

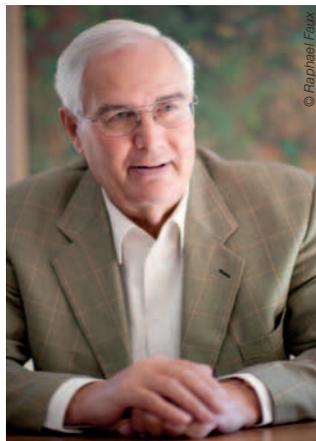
LES ARTS GSTAAD

No. 4

February 2012

Dear Residents of Saanen
Dear Guests

First of all, we would like to thank you for the critical and dedicated interest that you have shown in the LES ARTS GSTAAD project and the idea of a unique cultural centre. Although the road to LES ARTS GSTAAD has been prepared, as you already know, the entire project is ambitious and requires a lot of effort from all those involved. However, we want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has assisted us this far with financial resources, ideas and enthusiastic support in the form of specific work. This also includes the constructive critical contributions in the regional media. We are taking these ideas seriously, discussing them and incorporating them into the project's further development. The Foundation Board continues to focus on a broad discussion of the project, so that a well-informed population in Saanen can respond to the town council's submissions in the approval process. The status of planning work, discussions with potential donors and good cooperation with authorities are creating a buoyant mood. The aim is to provide a structure that will be an asset both to the region as a whole and to the people in Gstaad and is supported by a solid majority.



Over the past weeks and months, we have amended the concert hall, bus station and access points in response to the critical contributions received, the evaluations with experts and discussions with the authorities and the architects on key points. This process is now being continued and design work on the other premises such as the foyer and the exhibition space is being completed through to the submission of the construction application.

In addition, we are pleased to announce that the Foundation Board of LES ARTS GSTAAD has a keen new member – Mr Dmitriy Rybolovlev.

The financing of the planning has been secured through to the application for a construction permit with the required participation and voting procedures of the population. The project is attracting a lot of attention and increasing interest. All of this is highly gratifying to us and constantly reaffirms our commitment.

Read more on the status of the project work and upcoming events in this newsletter. Thank you for your interest!

Kind regards,

J. Markus Kappeler-Steffen
Chairman of the
LES ARTS GSTAAD Foundation



LES ARTS GSTAAD: What qualitative further development will provide

LES ARTS GSTAAD will be a striking, distinctive building; the building's dimensions and the concert hall have been amended to blend more with its surroundings and to take new ideas into account: a plus in terms of both acoustics and atmosphere.

In autumn 2011, a meeting was held with the architect Rudy Ricciotti in Bandol/Menton, France. The Foundation Board delegation found it interesting not only to pay another visit to architect Rudy Ricciotti at his place of work. Changes considered necessary for the project were also discussed in a detailed and productive manner and sketched out in advance.

In the months prior to this meeting, a lively discussion had been ongoing, in Gstaad, in the region and among experts. New ideas, points of criticism and suggestions were noted and analyzed by the Foundation. LES ARTS GSTAAD aims to attract attention, but the building's height, size and dominance has also evoked criticism. The Board acknowledges this criticism and, in close collaboration with the architect,

it has now been acted upon in the form of appropriate project changes:

Striking, but less dominating

The building's height has been reduced in the revised project by more than 4 meters. The concert hall will be set lower by one storey within the building complex, which offers the following additional advantages: access to the hall will now be possible from the level of the foyer, visitors can go directly to the cloakroom from the underground garage and the total height of the building remains within the limits of its surrounding structures. The adjacent bus station will also be correspondingly upgraded. With an unobstructed design, it will take on the character of an atrium with lots of natural light and fresh air.

Seating for 1,200 is the right size

One desirable change will be in the seating capacity of the concert hall. Together with international experts, the Foundation Board had appropriate comparisons carried out and analysed requirements once again: high-calibre concert halls around the world meet the needs of a large orchestra and their audiences with 1,000 to 1,400 seats. The previous 1,400 seats in the concert hall for the project are to be amended to 1,200 in the revised project. Potential donors, experts and many dedicated local citizens have rightly pointed out that the size and the extent to which the hall's capacity will be used should be critically re-appraised.

An acoustic quantum leap

The results now reflect the fact that consistently filling a large number of seats in concert halls for more than 1,200 concertgoers is possible in Switzerland, but is critical in Gstaad; realistically, LES ARTS GSTAAD's initial target of 1,400 seats would have led to an unsatisfactory number of empty seats. This is what the Foundation Board wishes to avoid at all costs. Full capacity can be achieved with first-class, exclusive events – and the stalls/parquet can be extended into the foyer to create a few dozen extra seats.

