

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 80 (2014)
Heft: [1]

Artikel: Searching for a new national anthem : X-Factor style contest to replace "boring" Swiss national anthem
Autor: Latham-Zurbruegg, Tanja
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-943930>

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: 03.04.2026

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

Searching for new National Anthem

X-Factor style contest to replace "boring" Swiss national anthem

Likened to a weather forecast crossed with a church hymn, Switzerland's national anthem could be binned in favour of a new version if campaigners get their way. Too heavy on God and Alpine vistas, the anthem fails to reflect today's values and has never been etched into the national psyche, critics say.

"Nobody knows the words! Anyone who tells you they do is a liar. Or else we manage the first few and afterwards we go 'la, la, la'," said Pierre Kohler, president of the jury holding an unofficial competition to choose a new anthem.



On January 1, organisers kicked off a contest to find a new anthem, open to all and with a first prize of 10,000 Swiss francs.

The current anthem, officially called the "Swiss Psalm", was penned in 1841, setting a poem on piety and Alpine climes to music composed by a priest. "You've got rolling thunder, radiant mountains. It's a mix between a weather report and a psalm. That might have been right for its century," said fellow jury president Oscar Knapp.

Its de facto song was "When you call us, Fatherland", written in 1811. But that shared a tune with Britain's "God Save the Queen", a tune once common in many countries and still used by Switzerland's tiny neighbour Liechtenstein. This created a few awkward situations.

"Swiss Psalm" supporters pushed from the late 19th century to make it the official anthem and end confusion with Britain's, but decision-making can move at snail's pace to build consensus. In 1961, the government declared The "Swiss Psalm" the provisional anthem, before giving it official status in 1981.

The problem, opponents argue, is that it was outdated already five decades ago, given Switzerland's increasingly secular society. "We don't take issue with the tune, which is quite beautiful," said Jean-Daniel Gerber, chairman of the Swiss Society for Public Good, the 203-year-old association which masterminded the competition. "The problem is the lyrics".

The author had in mind a psalm, not a national anthem. As a psalm, you have to admit that it's very good. We have no qualms with it as a psalm, just as an anthem," he added.

The jury includes establishment figures - Kohler is a former cantonal government chief and Knapp an ex-ambassador - as well as musicians, journalists and representatives of choirs, yodel clubs and sports associations.

Entries must be submitted by June 30, in at least one of the four languages, with the organisers handling subsequent translation. The competition rules say the current tune should be respected, albeit with room for artistic licence.

By Tanja Latham-Zurbruegg

Consigli della Nonna

1. *If you are baking cakes or cookies and discover that someone used the last of the eggs in the fridge, did you know that you can use vinegar instead? Just use one tablespoon of white distilled vinegar plus one teaspoon of baking soda to replace each egg in any cake recipe. And no, your cake won't taste of vinegar.*
2. *Buttermilk is a common ingredient in baking. If you don't have any, add a tablespoon of vinegar to a cupful of whole milk, then let it stand for five minutes.*



By Ursula Nixon



Margaret Mortimer

Residential Sales

mob. 027 280 6772
bus. 09 478 9089
ah. 09 410 4848
email. m.mortimer@barfoot.co.nz

Barfoot & Thompson
SINCE 1833 MIRENZ

Licensed under the Real Estate Agents Act 2008

Starship
Five Star Sponsor

Mairangi Bay Branch
386 Beach Road
P O Box 65075, Mairangi Bay, Auckland
fax. 09 478 9086
www.barfoot.co.nz

Heirloom Cookie Moulds
Hundreds of Moulds to Choose From

**SPRINGERLE
COTTAGE**

Suitable for:
WAX • CARD MAKING • COOKIES • CLAY

Old-Fashioned Artistry
Deb Hrstich - 027 343 2130
springerlecottage@paradise.net.nz

Quality Handcrafted Antique Replicas