

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 51 (2024)
Heft: 3: Dayana Pfammatter - blazing a trail as Switzerland's first-ever yodelling graduate

Buchbesprechung: Own your Age : stark und selbstbestimmt in der zweiten Lebenshälfte
[Pasqualina Perrig-Chiello]

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Growing older means redefining yourself



PASQUALINA PERRIG-CHIELLO: "Own your Age. Stark und selbstbestimmt in der zweiten Lebenshälfte", Beltz Verlag, 2024, 285 pages, CHF 32.50

In a society that prizes youth and dynamism, attitudes towards ageing often tend to be negative. This is mainly down to ignorance and fear, says developmental psychologist Pasqualina Perrig-Chiello in her new book. Perrig-Chiello, a professor emeritus at the University of Bern, tells us how getting old certainly has drawbacks but also advantages. And how it allows space for personal growth. At no other time in history have people had the tools to grow old gracefully as they do today, she argues. With higher life expectancy, we have more years of good health ahead of us and greater opportunity to enjoy our hard-fought freedoms.

The author offers an interesting take on the three major transitions in life that begin from middle age. We enter the second half of our lives at around the age of 40. The second transition is when we retire, which in Switzerland is at the statutory age of 65. Finally, the transition to advanced old age begins around 80. Perrig-Chiello: "These phases are times of uncertainty, during which we search for direction and feel more vulnerable as we come to terms with shedding our old identity and redefining ourselves." How will I cope with physically growing old? What happened to the dreams I had? Who am I without my job? How will I cope with having to rely on other people for support? How do I look back on my life?

Perrig-Chiello encourages us to own our age and embrace the change. She offers specific ways to deal with the three transitions, basing her advice on scientific findings to which she herself has contributed over the years. She gives examples of how men and women find their compass – and how this not only benefits them but often the people around them too.

In this extensive guide, Perrig-Chiello puts our personal development into a social context. Her book has notable depth but is easy to read. For one thing, it counters the pernicious tone of the "OK boomer" brigade that have called time on an older generation who, through no fault of their own, are being blamed for things like the demographic crisis. According to the author, research has proven that a negative attitude towards ageing is bad for your health. In other words, freeing yourself from stereotypes can only be good.

SUSANNE WENGER

Spa music



BORIS BLANK: "Resonance" (Universal, 2024)

When news dropped of Boris Blank's third solo record, the details sounded anything but promising. The synth wizard from Yello, regarded for decades as one of the key pioneers of electronic music, had composed an album for spas – music to accompany eucalyptus steam in the mixed sauna, interspersed by the chirping of exotic birds on the loudspeaker.

No joke. This new LP, called "Resonance", contains 12 tracks produced as part of a project commissioned by Fortyseven, a thermal spa based in Baden in the canton of Aargau. Blank has stuck closely to his brief. Instead of the unmistakable percussive rhythms and synthesisers of Yello to which we have grown accustomed, Dieter Meier's sidekick arranger is now venturing into the ethereal world of ambient. According to the record company, the 12 pieces are "meditative sounds for wellness and relaxation". Blank says that his "affinity to wide-open spaces like factory floors, underground garages and mountain landscapes, and to the acoustic resonance within these spaces" inspired him to make the album.

The result? "Resonance" is indeed much more ambient than anything you will have heard from Boris Blank or Yello. Only rarely do the usual pumping beats come to the fore (see opener "Vertigo Heroes"). The title track has a pleasing retro vibe but falls down slightly on account of its kitschy piano melody. Compositions like "Ninive", "Najade", "Mirage" and "Time Bridges" meander for minutes on end but suggest a certain esoteric indulgence. Infinite soundscapes evoking fluffy white clouds and a bright blue sky, on the other hand, have the desired meditative effect. Perfect for any spa.

"North of Eden" finally gives us the exotic birds and babbling brook – the soundtrack to any self-respecting spa. But this really is overly ambient for one day. Press the stop button and play good old "Bostich" instead – Yello's bright-eyed and bushy-tailed antidote.

MARKO LEHTINEN