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



Andersson was something of an eccentric, at odds with life, but very skilful and with a bizarre visual imagination. Albert Engström that a Swedish cartoonist was wrote racy stories, often about firmly established if he got to draw farm labourers, fishermen and



Bv Albert Enaström

soldiers, and drew an anarchistic tramp, Kolingen. He also ran his own paper, Strix. The legacy of both men is still evident in Sweden



Another influential cartoonist was young poet and Olle an angry Rit-Ola. Besides the legendary 'Biffen & Bananen' strip, he produced countless sports and political cartoons in the daily and weekly press over the years.

In the early 1980s, Swedish dailies and comics were dominated by American strips. The most popular Swedish strips were cartoon versions of popular film comedies

from the '30s. One such was the poetry, short stories, illustrations, in the comic paper Larson. A army cartoon strip. 91:an from photos and experimental col-1932, which had its own paper. lages, all mixed together with Others included Åsa Nisse, 113 comic strips. New cartoonists Bom and a newcomer Lilla Fridolf appeared from nowhere. Soon, from 1956. All the cartoons were Galago had created a completely



owned by a giant Swedish comic publisher. Semic Press. None of them were especially hip, but they were all there was. You might say 91:an at some point in his life... One bright spot, particularly in the '60s, was the Swedish edition of MAD, which was excellent.. In the '70s other foreign influences also began to find their way to Sweden: Crumb, Spiegelman,

Skelton and others. In Sweden, too, there were signs of innovation. Some short-lived attempts were made to start comics with young Swedish car-



Anka (Cold Duck), seen here. rence and choice of themes. There was also a small publisher, Epix, that introduced many new strips, mostly French ones.

GALAGO

Galagago was launched in 1979 by Rolf Classon and Olle Berg. At the time, Rolf was an angry young cartoonist. Galago published



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 loakim Pirinen, Max Andersson, Charlie seems to determine what style the Christensson and Eva Lindström. cartoon is drawn in and whether All started out in Galago. In time, it is to include other figures who the paper focused increasingly may only appear once or twice. on cartoon strips. In the '80s and You can rarely dash through Olle '90s it grew in stature and helped Berg's comic strips. Each operates



Swedish cartoonists. Galago has work these out before the pieces been genuinely home-grown in its fall into place. style and humour, with surprisingly In one cartoon, for instance, you few references to foreign comix. are asked to assume that the aniof contact, however. Most of the (A Day in the Country). Another early Galago strips were very 'car- might illustrate the importance toony' and out for laughs. Virtually of proper etiquette when hiking all involved scenes from everyday through the Alps (Grüss Gott), life that spun out of control and while a third shows how a young reached absurd heights where anything could happen, and did. These Swedish cartoons were rarely drug-, porno- or violenceoriented. Nor was there much swearing or drunken humour. Instead, the cartoonists made their mark with their partoons, including Mammut and Kall ticular brand of imagery, irreve-

OLLE BERG'S COMIX

Interest in comics became intense in the 1980s, as noted above, and it was not long before the established media realised what was going on. Olle Berg was soon a regular contributor to the have been published in Holland Stockholm city guide, Nöjesguiden. and Germany. Besides being a Dagens Nyheter, Sweden's big- cartoonist he works as an illustragest daily, helped things forward tor for magazines and advertising enormously by opening its pages agencies. to the new generation of Swedish cartoonists. Many of Olle's strips Kerold Klang have done the rounds in Sweden. Journalist Originally produced for Galago or Nöjesguiden, they might then appear in Dagens Nyheter's Sunday section, and subsequently

couple of figures feature quite often in Olle's cartoons, namely



to produce new generations of on its own terms and you have to



The swedish albums

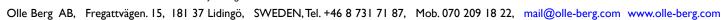
There have been some points mals are putting on a show for us fellow has a feeling all things are against him (Little Charlie). Olle's comic strips have been published in a dozen countries They have appeared both in Heavy Metal and the German magazine



he dutch and the german Bo

Die Zeit. Albums with his comics

Translated comics, illustrations and animations on www.olle-bera.co





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BLOODY FUNNY. IN FACT!

