

# Stefan Schwietert



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## Stefan Schwietert

Born in 1961 in Esslingen, grew up in the canton of Basel. Stefan Schwietert is living and working in Therwil (Switzerland) and Berlin (Germany).

In 1979/1980 Schwietert made his first films during the youth unrest in Basel for 'Videogenossenschaft Basel'. From 1981-1982 he lived in Brazil and worked as a director's assistant for TV Globo in the music film department. In 1983 he spent a guest semester at the California Art Institute in San Francisco. Upon his return to Europe in 1984 he studied film at the Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie in Berlin (dfffb) where he graduated in 1990 with *SPRUNG AUS DEN WOLKEN*. His fiction film was premiered in 1991 at the International Film Festival in Locarno (competition) and then at Festivals in Montréal, Vancouver, Chicago, Göteborg, Saarbrücken, a.o.

In 1991 Schwietert established his production company 'Neapel Film' in Swiss Therwil, where he made two short films, as well as other films in international co-production.

In 1996 Schwietert achieved his international breakthrough with *A TICKLE IN THE HEART*, a theatrical film about the Epstein Brothers, klezmer musicians who had performed together for over sixty years. Since then he has made a name for himself as an astute music film director. Apart from working as a film director, he also lectures at numerous film schools and supervises other film projects as a drama-coach. His films have received wide critical acclaim and are in distribution within Europe, the US and South America.

„(...) What I find especially interesting as a filmmaker is the friction and the changes that occur. (...) Take Muotathal in Switzerland for instance, where much has been preserved. When I discover a traditional form of yodeling there, then look at how the 'Eidgenössische Jodelverband' approaches yodeling, and ultimately see how it all comes full circle when a contemporary musician like Christian Zehnder departs from the traditional to develop his own genuine form of yodeling, it's magnificent. On the basis of this brief story a concrete piece of Swiss history can be deduced: you see the dissolution of a custom, the mentality of museums and cultural heritage in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. But you also see in it the temperate emergence of a creative music generation rediscovering its roots.“ (Stefan Schwietert)



Babylon Mitte | Rosa-Luxemburg-Str. 30 | 10178 Berlin  
Veranstalter: Helma Schleif | TMP Productions | A division of FMP FREE MUSIC PRODUCTION Distribution & Communication  
Markgraf-Albrecht-Str. 14 | 10711 Berlin  
T - +49 30 323 75 26 | F - +49 30 324 94 31 | tmp-schleif@gmx.de | tmp-ermer@gmx.de | [www.free-music-production.de](http://www.free-music-production.de)

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## Films – captivating, well-tempered compositions

Schwietert has devoted his attention to the documentary music film. Since then he has become one of the important figures in this genre. His films, particularly those made for the cinema – such as **A TICKLE IN THE HEART**, **EL ACORDEON DEL DIABLO**, **THE ALPHORN STORY**, **ACCORDION TRIBE** and **ECHOES OF HOME** – are marked not only by a compelling imagery and beguiling musicality, they have also set new genre standards. Indeed, they go far beyond – not only in what, but also in how they tell - what is commonly viewed as a ‘music documentary’. A distinguishing feature of Schwietert’s films is the cosmopolitanism and scope which the director conveys through his impartiality: even when Schwietert directs his attention to the homeland his films are expeditions into fascinating, new worlds. They journey at once into the past and into the future. They tell of ancient traditions and that which is vanishing, while nevertheless referring to the emergence of the new, not least based on this emphasis of the fading. It could also be said that Schwietert’s films revolve around the very origins of a type of music, a society and its culture, of life per se.

[www.ventura-film.de](http://www.ventura-film.de) / [www.swissfilms.ch](http://www.swissfilms.ch) / [www.swissguide.ch](http://www.swissguide.ch)

## Films:

- 2007 **BIG BAND POESIE (TV)**  
**ECHOES OF HOME / HEIMATKLÄNGE**
- 2004 **ACCORDION TRIBE**  
**DIE SCHWARZE MADONNA (TV)**
- 2003 **THE ALPHORN STORY / DAS ALPHORN**
- 2002 **LIEBESLIEDER (TV)**
- 2000 **EL ACCORDEON DEL DIABLO / SPIEL MIT DEM TEUFEL**  
**VOYAGE ORIENTAL – THE GEORGE GRUNTZ CONCERT JAZZ BAND IN TURKEY (TV)**
- 1998 **IM WARTERAUM GOTTES (TV)**
- 1997 **DIE BALLADE VON SCHNUCKENACK REINHARDT (TV)**
- 1996 **A TICKLE IN THE HEART**
- 1993 **DER SCHATTEN IST LANG**

1992-95 Collaborating on the series **LOST IN MUSIC** with ZDF/ARTE as editor

- 1991 **SPRUNG AUS DEN WOLKEN** (graduation film at dffb)
- 1988 **FUALNI 88, THE LAST 10 DAYS OF A CAMPAIGN**
- 1987 **TAPEZ 36-15 CODE GORBA**
- 1986 **DAS TOPOLINO PROJEKT**

## Prizes, Wins, Awards (Selection):

- 2007 **European Film Academy Documentary / Prix Arte (for HEIMATKLÄNGE)**
- 1996 **Federal Quality Award (Prädikat „besonders wertvoll“). Artur Brauner Film Award 1996, Bavarian Film Prize 1996 (for A TICKLE IN THE HEART)**
- 1987 **Kurzfilmpreis Festival Clermont Ferrand, Prädikat „besonders wertvoll“ (für TAPEZ 36-15 CODE GORBA)**
- 1986 **Prize of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation for Best Swiss Young Film (for DAS TOPOLINO PROJEKT).**

<http://www.imdb.de>



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