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Patti Basler



She calls herself an “accomplished know-it-all”. After all, this farmer’s daughter from Aargau was a teacher and educationist before beginning her career as a wordsmith and cabaret artist. “Frontalunterricht” (Frontal Teaching) was the name of her first full-length stage show in 2016. On the side, she took part in slam battles and was runner-up Swiss champion at the 2018 Poetry Slam.

Now, Patti Basler is receiving the Salzburger Stier – the most prestigious cabaret award in the German-speaking world – presented in Meran, South Tyrol, in May. The jury praised the “hard-hitting directness” the 42-year-old Swiss native uses to expose the linguistic and political contradictions of our time.

Among Basler’s trademarks are her performances as the “instantaneous recorder” in the “Arena” programme on Swiss television, for example. She follows the debates live on location and summarises the votes at the end of the show – as poetry and rhymes and always with biting satire. She is not afraid of failure. “I simply don’t have time for it,” she says. The instantaneous format is absolutely ideal for her, since she suffers from self-diagnosed chronic procrastinitis. “You could say I have made a career out of procrastination.” Extreme time pressure seems to inspire her creativity.

Patti Basler has been on tour in German-speaking Switzerland since the beginning of March with her new “Nachsitzen” (Detention) stage show. Together with musician Philippe Kuhn, she explores humans as “beings learning in a worldwide classroom”. There are more than enough reasons for detention in life, but we all want to get back in the teacher’s good books. For Basler, the keyboard of life has more than just black and white keys, “it also has 50 shades of grey”.

THEODORA PETER

CHF 15 billion loss for the Swiss National Bank

The Swiss National Bank (SNB) announced in January that it expects to make a CHF 15 billion loss for 2018. This news is not a complete surprise, because currency fluctuations in particular had been fuelling expectations of an extremely negative result. The federal government and the cantons benefit from the SNB’s profit distributions and therefore take keen interest in the bank’s results. Such payouts are crucial for some cantons. Despite the record loss, the SNB is likely to pay the maximum possible sum of CHF 2 billion to the federal government and the cantons. This is due to the SNB’s high profit distribution reserves. (MUL)

Skipping school in the name of climate protection

In January, thousands of pupils aged 12 and older held co-ordinated demonstrations against climate change in virtually all of Switzerland’s major cities, protesting at what they see as political inertia on this issue. Since the first demonstrations of this type began in December 2018, the student protest movement has rapidly grown. Activists are calling for a national declaration of climate emergency, zero net greenhouse gas emissions in Switzerland by 2030, and “systemic change” across the board. (MUL)

Change affecting Swiss television

From 3 June 2019, you will no longer be able to receive Swiss television via an indoor or roof antenna. This change will also affect some viewers in neighbouring countries, who in future will only be able to receive SRG SSR broadcasts via the methods that most of us already use: cable, satellite or Internet. A website in the three national languages of German, French and Italian (<http://ogy.de/swiss-tv>) contains information and advice about the change. (MUL)

Further increase in health insurance premiums

Swiss health insurance premiums have increased again in 2019 – this time by around 1.2%. However, the starting point for this rather modest increase was already high. Amounting to an average of CHF 4,464 per capita, premiums are onerously steep for many families and are the second most common reason for indebtedness. More and more voices within the National Council and the Council of States are now calling for tax deductions on health insurance premiums to be increased at the very least. However, any such move would have no effect in putting the brake on Swiss healthcare costs. (MUL)