

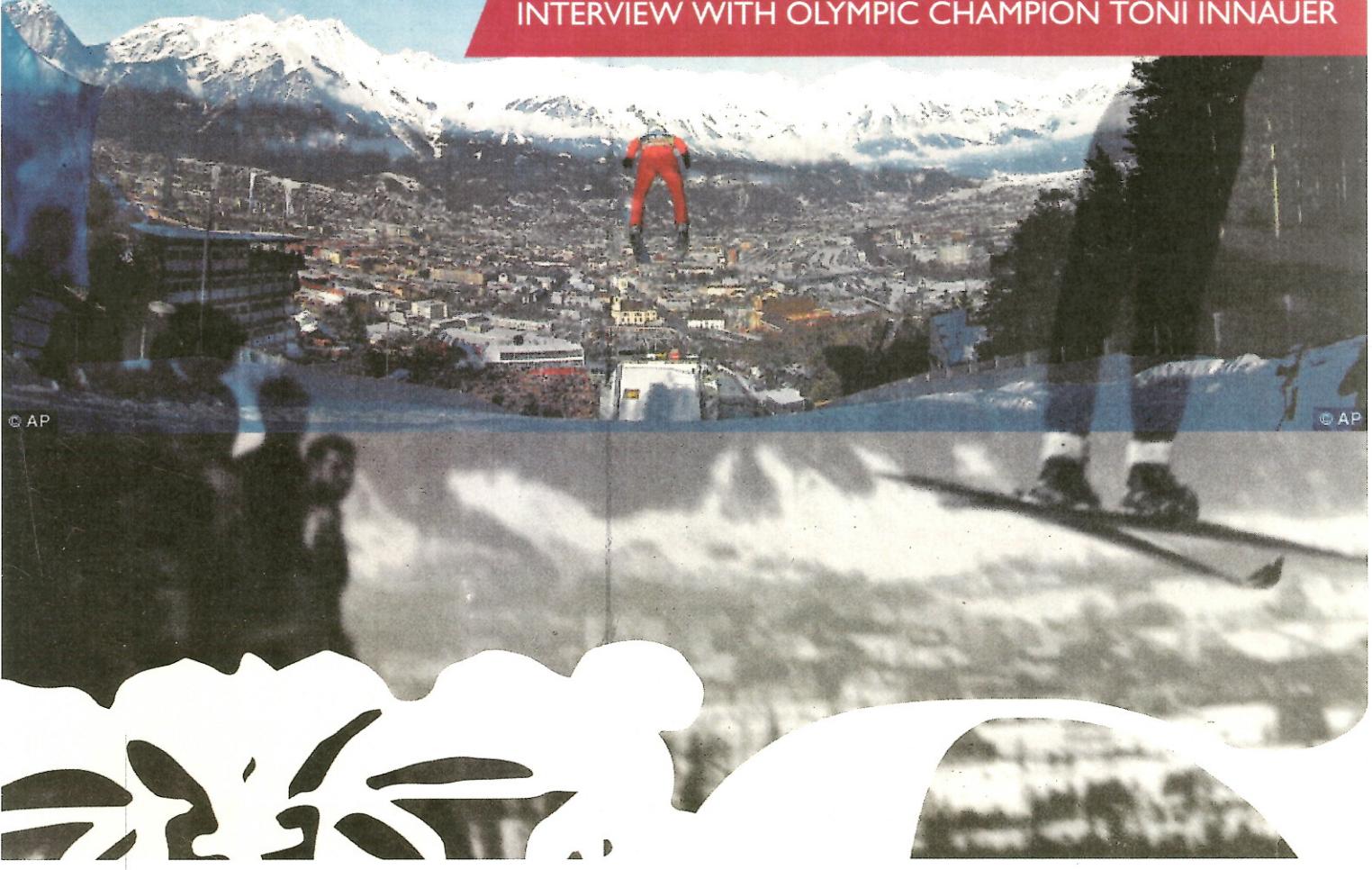
WIR SKISPRINGER SIND GANZ UND GAR SOLISTEN.

