



50 years
**Matterhorn
Choir**
1969-2019





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50 years Matterhorn Choir 1969-2019

*Commemorating the 50th Anniversary
of the Swiss Yodel Choir Matterhorn*

Foreword

Dear Yodlers, Dear Friends,

It is a pleasure and an honor to be able to write a few words on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Swiss Yodel Choir Matterhorn Melbourne and its wonderful celebration of this milestone.

Traditions and customs play an important role in the cultural life of Switzerland. Our home country, due to its geographical location, has always been a crossroads for different cultures. Our customs, including Swiss folk music, have therefore been subject to varied cultural influences and enriched by visitors as well as immigrants. Passed-down from generation to generation, the Swiss folk music tradition is rich and, whilst most major cities have orchestras, many smaller communities have a brass band, a choir and/or a Yodel Choir, all of them keeping our traditions alive.

It is wonderful to see that these traditions are also kept alive outside of Switzerland and the Swiss Yodel Choir Matterhorn is a great example of this. Founded in 1969 by a few, mostly German speaking, Swiss emigrants, the choir has been maintaining Swiss traditions and culture for the last 50 years far away from Switzerland. Their varied activities are an important part of the Swiss Community in Melbourne. Best known for the organization of the 1st August celebrations, the Swiss picnic, every year, they also regularly perform at the Swiss Festival and at other Swiss-related events, and even attended the National Yodel Festival in Switzerland.

For their special celebration they will welcome fellow Yodlers from around Australia and together they will celebrate Swiss music, culture and traditions.

It is with great pleasure that I extend my congratulations to the Swiss Yodel Choir Matterhorn in Melbourne on their 50th Anniversary. I wish them all the very best and much success for the future.



Bernadette Hunkeler Brown
Consul General of Switzerland



Introduction by the President

This booklet tells you a bit more about the Matterhorn Choir and its history. As we look back over the 50-year life of the Swiss Yodel Choir Matterhorn in Melbourne and the many enjoyable moments it has brought to its members and the Swiss community in Victoria, it is worth thinking about how we got to this milestone.

The 50 years of successful Choir life have only been possible thanks to the efforts and the helpful support of many people. Firstly it is the singers and yodlers who have been active Choir members over the years; they have put in countless hours of practice to bring enjoyable performances to a broad range of audiences. The Choir's conductors had the sometimes difficult task to mould the Choir members from different parts of Switzerland and even from neighbouring countries in Europe and from Australia into a harmonious ensemble that would do justice to the tradition of Swiss yodelling songs. The Choir presidents and Committee members made sure that all the Choir activities could run smoothly, and they also had the challenging task of organising and running several major and minor events each year. The fruitful cooperation with the other Swiss groups in Melbourne was a major factor contributing to the success of these events. Finally, perhaps most importantly, we have always been able to rely on the help of our passive members and other supporters of the Choir.

On behalf of the current Choir members, I would like to take this opportunity to thank every one of these contributors for their involvement and their continuing support!

The 50-Year Celebration also gives us a good opportunity to think about the future of our Choir. We and the world around us change, and the Choir has to adapt to new situations. As long-term members of the Choir are getting older they may join the grey nomads or travel overseas for extended periods, while at the same time there are fewer potential new Choir members arriving from Switzerland. To deal with the challenge of having all the yodelling and singing parts of the Choir well represented we decided a few years ago to invite women to join the Choir as active members. I'm very happy to report that this has revitalised the Choir and allows us to look positively into the future. Nevertheless, it would be great if we could welcome into our Choir new singers interested in traditional Swiss yodelling!

Another positive note is that we enjoy very good relations with the other Swiss groups in Melbourne and with the Swiss Yodlers of Sydney. They will be an important part of the program of entertainment at our 50-Year Celebration on 16 November. We hope to welcome many members of the Swiss community in Victoria and their friends at this special event!

Erwin Weinmann



About the Matterhorn Choir and its History

Many Swiss migrants to Australia continue to feel a strong connection to their country of origin, its culture and unique traditions, even after living many years in their new homeland. So it is not surprising that in 1966 several Swiss migrants in the Melbourne area decided to bring some of these traditions to their new home and form the Melbourne 'Schwing-Club' (Swiss Wrestling Club). It then did not take long before those among them who enjoyed singing also wished for a yodel choir. So it happened that in November 1969 the Swiss Yodel Choir Matterhorn was founded.

Over the years choir members have come and gone. Founding member Godi Schmuki and early choir members Paul Voumard and Beny Hürlimann are now supporting the Choir only from the distance, but our conductor Chris Hostettler can look back at 45 years of active involvement with the Choir.

