

Peter Hammerschlag (1902-1942) was the great linguistic artist of the Austrian cabaret and one of the most colorful characters in the brief halcyon days of Viennese cabaret during the thirties, which ended with the invasion of the Germans in 1938. After his first appearances in the Berlin Catacombs (Die Katakombe), the “off-the-cuff poet” was co-founder, emcee, and house author of “Literature at the Naschmarkt” (Literatur am Naschmarkt); here he captivated his viewers with virtuoso impromptu and fantastic parodies inspired by suggestions from the audience. Bizarre rhymes, a taste for the macabre and grotesque, and a love for nonsensical wordplay characterized his texts. The “last of the coffee-house poets” also wrote for ABC and Dear Augustine (Lieber Augustin). After a failed emigration attempt, he was arrested in 1941, deported to Theresienstadt, and murdered in Auschwitz.

Peter Hammerschlag

“Half a sweetheart, half spooky, but always fascinating: a child plunged into the world, a fool persecuted by intellect, a runaway bourgeois, a poet who created tender verses, who loved diminutives and conjured up moods, who invented songs full of wild imagination.” (Hans Weigel)

