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Railway history at the Gotthard Pass. The opening of the base tunnel



Hats off to Switzerland! A first-rate technical achievement, and a testimony to the (political) willpower of the people behind such a massive project.

ROBERT RICKENBACH

Between tradition and modernity. The alphorn in pop and jazz

As half Swiss, half English I have played a carbon alphorn for the last five years. I echo some of the sentiments in the article. I get great pleasure playing "Alfie", my alphorn, in London, in the middle of the city, up in Scotland, on our beautiful Devon coast. I tend to be relaxed about tradition and sticking to rules. Tradition for me is like grammar: as a player of a number



of musical instruments you absolutely need the "grammar/tradition" of an instrument to play well. But then like language, your vocabulary develops and flourishes because of a sound grounding of the

"grammar/tradition". I find players who go beyond the past and test the boundaries of what the alphorn can achieve, amazing and a great inspiration. I too hope one day to emulate them, if only half as well!

N. EVERETT, ENGLAND

Born in Switzerland into a family with a long farming and alpine cattle breeding history, I did bring an alphorn with me when I moved to Texas. I generally blow a few tunes around midnight greeting the New Year, albeit there is no echo in the wide open prairies and I do not have any Longhorns to call in the evening. The sound of the alphorn awakens recollections of my brother's fantastic alp and summer life high above the Rhine River in Grisons, and many festivals in Switzerland. But it is even more of a pleasure to hear the alphorn blend or lead when playing together with other instruments. Its unique sounds deliver memories and just good music to the ear and heart.

OTHMAR SCHWARZENBERGER, USA

Since I play the alphorn myself, I'm against modern alphorn music. It undermines tradition. If I feel like hearing music like that, then I grab a saxophone.

CHARLES SCHMID, AUSTRIA

Editorial: Casting your vote – even if it is sometimes a chore!

Your editorial only concerns a small section of your readers. No, I did not vote on 5 June. It's difficult for me to get to the polls from Africa, where I live. You also need to get the brochures Marko Lehtinen refers to in advance, yet the postal service is very slow and the distances huge in this country. I am thus a Swiss citizen deprived of his right to vote. And yet there is a solution. It's what enables me to receive the "Swiss Review", write to you, do my banking, etc.: the internet. As long as voting via the internet is not possible, I shall remain a citizen without rights. Of course, it is probably complicated to set up. However, it should be possible for a country proud of having dug the world's longest rail tunnel, shouldn't it? But when?

YVAN STERN, ALGERIA

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