

SF Commentary 112

June 2023

76 pages

TRIBUTES TO

**LEE HARDING * CHARLES TAYLOR * VALMA BROWN
EVE HARVEY * MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER
PETER RYAN * BRODERICK SMITH * MARTY CANTOR
DENNY LIEN * JENNIFER BRYCE**

**JENNIFER BRYCE'S LAST ARTICLE: FAVOURITE BOOKS OF 2022
BRUCE GILLESPIE'S FAVOURITES OF 2022
JOHN HERTZ'S VIEW OF CHICON 8 (WORLDCON 2022)**



Cover: 'Charles and Nic Taylor, July 2019.' Photo taken by Maggie Miranda, at the hilltop town of Loreto Aprutino, Italy.

SF COMMENTARY 112

June 2023

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FRONT COVER: 'Charles and Nic Taylor, July 2019.' Photo taken by Maggie Miranda.

PHOTOGRAPHS: Nikki Harding (p. 4); Ditmar (Dick Jenssen) (pp. 5, 7, 13); Lee Harding (p. 6); Helena Binns (pp. 6, 10); Iola Mathews (p. 8); Morgan Taylor (p. 18); Cath Ortlieb (p. 20); Tom Becker (p. 21); Chaz Boston-Baden (p. 28); Mike Glycer (p. 29); Mike Ward (p. 30); Karen Schaffer (p. 31); Jeff Hamill (32); Jeanne Gomoll and Geri Sullivan (p. 33); unknown (pp. 34, 35); Barry Lee Thompson (p. 39); Lyndal Thomas (p. 39).

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JOHN HERTZ

I must be talking to my friends

These are almost the last words to be written for this issue, which has taken six months to put together. Again *SFC* includes many tributes for lost friends. **Leigh Edmonds** says it best in his letter of comment in *SFC* 113 (p. 67):

In a way I thought the obits [in *SFC* 111] were cheerful too, because they reminded us of the many good, bright, and fun people we've known over the years. Fandom does have some very good points, and its people are the main one.

The people of fandom and the general SF community are what have become most important to me over the years. Each person who dies leaves a gap, but we can then remember all the ways in

which this person has contributed to our lives. Read the following stories, enjoy again the lives you shared with them, and send me further stories about them.

Take a look at the extract on this page from Caroline Overington's Book Editor's column from *The Weekend Australian Review*. She is one of many writers who have said that they still remember the impact that **Lee Harding's *Displaced Person*** had when it was published over 40 years ago.

Another feature of **SFC** 112 is my **Favourites of 2022**. **Colin Steele** includes his 2022 Favourites in his column in *SFC* 113. **Perry Middlemiss**, **David Grigg**, and **Ian Mond** have published their lists elsewhere.

And here is the 2022 list posted by:

CAREY HANDFIELD
Yallambie VIC 3085

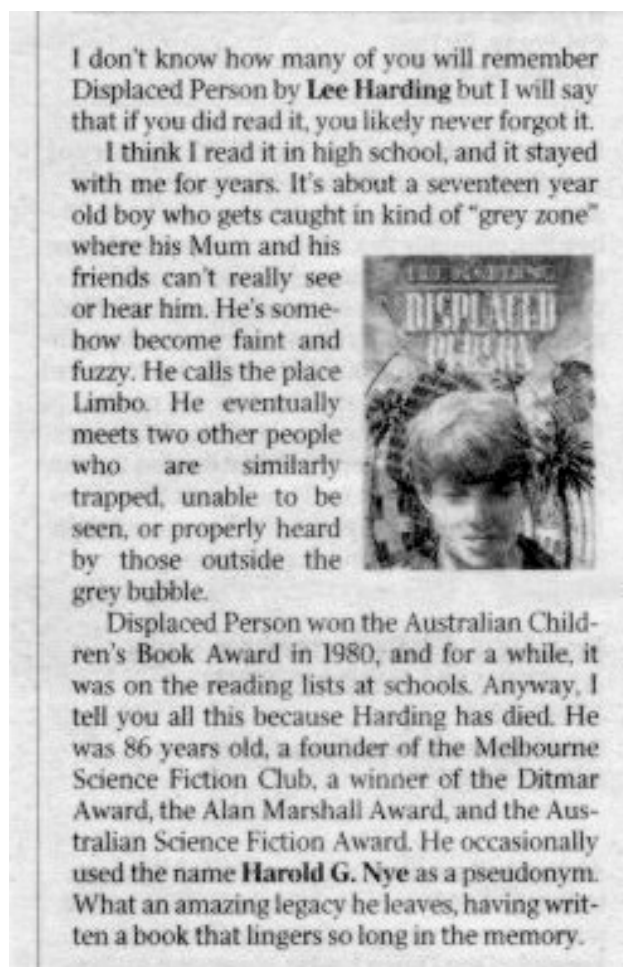
Last year I had two aims. First, my normal target of 50 books read. The second was to pass 66 books, which I did about five years ago. In 2022, I read 68 books, so I achieved both goals. In no particular order my top five are:

- *All Systems Red* — Martha Wells
- *Cloud Cuckoo Land* — Anthony Doerr
- *She who Became the Sun* — Shelly Parker-Chan
- *Beyond the Mirage* — Arthur Upfield
- *Limberlost* — Robbie Arnott.

Beyond the Mirage is an autobiography by Arthur Upfield. It is all Perry Middlemiss's fault that I managed to find it. While looking for Upfield titles at the library I came across *Beyond the Mirage*. This is a fascinating book. It covers Upfield's childhood and growing up in England, then covers his move to Australia. For many years he worked as a jackaroo in the outback. The descriptions in this book show a deep understanding of the land. It is where he got the best writing for the Boney books.

