

# PRESS RELEASE



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## CHAPLIN'S WORLD The Modern Times Museum

Chaplin's World: more than  
just a museum!

### Where culture meets entertainment

Corsier-sur-Vevey, 23 November 2009: The developers of a project for a museum dedicated to Charlie Chaplin and his work are taking advantage of the start of the public enquiry into the construction to publicise the detailed plans of the design and multimedia elements that they hope to incorporate in the future museum at Manoir de Ban, the entertainer's Swiss home during the last 25 years of his life. The document, entitled "Chaplin's World, The Modern Times Museum" and introduced by Michael Chaplin, the filmmaker's son and president of the Charlie Chaplin Museum Foundation, outlines the project directors' design concept for a voyage of discovery with a budget of 15 million Swiss francs. The visitor concept is based on three key elements: the Manoir de Ban, a brand new exhibition hall and extensive grounds offering an unrestricted view of one of the most beautiful landscapes on the Swiss Riviera, a stone's throw from the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Lavaux.

*"Our family is especially honoured to be involved in a project which has developed in a spirit of partnership and with all due respect for our father's work," said Michael Chaplin. "We fully approve of the sensitive yet innovative concept developed by the team of partners led by the Charlie Chaplin Museum Foundation and Chaplin Museum Development SA. We are very excited by the use of multimedia and virtual technologies, which we believe will create a more magical and immediate way for the children of today to discover the interplay of light and dark so characteristic of our father."*

### More than just a museum

The natural décor and avant-garde design of the planned museum at Corsier-sur-Vevey evoke a period of history which inspired films that have become famous the world over. Chaplin's World is entertaining, spectacular, interactive, moving and different. Perched on the boundary between entertainment and culture, and sensitive to the language used by children and families today, the daring concept employs the latest technologies and combines scenography, animated décors, multimedia elements, 3D and HD imagery, ambiophonic acoustics, special effects, virtual reality and cinematography. Chaplin's World is intended to be much more than just a museum. The house itself retains the ambience of yesteryear, and the project also includes a VIP area for even the most prestigious functions, a multimedia theatre and an exhibition area in a consciously Hollywood-esque style, a shop and café spread over three floors, an entrance piazza and terraces flanking fountains and hundred-year-old trees, an esplanade available to the local community for hosting performing arts events and festivals, and a stunning garden criss-crossed by paths and landscaped areas dotted with fountains and sculptures.

### From the streets of London to the gardens of Manoir de Ban

In keeping with the burlesque style of Chaplin's work, the visitor experience is to be decidedly droll and entertaining. It will also be touching, reflecting the humanism and universalism of an artistic oeuvre that continues to resonate around the world. In addition to exploring the house, which has been preserved in its original colours and family atmosphere, visitors are invited to dive into a cinematographic world that takes them on a journey through time, from the performer's modest beginnings in late Victorian London to the glamour of Hollywood and his Swiss home. The immersive décor and ambience start in the Manoir's cellars, continuing through a series of experiences, discoveries, emotions

and inevitably laughter, from the intimacy of the family home to the brand new exhibition area with its decidedly Hollywood-like character.

A variety of topics are addressed on this voyage of discovery; themes that evoke the veritably cinematic life of both Chaplin the man and Chaplin the artist: Intimate Encounter, Family Album, A Legacy of Words, A Life on Screen, The Death of Calvero, Echoes of East Lane, Crossing the Atlantic, Flavours of the Nickelodeon, From Laughter to Tears, Easy Street, Corps de Ballet, David and Goliath, The Beauty of Silence, Hollywood Boulevard, Dreams, The Final Scene, and many more.

## Immersion in Chaplin's world

The garage itself has been transformed into a reception area with large windows overlooking two adjacent terraces and leading to a glazed passage – a reminder of the winter garden that was here when this was a family home. The passage leads to a 200-seat theatre showing the multimedia spectacular "From Laughter to Tears", which employs 3-D and high-definition imagery, ambiophonic and THX sound, an all-round lighting concept, animated decor and special technical effects that characterise the Hollywood style of this new building. Having passed through the images on screen, visitors are immersed in the sights and sounds of a typically Chaplinesque world, where they walk down streets, past shop windows and shops, passing through a film set to see behind the scenes in which the iconic Charlie appeared before continuing a voyage of discovery that is both humorous and moving inspired by a life's work outlined and explained by Charlie Chaplin himself.

Passing through a succession of multimedia zones, some breathtakingly daring and never previously seen in Switzerland, visitors cannot help but feel the gamut of emotions associated with the discovery of the man, the artist and the work that revolutionised the Seventh Art and which is more universally well known today than ever.

