

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 43 (2016)
Heft: 5

Rubrik: Sounds : Peter Schärli's liberated jazz

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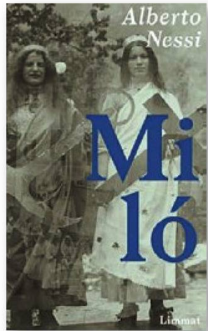
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Partisans and other stories



ALBERTO NESSI: "Miló".
Translated by Maja Pflug.
Limmat Verlag, 2016.
232 pages, CHF 34.50,
EUR 34.50
Published in Italian
by Edizioni Casagrande, 2014.

Alberto Nessi's "Miló" collection of stories, published in 2014, is finally available in German. The protagonists of these 18 stories live on the border between Italy and Switzerland. In the first such tale that takes place in Geneva before the start of the Second World War an Italian immigrant ekes out a meagre living rolling cigars and worries about her son Miló in prison. Having subsequently been extradited, Miló wanders around Italy doing various odd jobs. In September 1943, he goes underground and dies in the mountains fighting the fascists.

The author visited his widow and brings her memories to life: "Seeing him up on that scaffolding, she fell in love with him because he was a free young man." It is a wonderful

declaration of love in this war-ravaged era. Further tales about male and female partisans follow, combined with those of men and women alive today. These are the stories of the so-called "little people" who will never be famous. And yet they are swimming against the tide, showing bravery by refusing to abide by social norms, biding their time in abandoned Ticino villages or seeking a better life as migrants.

You can sense that Alberto Nessi is a good listener and always puts a person's inner life centre stage. "Forever", an homage to his father, is a gem. Nessi's portrayal of his father, who died at an early age, is clear, almost detached. Perhaps that is why it seems so close and tight. His comment "or maybe you saw me here, completing your work as a chronicler" is evidence of a close inner connection between father and son.

Nessi is indeed a chronicler through his stories, which shine a spotlight on resistance, bravery and thus freedom. Sometimes they drift into his protagonists' dreams, thus attaining a wonderfully lyrical side.

This is therefore a volume replete with poetry that, thanks to Maja Pflug's sensitive translation, is also a delight to read in German. Maja Pflug has been translating Italian literature into German for many years. In 2011, she was awarded the German-Italian Translator's Prize for her life's work.

Alberto Nessi, born in 1940, returned to his native Ticino after completing his studies in Fribourg. He taught in Mendrisio, wrote for newspapers and worked as an author. In February 2016, he became the first Italian-speaking author to be awarded the Swiss Grand Prix for Literature for his life's work.

RUTH VON GUNTEN

Peter Schärli's liberated jazz



PETER SCHÄRLI TRIO
featuring Glenn Ferris:
"Purge", Enja, 2016.

Peter Schärli has been touring for more than 35 years and has played throughout Europe and at festivals around the globe. In this time, his music has become even more stylish and mature. Trumpeter Peter Schärli comes from Lucerne and lives in Aarau. His jazz is popular among many people who claim not to like jazz. His latest album, "Purge", is proof positive of this.

On nine tracks that flow and groove, the Peter Schärli Trio featuring Glenn Ferris play melodies that create connections and contain superb improvisations on the main theme. The result is jazz that is so relaxed that you overlook the almost secret complexity of tracks with unique chord progressions and unusual forms.

This music is the product of deliberate omission and of paring down, enabling its essential elements to come to the fore more clearly. The album title, "Purge", means doing precisely that. "I don't believe in being better, faster and louder than others, whether in society or in music," Schärli said in an interview. Nevertheless he adds, "I practise daily. Sometimes I play a single note for 45 minutes."

Just like his long-established Special Sextet, the Peter Schärli Trio featuring Glenn Ferris is a real working band. He's been playing with the earthy sounding bassist Thomas Dürst and the wonderful trombonist Glenn Ferris for decades. The youngest member of the band is Hans Peter Pfammatter, who has already made a name for himself with experimental electronic projects, though here he plays classic piano, albeit in an imaginative and form-conscious manner.

Glenn Ferris, the American in Paris, played with jazz and pop icons like Frank Zappa, Archie Shepp, Don Ellis, Tim Buckley and Stevie Wonder before coming to Europe. His swing is as sentimental as it is funky and full of soul; his solos are a delight to behold. The band-leader's clear and precise sound creates a veritable horn section.

Peter Schärli turned 60 last year. "Purge" is like an initial stock-taking of his current qualities. These qualities can also be heard in his other trio with Brazilian guitar-player Juarez Moreira and the Basel pianist Hans Feigenwinter as well as in his ballad-like quartet "Don't change your hair for me". Schärli is therefore a tried-and-tested guarantor of understated class.

PIRMIN BOSSART