

# "Terres de Fribourg" : a few notes on the drama

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across the frontiers. Secondly, and above all, the concentration of forces.

For a number of years, we have had a quarterly publication which we have been able to produce in close co-operation with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs which has handsomely supported it financially. This quarterly we are able to send to all Swiss nationals registered at Swiss Embassies and Consulates abroad. This publication is now well established. We shall endeavour to instil something of the spirit of the «echo» into its columns. This is the reason why we have changed the name and have

now put it under the title «echo» which we shall keep for future issues. In view of the restricted space at our disposal, we shall have to make a specially attractive selection of our communications. On the other hand, we have the advantage that we reach all Swiss abroad with this publication four times a year, and amongst them also the loyal subscribers of the former «echo». This fact makes up for our loss and regret somewhat, and we are looking forward to the continuation of our contacts.

In addition it is pleasing for us to see that our quarterly provides a valuable supplement to the publi-

cations of their own in some of the Swiss communities abroad. We trust that this will remain the case also in the future.

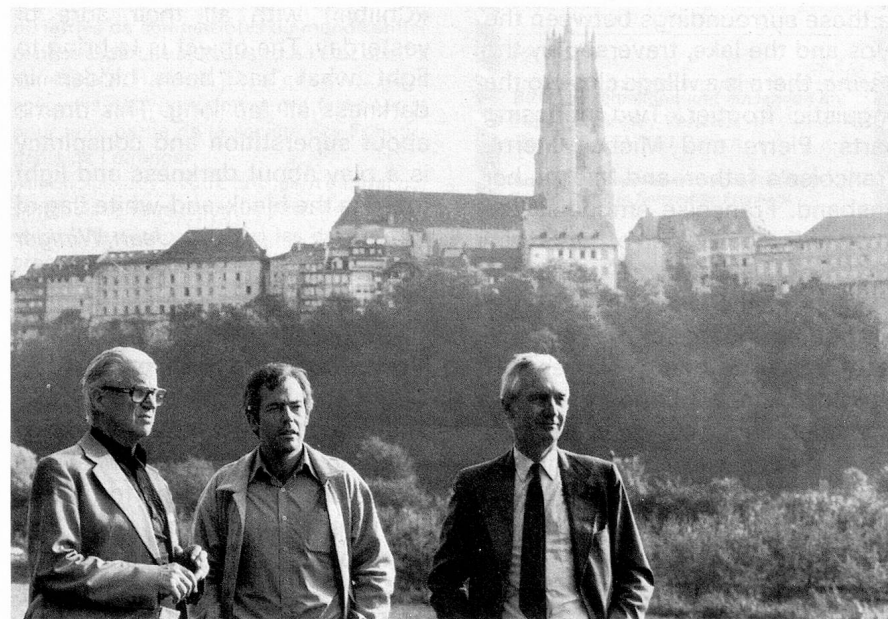
We should like to take this opportunity of thanking sincerely the Service of the Swiss Abroad at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, led by Minister Maurice Jaccard, for their continued support. Our warm thanks go equally to the various personalities in Swiss communities abroad who look after the local and regional pages of the quarterly publication. *Marcel Ney*

## «Terres de Fribourg»

### A few Notes on the Drama

It is a kind of pageant representing the seven regions of the Canton. It has been created to celebrate in style the quincentenary of joining the Confederation. «A presentation of high artistic character, which includes folklore and recalls history, yet at the same time brings into view the present and even dares take a look into the future.» These were the main tasks put to the producer.