OLYMPIASIEGER TONI INNAUER
IM INTERVIEW



SKI JUMPERS ARE
DEFINITELY SOLOISTS.

INTERVIEW WITH OLYMPIC CHAMPION TONI INNAUER



Toni Innauer: Bevor wir beginnen, wie sind Sie auf mich gekommen?

NHG: Herr Innauer, Sie sind Olympiasieger im Skisprung, waren Trainer der österreichischen Nationalmannschaft, sind Autor mehrerer Bücher, haben Ihre eigene Firma mit Büros in Dornbirn und Innsbruck und Sie sind Philosoph. Die Neue Hofkapelle Graz wagt sich in ihrem Magazin in vermeintlich abwegige Sparten wie Architektur, Soziologie, Linguistik, und jetzt eben Sport, um dort nach Verbündeten zu suchen. Im ersten Moment kennt ein Musiker vom Skisprung nichts anderes als die Vierschanzentournee und das Neujahrsspringen...

TI: Und ein Skispringer nur das Neujahrskonzert der Philharmoniker, auch wenn er es nie live hören kann... (lacht)

NHG: Wir wollen herausfinden, was uns trennt und was uns verbindet. Und dabei etwas über uns selber lernen. Und tatsächlich spielen wir 2019 in Graz unser eigenes Neujahrskonzert mit einer "Musikalischen Schlittenfahrt" von Leopold Mozart. Das Thema Wintersport klingt also durchaus an in unserer kommenden Saison.

DER ENSEMBLE-PARTNER DES SKISPRINGERS IST DER WIND. WIND IS THE ENSEMBLE PARTNER OF A SKI JUMPER.

TI: Musik und Sport kann man sehr gut vergleichen. Nehmen wir an, Sie haben einen Auftritt als Singer/Songwriter, da sind Sie ganz mit sich und Ihrer Gitarre beschäftigt. Sie sind wirklich allein, spielen mit niemand anderem, und konzentrieren sich ganz auf sich. Und so ist es beim Skispringen auch. Sie sind schon sehr mit sich selbst beschäftigt. Und das können Sie auch, denn es gibt keinen Gegner, der einen Stopp am Netz spielt wie im Tennis oder an dem Sie einen Pass vorbei spielen müssen wie im Fußball. Ich habe nach meiner aktiven Sportlerlaufbahn auch Sportpsychologie studiert, und da sieht man ganz systematisch die Unterschiede der einzelnen Sportarten. Mannschaftssport ist wie Orchesterspielen. Wir Skispringer sind ganz und gar Solisten. Und das habe ich sehr genossen.

NHG: Warum liegt Ihnen das Einzelgängertum?

TI: Ich war als Kind und Jugendlicher ziemlich introvertiert, konnte mich ganz konzentriert und intensiv mit etwas auseinandersetzen, wofür ich niemanden sonst gebraucht habe. Vielleicht auch, weil wir am Berg aufgewachsen sind. Beim Wettkampf verhält es sich dann aber selbst bei einer

Toni Innauer: Before we start, how come you wanted to do an interview with me?

NHG: Mr. Innauer, you are an Olympic champion, you were coach of the Austrian national team, published several books, you have your own company including offices in Dornbirn and Innsbruck and you are a philosopher. In its magazine, the Neue Hofkapelle Graz ventures into supposedly absurd categories such as architecture, sociology, linguistics, and now sports, looking for allies. At first, a musician knows nothing more about ski jumping than the Four-Hills-Tournament including the New Year's Ski Jumping...

TI: And a ski jumper nothing more than the New Year's Concert of the Vienna Philharmonic, even if he can never listen to it live... (laughs)

NHG: We want to find out what separates us and what connects us. And learn something en passant. And indeed, in 2019 we play our own New Year's Concert in Graz with the "Musical Sleigh Ride" by Leopold Mozart. So there already is a hint of winter sports in our upcoming season.