(2 January 2023)

Caroline Overington, 'Come Writers and Critics',
Weekend Australian Literary Review, 22 April
2023.



A loss that really hurts me and many others. From Belinda Gordon, his ‘Perth daughter’, comes the news of the death of Lee Harding (1937–2023). Here’s her wonderful tribute:

Belinda Gordon: Lee Harding, my father



Above: Lee Harding (centre), in Perth: (l. to r.) Carla Bleeker, his first wife; Stephen Harding; Madeleine Harding; Erik Harding; Belinda Gordon (Photo: Nicki Harding, about 2003.)

Below: The Gordon family (l. to r.) Kiera, Belinda, Darcy, Ian, and Millie. (Photo: a family friend.)



It is with great sadness that I share the passing of my dear Dad, Lee Harding, who passed peacefully at 6.33 am this morning, 19 April 2023. No longer in pain.

Dad lived a long life of creativity and learning — immersing himself in the worlds of literature and books, theatre, cinema, photography, and music. He was an excellent and avid cook and true ‘foodie’ who revelled in the art of cooking for, and dining with, family and friends. He shared all of these passions with his children, and our lives — and subsequently the lives of his grandchildren and great grandson — have been richer and better for it.

He continued to work at writing, which he found so completely fulfilling, up until the Covid pandemic. Sadly, the

extended isolation of that time accelerated his decline in health, both physically and mentally.

Dad was a successful author of numerous science fiction works and some young adult novels, in the 1970s and 80s. He was the recipient of the Australian Children's Book of the Year award in 1980 for his novel *Displaced Person*. He had a strong group of like-minded friends from the science fiction and amateur theatre community, that he admired and cherished his whole life. He adored the city of Melbourne, his one true home. If there had been a way for him to continue living there, we would have honoured those wishes, but it simply wasn't possible, with no family members now living there.

Dad was a devoted father, travelling to Perth every year for 40-plus years to spend time with his three eldest children, and their families. He was a hands-on Dad in helping to raise his youngest daughter, Maddie.

Loved Dad/Pa of Erik, Belinda, Stephen, and Madeleine; Pop to Darcy, Jade, Millie, Yazmin,

Amber and Kiera; Great-grandpa to Connor. Life-long friend of his first wife Carla.

Steve, Maddie, and I have now lost the two men in our immediate family who knew and loved us our entire lives, in less than a year. That's very tough. But I see Dad and Rik together now, somewhere, chatting away about books and movies, science fiction and *The Goon Show*, as they loved to do. Maybe drinking a wine. Animated, loud, and laughing. And it makes me smile. Dad's charismatic and funny personality was with him to the end. Steve and I had a lovely visit with him just yesterday morning.

At peace now Dad, alongside your beloved Rik, your brother Johnny, your incredible Mum Elvie and Dad Stan, and your treasured friends and peers who have passed.

Vale dear Dad. Thank you for giving me 'The Arts.'

— **Belinda Gordon**, April 2023

Dick Jenssen (Ditmar)

Memories of Lee

I first met Lee 71 years ago — he was 15 and I was 16 — and it was my school friend Race Mathews, a sixteen-year-old teenager, who brought us together and into the Science Fiction fan world. Race was a keen reader of SF, and had been getting in touch with as many fans as possible. Which was a tough ask, for in the early 1950s Australia there were not many who were willing to admit that they

read that 'Buck Rogers trash'.

It was not a wild and stormy night when we met at Race's parents' house, but it was cold and windy, so that the warmth of both the rooms and the fans was cheering and welcome. Being the two youngest there, Lee and I gravitated to each other, and found that there was some comparability there. Another teenager, of future importance, was Merv Binns, also 16, but I cannot recollect him being at the gathering.

Merv worked at McGills Newsagency in the city. The centre of the shop downstairs featured a long oval display where the latest magazines and newspapers were displayed, and Merv was in charge of the area, which included what SF magazines were available. There were a couple of British SF magazines (*Authentic*, for example) and the British reprint edition of the US *Astounding Science Fiction*, which was of poor paper and which invariably omitted the longer stories in order to restrict the number of pages.

Lee and I would meet with Merv most lunchtimes, chat away, and hinder the sales. We three developed a friendship bound together by



Lee Harding, 1964. (Photo: Ditmar (Dick Jenssen).)

our passion for SF. Under Lee's enthusiastic guidance we decided to create and publish our own fanzines. These were heady times for us with many a setback, but which finally resulted in the publication of *Perhaps* and *Etherline*. The story of those times has been thoroughly and brilliantly documented by Leigh Edmonds in his magazine *iOTA*, and can be found on the site <https://efanzines.com/>, so I will not repeat the story here. What I will say is that it thrust Lee into the forefront of SF fan commentators, particularly in Melbourne and Sydney.

Lee, Merv, and I had bonded so effectively that we would remain friends for the rest of our lives.



Top photo: Original MSFC members, 1954: (l. to r.) (Top:) Merv Binns; Dick Jenssen. (Below:) Bob McCubbin, A. Bertram Chandler, Race Mathews. (Photo: Lee Harding.)

Photo below: Survivors, 2000: Race Mathews, Merv Binns, Dick Jenssen, Lee Harding. (Photo: Helena Binns.)

At the time when Lee, Merv and I were attempting our fledgeling forays into amateur publishing, my father was in Hong Kong working for the Shell company and my mother and I were staying in a large guest house, 'Harbury', just off Domain Road, and kitty-corner to the edge of the Botanical Gardens. Harbury was a sprawling two-storey building, featuring a small third-storey tower. That was my room — tiny, compact, cosy, just large enough for a bed, a cupboard, a bookcase, a desk and a chair. The view out the windows showed a glimpse of the gardens. It was in those confines that I 'entertained' my guests — my best friend from school, David Rose, Race, and Lee.