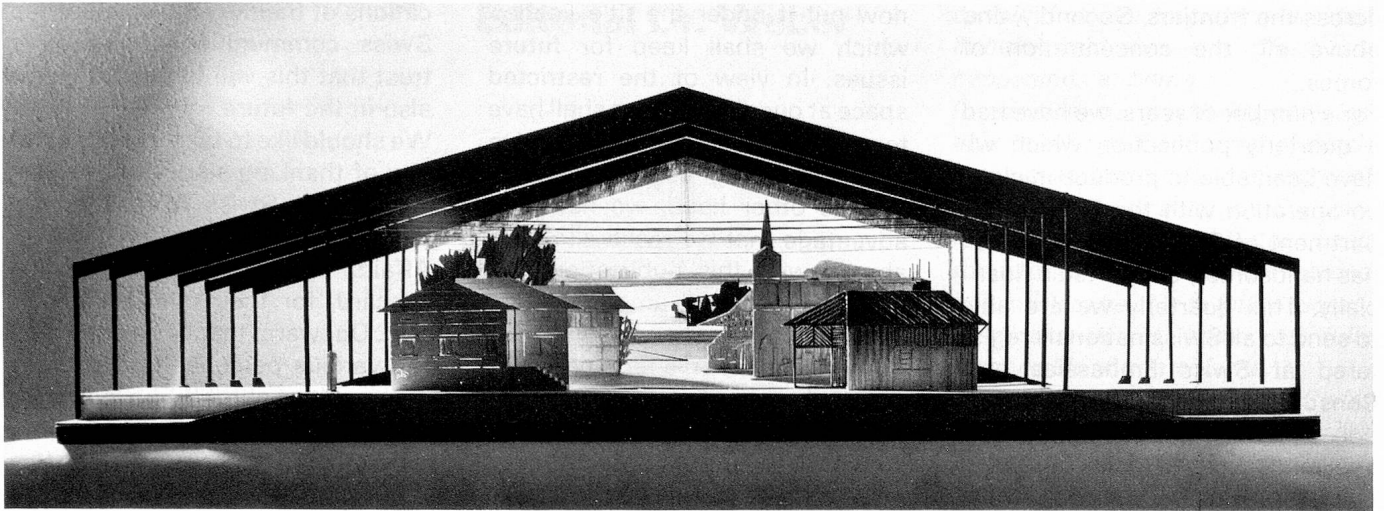
The Fribourgeois is an amateur; let us first look at singing: for every 1000 inhabitants there are 44 singers. He also loves play: his field is the comical aspect of his existence, possibly sometimes with a trace of the tragic. Comedy and tragedy, the main forms of occidental theatre; social and religious forms of expression. The «Terres de Fribourg» is a lyrical work with dramatic action, in the course of which the onlooker should recognize himself



Organizers from left to right: clergyman Pierre Kaelin, Jean Winiger and Thierry Vernet

and be able to laugh, to become pensive and possibly find comfort. But the Fribourgeois is diverse. His

seven regions spread from the Pre-Alps over gentle hills to the lake. The daily light appears high above



Model of the scaffolding and the stage

and dies out down below in the plain and on the water. Each of these regions has a special voice and its own accent. And each wants to be heard it seems. Evidently, the Fribourgeois was told one day that «poor is only he who cannot be heard».

In these surroundings between the Alps and the lake, traversed by the Sarine, there is a village close to the linguistic frontier. Two opposing parts: Pierre and Michel. Pierre, Françoise's father, and Michel, her husband. Françoise embodies the town of Fribourg; Pierre, her father, the representative of the rural Cantons at the Diet of Stans, and Michel, her husband, the Cantonal President of Fribourg who endeavoured to have Fribourg in the Confederation. 1481 – the transition between two epochs and the basis for the creation of French-speaking Switzerland in the European game.

1981 – transition in the world's spirit – but into what kind of era? In life as in the play, Pierre and Michel become antagonists. A plan defended by Pierre and still kept secret would lead to the sale of part of the village. From this, material gain would be made by some. The others feel themselves outside this

transaction, although their lives, too, will be affected in the village by tomorrow.

This kind of drama within the play allows to keep awake the past and not only to display it. It permits presentation of customs and traditions (like «Bénichon», a kind of «Chilbi») with all their aura of yesterday. The object is to bring to light what has been hidden in darkness all too long. This drama about superstition and conspiracy is a play about darkness and light just like the black-and-white flag of Fribourg.

*Jean Winiger*

### Notes on the Staging

The object was to find the framework for a dramatic and lyrical play in which, at each performance, 2000 spectators and over 350 participants unite (actors, choristers, musicians and technicians). After a long search, the best possible location was found, the «Neigles Meadow» at the foot of the Cathedral, a charming idyllic place in the centre of the town – exactly what was needed.

The story takes place in a country village in the Canton of Fribourg. In

a pleasing manner, the stage leads to the Alps by way of a wide flight of stairs. This produces the free space necessary for the production. Plenty of room is needed so that the spirit (and the music) may unfold freely. The whole picture rests on reality without heaviness, in a familiar manner through which, I hope, everyone can recognize himself.

Three kinds of costumes are being used for the performances. Firstly, everyday clothes, personal clothes belonging to the players, figures of 1981. Secondly, the folkloristic costumes of the seven regions of the Canton, those of the choristers in the production. Thirdly, the historical costumes which have been specially designed and made for this event, those of men and women of 1481.

In front of the stage there are rows of seats going up in a circle, their profile following that of the stage representing the countryside. Thus all players and spectators are united in the action, gathered round the orchestra in the centre of the theatre, conducted by Pierre Kaelin who also composed the music.

We may look forward with confidence to the gala evenings in June and July 1981.

*Thierry Vernet*