among the present crop of swedish car- political magazine, folket i bild. and then buying the magazine from a shy fellow toonists

its circulation among the populace, i pro- aret runt. pose to discuss olle berg - mention him not a person with time to waste, in other lop. in the night bus he cuts loose with to your friends.

into zen, a somewhat overcomplicated garland, died in 1988. title for someone as easily accessible and a couple of years earlier, his son, olle become recognisable. uncomplicated as olle berg.

ever seen in sweden as an illustrator, he already established as a cartoonist. and seems to have embarked on a winding was also one of the co-founders of the Henrik Arnstad and labyrinthine route from cubism and cult magazine, galago. art deco, dissolving the grid with surrea- in recent years, his cartoons have becolistic, dreamlike cartoon tales such as the me considerably more cheerful, to put it **MORE COMICS STUFF:** night bus and charlie's xmas.

tures in this album are highly compres- his two albums, nobby clarke's ascent some of the folks i'd corresponded with sed - the core essence remains, all else into zen (1989) and bonk (1997), would in past years. it was an excellent shop, is peeled away.

over the late-night bus is slapstick of the imagery - the wildly stylised characters something particularly swedish, i asked highest order.

remarkable pictures, as they're tremen- nevertheless have something in com- the big find for me, though, was the work dously graphic, they're like a cross bet- mon. ween the puffiest whipped cream and father and son both tell stories, extrava- huge (2000 page) comix 2000 volume glittering stilettos, full of payoffs and gant tales in which dynamic, unexpected published by l'association in...that's right. hilarious comments

i broke down frequently while reading and the finale. about with laughter.

recognition – ha, at last, someone who has observed what sweden looks like Håkan Ljung these days!

bloody funny, in fact.

ascent into zen its gold medal.

Kiell Alinge Fldorado Swedish radio di and satirist

A FAMILY AFFAIR

father and son will be exhibiting original readers. comic drawings at the cartoon gallery, also, he's funny, which sets him apart from seriegalleriet, on saturday 31 august. most other comic artists in sweden, who Jim Ottaviani the father is the legendary cartoonist tend to be very serious and pretentious. Jim Ottaviani is the eisner award nomirit-ola, who published a sports strips berg's new album, nobby clarke's ascent nated writer and publisher of two-fisted for almost half a century in sweden's into zen, is playful and entertaining the science. biggest daily, dagens nyheter. he was reader gets to follow how he helped to also responsible for a weekly political start the comic magazine galago in 1979

cartoon in the picture magazine, se, and and produced advertising pages that there are quite a few potential masters another strip, 'biff & banana', in the old showed everyone from satan to corpses there was the drawing school he ran for called holger swax. in today's lecture on popular culture and 15,000 pupils in yet another magazine, even at this early stage, olle berg's strips

words.

berg, had first appeared in dn with the today olle berg is funnier than ever and he draws the most elegant cartoons i've ghoulish strip, knut by that time, he was his drawings have a more powerful sting.

mildly, to the delight not least of readers i also visited a comic store while there make even an undertaker crack a smile. with a terrific selection of comics from advise you to look through these rit-ola's brisk line drawings – but they to me they suggested (...)

actions often provide both the high point 2000, i had enjoyed his contribution, but

expression

Dagens Nyheter

eldorado hereby awards nobby clarke's NOBBY CLARKE'S ASCENT INTO ZFN

nobby clarke has ascended into zen and the torpedoes are invading france. olle berg's cartoon world blends farce. favorites into english at his website: satire and experimental imagery, and he www.olle-berg.com visit now, and perhas now published his first album, offe- haps even order a copy or two of his

were unique, but he continued to devea vengeance – that cartoon is simply in front of me i have nobby clarke's ascent rit-ola, whose real name was jan-erik a must! berg likes observing ordinary people and drawing them so that they

Kvällsposten

the scenes from swedish life that he cap- of the dn sunday cartoon supplement. (in sweden) (staffars serier), and met the scene with the bawling lads who take rit-ola and olle berg use very different all over the world. since i wanted to read in berg's strips are a world apart from them to recommend a couple of books

of olle berg, i'd seen his work in the have to confess that it didn't make a the album and had to put it aside, falling and both of them love words and artistic huge impression the first time around. probably because i was so shell-shocked and the material gives you the delight of and both share the same good humour. by the time i finished the book that i'd forgotten the work that came earlier ir 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 ring world-class comic strips for adult books i'd loan you mine, but i'm worried that i wouldn't get 'em back...