David was an artist, who made significant contributions to *Perhaps*, and whose graphic work featured, in later years, in the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Lee and I had both been subjected to taunts and abuse from colleagues and school companions, and others, not only for reading SF, but for claiming that it was more, much more, than 'that Buck Rogers crap', and so we recognised each other's frustration over our preferred literature being so misunderstood. In the arrogance of youth, we knew that we were not the idiots the ignorant assumed us to be, but rather were smarter than the scoffers. We discussed our favourite stories, and delved into the reasons for our likings — and in the process discovered that SF was a somewhat subversive literature which hid ideas not commonly expressed. As an example, there was the Henry Kuttner story 'The Proud Robot', on the surface a light-hearted yarn about a scientist who created an intelligent, sentient artificial life-form. We asked ourselves such questions as: what is intelligence, what is sentience, can a machine think, are humans biological machines, where does the ego come from? and in doing so discovered the power of SF to make one think, even if the thoughts remained subliminal.

Those days of discovery were heady indeed, both exhilarating and enervating. Fortunately, whenever I had visitors, my mother would have made a special trip, the day before, to St Kilda and to the Village Bell, and to Fleischer's cakes, always returning with a large box of small, delicious, gourmet cakes. Thus, sometime in the afternoon, Lee and I would make our way downstairs to my mother's room for tea and cake. It



Lee Harding and John Foyater, 1964.
(Photo: Ditmar (Dick Jenssen).)

pains me to say this, even though it is a great tribute to my mother, that many decades later, when I was reminiscing over the Harbury days Lee confessed that what he remembered most, and most vividly, were the Fleischer cakes and not prominently our SF discoveries.

Lee and I were both great admirers of the works of Charles Harness — in particular with his novel *The Paradox Men*, a wildly complicated trip through space, time, and seemingly also out of both space and time. When the novel was reprinted in the UK it carried an enthusiastic introduction by Brian Aldiss. A short time later, at, I believe, Aldiss's urging, Harness' *The Rose* was published. Lee was as enthusiastic as Aldiss, but I was less so. Now, with the superior vision of hindsight, I interpret this as the beginnings of a shift in the way Lee and I responded to SF. Lee was more interested in the effects which the plot and incidents had on the people in the fictions, whereas I was more interested in the pseudo-science aspects of the stories — very few yarns could be said to have convincing science. Pursuing the hindsight further, I see this now as how SF was already determining both Lee's and my future history — how it had already set us on our future callings — Lee as an author exploring human reactions to SF tropes, and me as a scientist nerdishly into physics and mathematics.

Bob McCubbin, who was at the first Race Mathews meeting, had suggested at the unofficial meetings which we SF fans held at Val's Coffee Lounge that we should call ourselves the Melbourne Science Fiction Group. Which we did, and in time it became the Melbourne Science Fiction Club. That is yet another story, and again

has been well documented by Leigh Edmonds in *iOTA*. Race, Lee, Merv, and I were invested many years later with honorary life memberships of the club.

It was now 1953 and changes were imminent. My father retired, moved to Melbourne and bought a house — for a while we were a family and time was spent just being together so that reading was diminished. I was now in my final year of school, and I wanted to obtain reasonable results in the matriculation exams which would then give me a Commonwealth Scholarship and so would pay for all my tuition fees at University. (University entrance was granted if one passed the matriculation exams,

but the better the passes, the likelier the scholarship.) Finally, I read a novel which drastically affected my life. I'd like to say that the book changed my life, but it is impossible, of course, to see what that life would actually be, so 'affected' rather than 'changed'. The novel was Nicholas Monsarrat's *The Cruel Sea*, and its effect was one of my life's great epiphanies. It held me engrossed throughout; I did not want to stop reading; and it was about characters who seemed alive, certainly in comparison to the ciphers who populated most of SF. I realised, with some stupefaction, that there was more to prose than science fiction. And so, I began to read more mainstream works, and less SF. Discrimination had wormed its way into my life.

Things changed again the next year. My father sold the house and moved to Noosaville in Queensland, my mother moved back to Harbury, and I moved into a complex which provided accommodation and all meals for university students living away from home. New friends were made in the digs and especially at university. There was the Uni bookroom with gems of information just waiting to be absorbed, and the deepening fascination of physics and mathematics. Poor SF! It fought valiantly, but slowly receded into a background read every so often for pleasure.

In 1963 I finished my postgraduate work and joined the staff of the Meteorology Department of the University of Wisconsin in the US. I missed Australia, and so, late 1965, I was back at Melbourne University as a lecturer with its Meteorology Department.

In the intervening years SF, even in Australia, was becoming an accepted genre of fiction — a poor relative, to be sure, but was, more and more, being taken seriously. The change was manifest in the new members of the Melbourne Science



Race and Iola Mathews' film night: (l. to r.): Carey Handfield, Bruce Gillespie, Race Mathews, Bruno Kautzner, Merv Binns, Helena Binns, Dick Jenssen, Maddie Harding, Lee Harding. Seated: Bill Wright. (Photographer: Iola Mathews.)

Fiction Club — people such as John Foyster, John Bangsund, Mervyn Barrett, and older constituents like Lee. As I mentioned above, Lee always knew that SF was a wonderfully subversive way of commenting on contemporary mores, on current fads and trends, on the impact of technology, and even on philosophical ideas. Lee always had strong opinions and shared them with whoever would listen.

It was also a time for new writers — Tom Disch and *On Wings of Song*; John Brunner and *Stand on Zanzibar*, Ward Moore's *Bring the Jubilee*; the short stories of J. G. Ballard, and, what I consider is near the apex, Bernard Wolfe's *Limbo* — and, naturally, many others. Others, some of whom remained unclassifiable — R. A. Lafferty, Avram Davidson, and Ferdinand Feghoot.