The Foundation LES ARTS GSTAAD is aiming to offer top quality in an appropriate setting and is willing to replace the actual concert-tent. The Foundation Board was pleased to learn from the experts that the new number of seats would additionally improve the acoustics because the space avail-

able is to be optimized in terms of height, width, depth and distance between the balconies, the new dimensions will also improve the hall's acoustics. At 13 m³, the volume per seat is ideal. Experts confirm this: the analysis of comparably large concert halls in Europe shows that LES ARTS GSTAAD would make an acoustic upgrade with the new dimensions. Particularly since the concept provides for LES ARTS GSTAAD to host numerous events and activities at which fewer visitors to the hall can enjoy a pleasant atmosphere and excellent acoustics – with the possibility of limiting the room flexibly to a size of approximately 700 seats. Quite apart from these decisive gains in quality, a significant saving in investment costs can be made by dispensing with one of the three balconies. The Foundation Board will very soon be able to present the new concept in detail to stakeholders. Seen in the context of the village, the new model of the reduced structure is on display in the window of the "Haus des Gastes" in Gstaad.

www.lesartsgstaad.com



“Gstaad 2020+”: LES ARTS GSTAAD is key

“Gstaad 2020+ On the way to sustainability” is a project with a committee of tourism professionals, politicians, representatives of the farming community, the hotel industry and of regional events (Saanen, Pays d'Enhaut, Zweisimmen). The LES ARTS GSTAAD project as an important and major opportunity is embedded in the issue of how and in which direction Gstaad and the entire region should further develop.

As you can probably recall from our last newsletter: the Foundation Board pointed out how the LES ARTS GSTAAD project can help keep Gstaad attractive as a brand and destination and maintain this in future. In recent months, the work of “Gstaad 2020+” has become even more specific.

At this point, we would like to include some of the results that are both pleasing and an obligation to the LES ARTS GSTAAD Foundation.

A guiding star for our future

In its observations on all aspects of development, the “Vacation region Gstaad 2020+ think tank” project group notes how LES ARTS GSTAAD can and ought to contribute to the future. Among other things, the project group states that LES ARTS GSTAAD covers many of the elements of “Gstaad

2020+”, such as innovation, year-round efforts, excellence goals, events and so on. After intensive discussions the group therefore comes to the satisfying conclusion: “LES ARTS GSTAAD can be a guiding star for designing our future”. In the ongoing work done by the working group it has therefore been decided that the think-tank would clearly be behind “the implementation of the project and a constructive decision-making process”. While they are aware “that this project will be a constant challenge”, they also stress that “the project will have a unique effect in benefitting Gstaad.”

The Foundation Board of LES ARTS GSTAAD is very pleased with this declaration and support and assures “Gstaad 2020+” of its creative and energetic support. It is a good feeling to be able to collaborate in this way for the successful future of the region!

Interview with Christian Hoefliger, President of the Hotel-Association Gstaad Saanenland and member of the group “Gstaad 2020+”

“My personal enthusiasm for LES ARTS GSTAAD has increased”

From the perspective economy and tourism, “LES ARTS GSTAAD” represents an opportunity for the entire region. What are you hoping for?

Christian Hoefliger: LES ARTS GSTAAD covers so many requirements for our region’s successful future orientation. A few of the main requirements are definitely an increase in attractiveness throughout the four seasons, additional and very important frequencies that can be generated and, in particular, greater diversification alongside winter sports.

While this will undoubtedly remain a cornerstone for tourism in our region, LES ARTS GSTAAD will help to further reduce this dependency.

Above all, the creation of an additional and unique feature is a very important point: in future, a successful destination will only be able to position itself on aspects based on quality and

uniqueness. From the viewpoint of tourism, the implementation of this project would be nothing less than a quantum leap!

What needs to be in place for LES ARTS GSTAAD to be a “guiding star for the future”?

The main points have definitely been covered in our planning so far. Support from the local population and our regular guests is undoubtedly much more important for the emergence of this guiding star at this moment in time and over the next few years. Only if confidence, enthusiasm and passion can be developed among this broad base will LES ARTS GSTAAD become the guiding star that we want and which it should undoubtedly be. As is always the case with large projects, its positioning in public perception and its careful development are absolutely key.