TI: Music and sports are easy to compare with. Let's say you have a performance as a singer / songwriter. You are completely occupied with yourself and your guitar. You are all alone, playing with no one else in the spotlight. Same thing you find in ski jumping. Being totally involved and very busy with yourself. And it truly is possible to do so, because there is no opponent who performs a sudden drop shot like in tennis or tries to side-step you like in soccer. After my active sports career I studied sports psychology looking quite systematically into the differences between the individual sports. Team sport is like playing in an orchestra. Ski jumpers, by all means, are soloists. And I really enjoyed that part.

NHG: You like being the loner?

TI: I was quite introverted as a kid and teenager, and able to focus on something intensely with no need for anyone else. Maybe because I grew up on the mountain. In competition, however, even in a sport as standardized as ski jumping, the perception of external forces - speed, aerodynamic drag, centrifugal forces - will determine whether or not someone reaches top performance. Only if the jumper senses and manages the forces acting on him during the flight in synergistic coordination with his motor skills he will be able to achieve the optimal outcome. It is most crucial in our sport: not just reeling off your program, but really feeling what the very moment is demanding. So you have to be open and be inspired by what's happening around you.

so genormten Sportart wie im Skisprung so, dass das Wahrnehmen von äußerem Kräften wie Geschwindigkeit, Luftwiderstand oder Zentrifugalkraft darüber entscheidet, ob jemand große Leistungen bringen kann. Wenn der Springer die Kräfte, die im Moment des Sprungs auf ihn einwirken, sehr sensibel wahrnimmt und verwaltet und sie in synergetische Abstimmung mit seiner Motorik bringt, erst dann kann er die ideale Wirkung erzielen. Das ist in unserer Sportart so entscheidend wichtig: nicht nur sein Programm abspulen, sondern zu spüren, was der Moment verlangt. Also muss man offen sein und sich von dem inspirieren lassen, was gerade stattfindet.

NHG: Ein hohes Maß an Intuition ist gefordert...



NHG: A high degree of intuition is required...

Tl: For sure. Seizing the moment. But that's only possible if all the necessary skills are automated to a very high degree, so you can really trust that all processes are ready for action. That you know what you are doing at any given moment. Then you can start to play with it, to vary and modify.

NHG: You have achieved your greatest successes, 1976 Olympic silver here at the Bergisel in Innsbruck, 1980 Olympic champion in Lake Placid, with a jumping technique, that later on was replaced by the V-style...

Tl: Yes, it was a Swede who invented this style, Jan Boklöv. I would appreciate if the style was named after him. He really would have earned this. But the very lapidary designation V-style has prevailed.

NHG: We are asking, because the Neue Hofkapelle Graz are into historically informed performance practice, playing on old types of instruments. People used to think that instruments being adapted to modern needs were always getting better. But with an improvement on one side usually comes a loss on the other. We don't want to think of certain changes as being a progress in history of music, but rather just becoming different. Now you have experienced a very radical change in your world of expertise. How did it strike you?

Tl: Oh yes, there are incredible analogies. I would like to say that the jumpers, who were active long before my time, were outstanding in their own way - for example Helmut Recknagel, who even flew with his arms stretched forward. They had totally different conditions: they had hazardous bindings, the skis were much heavier and slower and yet much shorter and narrower... but the best in each generation have sought and found their optimum. I speak with great respect of these pioneers. They were at least as good as I was, because they managed to perform with maximum outcome using junk material and ill-prepared ski jumps. If you analyze that biomechanically you realize what they did was outstanding. How dangerous it all was back then. I was still part of that during my early days. We jumped without safety bindings, without crash helmet, at 130 km/h (80 mph) landing speed.

NHG: Why in the world would you do that at all? Even today you still risk your life. Being a tourist on top of the Bergisel ski jump looking into the abyss, it seems totally unimaginable to take that step.

Tl: Well, you inch your way up. Nobody goes from zero to Bergisel. You train for that for many years. I had a different approach right from the start. I did downhill and giant slalom. I even was champion in downhill skiing of Vorarlberg. Yet jumping always fascinated me a lot more. I just thought at first that I would never have a chance to learn that. I was good at skiing, but not the best.