Enough new writers, new thoughts, new techniques, new themes to bring me back to SF, though in a still reduced manner. Keeping me abreast of the rapid changes was the always effervescent Lee. Future luminaries were already offstage, soon to claim their heritage — such as the winner of more Ditmars than anyone else, Bruce Gillespie.

Here things stood for some years until Race Mathews — yes Race, again — decided to get a group of fans together, including John Foyster, to see how tastes had changed. The results were somewhat of a surprise: for us all, there was a shift away from near obsession with SF towards literature, classical music, and film, especially film. So much so, that Race instigated a monthly gathering

at his place for film nights, overseen by his wife Iola as hostess, while Race prepared some come-tibles. Guests were to bring food and wine.

Some years before — 1968, to be precise — Stanley Kramer had come to Melbourne to film *On the Beach*, Nevil Shute's end-of-humanity cautionary novel. So cautionary, indeed, that all human life was extinguished. Now Lee, in a early job, had been involved with a photography firm, or as an apprentice/trainee. Accordingly, when filming was ongoing in the streets of Melbourne, Lee was there documenting the process, creating, let's say, a bystander's view of the making of the film. Lee showed us some of the photos, and had put them together into a 'diary' of a few pages, but, to my knowledge, never published them. Which is a pity.

Then a year or so later, the film industry came again to Victoria for the colour movie *The Sundowners*, starring Deborah Kerr and Robert Mitchum. Again Lee was there with his camera and rolls of colour film — this time, judging from the write-up, he was on set when he took photos, and may have actually interviewed some of the actors. Yet again, although Lee showed some of us a prospective article, I heard, or saw, no more of this. Another pity. In view of these adolescent adventures, it is no wonder that Lee was almost more — perhaps even more? — enthusiastic about film than SF. He cared about movies, and about every aspect of film-making.

Lee's greatest love, as far I could tell, was for musicals — I sometimes felt that had Lee been the dancing/singing/acting talent that Gene Kelly

was, he'd have been in ... well, is there a heaven greater than the seventh? ... if there is, then that's where we'd find Lee. I never could, though, persuade him that Vincente Minnelli's *Kismet* was a more enjoyable film than he thought. Lee and I shared an unaccountable fascination for the musical *Li'l Abner*, and in particular for the song 'Jubilation T. Cornpone', which had many verses, likely inflammatory to Southerners. On more occasions than I care to remember, Lee and I tried to one-up each other by singing (not the right word by any means) the entire song with the correct words. Lee invariably won, since he had the better memory. These contests never lasted long since we were laughing almost as soon as we began.

As regards SF movies, Lee agreed that Jean Luc Godard's *Alphaville* was one of the top SF movies, along with *2001*, *Galaxy Quest*, and *Twelve Monkeys*. Once again, though, he disagreed with me on the entertainment to be found in *When Worlds Collide*, even as we confirmed that George Pal's *War of the Worlds* still holds up well today. (Neither of us were fond of Tom Cruise's rather bad remake.)

Race's evenings lasted many years, and built

up a steady, consistent following of SF names — Lee, Bruce Gillespie, Elaine Cochrane, Bruno and Keren Kautzner, Bill Wright, Merv and Helena Binns, amongst a host of others whose presence was somewhat sporadic. Of those just mentioned, six of us were near neighbours in Carnegie, and Lee, Bill, Bruce, and Elaine, seemed happy to visit the main Koornang Street dining area by train or bus for an ethnic meal every three or four weeks. With Lee and Bruce at table, there was always a spirited discussion of film and/or SF — and those not in the depths of such esoteric analyses found many other topics of interest.

Then Covid struck, and meals together were lost as gatherings were no longer permitted. Finally all that remained were emails, phone calls, and memories.

Which is how I now remember Lee.

I miss his great enthusiasm, and his love for literature, for music, for SF and, above all, for the culinary delights of Fleischer's cakes.

I miss him.

— **Ditmar**, April 24th 2023

A. Bertram Chandler Award 2006 presented to Lee Harding

Text by Bruce Gillespie, with substantial contributions from Dick Jenssen, Race Mathews, and John Bangsund, and information from The MUP Encyclopedia of Australian Science Fiction & Fantasy (ed. Paul Collins) and The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction (eds Peter Nicholls and John Clute)

The life and career of Lee Harding can be summed up in one word: enthusiasm.

In 1952, when Lee Harding was 15, he was a founder member of the Melbourne Science Fiction Group (later Club). He told Dick Jenssen, another founder member of the Club: 'We must put out a fanzine.' Race Mathews was also a founder member of the Club. As he puts it: 'What resulted after lengthy gestation was not one fanzine but five, titled respectively *Perhaps*, *Bacchanalia*, *Etherline*, *Question Mark*, and *Antipodes*.' Dick Jenssen continues: 'Leo [as he was then] not only provided the push, but he did most of the work. He wrote letters, contacted people, suggested story ideas and cover illustrations, solved layout problems, told Mervyn when to turn the duplicator handle,

and in short was the driving force (spiritual) behind *Perhaps*.'

