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Swiss Review 4/05

I write to express how impressed I am by the cover of the August issue, which I received today. Switzerland is in desperate need of a multicultural awakening, and your cover provides a positive image and model in this respect. I lived and grew up in Canada, and though that country does not have the same ingrained historical traditions as Switzerland – thus making it somewhat easier for it to adapt to immigration and change – it nevertheless had to generate a multicultural identity for itself, often through explicit campaigns aimed at achieving that goal. Switzerland needs to do the same thing, ditching its negative, ostracizing policies (3 generations and no citizenship) for more progressive and sustainable ones. An image such as that of the young soldier on your cover provides a new model for Swiss people of all races, showing that the traditional is compatible with the undeniable present.

I also would like to express my appreciation for the book review of Thomas Maissen's "Verweigerter Erinnerung". Again, on the theme of Switzerland's need to recognise itself as it truly is, this book – and any publicity for it – will help us to confront an unpleasant historical truth, a process which I believe has not been undertaken sufficiently to date.

I look forward to the next issue of Swiss Review.

MATHIAS LOERTSCHER,
LONDON, UK

Good typography

Congratulations on your new layout. We (a group of Swiss sharing a house in Berlin) were

pleasantly surprised with the new look. Normally the Swiss Review is immediately consigned to the paper recycling heap. This time I took it with me and read it in the subway on my way to work. I am most impressed by the good typography and the appealing imagery.

I'm already looking forward to the next issue.

MARTIN SCHMID, DESIGNER,
BERLIN, GERMANY

Applause for the new Review

I congratulate you on the quality of the new Review and in particular the August issue (No. 4): the content and layout are a total success. I used to leaf quickly through the magazine (out of a sense of duty), but I thoroughly enjoyed reading the last issue.

All the articles – army, around the world on foot, Hayek etc. – provided stimulating and interesting reading. Bravo!

LOUIS-DAVID MITTERRAND,
FRANCE

The new look

When a woman gets a new outfit, I'm the first to compliment her. When a well-loved magazine does the same, I feel entitled to criticise. Since 1960, when I was privileged to work in Zurich as a typesetter for a number of years, I have regarded Swiss typography as a shining example. Like the Roethlis' expression in the "Contents" section, my first reaction to the new magazine was puzzlement. Everything I object to actually appears on the editorial page:

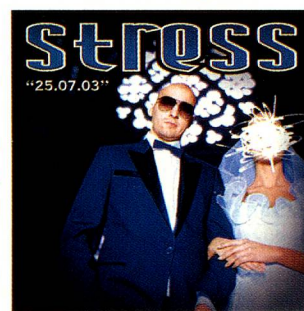
1. Here we find six different fonts.
2. The Antiqua used for the editorial is too slight in the serifs and the last line of paragraphs. I find it difficult to read the text – despite the new spectacles I've had since last week.
3. All the lines are somewhat too "bold".
4. I would only use the upper and lower line in the page header (no frame). Then there would be no need to position the page number on the lower edge of the fill-in. The page number

Funky western Swiss music scene

The vitality of the Swiss music scene is reflected in the quality of our country's musical output. This article turns the spotlight on three western Swiss groups: The Rambling Wheels (rock), Stress (hip hop) and Akamassa (reggae).

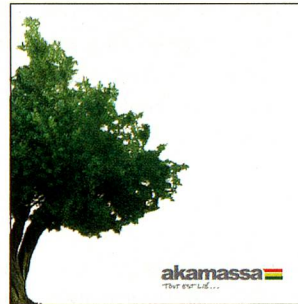
Just like the Rolling Stones. A sense of irony, outstanding panache, and outfits reminiscent of the sixties: The Rambling Wheels mix the aggressiveness of the Rolling Stones with the lyrical songwriting of the Beatles. Hot off the press, their first album "The Rambling Wheels" offers a selection of exciting melodies that appeal to today's rebellious young generation and the '68 generation alike. Formed in 2003, the Rambling Wheels (like other currently popular groups such as Sweden's "The Hives" or New York's "Strokes") specialise in timeless songs. The band members call themselves Fuzzy O'Bron, Rafenbaker, Mr. Jonfox and Papayoo Kustolovic. Not a trace of melancholy: just good old rock'n'roll to lift the spirits.

Biting satire from Stress. The rapper Stress was the first French-speaking Swiss to make it to No. 3 on the Swiss hit parade, successfully combining different musical genres and creating a hip hop that transcends the conventional sound system (a DJ without instrumentalists) by joining forces with an inspirational band. The calm demeanour of this young Lausanne rapper contrasts with the biting satire and acerbic pen of his alter ego Billy Bear, the hero of his first album, who occasionally reveals his cheeky, ingenious personality. After completing his studies at the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne and working for one year as a junior manager, Andres Andrekson decided to devote his life to music. With his multifaceted album "25.07.03", Stress created a masterpiece that successfully mixes hip hop, rock and folk. He is even more famous in German-speaking Switzerland than in his own French-speaking part. Stress doesn't hesitate to sing with Bernese or Zurich rappers in order to publicly criticise a certain right-wing political party, in the process turning his poetic spirit, inspired by everyday life, to political ends.



Positive vibes from Akamassa.

With their "roots-rock-reggae" mix, the nine members of Akamassa have carved themselves a remarkable reputation in western Switzerland over the past four years and even gained recognition in the music scene beyond our borders. Their first album, "Akamassa" (2003), featuring songs



like "On est des millions" and "Sequoia Tree" (a homage to Bob Marley), was a big hit with music fans and proved especially popular with live audiences fascinated by the charisma and candidness of singer Greg, alias Junior Tshaka. The second album, "Tout est lié..." (due to come out towards the end of 2005) features some high-calibre guests (a French musician and a Jamaican). Passages like "Le battement des ailes d'un papillon africain peut déclencher un ouragan sur sol américain" ("A butterfly fluttering its wings in Africa can trigger a hurricane in America") or "Yvan", a song about an old farmer losing his land, will touch listeners' hearts and radiate an energy that instils a zest for life. Positive vibes.

BY ALAIN WEY