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REVIEWS OF THE DUTCH BONK

Dizzying laughs

but to accept it. Wishing you many dizzying laughs,

your partner in comedy

Hanco Kolk (author of Meccano, SIngle & **BONK** Gilles de Geus) Holland

Cranky with a brain

laughing. His jokes are cranky with a brain: absurd humor which reveales the true glimpses of reality.

Mark Retera (Autor of Dirkian) Holland

Lovely nonsense

The teacher holds up the letter A. 'Well... Pelle which letter is this ? Pelle dosent know... Drops of sweat are appearing on his forehead... the letter gets legs...starts The dutch and the german Bonks. double tounge... shaking... four eyes - two mouths...TOTAL CHAOS.

ning is airtight.

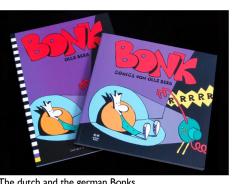
Nyheter and the German daily Die Zeit. eccentric Berg is certainly worthwhile. In Bonk are 51 cartoons, gags illustrations and funny stories, plus some extra bonuses 22/10/2005 in form of loose (?) drawings on the back- Michel Kempeneers

side of the front and back cover.

... you will find yourself reading it time and The comics were previously published in Belgium again and invariably be surprised by the ap- the albums Zen (1989, own release) and parant simplicity and controlled chaos Olle Bonk (Swedish humor, 1997), with recent **The best kept secret of Sweden** Berg has to offer you. Such is the fate of a work added. Bonk by Olle Berg is a valuable The loose press supplement that comes Olle Berg- reader and you have no option extension of the Collection De Wilde Vaart. with the album describes it as a "sparkling

Stripschrift 372 2005

sed an anthology from Berg's body of work, piece about this. Not an easy task. Like with mainly containing work from the 90's. The many absurdist comics, this work seems to Bonk album truly is a jewel. The comic be beyond all criticism right from the start. Olle Berg knows that thinking precedes book community should be grateful to Zet. Because, well, yes, after all, it's absurd. Every



dancing... the teacher suddenly speaks with Dutch publisher: Zet.El, german publisher: Lappan verlag for. The presentation of the short stories

The Swedish artist Olle Berg possesses information magazine ZozoLala, for being so Every contribution has its fitting effect with a well developed ability to identify him- much impressed by their Berg discovery, to respect to atmosphere and dynamics. And self with others and a rich imagination, a immediately want to put together an ant- this is a key factor when it concerns a colsmooth cartooneque and yet personal dra- hology. There is no way of comparing Berg's lection of very short sketches, in order to wing style and a well-developed sense of cartoons with others. They are highly sur- avoid the risk of losing the reader's attensubtle, absurd humor. Besides this he is able realistic, often funny, but apparently at times tion. The drawings work out just fine. They to lead a situation very consquently to an also pointless. Berg constantly presents are recognizable, but never annoy thanks to inevitable end. It leaves the reader laughing new characters, mostly in one page, oc- the diversity of characters. Also, the drasurprised, lovely nonsense and the reaso- casionally spread out over two pages. His wings naturally emphasize the humor that characters have gigantic noses and act in a is often bizarre. The subjects Berg handles are very diver- Miró-like setting of which the laws of nature The jokes themselves are of a varying quase: from his vision on the working day of a appear rather coincidental and may as well lity. For instance, the stories about a tourist medieval knight on the flat earth (mornings be different again tomorrow. Berg has an in Bali who goes insane from the everlasting and evenings in the traffic jam), the happy unparalleled style in telling about the origin smile of the local people ("I will smack the djungle animals who come and get their of energy, or the working day of a medie- skull of the next guy with a smile on his portion of Prozac, the three cool men who val knight. But he could as well tell a story face!") and the short but intense battle of say they want to drink, gamble and go to about the use of Prozac in the animal world, competences between two yodelers, are the whores but eventually don't dare, till or a fight amongst products in a fridge, and simply hilarious. (...) there seems to be the over-zealous orange in the fridge who American tourists in Stockholm. Also aliens bright future ahead for Olle Berg. He strigets a good hiding from the other inhabi- may appear in his little world --- on those kes the golden mean and seems to walk the occasions, Gary Larson (The Far Side) peeks path of 'accessible absurdism', which may Olle (Olof) Berg is the son of comic artist around the corner. It appears that Berg has turn out to be a successful genre. More-Rit-Ola (Jan Erik Garland). He studied grap- published only two albums in his home over, his drawing style is identifiable out of hic design and was co founder of the comic country, of which Bonk compiles the best. thousands and radiates an eccentricity that magazine Galago. He published in, amongst Let us hope a second album with the lefto- doesn't disturb. (...) others, the Swedish newspaper Dagens vers will follow at some point, as the slightly