Eleven years later, John Bangsund met Lee for the first time. He writes: 'At a party in 1963 I met Lee Harding, a writer of science fiction. I was 24. My life was about to change in a way I could never have imagined. "You go through Bayswater and head for The Basin," Lee said when I accepted his invitation to dinner, "you'll come to a service station on your right, then our place is the third house along. You can't see it from the road." [Carla was Lee's wife at the time.] Lee and Carla's place was full of books and music, and I felt at home the moment I arrived. And we had so much to talk about! Lee was very tactful about science fiction, barely mentioning it. Knowing my background as



I can't find a photo of the presentation to Lee of his Chandler Award. Instead, here is the presentation of the first Melbourne Science Fiction Club's Lifetime Achievement Awards in 2005. Jack Dann (fourth from left) was the presenter. Recipients: (l. to r.): Bill Wright, Merv Binns, Dick Jenssen, Lee Harding, Bruce Gillespie, and Alan Stewart. (Photo: Helena Binns.)

a theological student, before I left Lee gave me a copy of Arthur C. Clarke's "The Nine Billion Names of God" and invited me to comment some time on the theology in it. The hell with theology! I was suddenly and most unexpectedly hooked on science fiction. Lee introduced me to the best and most interesting writers, and I couldn't get enough of them.'

Four years later, Bruce Gillespie enjoyed a similar experience of meeting Lee Harding for the first time. He met Lee during the weekend in late 1967 when he met the rest of the *Australian Science Fiction Review* group in Ferntree Gully. Lee overwhelmed Bruce with his enthusiasm for science fiction, music, general literature, and Hollywood musical films. Before that weekend, Bruce knew little about Brian Aldiss, Gustav Mahler, or *Singing in the Rain*. After that weekend, he was determined to find out much more about them all, write science fiction, and start a fanzine.

Let's go back to the beginning.

Dick Jenssen writes: 'Lee (née Leo) Harding began reading science fiction at about the age of ten, and five years later was a fervent and addicted fan of the genre and had been in touch with Sydney

fan Graham Stone. Stone gave him Race Mathews' name and address. Race was then forming the nucleus of what would become the Melbourne Science Fiction Group, and invited Lee to visit him at home and shortly thereafter to the first meeting of fans there. This was somewhat fortunate, for at the time Lee was, to quote Race, "an aspiring professional photographer", and consequently provided history with what must surely be the only visual documentation of the nascent SF group — a portrait of most of the founding members of what would become the Melbourne Science Fiction Club. In this photograph are: Race, Bertram Chandler, Bob McCubbin, Merv Binns and Dick Jenssen. Unfortunately, since Lee was behind the camera, he does not appear in this significant document.' [See p. 6.]

Like many of the overseas writers of the time, Lee saw fanzine writing as a stepping stone to learning the skills of professional fiction writing. During the years when he was getting married, having children, and earning a living as a professional photographer, he was writing SF stories and submitting them overseas. There were no markets in Australia. In 1960, E. J. (Ted) Carnell, the all-important British editor, published Lee's first story, 'Displaced Person', in *Science Fantasy*.

Twenty years later, this would become the basis of Lee's most successful novel. Lee placed a wide range of stories with Carnell's magazines *New Worlds*, *Science Fantasy*, and *Science Fiction Adventures* during the early 1960s. As with several other Australian writers, he found he could sell nothing to Michael Moorcock, who took over as editor of the British magazines in 1964 and began the New Wave. It seems odd that Moorcock did not recognise that powerful influences on Lee's writing included J. G. Ballard and Brian Aldiss, major contributors to the New Wave.

In 1966, at the first Australian science fiction convention held in eight years, John Baxter pointed at John Bangsund and suggested he begin a high-quality fanzine about science fiction. The result was *Australian SF Review*, the best magazine about science fiction ever published in Australia. John's two partners were Lee Harding and John Foyster. Thanks to the enthusiasm and writing skills of the three of them, *ASFR* not only became world famous, but led directly to the renaissance of Australian fan writing, professional SF writing, and convention organising. Lee began writing long entertaining articles and insightful reviews for *ASFR*. During the late sixties Lee was Australia's best SF reviewer other than George Turner and John Foyster, but unfortunately he stopped reviewing after 1969, when *ASFR*, First Series, ceased publication.

The termination of *ASFR* coincides with the beginning of Lee's second fruitful period of science fiction writing. In 1969, Ron Graham, a Sydney businessman, set up the first glossy Australian professional SF magazine, *Vision of Tomorrow*. Unfortunately, he decided to print it in Britain, with a British co-editor, although half the contents were to be written by Australians. On this promise of continual work, Lee left his job as a photographer and began writing full time. He sold several of his best stories, including 'Dancing Gerontius' and 'The Custodian', to *Vision of Tomorrow*, before it folded after only ten issues.

At the same time, Lee began selling his first short stories to the American magazines. 'Space-man' appeared in *If* magazine in 1970. It was followed by further sales to the Galaxy group of magazines, and quite a few foreign translations of these and earlier stories.

Lee found an unexpected entree into publishing novels when he met Jim Ellis, of Cassell Australia, one of the great Melbourne enterprising publishers of the mid 1970s. Ellis needed fiction for the young adult market, a field that was just becoming important. Lee adapted his short story 'Fallen Spaceman' for Cassell Australia. The novel

version was also sold to Harper & Row in New York. Lee's first full-length adult novel, *A World of Shadows*, appeared from Robert Hale in London in 1973. Lee published a long series of books for young adults during the 1970s, as well as the adult novel *The Weeping Sky* for Cassell in 1977.

During the 1970s, Lee took part in every aspect of science fiction activity in Australia. For several years he was a valued bookseller at Merv Binns' Space Age Books. In 1973, he became the first Australian to conduct a Clarion-type SF writers' workshop. Held as part of the Melbourne Easter convention, Lee's workshop was only one day long, but it pointed the way to the more famous writers' workshops of 1975, 1977, and 1979. Throughout the early 1970s, he worked tirelessly in the effort to gain the right to hold Australia's first world convention in Melbourne in 1975. He wrote and narrated the soundtrack for the *Aussiefan* film, produced Australia's first fan opera (*Joe Phaust*, written by Leigh Edmonds and David Grigg) in 1973, maintained a wide range of contacts with overseas writers, and chaired many of the panels at Aussiecon I.