You are member of the group “Gstaad 2020+”. What contribution can “Gstaad 2020+” make to the success of the project?

Above all, it is probably the mission of 2020+ to provide additional information, communication and to build confidence. In many sectors of the population, there is an understandable fear of tackling a project of this size. This means that help is essential when addressing these issues and seizing the major opportunity offered to our region.

One must not forget: it is in the nature of human beings not to change but to hang onto what already exists. So the question is perfectly understandable as to why there is any need at all for such a building, when everything is so beautiful? The answer lies in the economic reality of our region. To be able to make the necessary re-investment in future, we need to utilize our entire infrastructure to better effect. With the exception of our best times in the year, we are, ultimately, a region that is affected by the increase in urbanization. Our economic cycle makes life difficult.

The intensity and complexity of the work increase with the progress of the project: can LES ARTS GSTAAD also expect to have an independent, specific working group within “Gstaad 2020+” that is committed to supporting it?

This is already happening and will perhaps be even

more the case in future At present, the relevance of LES ARTS GSTAAD for the region is obvious to us and so this aspect is in our thoughts at every meeting. Similarly, the project occupies a special “action plan” within “Gstaad 2020+”.

What expectations do you have, personally, of a cultural project such as LES ARTS GSTAAD?

My expectations in terms of content actually coincide with the hopes I mentioned in my reply to your first question. First of all, of course, I am immensely pleased that we are discussing such a project at all in our region. Not every leisure destination can enjoy this privilege by any means and we should be appreciative and aware



of this when we are weighing up the advantages and disadvantages. I probably think the same as many residents and guests: by supporting such a big project, you assume a certain responsibility for the future and this, quite logically, leads to the question of whether you are doing something wrong. From the start, my personal enthusiasm has only increased and not waned.

What would you like guests to experience in the new Gstaad that you envisage?

Primarily, alongside an increase in cultural emphasis, a far wider range of attractions throughout the seasons. Our region will be revitalized and thus become more appealing. In addition, guests will experience the perennial attractions of

the region: its authenticity, the beauty of its setting and the genuineness of what they encounter here. All this will have a knock-on effect: an increase in frequencies means more opportunities for our local trade, for our cable car companies and for our hotel industry, etc. This, in turn, means a wider range of attractions, which, in turn, means greater satisfaction among our visitors. What will our guests get out of this, in particular? Even greater quality, which is the most important aspect for a successful future.

Does LES ARTS GSTAAD have the necessary economic potential?

The Foundation Board of LES ARTS GSTAAD has commissioned Prof. Dr. Hansruedi Müller to evaluate the “LES ARTS GSTAAD” project and set out the likely economic benefits of the project in terms of the relevant criteria.

The initial situation is clear: Gstaad-Saanenland as a destination is aiming for year-round tourism. In particular, the aim is to support the low seasons in spring and in autumn. This requires all-weather facilities, particularly for cultural events. The LES ARTS GSTAAD project has therefore been launched with the declared aim of building a top-class cultural and meeting centre. Designed by architect Rudy Ricciotti, the project is to be built alongside Gstaad’s railway station.

Visualizing the opportunities

A few weeks ago, the Foundation Board of LES ARTS GSTAAD decided to commission Prof. Dr. Hansruedi Müller and Dr. Monica Baldi together with other experts at the University of Berne to conduct a corresponding study. The tourism experts analyzed the business plan and all the

calculations and economic estimates previously carried out by the Board itself and outside consultants.

The study and the results are now available. Prof. Dr. Müller and Dr. Baldi will soon be presenting the results of this study to the authorities, interested parties and the general public in Gstaad.

“Significant enhancement”

Prof. Müller says that the project evaluation will comprehensively identify the regional economic importance of the LES ARTS GSTAAD project. “And I can already say this: the advancement of this visionary project is undoubtedly desirable as it represents a significant enhancement of the destination.”

Gstaad - Alpine festival capital: developing new musical opportunities

LES ARTS GSTAAD is opening up new premises for classical music in the village. This is an opportunity that we should seize in the interests of the entire region.

