

What image of Switzerland does Pro Helvetia convey abroad? Urban or rural, innovative or traditional, alpine or multicultural? The answer is simple: either/or viewpoints no longer suffice. Any appropriate approach must include both. Alpine music, for instance, has recently met with success in Swiss urban music clubs and has been taken to Paris and Berlin. In its present form, it combines traditional and contemporary elements in a way that does justice to the multicultural roots of all things today considered Swiss. Find out more about our cross-border projects in this Newsletter!

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LATEST NEWS

Voices of the people: Kaléidoschoral

Top-range choirs from the Cantons of Fribourg, Jura and Valais will meet up in La Tour-de-Trême on 3 March 2007 for a five-hour mega-concert entitled "Kaléidoschoral". Yodelling, variété, children's voices, classical and contemporary music will be echoing folk music rooted in a variety of cultural soils. André Ducret is the manager of this project, which is part of Pro Helvetia's "echoes - folk culture for tomorrow" programme. **More...**



Good neighbourly relations: La belle voisine en Suisse

Since mid-August last year, "La belle voisine", the beautiful neighbour Switzerland, has been bestowing some of its finest arts on the French Rhône-Alpes region. From 20 February on, France will be reciprocating in kind by bringing around 60 events to Switzerland. "La belle voisine en Suisse" will be launched with the play "Les Âmes solitaires" (Lonely Lives) by Gerhart Hauptmann, a co-production of the Comédie de Valence and the Comédie de Genève directed by Anne Bisang in Geneva. Pro Helvetia is supporting the programme in co-operation with the French Embassy and further partners. More at www.prohelvetia.ch



Voices of the Alps in Paris

"Voix des Alpes", a series of concerts, will be staged at the Centre culturel Suisse as part of the "Peintures Aller Retour" event. The music takes its inspiration from the wealth of traditional Swiss folk music and adds its own contemporary sound elements. The following groups and artists will be performing: Vox Vokalquartett (8 February), Erika Stucky & Roots of Communication (22 February) und Betty Legler (8 March). Details at www.ccsparis.com



Lesser known side of object artist Mario Merz

The Kunstmuseum Winterthur is showing a first comprehensive retrospective of drawings by Mario Merz (1925-2003). Drawing was a starting point for Mario Merz, helping him to work out his three-dimensional creations. The significance of drawings in the artist's overall oeuvre is highlighted for the first time in the exhibition "Mario Merz. Disegni" and the accompanying catalogue - thanks also to a Pro Helvetia grant. More at www.kmw.ch



Lute versus oud in Palestine

Hopkinson Smith, a highly esteemed lute player from Switzerland, has been invited to Palestine by the Barenboim-Said Foundation (which aims to promote peaceful co-existence through music). From 3 to 8 March 2007, he will perform four solo concerts and teach two master classes in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Nablus and Bethlehem. In discussions

with Palestinian musicians, he will be exploring the connections between the Western lute and the Oriental oud, said to be an ancestor of the medieval lute. Details at www.hopkinsonsmith.com



Movements: The Maghreb Connection

Migration is part and parcel of life in Northern Africa. The art and research project "The Maghreb Connection", managed by curator Ursula Biemann in cooperation with artists from Egypt, Morocco, Spain, Italy and Switzerland, tracks the migrants' routes through the Maghreb. From 24 February to 22 April 2007, the exhibition project, initiated by Pro Helvetia, will be on display at the Centre d'Art Contemporain in Geneva. Details at www.maghreb.geobodies.org



New sounds - urban and rural - in Berlin, 16-25 March

"MaerzMusik", the festival of contemporary music in Berlin, is presenting a Swiss special with the support of Pro Helvetia. Two leading Swiss contemporary music groups, Contrechamps and Collegium Novum, and the Steamboat Switzerland trio have been invited, along with Ils Fränzlis da Tschlin, as representatives of contemporary folk music. The programme also includes music theatre projects by Heinz Reber and Mela Meierhans. Details at www.maerzmusik.de



This is Switzerland: Inland Archive

Erich Busslinger's video installation "Inland Archive" offers a glimpse of Switzerland. Pictures are mixed together at random, linking up material from 258 video clips to provide new and astonishing insights. The Swiss Institute in Rome is showing the installation up to 28 February 2007, the Spazio culturale svizzero in Venice will follow suit from 29 March to 19 May. More at www.istitutovizzero.it www.pointdevue.ch



Gipfelstürmer - young stage artists on their way up

"Gipfelstürmer" (on the fast track to the top) will be presenting up-and-coming artists and groups from the world of theatre and dance at various venues in Zurich from 10 to 24 March 2007. This will give audiences and international event organisers an opportunity to gain an overview of the young Swiss theatre and dance scene - both German and French speaking. It is mobile and interdisciplinary, with intensive networking. Details at www.gessnerallee.ch



THE ARTS COUNCIL

New face on the Executive Management

Since the beginning of the year, Pro Helvetia has had a new Head of Cultural Funding and Promotion and Deputy Director: In accordance with the principle of internal rotation, Thomas Gartmann, Head of the Music Department, has taken over as Head of the Cultural Funding and Promotion Division from Erica Benz-Steffen, Head of the Department of Literature and Society. In his new function, Thomas Gartmann is a member of the Executive Management. He continues to head up the Music Department. **More...**



Pro Helvetia New Delhi office opened

On 8 January 2007, a new phase in cultural cooperation between Switzerland and India was launched. The opening of Pro Helvetia's liaison office met with considerable interest. Director Pius Knusel was there and reports here on the reactions of the Indian audience (in German). **More...**



TIPS

Debate: More for less - visions of cultural promotion

Pro Helvetia is trying to make its cultural promotion policy more focused - an approach that is not meeting with universal approval. Issues such as cooperative support agreements with free-dance companies, the priority given to the promotion of jazz and the multi-year contracts for theatre tours have all been subject to intensive debate. The next opportunity to join in is on 16 March 2007 (16.30 - 18.00) at the Theaterhaus Gessnerallee, Stall 6. The following will be discussing the pros and cons of the paradigm shift: Rosie Bitterli Mucha, Head of Culture of the City of Lucerne and musician Nik Bärtsch; representing Pro Helvetia will be Director Pius Knüsel, Thomas Gartmann (Music), Andrew Holland (Dance) and Martha Monstein (Theatre). Drama critic Tobi Müller will be the moderator of the event.

COLOPHON

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Pro Helvetia supports and promotes Swiss culture in Switzerland and throughout the world.

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