Lee's involvement in Aussiecon led indirectly to his next career move. He edited *The Altered I*, the book that told the story of the Ursula Le Guin writers' workshop, held a week before Aussiecon. The anthology included documentary material about methods of conducting future workshops, plus a selection from the best stories written at the workshop. Simultaneously he became involved with Wren Publishing, a shortlived attempt to publish hardback science fiction in Australia. For Wren, he edited *Beyond Tomorrow*, an ambitious anthology of stories written by overseas authors combined with new stories by Australian writers.

This led to Lee editing the even more ambitious *Rooms of Paradise*, which he prepared for Hyland House in Melbourne. *Rooms of Paradise* also appeared in an American edition. Hyland House was a small publisher set up by Anne Godden and Al Knight, who Lee had met before they left Nelson Australia. Anne and Al were determined to promote Australian writers in general, and Australian SF in particular. They established the Alan Marshall Award manuscript award for narrative fiction. Lee Harding won the award in 1978 with his new novel, *Displaced Person*. In turn, Anne and Al published the novel in 1979, and it won the Australian Children's Book Council Award in 1980.

Much could be said about the unity of Lee Harding's themes in his fiction, but we don't have time here. Enough to say Lee's first short story matured in his mind for nearly twenty years before

it became a powerful fable about a teenager who finds that the rest of the world cannot see him. Many of Lee's stories and novels concern loner characters under attack from hostile environments. In *The Weeping Sky*, several characters survive although a sea from another dimension is flooding into their own world. *The Weeping Sky*, *Displaced Person*, and *Waiting for the End of the World* (1983), Lee's second novel for Hyland House, are his three most subtle and interesting expressions of his major themes.

Lee's disappearance from the Australian science fiction scene for fifteen years is a mystery that no doubt he will explain one day. He published nothing between *Waiting for the End of the World* in 1983 and *Heartsease* in 1997. This emotionally powerful realistic novel for young adults about a family splitting up, seems to have

been ignored by many of Lee's admirers because it had no SF or fantasy element. We all hoped that *Heartsease* would signal the beginning of a new chapter in Lee Harding's career.

Of all the people who have featured in the Australian science fiction scene since World War II, Lee Harding has had the most diverse and interesting career. Although he has never earned a great income from science fiction, he has done much to contribute to the vigorous field that is today's Australian SF scene. The Australian Science Fiction Foundation awards Lee Harding the A. Bertram Chandler Award in gratitude for his life's work.

— **Bruce Gillespie and Many Others**, 29 March 2006

John Bangsund: Glimpses of a Golden Age

(Extracted from a longer article, 'How I Became an Editor', *The Society of Editors Newsletter*, September 1992)

fanzine (fæ.nzin), orig. U.S. [f. *FAN sb.2 + MAGA)-ZINE.] A magazine for fans, esp. those of science fiction.

(Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary, vol. I (1972))

Oxford's first citation dates from 1949. Peter Roberts, in Peter Nicholls' *Science Fiction Encyclopedia* (1979), gives 1930 as the date of the first known fanzine and credits Russ Chauvenet with inventing the word in 1941. Peter Roberts continues:

[The] early fanzines were straightforward publications dealing exclusively with sf or amateur science and were produced by local fan groups founded in America by the more active readers of contemporary professional sf magazines. As interest grew, however, and sf fans formed closer contacts and friendships, individual fans began publishing for their own amusement and fanzines became more diverse, and their contents more capricious; fan editors also began to exchange fanzines and to send out free copies to contributors and letter-writers. Thus fanzines abandoned any professional aspirations

in exchange for informality and an active readership — characteristics which persist to the present and which distinguish fanzines from conventional hobbyist publications. ... The smaller fanzines are often written entirely by the editor and serve simply as letter substitutes sent out to friends; others have limited distribution within amateur press associations such as FAPA.

It's hard to believe now, but from 1961 to 1965 I was respectably employed as a librarian at the Victorian Railways Institute. In my spare time, which seemed endless, I read good books, listened to good music, watched good films, travelled a lot around Victoria, and wrote about these and other things in a diary. Something of a republican even then, when Queen Elizabeth visited Melbourne in 1962 I didn't stay in town for the show but went off to Portland, stayed in a cheap pub, and read nothing but Shakespeare for three or four days.

I lived alone, but I had a social life that now seems extraordinarily active. I joined the ALP, indeed belonged to the same branch as Barry Jones (then emerging as Australia's greatest TV quiz champion, later national president of the party). I was moderately active in Amnesty, writing swingeing letters to foreign dictators, who never wrote back. I went to concerts and films and exhibitions, usually with some bright girl I had met



Lee Harding, 1964.
(Photo: Ditmar (Dick Jenssen).)

in the library. I did not watch television. I did not read science fiction. At a party in 1963 I met Lee Harding, a writer of science fiction. I was 24. My life was about to change in a way I could never have imagined.

'You go through Bayswater and head for The Basin,' Lee said when I accepted his invitation to dinner, 'you'll come to a service station on your right, then our place is the third house along. You can't see it from the road.' Lee and Carla's place was full of books and music, and I felt at home the moment I arrived. And we had so much to talk about! I believe I stayed the night. Lee was very tactful about science fiction, barely mentioning it. Knowing my background as a theological student, before I left Lee gave me a copy of Arthur C. Clarke's 'The Nine Billion Names of God' and invited me to comment some time on the theology in it. The hell with theology! I was suddenly and most unexpectedly hooked on science fiction. Lee introduced me to the best and most interesting writers, and I couldn't get enough of them. On a long trip to Queensland later that year I read nothing but sf. Some of the places I stayed in are linked still in my mind with the books I read there.

