

Judges' Comments (Queensland Literary Awards)

Essentially three distinct novellas, crossing three continents and three very different time-lines, Yaxley's prose performs wonders with great subtlety. Beginning with a no-holds-barred account of musician Rafael Ullmann's holocaust traumas, we see how his experiences ripple on into the story of his daughter's isolated life on a Canadian prairie, and then further on still to the comparative comfort of Australia and the aspirations of his musical grandson. As the reverberations of the story fade further and further from their source, we begin to understand, through a clever literary conceit, that while some histories are too horrific to pass on, the transcendent possibilities of music are timeless and indestructible.