___ copies of CD "Swiss Composers I" (Hess, Schoeck, Sutermeister)

The oldest known city seal – dating from 1224 – already carries the bear as its symbol. The first definite mention of a bear pit in Berne stems from the year 1441 and takes the form of an accounting item: the city council ordered some sacks of acorns as fodder for the bears. In 1513, we are told by a chronicler, the victorious Bernese returning from the Battle of Novara brought back with them a live bear amongst their booty. A kennel was built for him by the city

moat outside the middle gate, exactly where the Bärenplatz, or Bear Square, is today.

Since that time there have always been bears in Berne. With one single exception: in 1798 the French army took the bears to Paris along with the contents of the city treasury. Only one small dead cub remained in the bear pits. You can see it stuffed in the Historical Museum of Berne labelled: "The last bear of old Berne".

bear pit as "a really miserable hole in the ground". After complaints about cruelty to animals had brought the tourist attraction into disrepute, a renovation of the bear pit worth Sfr. 2.4 million was started at the end of 1994.

By 1996 the hitherto bare bear pit will be decorated and furnished in a way befitting its inhabitants. Soon these hunters and gatherers – who can weigh up to 300 kilos – will be able to bathe in fresh water, catch trout, trot about on sandstone without hurting their feet and when they are tired return to their dens – all things which are natural for townspeople. By the end of the century the hairy symbol of Berne will again attract tourists the way a honey pot attracts bears. There is also plenty of entertainment: to stop the bears getting bored the tourists make the oddest gestures and grimaces for them, wave at them, throw carrots into the pit and simply beam at the bears. And the bears do the same to the tourists.

(Foto:
Ruben Sprich)



"A really miserable hole in the ground"

The old bear pit was moved several times before it found its present site near the big Nydegg Bridge. Up to twelve animals sometimes lived here at a depth of 3.5 metres. They were admired and fed every day, but people also had increasing sympathy for their plight. Even zoo director Müller describes the