By Christoph Mueller, director of the Menuhin Festival Gstaad

The Menuhin Festival is now on solid ground. It has a regular audience of loyal followers and, with the church in Saanen, the smaller churches in the Saanenland and the Pays d'Enhaut and typical local venues such as carpenters' workshops, alpine huts and mountain stations, it has a quality USP ("Unique Selling Proposition"). The festival concert tent, which has enabled the festival to grow significantly since 1987 thanks to the inclusion of symphonic concerts, has also become a symbol of the Menuhin Festival. With its arena of some 1,800 seats, the festival has suddenly been able to attract sponsors and engage large orchestras and renowned soloists and conductors. In the meantime, the tent has become a "permanent" interim solution that has endured for 25 years.

New requirements, highest quality

Recent years have shown, however, that the existing infrastructure is falling short of what is expected for top-class artistic offerings. The question of whether we can, in future, ensure maximum quality in the "permanent" interim solution can no longer be answered in the affirmative. All guests and visitors, stakeholders and those involved quite rightly have high expectations. Their demand for quality can barely be satisfied with the existing infrastructure. The Menuhin Festival wishes to maintain its profile as the second largest and most important summer classical music festival in Switzerland, however, and expand. We can hardly succeed with the "permanent tent". This explains the visionary and now highly substantial idea of creating a new home for the festival in a concert hall.



Audience in the actual concert tent

It is abundantly clear to everyone that, when guests arrive from far away, they come not only because of the music, but certainly also



Christoph Mueller

because of Gstaad's natural surroundings and the vacation experience. Music aficionados experience musical fare at its finest in the outstanding acoustics of the church concerts and the festival tent. However, we cannot deny that the Menuhin Festival is now regarded by many as a "vacation festival" and less as a "connoisseur festival", of which there are many – virtually on the way to Gstaad – in Basle, Lucerne, Zurich or Geneva, and in acoustically excellent concert halls. People who visit our tent concerts undoubtedly appreciate the concert and the special atmosphere – but they also know that a concert would be disrupted by wind and rain or even cancelled and that the constant burbling from the adjacent stream could "drown out" the orchestra's pianissimo.

Improving the acoustics and atmosphere

In the medium to long term, a solution is required. Only acoustic and atmospheric improvements would attract new audiences and new concertgoers to Gstaad.

What options do we have? We can leave everything as it is – even though the festival tent prevents qualitative growth and weakens our competitiveness in the medium term. A permanent building with a capacity for around 1,200 concertgoers would make it possible to carefully expand the existing potential audience and

provide concerts of international appeal in a hall with adequate acoustics. It would also enable Gstaad to position itself as the most important Alpine Music Festival.

Defending our international ranking

Gstaad's festival culture is at a crossroads. At this junction, this concert hall project gives us an opportunity to open up new space to a culture of symphonic concerts and provide Gstaad with a chance for more extensive development.

This is particularly true since it cannot be denied that the Menuhin Festival Gstaad has its place in the international festival

scene. We have many advantages: the high-profile church concerts that often outdo the competition – and an exciting programme structure in the Menuhin Festival, which has long needed a worthier setting. Let us take a step forward and dare to innovate: traditionally, Gstaad has always been a source of quality, innovation and exclusivity. With LES ARTS GSTAAD and its superbly designed concert hall, the region would gain what it needs for the future.

Status of financing

Due to the new situation in international financial markets, the Foundation Board of LES ARTS GSTAAD has long been carefully checking its financing strategy.

Further development of the winning project from the competition stage through to the building permit will now be financed by non-repayable contributions from donors. Thanks to contributions from Chalet owners in Gstaad and other donations, sufficient funds are available to enable the Foundation Board to give the go-ahead to submit the building permit application (building ordinance, construction project).

The Foundation Board would like to thank all those involved in the ongoing planning process – especially the design engineers and architects – who expressed their willingness to bear their share of the risk in the project and to waive half of the fees quoted if this project fails to come to fruition. Without their commitment and willingness to take risks, the project could not be taken to the next stage – the construction permit.

Fundraising is now focused on gaining patrons for binding pledges of finance for the overall implementation of the LES ARTS GSTAAD project. These pledges are subject to the

issue of a valid building permit for the project – in other words, the consent of the municipal assembly and the clarification and resolution of any objections. Under current statutes, the Foundation Board may in any case only give its go-ahead to the start of construction if the total funding for infrastructure and operating fund has been secured and is available and if a valid building permit has been issued.

Individual financing pledges have already been received by the Foundation Board. Since the start of the project in 2005, the Board has collected a total of CHF 6.3 million in non-repayable contributions. These have covered the cost of the architectural competition, the development of the project to date and will secure its continuation through to the building permit.

LES ARTS GSTAAD