

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 15 (1988)
Heft: 3

Artikel: Opera director Rolf Liebermann : departure from the theatre
Autor: Etter, Martin
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-907595>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. 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. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

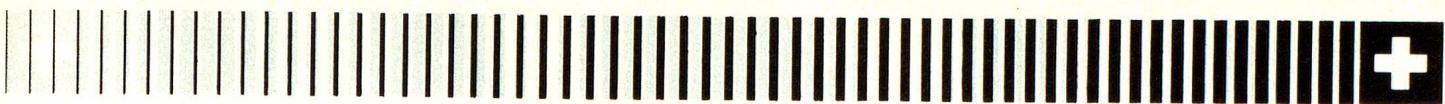
L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

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. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 13.01.2026

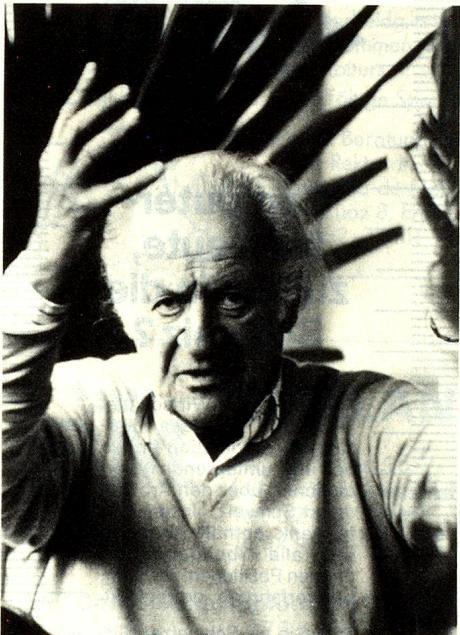
ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>



Opera Director Rolf Liebermann

Departure from the theatre

The grand old man has struck once again: at the end of his musical directorship in Hamburg the 78-year-old Swiss Rolf Liebermann has come out with still another work. He has written together with George Gruntz the music to the jazz opera «Cosmopolitan Greetings».



Rolf Liebermann is undoubtedly among the most important theatre-makers which Switzerland has ever produced. Born in Zurich on the 14th of September 1910, he studied

initially law and then music – with conductor Hermann Scherchen and composer Vladimir Vogel.

Then he worked for some years for the German-speaking Swiss national transmitter Beromünster as a sound engineer and as conductor of the radio orchestra. Later he became the Director of the Music Division of the North German Radio in Hamburg, afterwards Director of the Hamburg City Opera and from 1974 to 1980 Director of the Paris Opera.

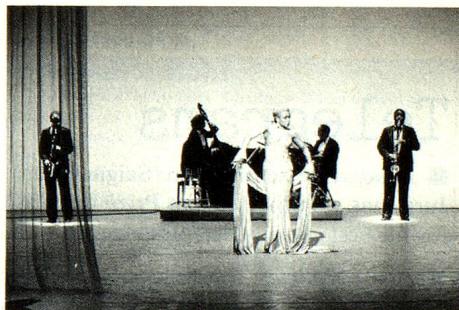
For decades Liebermann was one of the important people who made things possible. Many composers were able to get commissions through him. Moreover, he promoted young talent on the stages under his direction, and did not shy away from risky experiments (especially in the area of staging). During this period he put his own creative talent into the background; his successful operas «Leonore 40/45» (1951/52), «Pen-

elope» (1953/54) and «School of Women» (1954/55) were not continued, his symphonic work hardly enlarged upon.

It was not until 1985/86 that he took up his pen again and composed (based on a libretto by his wife Hélène Vida) the musical comedy «The Forest», which had a successful opening night at the Grand Théâtre in Geneva in April 1987. There it became evident that the «Old Lion» had in no way lost his artistic touch. The innovative new piece was judged to be an inspiring testimony to the art of opera in our century, and since then it has been a subject of discussion in Germany.

But that was not enough. Always curious, willing to take risks, and interested in exploring uncharted areas of expression, Liebermann decided to co-operate on the multi-media project «Cosmopolitan Greetings». His colleagues on the team of playwrights were beatnik poet Alan Ginsberg, jazz composer George Gruntz and the director and choreographer Robert Wilson.

The multi-media opera revolves around stations in the life of the Queen of Blues



Scenes from «Cosmopolitan Greetings» (June 1988, photo: Ralf Brinkhoff).



