

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1976)
Heft: 1714

Artikel: "Papa" Burkhard Scores a christmas hit
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687246>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

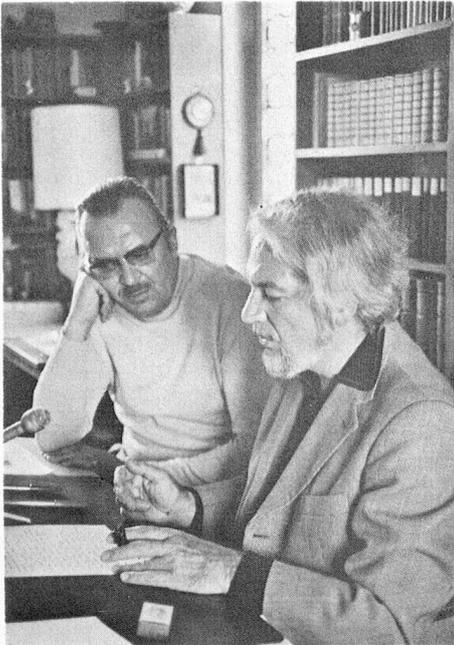
Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 02.03.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

'PAPA' BURKHARD SCORES A CHRISTMAS HIT



Paul Burkhard (right) with Lance Tschannen, head of Swiss Broadcasting Corporation's Transcription Service, at the composer's home in Zell, Kt. Zürich.

Paul Burkhard, the Swiss composer who achieved worldwide fame with his 1939 hit "O Mein Papa", is now winning an international reputation of a different kind — as a writer of religious music for children.

Last Christmas saw the release by the Transcription Service of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation in Berne of the first recorded English version of his Nativity play, "Zeller Weihnacht" — Christmas at Zell.

Written originally by Mr. Burkhard "for the children of my village", the work has since proved so popular that versions now exist in six languages. SBC's Transcription Service has distributed the recording to more than 200 radio stations

in the United States, Britain and elsewhere. Several thousand other stations around the world have broadcast excerpts. And negotiations are under way in Switzerland for the release of the English version commercially.

Taking part in SBC's English recording (under the direction of the 63-year-old composer) were more than 50 children from a dozen nations.

All of them were between eight and 13 years of age and are pupils at the Inter Community School in Zumikon, near Zürich, which has as one of its major aims the promotion of international understanding. About half the children were from the United States, and the others come from Canada, Britain, Australia, the Netherlands, Sweden, France, Austria, Israel, Cuba, Spain and Switzerland itself.

The instrumental accompaniment

was provided by musicians from the light orchestra of the German-Swiss Radio, under the direction of Hans Moeckel.

The story of the "Zeller Weihnacht" Nativity play began in 1960 when Paul Burkhard, having decided to leave behind the increasing pressures and pollution of the big city life, moved 30 miles from his native Zürich to the tiny village of Zell.

"It was a decision," he recalls, "which was to change my life-style and my work. No sooner had I moved than I was asked by the people of Zell if I could write a small Nativity play for the local children to perform in the village church that Christmas. So I wrote a simple version of the Nativity story in Swiss-German dialect. I had no big plans for "Zeller Weihnacht". It was just for the children of my village . . ."

Since then, however, the work has



The village of Zell, near Zürich.



By Appointment to Her Majesty The Queen
Suppliers of Catering Utensils & Equipment

LEON JAEggi & SONS LTD.

232 TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, LONDON W1P 0BL.

Tel: 01-580 1957/8

Catering Equipment & Utensils — Coppersmiths, Tinnern, Silver Platers

Publishers of: "Le Repertoire de la Cuisine"

