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## AVENCHES AS OPERA CENTRE

Up to now, Avenches (Waadt) was mainly known for its well preserved Roman ruins. But now, after a first and very successful try to stage Verdi's opera "Aïda" in the old Roman amphitheatre which attracted more than 35,000 spectators, Avenches (or Aventicum in Latin) is sure to become Switzerland's new opera centre.

Following this huge success, the organisers "Les arènes d'Avenches" have decided that from now on they will stage one or two operas each year plus a certain number of smaller and lighter productions. For this year, they will present Bizet's opera "Carmen" for which 32,000 tickets out of a total of 35,000 have already been sold.

For 1997 they plan to stage "La Traviata" and "La Bohème", in 1998 "Turandot" and "The Barber of Sevilla", in 1999 "Nabucco" and "Rigoletto". "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Il Pagliacci" are planned for the year 2000 and for 2001 the main attraction will be "Wilhelm Tell".

So against all expectations, Avenches, the little, almost forgotten village near Murten along the main road between Lausanne and Berne has suddenly become a well known cultural centre. Well done!



The old Roman arena provides a dramatic setting for the opera "Aïda".

### NOTE TO SECRETARIES

Next issue of the Helvetia magazine: SEPTEMBER 1996. All contributions must be in by 15 August. Many thanks for your kind cooperation.

### WANKDORF PROJECT

Wankdorf, the soccer stadium near Berne, like so many other stadiums in Switzerland, has grown old and somewhat dilapidated over the years. It no longer meets the demands of a modern stadium requiring covered seating for

all spectators. So a 190 million SFR plan has been prepared to upgrade Wankdorf in order to accommodate 36,000 spectators in an all-seating configuration. A large shopping centre is also part of the refurbishing project.

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