

Charlie Chaplin returns to Vevey

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): **- (1982)**

Heft 1788

PDF erstellt am: **01.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-686458>

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How the finished statue will appear

Charlie Chaplin returns to Vevey ...

IN a unique tribute to the man who was the greatest comedian the world has ever known, a life sized bronze statue of Charlie Chaplin is to be erected on the quayside of Vevey – near where he spent the latter part of his life.

Chaplin made his home at the Manoir de Ban in the little village of Corsier, and knew well – and loved passionately – the whole of the vineyard-encrusted Montreux-Vevey region that lies on the sun-drenched northern shore of the lake of Geneva.

The proposal for the statue came from the Swiss National Tourist Office whose president, Mr Jean-Jacques Cevey, is himself the mayor of Montreux, where Chaplin was a frequent visitor.

The statue, which will be unveiled in August, is the work of an English sculptor, John Doubleday, who created a similar

memorial which now stands in London's Leicester Square.

His appreciation of bronze as a medium owes much to his familiarity and involvement with the process of casting. He does most of his work at his studio near Maldon in Essex, from where the completed originals are taken to London to be cast under his supervision.

The Vevey bronze, says John Doubleday, will be a version of the Leicester Square work, but there will be differences to take account of the lakeside situation.

Because it is to be mounted at ground level, people will be able to walk right up to it, perhaps to have their photographs taken next to the screen legend, and this introduces a new dimension into the work.

Although John Doubleday has

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produced copies of some of his statues in the past, this is the first time that he has produced a second version of the same subject. And he has found the experience an interesting one.

"It certainly has not been boring," he says. "Working on the same subject has given me the opportunity to look at the piece afresh. After a couple of years, different things occur to one. The first piece is produced purely as a reaction to the subject. Then time goes by and when one returns to it reactions have settled a little. Perhaps the new approach is more mature."

John Doubleday's work has been widely acclaimed. One of the most recent was for the Harvard Medical Centre in Boston, USA. But the most ardent fans of his latest statue are very close to home. His three young sons, aged seven, six and four, have been particularly interested in the Chaplin study.

"They have, of course, seen Chaplin films on television," he says, "and it is the first time that I have worked on something which has really captured their imagination."

The whole family will be visiting Vevey in August to be present at the unveiling ceremony.

The sculptor with the Swiss Connection



WHEN young John Doubleday visited Paris after leaving school he had his first real encounter with the sculptures that were to help decide his future career.

He spent a great deal of time drawing the work of the post-Rodin sculptors, Mialloli and Despiau, and later, the Swiss Giacometti.

On his return to England he worked for a while in Cumberland but spent his spare time drawing and painting at Carlisle Art School. It was here that he was encouraged to take formal art school training.

Three years at the Gold-

smith's School of Art followed, and while he was there he won a competition to produce a piece of sculpture for the Glossop Centre in Derbyshire and had exhibitions at the Waterhouse Gallery in London.

From that point his reputation has grown to one of international proportions, mainly through his remarkable sculpted portraits.

Today John Doubleday lives near Maldon in Essex, not far from where he was born in 1947. It is a part of England he loves dearly. But he is also enthusiastic about another place, far removed

from coastal Essex - Switzerland.

His family began to holiday and ski in Switzerland before the First World War, visiting Grindelwald and Château-d'Oex. Young John Doubleday was the third generation of the family to establish a close relationship with the country, and by the time he reached adulthood he knew the area around Vevey very well.

This resulted in portrait commissions from the Thom family of Montreux, which in turn led to other private work. He spent a lot of time in the area while completing

