

ABOUT SWEDISH COMIX IN GENERAL AND GALAGO AND OLLE BERG'S COMIX IN PARTICULAR

IN THE BEGINNING

Sweden has a rich tradition of comics and cartoons. The two leading cartoonists in the 19th century were Oskar Andersson and Albert Engström. Oscar

from the '30s. One such was the army cartoon strip, 91:an from 1932, which had its own paper. Others included Åsa Nisse, I13 Bon and a newcomer Lilla Fridolf from 1956. All the cartoons were

poetry, short stories, illustrations, photos and experimental collages, all mixed together with comic strips. New cartoonists appeared from nowhere. Soon Galago had created a completely new climate for Swedish comics. It offered satirical, political and humorous strips pitched at adults.

Several of the cartoonists from the 'Galago generation' have since won fame abroad, including Joakim Pirinen, Max Andersson, Charlie Christensson and Eva Lindström.

All started out in Galago. In time,

the paper focused increasingly on cartoon strips. In the '80s and '90s it grew in stature and helped to produce new generations of

Henrik Arnstad

Kvällsposten

MORE COMICS STUFF:

I also visited a comic store while there (in Sweden) (staffers serier), and met some of the folks. It's corresponded with in past years. It was an excellent shop, with a terrific selection of comics from all over the world. Since I wanted to read something particularly Swedish, I asked them to recommend a couple of books to me. They suggested (...)

The big find for me, though, was the work of Olle Berg. I'd seen his work in the huge (2000 page) comix 2000 volume published by the association in... that's right, 2000. I had enjoyed his contribution, but have to confess that it didn't make a huge impression the first time around, probably because I was so shell-shocked by the time I finished the book that I'd forgotten the work that came earlier in the alphabet, but with a concentrated dose of Berg in Bonk, I saw the light, marvelous work, very graphically inventive, and as hilarious, even though (as indicated above) I don't read Swedish, and you don't have to either, since he's done us all the good turn of translating many of his favorites into English at his website: www.olle-berg.com Visit now, and perhaps even order a copy or two of his books. I'd loan you mine, but I'm worried that I wouldn't get 'em back...

Håkan Ljung

Dagens Nyheter

Mark Reitera (Autor of Dirkjan)

Holland

Lovely nonsense

The teacher holds up the letter A. 'Well... Pelle, what letter is this? Pelle doesn't know... Drops of sweat are appearing on his forehead... the letter gets legs... starts dancing... the teacher suddenly speaks with double tongue... shaking... four eyes - two mouths... TOTAL CHAOS.'

El, which also publishes the free comic book information magazine Zozolala, for being so much impressed by their Berg discovery, to immediately want to put together an anthology. There is no way of comparing Berg's cartoons with others. They are highly surrealistic, often funny, but apparently at times also pointless. Berg constantly presents new characters, mostly in one page, occasionally spread out over two pages. His characters have gigantic noses and act in a Miró-like setting of which the laws of nature appear rather coincidental and may as well be different again tomorrow. Berg has an unparalleled style in telling about the origin of energy, or the working day of a medieval knight. But he could as well tell a story about the use of Prozac in the animal world, or a fight amongst products in a fridge, and American tourists in Stockholm. Also aliens may appear in his little world -- on those occasions, Gary Larson (The Far Side) peeks around the corner. It appears that Berg has published only two albums in his home country, of which Bonk compiles the best. Let us hope a second album with the leftovers will follow at some point, as the slightly eccentric Berg is certainly worthwhile.

Jim Ottaviani

Jim Ottaviani is the Eisner Award-nominated writer and publisher of two-fisted science.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Father and son will be exhibiting original comic drawings at the cartoon gallery, Seriegalleriet, on Saturday 31 August.

The father is the legendary cartoonist Rit-Ola, who published a sports strip for almost half a century in Sweden's biggest daily, Dagens Nyheter. He was also responsible for a weekly political

Kjell Alinge

Eldorado

Swedish radio dj and satirist

NOBBY CLARKE'S ASCENT INTO ZEN

Nobby Clarke has ascended into Zen and the torpedoes are invading France. Olle Berg's cartoon world blends farce, satire and experimental imagery, and he has now published his first album, offering world-class comic strips for adult readers.

He's funny, which sets him apart from most other comic artists in Sweden, who tend to be very serious and pretentious. Berg's new album, Nobby Clarke's Ascent into Zen, is playful and entertaining, the reader gets to follow how he helped to start the comic magazine Galago in 1979

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