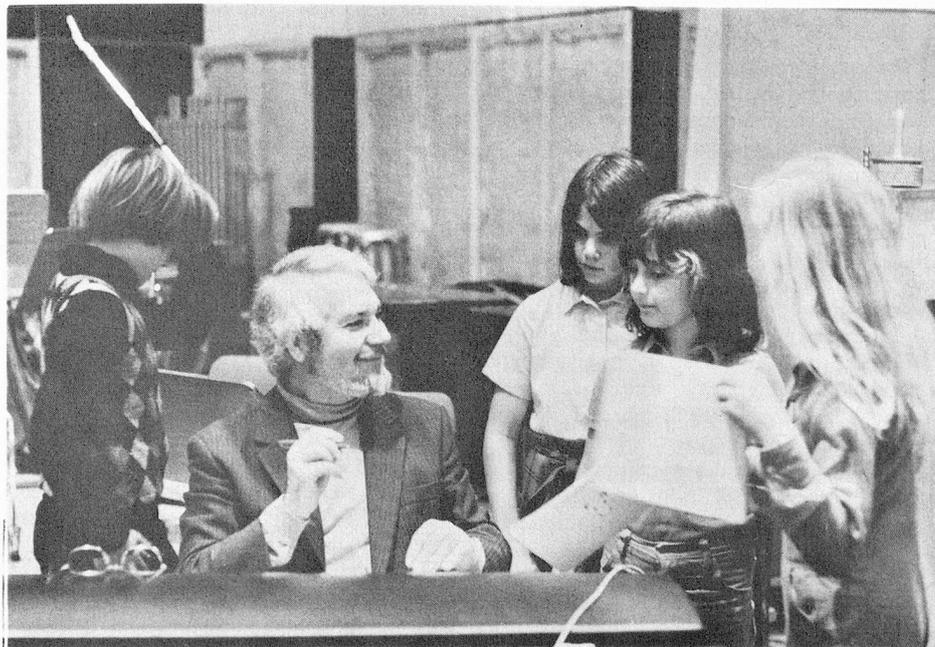
been translated into High German, English, French, Swedish, Spanish and even Arabic. It has been performed in churches throughout Switzerland and has also been produced on TV and on records.

Paul Burkhard has since followed up his "Zeller Weihnacht" with similar religious musical plays, all of which have been performed first by the children of Zell.

Paul Burkhard feels that "Christmas

has lost much of its original meaning. Even very early in my life the commercial aspect of Christmas made me sad. Children today see in Christmas, above all gifts, a party, good food . . . I think we must give them something more, the real deeper meaning of the birth of Christ.

"Christmas to me means exactly what I am trying to tell the children with my plays about the Nativity — the universal message of the coming of Christ and goodwill among all men!"



Paul Burkhard with children of the Inter-Community School of Zumikon (Zürich) during the English-language production of "A Village Christmas at Zell".

Too few doctors

Figures issued by the Swiss Medical Federation show that 60 per cent of the country's doctors are now specialists and the trend is growing.

The Federation's president maintains that the right ratio should be 85:15 in favour of general practitioners.

Specialists, however, earn more and do not in general have the inconveniences of night calls and house visits. Hence the shortage of GPs.

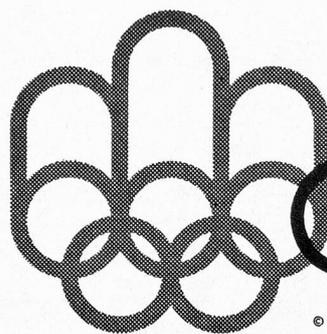
Private enterprise medical centres have been opened in many of the principal cities over the last decade. They provide most forms of treatment short of admission to hospital and are staffed largely by foreign doctors who would not otherwise be allowed to work in Switzerland, except in hospitals. Perhaps therein lies some alleviation of the problem.

WGS

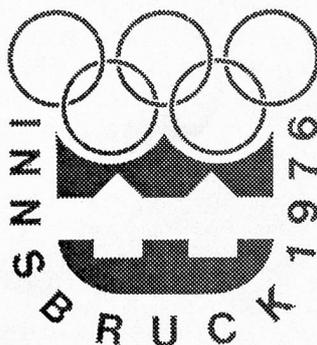
SALE OF TWO CITIES

Free Swiss cheese and chocolate proved a big crowd-puller at Hanover main station recently when the cities of Lausanne and Berne participated in a one-week promotion to publicise the West German Federal Railways' new winter programme of inter-city weekend rail tours.

Both Swiss cities are included in the programme from northern Germany this winter — Lausanne for the first time.



Montréal 1976



OMEGA Ω

Official Timer of the 1976

Olympic Games in Montreal

Official Timer of the 1976

XIIth Winter Olympic Games in
Innsbruck

Since 1932 Omega has been the official timekeeper for 12 summer and winter Olympics.

Omega, 67-74 Saffron Hill, London, EC1N 8RS