

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 19 (1955)  
**Heft:** [3]

**Artikel:** The Winegrowers' Festival : the origins of the festival  
**Autor:** [s.n.]  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942492>

### **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:** 22.12.2024

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

the production of the American watchmaking industry, that the Government of the United States will have recourse to other means than those which carry with them serious obstacles to international trade. Moreover, this restrictive attitude is in contradiction with the principles of international trade, which President Eisenhower so strongly reaffirmed in his last message to the American Congress. The most recent statistics concerning trade between the United States and Switzerland confirm the justification of the Swiss claims. From them we perceive, in fact, that in 1954 Swiss exports to the U.S. declined to 640,000,000 francs as compared with 852,000,000 in 1953, whereas Swiss imports from the United States increased considerably from 619,000,000 to 710,000,000 francs.

### Record Production of Sugar

The transformation into sugar of the 1954 beetroot harvest was completed on January 6th last. Nearly 30,000 tons of sugar were manufactured at Aarberg, the only sugar refining factory in Switzerland, representing the largest annual production registered up to the present. Nevertheless, the fact remains that this quantity of home-produced sugar corresponds to only about one-sixth of the total consumption in Switzerland.

## NEWS OF THE COLONY

### Switzerland as a Fatherland

The magnetic attraction of the homeland has invited many of our settlers to make a trip overseas.

Recently back are Mesdames M. Kuchler, M. Schicker, and J. Zimmermann, also Messrs. D. Chamberlain and Maurice Schicker, of Kaponga (for them the first visit).

Messrs. J. Beeler and W. Niederberger came back happily provided with a "Schweizer frauely."

Late February saw the departure of Mr. and Mrs. F. Steiner, of Eltham, Mr. and Mrs. F. Nolly, and F. Zimmermann, of Stratford, and E. Schicker, Hawera.

Swiss settlers from America, Mr. and Mrs. Eberhart Kalin, and Mrs. B. Stumpf, came to visit their brother, Alphons Kalin, of Manaia, and other relations in New Zealand. Being interested in agriculture and business, and coming from Jacoma (quite a Swiss settlement), they have been making many interesting comparisons. Mr. and Mrs. Kalin and Mrs. B. Stumpf are proceeding to Switzerland by air before returning home.

E.G.

On Saturday evening, February 19th, there was a gathering of settlers and friends in the Bird Road School, Stratford, to say au revoir

and make a presentation to Mr. and Mrs. Nolly, who left on the 24th for a trip to their homeland.

It was a happy gathering with plenty of refreshments.

Accordian items were given by Messrs. J. Fohn and L. Schonbachler, accompanied on the piano by Mrs. J. Widmer.

Mr. and Mrs. F. Steiner, Eltham, and Mrs. F. Zimmermann, Stratford, fellow-travellers, were also present.

Piano and piano-accordian items were also given by friends.

We wish them all a happy holiday in Switzerland. L.S.

## THE WINEGROWERS' FESTIVAL

### The Origins of the Festival

The culture of the vine in the upper basin of Lake Leman goes back, they say, to the Roman epoch. In any case, one knows that the Chapter of the Cathedral of Lausanne, in one thousand, possessed thirty-one vineyards round about Vevey and that the vineyards of Lavaux at the Dezaley had been planted in the twelfth century by the monks of the Abbey of Haut-Cret, near Oron.

In order to encourage and develop the culture of the vine, an "Abbaye" of agriculture called St. Urbain was set up in Vevey itself; the origin is lost in the darkness of centuries. This corporation, besides being interested in the growth of the vine handed out rewards to the most deserving winegrowers. At the end of the eighteenth century this "abbaye" took the name of Agricultural Society and then became the "Abbaye of the Vinedressers" and finally, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the "Honourable Brotherhood of Vinedressers." The aims have remained the same but the rewards are distributed at a three-yearly ceremony, which takes place in a day of rejoicing with a "bravade" or "parade," that is a procession through the town and a banquet. This "bravade" has become little by little a show with many participants.

Since the end of the eighteenth century, these shows became so significant that they took place every six years, then, occasionally, according to the international situation. Here, moreover, are dates of the Festivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: 1819, 1833, 1851, 1865, 1889, 1905 and 1927. Each time they became more important and several local authors and composers placed their talents at the disposal of this beautiful Festival.

### A magnificent popular Fete

The Winegrowers' Festival, "a national masterpiece" as the Swiss poet, Juste Olivier, has called it, glorifies the daily work of Mother Earth. In a glamorous evocation of Nature, it exalts the peaceful activities of our people.

It is above all a drama which brings into evidence the art of the painter, of the musician, of the poet and of the dancer, a brilliant hymn

of gratitude to the glory of the Creator. But with this divine glorification, it admits a kind of incantation of heathen virtues, so as to make Life burst forth showing the generous, carnal, warm side of beings and things.