Lee also introduced me to fanzines and fandom, and eventually fans. I met the fans' voices first. Lee was part of a round-robin continuing conversation on tape with John Foyster, John Baxter, and Bob Smith. I think I met John Baxter first, on that trip to Queensland. We sat at either end of a sofa in his Sydney flat, sneaking glances at each other,

because Lee had told us that we looked and talked alike. Apart from agreeing that we didn't, I remember little of that meeting with John Baxter. His interests overlapped with Lee's, but not much with mine. I met John Foyster about Easter 1964. I couldn't quite relate the man to his voice or his fanzines, and didn't know what to make of him at all. He was the youngest of us. He seemed at once shy and arrogant, considerate and condescending. I had never met anyone with such a sharp wit. When I read Shelley's comment on his friend

Peacock, 'His fine wit makes such a wound the knife is lost in it,' I thought instantly of Foyster. We established a mutual respect from the start, but it says something about both of us that I was surprised, years later, to realise that he had long regarded me as a friend: such a great honour I thought he bestowed sparingly. John Foyster is probably friend to more people than anyone else I know.

In 1963 Lee and Carla became, almost literally overnight, my best friends. Lee was an enthusiast, a man born to make discoveries and share them as quickly as possible, then move on to the next. I have something of that in my own nature, so Lee and I sparked each other off. I spent most weekends at Lee and Carla's place, and during the week Lee and I had long conversations on the telephone. 'Are you two lovers or something?' my mother once asked me — a question that embarrassed me no end. 'Tell her I've got a bum like a peach,' Lee suggested when I told him. He wasn't quite as fast as Foyster, but close.

As I recall, Lee didn't actively encourage me to write. In fact my first fanzine writing appeared in John Foyster's *Satura* — a letter or two, maybe other things. But I had been writing for years, in my diary and occasionally elsewhere, and I desperately wanted to convince Lee that I had at least the makings of a real writer, the sort of writer who could be published, perhaps even for money. One night I gave him a short story to read. He read it, in total silence. He finished it, got up quietly from his chair, walked quietly to the back door, opened it, and shouted into the night:

‘Speeee-yew!’ Well, I didn’t think much of it either, but I was hoping for some sort of constructive comment. As he came back into the room and we fell about in convulsive laughter, I knew he had given me far more than that.

The third Adelaide Festival of Arts was held in March 1964. I took a fortnight’s leave from the library and went to Adelaide. I had visited Adelaide three times before, during the 1950s, and had good memories of the place. It is still my favourite Australian capital city. Sally and I lived there for a while in the late 70s, and would have stayed there indefinitely if there had been work for me. My budget for that trip in 1964 was minimal, though it seems luxurious now. I had paid for my train fare and modest accommodation, and for tickets to the main things I wanted to see, and had a few pounds left over. I did a lot of walking in Adelaide, far more than I could believe when I moved there twelve years later, but I was young then. It was early autumn. Everything about the place was luminous, golden: the train’s early morning descent through the glorious Adelaide hills, the trees along the Torrens, the late sun on the city buildings, the day’s memories as I returned to my little rented house in the caravan park at Hackney.

At the Railways Institute in Adelaide, where I was welcomed as an emissary from some higher plane of existence (my library had thirty branches, theirs none), I was given an office and a typewriter, and there I wrote another story, ‘The Beheading of Basil Pott’. From that office, and from Hackney, I also wrote a lot of letters to Lee Harding. When I returned to Melbourne I couldn’t believe Lee’s excitement. He wanted to publish my story. He wanted to publish my letters. He wanted to publish a fanzine. He had published fanzines before, but nothing like what he had in mind now. This one would be something really special, and he would call it *Canto*.

The rest of 1964, outside of working hours, was mainly taken up with *Canto*, a lady named Carolyn, and a twelve-year-old car. ‘Not an Alvis!’ Lee cried in some mixture of disbelief and despair as I drove my limousine up his driveway at The Basin. At least he knew what it was. I had long admired English grand touring cars, and in 1952 I had fallen in love with the Alvis TA-21 at the Melbourne Motor Show. I never thought I would own one, but there it was, in mid-1964, a snip at 500 pounds. Carolyn liked it. I had met Carolyn the night before I left for Adelaide, and I saw the Alvis in a used-car lot in Prahran one day on my way to her place. Lee, I think, never entirely approved of Carolyn or the Alvis.

One day Carolyn and I drove to Olympic Park to watch John Foyster running in an athletic meeting. We cheered John when we saw him, but he probably didn’t hear us. Shortly after there was an announcement on the PA system: in a very plummy voice an official said that if anyone present owned a black Alvis sedan (not mine, I thought, mine is black and silver-grey), registration number WT-962 (but that is my number, I thought), they should inspect it at their earliest convenience, since it appeared to be on fire. The Alvis, it turned out, wasn’t actually on fire, but was close to it. Both Carolyn and I were smokers, and one of us had dropped live ash on a cloth that I kept under one of the front seats. The car was billowing smoke when we reached it. I doubt that John Foyster ran faster that day than I did.

Meanwhile, back at The Basin ... I was very fond of ellipses in those days. Lee didn’t seem to mind them. I can’t recall now whether Lee or I cobbled my Adelaide letters together to make up the piece we called ‘Sir William and I in Adelaide’, but I suspect I did. The uninspired introduction and ending are certainly mine. Rereading the piece after all these years was an unexpected pleasure: on the whole it is embarrassing, but I like its exuberance — and the touches of humour that creep in here and there between the bouts of labored witticism. But I must say that I have long since become very fond of Walton’s music.