Keeping to official singing traditions has been a guiding principle for our choir since its beginning, thus in March 1970 the choir joined the Swiss Yodeller Association (E.J.V.). At a special function during the 25th Swiss Yodelling Festival in Fribourg in 2002, we were inducted into the special circle of 'Veterans of the Association'.

Our choir's main aim has always been to keep the joy of Swiss yodelling and other folkloristic traditions alive among the Swiss expatriates, and to bring these enjoyments closer to Australians. Over many years our choir, together with the 'Schwing-Club', has organised 'Alpine Festivals' with Swiss wrestling, Swiss National Day celebrations and folkloristic nights, as well as performing at many events for the Swiss community in Victoria. In recent years we have enjoyed being part of the Swiss Festival in Melbourne, which showcases 'Swissness' to a broader group of Victorians. The annual pre-Christmas concerts at two homes for German speaking aged people and birthday serenades for aged Swiss friends continue to be particularly rewarding parts of our performance program.

The active choir members meet every Wednesday night for serious singing practice. Thanks to the efforts of our conductor and the marvels of new technology, we can now overcome our lack of skills in reading sheet music and readily practice our singing and yodelling parts at home.

Choir life is not all about serious singing business. We also enjoy the opportunity of regular social interaction with like-minded people. Our social program includes occasional gatherings with passive Choir members and the traditional Cup-Day weekends with the Choir in interesting places away from home.

After 50 years our Choir is alive and well – we hope this story will continue for many years to come!

Highlights

Among the many memorable events in the 50-year history of the choir, the following stand out as highlights:

1976	Recording of LP "Swiss Folklore Abroad" (with Ländlerkapelle Matterhorn)
1978	'A Weekend of Swiss Folklore' – Wodonga
1980s	'Free Entertainment in the Parks' Concerts in Fitzroy Gardens (3 times)
1982	'Music for People' – Sydney Myer Music Bowl
1988	Swiss Day at Expo 1988 in Brisbane
1991	'Moomba Festival' procession celebrating Switzerland's 700th birthday
1995	'Alpine Festival' in Myrtleford
1998	Swiss Folklore Festival in Sydney (Swiss Yodlers of Sydney)
2001	Port Fairy Spring Festival, dedicated to Swiss music
2002	25th Swiss Yodelling Festival Fribourg, as 'guest of honour choir from abroad' Our song 'Wenn ds Alphorn tönt' by Emil Herzog earned a positive jury report
2003	'Swiss Night at Federation Square' (with Roger Federer)
2004	'Swiss-Italian Festa' in Daylesford – regular participation until 2016
2005	Swiss Yodelling Festival in Aarau (part of Choir with Swiss Yodlers of Sydney)
2007	Production of our CD 'Vor mängem Jahr...'
2008	Swiss Yodelling Festival in Luzern (part of Choir with Swiss Yodlers of Sydney)
2009	40 Years Matterhorn Celebration – Hungarian Community Centre
2011	Swiss Yodelling Festival in Interlaken, performing the song 'Chüjerglüt' by Hannes Fuhrer and earning again a positive jury report
2011	Swiss Festival Melbourne – regular participation 2011 to 2018
2013	The Matterhorn Choir becomes an Incorporated Association
2015	Five ladies join the Choir and revive it
2018	50 Years Swiss Yodlers of Sydney – 3-day celebration with Choirs from AUS and NZ

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Early 1970s



Swiss Yodelling Festival Fribourg 2002



Matterhorn Choir 2011



Schwingfest Gembrook



Swiss Italian Festa 2013



Cup Weekend Mount Buller 2006



Mid 1970s



Swiss Festival Heidelberg 2009



Swiss Festival 2014



LP Cover 1976



Swiss Yodel Choir Matterhorn



Swiss National Day Picnic 2016



50 Years Sydney Yodlers 2018 -

Front Row (Left to Right) The Yodellers: Caroline Berry, Heike Jindra, Alice Bruengger

Back Row (Left to Right) Erwin Weinmann, Chris Hostettler (Conductor), Urs Zuber, Ilya Meyer, Sepp Schmidig, Juergen Kiefer, Michael Berry, Beat Stuber, Sepp Goldiger

