



GIRAMONDO PUBLISHING

MELODROME

Publisher's note

Melodrome is the new title in Giramondo's Southern Latitudes series, after Mariana Dimópulos's critically acclaimed novella *All My Goodbyes* and Ashleigh Young's award-winning collection of essays *Can You Tolerate This?* in 2017. The series is devoted to works by writers of the Southern Hemisphere – these authors are from Argentina and New Zealand.

Giramondo is, to my mind, as much a conceptual as a commercial publisher. It exists to explore new ideas and forms of writing; and to enhance the resources available to Australian writers and readers, by allowing parallels to be drawn between our literature, and the literatures of those countries which have similar histories, and geographical conditions, to our own. We publish works from overseas and in translation, not because they have been bestsellers in their countries, but because they have something interesting to offer, in relation to our own literary concerns.

As titles are added to it, the Southern Latitudes series should offer many points of comparison. It is often assumed that writers from the provinces will show some kind of deference to the influence of the metropolitan centres, particularly those in the northern hemisphere. But why should these centres exert a strong influence when you write from the edges of the world? Wouldn't there be a stronger pressure to look outwards, rather than back over one's shoulder, to imagine worlds even further out, beyond or within the world one knows?

This is one of the features I admire in the writing of prize-winning Argentinian author Marcelo Cohen, who over thirty years and more than a dozen works of fiction, has created and explored an entire fictional universe, called the Panoramic Delta. *Melodrome* (originally published under the title *Balada*) is his first work to be published in English. As the reader will come to recognise, it is speculative fiction, but unobtrusively so: the changes in technology, social circumstances and language have their effects on the characters, but in ways which only sharpen their capacity to feel, and to reflect on the consequences of their actions. Cohen himself defines this crossover genre, between fantasy and realism, as *sociología fantástica*, fantastic sociology.

The reader will also recognise, in *Melodrome*, the wonderfully limpid prose of Chris Andrews, the acclaimed Australian translator of Bolaño, Aira and Rey Rosa. Andrews is a prize-winning poet as well as a translator, skills evident in his translation of Cohen's innovative style, with its strange perspectives, neologisms and unexpected turns of phrase.

Ivor Indyk

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