Het Besloten Land / De Standaard

introduction " to the phenomenon that is called Olle Berg (1953). This Swedish strip cartoonist "treats the reader to clever iokes in a drawing style which is accessible and immediately recognizable and always (...)The Dutch publisher Zet.El has relea- intractable." Well, try to write a critical attempt to discover a thread or recognizable gags is doomed to fail. And if you do fail, you only have yourself to thank for it. It simply means you're not susceptible to absurdism. In any event, the author is not to blame

With this in the back of my mind, I started to read Bonk. I was perhaps not totally objective, but I kept a sufficiently open mind. And one must admit, Olle Berg immediately drags the reader along in his world. The drawings are dynamic and well-cared-(one or two pages) in alternating color or el. which also publishes the free comic book black and white print, offers a good mixture.

14 December 2005 Danny Koningstein 8Weekly

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gazine Galago, waarin naast ge

zijn eerste strips werden gepub

ceerd. Nöjesguiden en Dage

Nyheter, respectievelijk een

kranten, pikten hem op, gevolge

door het stripmagazine Larson.

1989 bracht hij met behoorlijk su

ces in eigen beheer een strip op d

Bonk, dat nu vertaald werd naa

het Nederlands en meteen zijn ee

ste Nederlandstalige album is, ver

scheen nadien. Ondertussen kre

Kortom: in eigen land geer

onbekende, in de rest van de

wereld een grote onbekende

Ja, maar dat hield de man niet

gen om in de rest van Europ

gaan leuren met zijn werk. Met b

scheiden succes. Zijn werk v

scheen in Die Zeit (veertien p

na's in de periode 1995

Heavy Metal en Zone 5300.

gekomen", grijnst Berg "Ik on

moette de Duitse striptekenaa

van Erlangen. Hij had Zweeds ge

studeerd en haastte zich om na

het festival, zonder mijn medewe-

ten, mijn strips te vertalen en ze

vraag of Zweedse strips gepast wa-

ren. Dat waren ze, blijkbaar. Hai-

mo belde me daarop met de vraag

of ik wel in Die Zeit wilde publi

ceren. Natuurlijk wilde ik dat." De

publicatie in Heavy Metal, oo

geen klein blad in de internatio

ale stripscene, heeft hij dan wee

O HOOFDPAGINA

naar Die Zeit te sturen met de

Haimo Kinzler op het stripfes

pig hoe ik bij Die Zeit ben b

Olle Berg zes tentoonstellinge

zijn thuisland.

markt, Zen. Het tweede albur

populaire stadsgids voor St

olm en een van Zwedens

lichten, kortverhalen en foto



en je hem dan laat reageren een manier die allesbehalve n maal is, kan dat zeer grappig zij at doen Laurel en Hardy ook. I landse stripmaker Ha olk (Meccano, Single) omschr ergs strip als "een boek dat ie t cian) heeft het dan weer ov orde grappen met hersens de meligheid die ook no s ergens over gaat".

Reviews of the NEW DUTCH BONK