Inset Missing in the picture: Bruno Schwaerzler and Bruno Frick





Schwingfest Cockatoo



Moomba Procession 1991



Swiss Yodelling Festival Fribourg 2002



Swiss Italian Festa Hepburn Springs 2005



Swiss Yodelling Festival Interlaken 2011 - with Jodlerklub Oberhofen



Wagga Wagga 2011



SBS Interview - In front of Caulfield Club Premises



Port Fairy



Cup Weekend 2004 - Grampians

Founding Members (1969)

Godi Schmuki	Yodeller (Founder)
Margrit Konarski-Steiner	Yodeller
Hans Bauer	1st Tenor
Karl Hostettler	1st Tenor
Alfred Knecht	1st Tenor
Walter Ammann	2nd Tenor
Ernst Ehrler	2nd Tenor
Paul Grässer	2nd Tenor
Hans Geisseler	1st Bass
Willi Kaufmann	1st Bass
Sepp Schacher	1st Bass
Bill Fiechter	2nd Bass
Walter Goode	2nd Bass

Presidents

Godi Schmuki	1969 - 1982
Chrigel Hostettler	1983 - 1984
Godi Schmuki	1985
Hans Sutter	1986 - 1993
Marco Unternährer	1994 - 2012
Chrigel Hostettler	2012 - 2017
Erwin Weinmann	from 2018

Conductors

Elisabeth Schmidli	1969 - 1975
Josef Serré	1975 - 1981
Bill Eddy	1981 - 1996
Paul Voumard	1997 - 2008
Chrigel Hostettler	from 2009

Present Choir Members (2019)

Chrigel Hostettler	1st Tenor
(Conductor)	
Caroline Berry	Yodeller/1st Tenor
Alice Bruengger	Yodeller/1st Tenor
Heike Jindra	Yodeller/1st Tenor
Michael Berry	2nd Tenor
Sepp Goldiger	2nd Tenor
Urs Zuber	2nd Tenor
Juergen Kiefer	1st Bass
Beat Stuber	1st Bass
Erwin Weinmann	1st Bass
Bruno Frick	2nd Bass
Ilya Meyer	2nd Bass
Sepp Schmidig	2nd Bass
Bruno Schwaerzler	2nd Bass

Honorary Members

Louis Blöchlinger
Beny Hürlimann
Walter Schellenberg
Godi Schmuki
Paul Voumard



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Yodelling in Switzerland

Switzerland, through its historical origin and growth, is a unique country and its citizens count themselves equally unique, possibly precisely because of their country's history or, perhaps more so, because of their geographical origin and character.

Either way, the Swiss are lovingly fond of their unique place in the world, and so it is not surprising to find a core of them preserving their equally unique and very own numerous folkloristic traditions.

Thus the 'Eidgenössischer Jodlverband' (EJV) or 'Association of Swiss Yodellers' was founded on May 8, 1910 in Bern with the view to preserve and foster the distinctive style of yodelling and singing of Switzerland's mountain dwellers against foreign musical influences from outside its borders. Today, more than a century later, the association, made up of five regional divisions, counts roughly 20,000 members.

Since 1970, one year after its inauguration in 1969, the Swiss Yodel Choir Matterhorn in Melbourne has been a member of this association and continues to hold true to its original raison d'être in its singing and yodelling. As in many other places around the world, here too, numerous Swiss expatriates have eventually found their way to a Swiss yodel choir, following an inner longing to actively connect to their origin through its distinctive music.

This is perhaps best explained further in a text from Fränzy Meyer from Birmensdorf, found on the website of the EJV:

From a distance, one could fall into the wrong assumption, our yodel songs showcase an exaggerated form of patriotism, but that's not the case. Pure yodelling, in its original form without words, is a very old language of the mountains used to connect with neighbouring alpine herdsmen and God. Such natural yodels originate in the heart, resonate through the throat and ascend toward heaven.

Songs with texts and interspersing yodels as choruses originated only at the beginning of the twentieth century, at the same time as the first yodel choirs were formed. This was, after all, also a time when people often had to bind together in order to cope. In this, the yodel clubs strived and gravitated towards camaraderie and unison amongst the Swiss, which often bestows the songs an old-fashioned character.

However, most of all, the songs depict the beauty of the mountains, of friendship and of Swiss country life.

*Compiled and translated by our
Conductor, Chris Hostettler, 2019*





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Swiss Yodlers of Sydney

Celebrating 50 years in 2018!
President Alois Kretz
Conductor Sepp Engesser



Swiss Folk Dance Group
Alpenrose

Celebrating 70 years in 2019!
President Sylvia Hochuli OAM



Swiss Companion Singers

Convenor Corinne Moor



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Swiss Yodel Choir
Matterhorn

1969-2019

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