Consulting

on the division
of estates according to Swiss
inheritance law:
Inventory, financial plan,
estate division contract,
powers of attorney,
taxes, company law



Treuhand Sven Müller
Birkenrain 4
CH-8634 Hombrechtikon ZH
Tel. 055/42 21 21



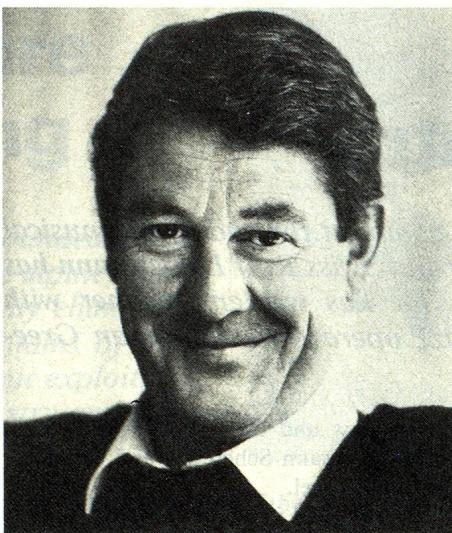
Bessie Smith. The story is broken up into a collage-like series of pictures, and symbolizes the process of life and death.

Rolf Liebermann contributed three-to-four-minute-long compositions for strings which, as intermezzi, link the individual scenes together. «In their peacefulness and delicacy they are the antitheses of the powerful big band sound», wrote Alice Baumann, correspondent for the Bernese newspaper *Der Bund*, following the greatly applauded première at the Kampnagel Factory in Hamburg on the 11th of June 1988.

At the end of June Rolf Liebermann bade his last farewell to Hamburg, and in doing so discovered that even international stars such as Placido Domingo paid him their respect. During his well deserved retirement he will not remain inactive, however. He has already announced that he is working on a cantata-like «dramatic scene» on the Medea theme. A cat never quits chasing mice ...

Martin Etter

A fresh breeze for «Du»?



«Du», the monthly «Magazine for Art and Literature», gets a new concept and a new Editor-in-Chief, Dieter Bachmann (picture). «A bit less introspection; a bit more discussion» is what author and journalist Bachmann, who succeeds Wolfhart Draeger, wants to offer readers of the Zurich glossy in future. The first number of the new «Du» comes out in September.

What is it that tempts a man like Bachmann who up to now has worked for the «Tagesanzeiger Magazine» as well as for the dramatic art and executive departments of the Zurich Theatre (Schauspielhaus), and who has also made a name for himself as the author of the novel «Rab» and the «Sorgen im Paradies» (Troubles in Paradise) reportages? What attracts a critical observer such as Bachmann to take over a somewhat affirmative and «posh» magazine like «Du» which can hardly be said to swim against the cultural currents? Bachmann readily admits that the horizon of «Du» has narrowed considerably over the last few years. The magazine confined itself, on the basis of a rather élitist claim, to the art sector and, indeed, to some extent distanced itself from what in our time was happening in the whole field of culture. What Bachmann had in mind was a re-enlargement of the subject matter of «Du», the recreation of a «Magazine for Art and Literature» in which, by «Art» also architecture and film, and, by «Literature» not only *belles-lettres* but also «whatever, anyway, moves us in print» would be meant – as far as philosophy, right up to contemporary thinking.

Above all, Bachmann would like to pick up the thread of the first years of «Du», when Arnold Kübler ran the magazine. What astonishes one most about the early num-

bers of «Du» is the enormous curiosity and openness that Kübler evinced towards what was happening at the time. To think back to Arnold Kübler and then to draw the conclusions for today is for him, Bachmann, personally, important.

Urs Allemann (*Basler Zeitung*)



Computer- fachleute, zurück in die Schweiz?

Fachleute der Wirtschaftsinformatik und der industriellen Automation finden bei uns umfassende Informationen über den Arbeitsmarkt Schweiz. Unsere Datenbank enthält Angaben über alle Arbeitgeber und offenen Positionen, wo Computererfahrung gefragt ist.

Falls Sie als Schweizer Bürger oder Ehemann einer Schweizerin an einer Rückkehr interessiert sind, helfen wir Ihnen gerne, die richtige Stelle zu finden. Dabei beraten wir Sie kompetent, objektiv und diskret. Unsere Arbeit ist kostenlos für Sie, denn wir werden von den Arbeitgebern bezahlt.

CBA
Computer Brainware
Advisors

Beethovenstr. 47, 8039 Zürich
Tel. 01/201 25 44
Avenue de la Gare 17
1001 Lausanne
Tél. 021/20 77 25

Seit 1972 Personalberatung
für alle Berufe der
Informatik und der industriellen
Automation.

Telegrams

■ *Zouc*, the actor from Saignelégier, Jura, has won the Molière Prize in Paris for the best comedy performance.

■ *Heinz Holliger*, who was born in Langenthal, has won the Frankfurt-on-Main Music Prize. He is one of the world's best oboists and teaches as a professor at the Academy of Music in Freiburg im Breisgau, W. Germany.

EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Back to your country

Headline expatriate service offers you many job openings

HEADLINE
PERSONNEL CONSULTANT
022 / 81 05 57 / 8
8, RUE DE LA ROTISSERIE
1204 GENEVA
EDP – ELECTRONICS – FINANCE – MARKETING