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Features

Eminent Swiss Cabaret Artists

The Old Guard



Zarli Carigiet

A herdsman and farmer from the Grisons, he likes townfolk who love him, but not the towns in which they live. Of all the cabaret artists, he is the one who can deal with himself least well, but with the public best of all.



Voli Geiler

She is a great artist who proves that art is know-how. She is a fanatic in her calling, perhaps more so than others.



Elsie Attenhofer

The lady amongst the female cabaret artists and a woman who excels in solo shows. She is also clever enough to hide her intelligence and thus attracts the difficult Swiss men.



Walter Morath

He began as a Basler and has not changed much as far as cheek and piquancy are concerned. One thing is certain, he might have become a great actor, if he had not become a great cabaret artist.



Alfred Rasser († 18.8.1977)

No other artist has created such novel and vigorous figures and types as he has, none could show such different faces without ever losing his own which somehow never changes.



Peter W. Staub

A comedian from head to foot, always ready to fool around and ever full of ideas. He is perhaps the most comic of all Swiss comics.



Schaggi Streuli

When a foreigner asks what a typical Swiss looks like, one should take him to Schaggi. Nobody looks like him, and none is like him. Nobody else knows just how to put the finest accent on Swiss rhythm as this affable and charming man.



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1. It assures

Features

Wellknown Swiss Cabaretists

Emil

How I came to discover cabaret. It began already at school. General entertainment during break. Often I played a lorry driver, and all the others stood round me. Or I pretended to write on an overgrown typewriter which reached almost to the next classroom. In holiday theatres for youngsters I always played a clown. I could also try out my talent as acolyte at St. Paul's in Lucerne. I made the other assistants laugh, and though I was able to respond properly and in earnest to the priest's «Orate fratres», the others were shaking with laughter. Well! well! When I was 18, I acted for the first time with the St. Paul's theatre group and had to get engaged twice on stage. I didn't like that at all. The producer had to explain to me in all detail how to take a fiancée in my arms ...

Later the same theatre group also introduced cabaret. Armin Beeler who was at a teachers' training college at the time, was there too. We said to each other «You know, we can do this just as well». Or perhaps we said «We can do this better».

And so we started the cabaret show «Güggüggü». A number of societies engaged us for social evenings. Then followed the cabaret «Cabaradiesli» with partly new actors. Everybody warned us that we would fail. But it turned out differently. Three successful programmes with 60 sold-out performances each. The fourth could not be realized, and so I ventured forth two years later with my first solo programme.

Franz Hohler

Franz Hohler is a cellist and sings his own songs which testify to hard work and reflection, persistent in his number «Frederick the Just» and in the foreground in the tale «The man who thought too much». Brainwork which at times reminds one of zeal, as in «Was ich alles bin» or tends to become a sketch as «Holiday experiences».

American folksongs sung in Bernese dialect are a novelty. This is very topical and exciting and contains just a pinch of the comic: «Carmina», the piece by Horace, is told in classical verse rhythm and Swiss dialect. Franz Hohler has earned his place amongst the cabaret elite with his remarkable solo programmes.

Dimitri

Dimitri is not a cabaret artist, but an excellent, yes, the most famous, pantomime specialist. He was born at Ascona in 1935, son of sculptor parents. He passed his childhood and school years there. Then he trained as potter in Berne, played comic roles in students' theatres, had music lessons at the Conservatoire, and was trained in ballet and

acrobatics. In Paris, he had his training as an artist and attended a school for mimics. He was engaged by a circus and became a member of the troupe Marcel Marceau. He gave his first solo performance at Ascona in 1959. Guest performances followed in Zurich, Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris, Prague, Milan, Rome, Tel Aviv and North America.

Ruedi Walter

Ruedi Walter is far from being or wanting to be a popular actor with all it implies. When one asks him about the beginnings of his career, he says that it was all so long ago that nobody is interested in it any more. A typically Swiss career: commercial training, acting on the side, cabaret for the soldiers, minor and major parts at the Municipal Theatre in Basle.

Then followed cabaret with Alfred Rasser, admiration for Cabaret «Cornichon» which soon accepted him as a member, and the life-long partnership with Margrit Rainer, both professional and as friends. They became a household word as a couple, the man from Basle and the woman from Zurich. Their co-operation showed itself at its best in the popular radio programme which lasted for over 10 years, «Spalebärg 77a – Bis' Ehrsams zum schwarze Kaffi». The first few times, they interpreted other people's texts, but soon Ruedi Walter wrote them himself. Unfortunately, due to changes at a studio, these radio programmes stopped.

and Margrit Rainer

Who talked about herself as follows: There is only one answer to the question why I have devoted myself to the life of a comedienne: I simply had to! This craving was apparently put into my cradle. Ever since I was a small girl, I enthused about all things to do with the stage. I love everything which gives people joy and relaxation: variety, circus, drama, music and singing – just to mention a few. Through my husband I had the first contacts with the stage. A time of hard work began! Lessons in acting, voice training, physical training through gymnastics and ballet filled my life for a time. And then I was ready to go on the stage with a few big and fine parts. How happy I was! I had arrived.

And then came the offer to join the famous «Cabaret Cornichon», and I spent ten years with this popular theatre. In the meantime I played many parts, fairy stories and reviews on many stages.

When the «Cornichon» came to an end, I started the double act with Ruedi Walter as my partner. Together we have produced several programmes on stages at home and abroad. We started the popular programme «Spalebärg 77a – Bis' Ehrsams zum schwarze Kaffi» on Swiss radio. Just how much of a favourite that show was is explained by the fact that it was transmitted for over 10 years, and also that Ruedi Walter and I were generally addressed as Mr & Mrs Ehrsam. One had actually identified us with this fictitious cabaret couple, and we never bothered to clear up this misunderstanding.

César Keiser

Talking about Swiss cabaret, the name of César Keiser crops up as one of the first. Automatically, one immediately thinks of his troubles as telephone subscriber at the holiday home of one of his friends. Keiser tries desperately to induce the Swiss telephone authorities to send him a separate bill for his telephone calls made at his friend's home. Keiser is connected to one office after another and has to repeat his request innumerable times. In the end, a most amusing and crafty play on words results, which demonstrates to the delighted cabaret public the red tape in public offices.

César Keiser was born in Basle and worked as a drawing master for a time. He then exchanged the drawing board for the stage, which meant the wide world. He has been living in Zurich since 1971. Soon after his arrival, he met Margrit Läubli. After many years together in the «Cabaret Fédéral», and an extensive world tour in a jeep, Keiser married «s Läubli». Since then, they have produced not only boys, but also their own programmes. The first two operas were solo shows with Margrit Läubli as producer. The third programme showed the two together on the stage. With their OPUS 4, the Keisers appeared for the first time in Munich. The critics and the public were delighted with this piece of «scurrilous Helveticism». The Swiss in New York, too, greatly enjoyed OPUS 4, all the more as Albert Knöbel, experienced stage-manager, was the producer.

From «Weltschweizer» No 84



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