The thirty-odd zones are the perfect way to discover, laugh with and be touched by an exhibition inspired by the words and images of Chaplin the artist and Chaplin the cinematographer. Indeed, little of what is written, said or shown at the museum does not originate directly from Charlie Chaplin himself. It is almost as if the owner of the manor house were your host, completely relaxed and perfectly at ease, and keen to share the secrets and experiences of his very personal and very professional life.

## Shop, café and terraces

The design concept, a combination of entertainment and culture, also extends to the configuration of the access to a range of public and commercial services which are themselves also designed along thematic lines, including a Chaplin-themed gift shop, a café-cinema in Gold Rush colours, a small London-style pub of the kind Charlie loved, and terraces offering an impressive view of the manor house and its lake-and-mountain backdrop.

## François Confino, internationally renowned set designer

The walk-through concept adopted for the new museum was the product of collaboration between internationally renowned set designer François Confino and Yves Durand, the initiator of the museum concept and its co-developer, working together with architect Philippe Meylan who was responsible for the ensemble. For over a year now, the team have been hard at work continually fine-tuning a concept of positively international stature which François Confino is proud to set the stage for. *"I have always chosen themes drawn from human life and the cinema. Designing the scenery for a grand museum dedicated to Charlie Chaplin and his work is for me the culmination of my career,"* says Confino. *"I have always been possessed by the spirit of the great cinematographers and the intercultural – indeed universal – dimension associated with images and cinematography. It was therefore natural that a succession of 'cités-cinés' on 'cinema avenue' around the globe – from Turin's National Cinema Museum to 'Paris-Décor', from the Lisbon Oceans and Utopia Pavilion to the staging of 'Temps Vite' at the Centre Georges Pompidou – should eventually lead me to consider designing the scenery for Chaplin's World. It is a dream project and by far one of the most exciting and inspiring things I've done in my professional career."*

The completion of the scenery as conceived by the men behind the project will take about 18 months and involve contributions from partners and suppliers in Switzerland and around the world, among them manufacturers, producers, technicians, IT specialists, scene shifters, lighting engineers and musicians of international repute. The idea behind Chaplin's World is to establish in Corsier-sur-Vevey an exhibition of international significance commensurate with the

global appeal of the artist and filmmaker whose work it celebrates with joy and passion, and promising the expected 250,000 visitors a year lots of laughter.

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Corsier-sur-Vevey, 23 November 2009

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Chaplin's World: outline of the planned tour

## A LAND OF DISCOVERIES AND EMOTIONS

A voyage of discovery, experience and emotion inspired by the life and work of one of the best-known and most beloved artists and film-makers of the 20th century. About 3000 square metres of exhibits and shows, and a cinematographic and multimedia environment drawing on state-of-the-art technology.

### On arrival on the site

- A footpath with explanatory signs linking the cemetery, the village and Domaine de Ban
  - A footpath and culverts under the trees leading to the manor house
  - A cycle path around the park
  - VIP disembarkation points for users of public transport
  - Environmentally-friendly car parks at different levels and along the green paths leading to the gardens
- A ticket office with its hilarious vestiges

### The manor house / Close encounter

- The ghostly mirror of a manor house that seems to be coming back to life
  - Dinner with the stars
  - Family life to the rhythms of Chaplinesque music
  - Words that inspire, writing that endures
  - A life in cinema: from London to Corsier-sur-Vevey
  - The death of Calvero or When fiction meets reality
- The family album: previously unpublished images of a family like any other

### The manor house / Prestige and celebrity

- Art gallery, where black and white merge into contemporary forms
  - VIP area combining prestige with celebrity
  - Terraces with a view of the countryside of the Swiss Riviera
- The manor house terrace and the London pub

### The Manor House / From London to the New World

- Remembering East Lane, or The unforgotten childhood
  - Crossing the Atlantic: from the Statue of Liberty to the iconic Charlie
- The smell of the Nickelodeon

### The exhibition hall / "From laughter to tears"

- Pre-show area: black and white; cinema's Golden Age
  - The winter garden echoing the Chaplin family's winter garden
  - The "From laughter to tears" multimedia presentation
  - Easy Street
  - The Corps de Ballet
  - David and Goliath
  - The great beauty of silence
  - The roof, with unforgettable images
  - The Modern Times staircase
  - The studio: a behind-the-scenes look at Hollywood
  - Hollywood Boulevard: the cutting room, the barber shop, the bank
  - Hollywood Boulevard: the florist, the clothes shop, the joke shop
  - La Brea, or the model for Chaplin's legendary studio in Hollywood
  - Dreams:
  - the final scene
- The piazzas under the trees

### The farm / Intermèdes

- The Charlo shop
- The Gold Rush Café
- Public services