



National Day of Switzerland

All you need to know about Swiss music This is how Swiss Direct Democracy works



WHILE traditional music remains very popular in rural areas, different kinds of contemporary music have a sizeable audience in Switzerland, as borne out by the phenomenal rise in music festivals over the last few decades. Two out of three people in Switzerland go to a concert or a musical performance during the year, and one in five play a musical instrument.

Traditional music: Swiss traditional music has its roots in mountain farming communities. Typical instruments are the Alphorn, the "Schwyzerörgeli", a special type of accordion, and the "Hackbrett" (hammered dulcimer). Yodelling is a form of singing, which was originally used to call the cows home and to communicate from one alpine farm to the next. It is also the centrepiece of Swiss traditional music. Every region of Switzerland has countless ensembles, brass bands, choirs and traditional music groups foster this tradition and regularly perform at traditional music festivals.

Classical music and opera: Switzerland's most famous composers and conductors include Joachim Raff (1822-1882), Ernest Bloch (1880-1959), Ernest Ansermet (1883-1969), Othmar Schoeck

(1886-1957) and Arthur Honegger (1892-1955). The leading orchestras in Switzerland today are the Orchestre de la Suisse romande in Geneva and the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich. Many Swiss towns and cities have their own opera house, with those of Geneva and Zurich enjoying international acclaim.

Modern day music: Many Swiss performers have an international following and have helped write Swiss musical history - names like Mani Matter (1936-1972), whose songs in the Bernese dialect have provided the soundtrack for several generations, or the Zurich duo Yello, who were at the avant-garde of the electronic music scene in the 1980s. The Lausanne group, Sens Unik, were pioneers of French-language hip hop and the Basel native George Gruntz (1932-2013) was one of the most respected jazz musicians of recent times. The current crop of musicians and groups which have enjoyed considerable success both in Switzerland and elsewhere include Stephan Eicher, Gotthard, Krokus, Michael von der Heide, Andreas Vollenweider, DJ Bobo, DJ Antoine, Erik Truffaz, Stress, Heidi Happy, Sophie Hunger and Bastian Baker. In March every year the Swiss Music Awards celebrates the successes of home-grown musical talent.



Switzerland.

WE HAVE THE FINAL SAY

In Switzerland sovereignty resides with the people, who exercise supreme political power.



The Swiss have many rights allowing them to participate in the political decision-taking process and can directly intervene in politics, for example by launching an initiative or a referendum.

63%

Swiss citizens are given the right to vote at the age of eighteen.

In the *Landsgemeinde* of Appenzell Innerrhoden and Glarus citizens cast their votes in open-air assemblies.

There are three ways to cast your vote



at the ballot box



by postal vote (most popular)



e-voting (only in certain cantons)

Swiss women did not gain the right to vote in federal elections until 1971.

On up to 4 occasions in any given year, the Swiss electorate votes on some 15 different issues.

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Interesting facts about Switzerland

FREE drinking water in Switzerland: One thing people often don't realise when arriving in Switzerland is that the water in almost all the fountains in Switzerland is free, drinkable and tastes delicious! In Zürich alone there are over 1,200 fountains with fresh drinking water.

Swiss people have a lot of power at their disposal. They are directly able to decide the fate of their country by participating in the polls held every quarter on major issues. In short, they have the direct ability to influence the government.

Switzerland shares a land border with five countries in Europe: Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Italy, and France.

Swiss city Geneva houses the second-largest office site of the United Nations.

St Peter's Church in the old town of Zürich features the largest Church Clock Face in Europe, even bigger than London's Big Ben!

Mountaineering, snowboarding, and skiing are some of the popular sports in Switzerland.

Switzerland provides nearly all CO2-friendly electricity to its citizens. 39% of electricity comes from nuclear power plants, while 56% is generated by hydroelectric power plants.

Highly skilled people form the basis for Switzerland's economy. Sectors such as banking, insurance, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, microtechnology, etc. employ these skilled people.

Since 1815, Switzerland has not been involved in any military conflict. Switzerland was not involved in any of the two world wars.

The very first Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Jean-Henri Dunant, a Swiss, in 1901. He is the founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Switzerland is also the only country in

the world to have built an airplane that is powered by solar energy.

Three-quarters of Swiss population lives in towns and cities, making the country mainly urban.

Jungfrauoch railway station in Interlaken, Switzerland is the highest railway station in Europe. It is built at an altitude of 11,332 ft above sea level.

Diversity is the spice of life in Switzerland. Switzerland has four languages and cultural differences between the people living in the mountains, mountain valley, big cities, and on the central plateau.

Despite the fact that it is a land locked country, there are around 1,500 lakes in Switzerland. Lake Geneva is the largest freshwater lake in Switzerland.

* This article is compiled using open source information

Swiss inventions that have changed the world we know



SWITZERLAND has the characteristic of converting crazy ideas into practical tools with catchy names. Chemists and scientists from all walks of life have used their Swiss pragmatism over and over again to turn out inventions that have changed the world forever. Here are a few examples:

The World Wide Web - Tim Berners-Lee at CERN (1989) The combination of British ideas and Swiss practicality seems to be a winner. Just over 100 years after the bobsleigh track, another English man was using the resources available in Geneva to create the World Wide Web.

It was while he was working at CERN that Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web in 1989. Inspired by CERN's own shared network, but frustrated that each computer stored information with a different login, Berners-Lee created his own version. The first website in the world was based at CERN, on Berners-Lee's own computer, hosting information about how the web worked.

This "NeXT" machine - the original web server - is still at CERN today. In 1993, CERN released the software into the public domain, the World Wide Web was born, and the way we find, browse and share

information changed forever.

Velcro® - Georges de Mestral (1941) You could say that the Swiss like things to stick. Does it surprise you that Velcro® was invented, patented and registered in Switzerland?

Hunting in the Jura mountains, a Swiss engineer noticed that certain seeds were attaching themselves to his clothes, as well as to his dog - and they were nigh on impossible to remove. On closer inspection, these 'burrs' seemed to have tiny hooks, attaching them tightly to fibres and hair. With help from friends in the

weaving industry, Georges de Mestral managed to replicate this 'hook and loop' fastening method in an invention. He named it velcro, from the French velour and crochet (velvet and hook). Although he marketed it as a 'zipperless zipper' in the 1950s, it took an organization like NASA to finally hook the world: in 1969, astronauts used Velcro® to secure things inside the Apollo spaceship.

Now, it may take another Swiss to quieten the loud noise that Velcro® makes - as well as to track down the name of the dog that inspired de Mestral.

*This article is abridged and extracted from <https://houseofswitzerland.org/>

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