That is why, for the pleasure of the eyes and the enjoyment of the procession, the Festival allows the God of Wine, the Goddesses of Harvest, the Goddess of Spring, with their colourful suites, to appear therein.

In the framework of the seasons, which must always remain the same, the Winegrowers' Festival mingles tradition and invention. It is a unique show, imitating nothing, always increasing and which follows its road like that of a stream into a great river.

### The Winegrowers' Fete of 1955

The organisers rigorously keep to a tradition and desire, in a framework already set, to bring some innovation caused by the progress of technique, by the evolution of taste in general and by the exactions of a public more and more up to date and better initiated into the themes of Art. It is in this spirit that the artists chosen for the Fete of 1955 are working. The musical part has been handed over to Mr. Carlo Hemmerling, composer and conductor, the poem to Mr. Geo. Blanc, dramatic writer. The painter is Mr. Louis Fost, the author of the projects for National Theatres of France. For the stage management, Mr. Oscar Eberle, playwright, has been approached and, finally, Mr. Maurice Lehmann, manager of the Union of National Theatres in France: Opera, Opera Comique, has kindly accepted to act as artistic director. As for choreographic part, the extent of which surpasses that of former festivals, it will be confided to important groups of actors, whose private gifts allow them to realise very fine effects. For certain ballets, which present real difficulties in execution, two couples of Parisian dancers, twenty-four girls and twelve men dancers from Lausanne and Geneva have been engaged.

The general direction of the choreography will be undertaken by the Master Nicolas Zvereff, the former dancer in the Ballet Russe of Serge Diaghileff, and assistant of Serge Lifar, at present manager of the International Academy of Dance in Lausanne. As his first collaboratrice, Mr. Zvereff will have Madame Jacqueline Farelly, ballet mistress in Lausanne and his assistant in the Academy. He will also be helped in his task by Mr. Henri Essiva, specialist in folklore and popular Swiss dances, Mme. C. Defago and Mr. Charly Weber.

From the beginning of their work, the authors—music and book—have been preoccupied by the show side of the Festival. The book contains music lyrical and at the same time popular; the descriptive poem weds divers rhythms and divers colours. It is by turns serious, full of movement picturesque, rustic and frequently lyrical and even

symbolical. The main idea is that of the triumph of Life and the everlasting return of the cycle dominating Nature, Man and the World.

The painter has drawn free inspiration from the Romantic Age. The style is happy and, above all, graceful. The heathen goddesses harmonise in the style of epoch. But, since each new Festival must have innovations, that of 1955 will show certain tableaux vivants which one can call symbolical. They are principally treated in ballets in a choreography different from the other traditional dances, and will be given to the most expert dancers. For example, the following will be evoked: as well as the attacks of Frost on the Spring Vines, the Archers of the sun will welcome the glory of Ceres, the Offering of fresh flowers to Pales, the Struggle of the Vinedressers against the enemies of the vine: parasites and maladies.

After a splendid prologue, including some 1470 participants, will come the evocations of the seasons, each in its habitual rhythm, each in its particular harmony: the Winter with its tones of brown wood, the cold blues of its skies; Spring, with the tender greens, fresh pinks, delicate mauves of its early flowers; the Summer, in the glory of its golden corn, the brilliant red of its poppies, and finally, Autumn, in the splendour of its rust colour and purple.

At the irresistible call of the celebrated Bacchanale, the innumerable dancers—this time more than three thousand—taking each other by the hand, for the first time mingle the colours of all the seasons.

The stage manager and the architect have arranged a vast amphitheatre on the Market Place (where Bonaparte reviewed his troops on May 8th, 1803) the centre of it will be an arena 80 metres long and 50 metres wide, and the circle will be made by huge slopes furnished with seats with backs, which can accommodate 15,000 spectators. This allows a very good view from all the seats. Three gates, surmounted by towers make the entrances for the actors.

This new arrangement of the theatre, the night-time performances in the light of electricity and torches, the rich development of contrasting scenes, the crescendo of the play up to the end, the direction minutely ordered in its smallest details, will make the Winegrowers' Festival of 1955 not only the prolonging of precedent festivals, but a surpassing of its forerunners, whilst still remaining in the tradition and its marvellous framework.

Amongst the number of novelties, there will be evening performances, when 3300 actors—amongst whom 950 children—will act under the electric lights. And, finally, thanks to the technical progress, all the spectators will be enchanted by perfect hearing and visibility.

The Vinedressers Fete of 1955 is being prepared with enthusiasm. It is looked forward to as one of the popular shows unique in the world, one of the most beautiful which exists.