Canto 1 appeared early in 1965. As well as my piece on the Adelaide Festival, it included my Basil Pott story, a fannish comic strip based on Walt Kelly’s *Pogo* characters that I did later in 1964, and pieces by Foyster, Bob Smith, and Don Symons (a superb writer, known to the great world, if at all, as father of the musician Red Symons). For the second issue John Foyster wrote about Dame Joan Sutherland and Don Symons wrote about his career in gold smuggling, and other things were written or planned, but *Canto 2* never appeared.

In 1966 John Foyster organised a science fiction convention, the first in Australia since 1958. Today’s Australian fandom, and much of its science fiction, has its origins in that convention. In turn, that convention had some of its origins in a house near The Basin that you can’t see from the road, and a caravan park in Hackney that has long since gone, and a fanzine that appeared just once.

Addendum

I became head librarian at the VRI in 1962. My predecessor, a man past retiring age, had run the Victorian branch of the Returned Servicemen’s



Other than the fanzines Lee produced for the Melbourne Science Fiction Club in the 1950s, *Canto* was his only later fanzine. (Cover: John Bangsund.)

League from his office and more or less let the library run itself. I was very impressed by the activities of the VRI earlier in the century, when it was a workers' educational, cultural and recreational centre — part of the same movement as the Mechanics' Institutes. For years it ran lecture meetings, addressed by outstanding men (invariably men) from all fields of endeavour, and by all accounts the meetings were packed. I recall seeing Bernard O'Dowd's name on one of the programs, and he was talking about poetry, not about parliamentary draftsmanship (his day job). There were concerts. The library thrived: among its old books that had survived was a huge leather-bound set of Wagner's operas; the dates stamped in the volumes were many. In 1962 the two main activities of the Institute were industrial training (courses on signalling, basic electricity, and the like) and sport. The library's annual loan rate had peaked during the Depression, fallen slowly during the 1940s and 50s, and by comparison had all but collapsed after 1956, when television came to Melbourne. I felt like changing some of this, and I did.

I removed the maze of balustrades and grilles from the library, changing it from a fortress into a big open space. I hung framed prints of early Melbourne about the place and brought in armchairs and a goldfish tank. I set up a collection of children's books. I abolished the Dewey system

from the small nonfiction section, and doubled its size. My predecessor had kept the motor-repair manuals in a locked cupboard in his office; I put them out on the shelves, and increased the section tenfold. I wrote a book column for the *Railways Newsletter* and ran ads for the library in the weekly gazette. I founded the VRI Music Club, organising regular concerts in the library of recorded classical music, and wrote the program notes for them. I visited the branch libraries much more often than they were used to, and upgraded their collections. I encouraged the opening of new branches. My reward for all this was suspicion from the general office and enthusiasm from the library's users. By 1965 the annual loan rate had shot up to a figure approaching those of the early 1950s, and my expenditure on acquisitions had set entirely new records. By 1965 I knew I wanted to be a book editor. The general office was pleased to see me go.

The library was unusual in that it was able to buy books directly from publishers at trade rates. This meant that publishers' sales reps visited me regularly, and they usually went away happy. The reps were mostly interesting blokes (all men, yes), but I was surprised at how unbookish most of them were. When I mentioned this to Jim Ellis, one of the reps from Cassell, he said that booksellers were much the same: among the people he called on there were only three who were good for a bookish conversation, and I was one of them. He could talk at length with anyone about the trade and books in general, but with me he could talk about Dostoevsky and Iris Murdoch, Nietzsche and Michael Innes, Joyce Cary and Kazantzakis and Camus. Jim was a bright, gentle, witty man, and we got on famously. He liked *Canto* when I gave him a copy. (So did Max Harris in Adelaide.)

Canto 2 went unpublished mainly, I think, because Lee Harding lost interest, or simply couldn't afford it, but in some part (I didn't want to cloud the 'golden age' with this kind of talk) because I hated the way he edited me — my writing and even my drawings. Lee's writing has always been good, in recent years very good indeed; his *Displaced Person* hasn't been out of print since it won the Children's Book of the Year award in 1980. But when it came to editing, in 1965 anyway, Lee had a tin ear. He was an interventionist editor, as every editor must be at times, but he didn't know how to intervene sympathetically. He seemed to have no respect for other people's writing, which to my mind was the first duty of an editor: not that their words are sacred, but neither are they raw material. I was sure that I could out-edit Lee any time, and Jim Ellis encouraged me in this belief.

Jim also encouraged me in the belief that I

could get into book-editing by the back door. Australian publishing was still in its infancy, but there were signs that it was about to grow up in a hurry. Jim and I were confident that if I could get some kind of job in publishing, sooner or later my talents would be recognised. So I went to Cassell and began my short career as the world's worst sales representative. Oh, I wasn't that bad, but I didn't have the killer instinct needed for the work — and I wasn't helped by Cassell's firm-sale policy. When you ordered books from Cassell you were stuck with them; other publishers were experimenting with sale-or-return, but not Cassell. During my two years with the company they introduced something much more controversial — the closed market. This relieved booksellers of the burden of overstocking, but it also reduced their profit margin. The retail price of a book had always been twice its landed cost; in the closed market that price remained the same, but the bookseller's margin was reduced from half to one-third. The truly professional booksellers protested mightily. Frank Cheshire, one of the most successful and influential booksellers in Melbourne, caused a sensation in the trade when he stopped buying books from Cassell. (But he went on buying Cassell's books, through Oxford University Press. Oxford were in a building close to Cheshire's main shop, and Frank Eyre and Frank Cheshire were good friends.)

This isn't telling you much about how I became an editor, but it may explain the kind of editor I became ...

The science fiction convention at Easter 1966, held in McGill's Newsagency's warehouse in Somerset Place, was an extraordinary event. It was, as I've said, the first in Australia since 1958, and there was something of the atmosphere of a revival meeting about it, a wonderful feeling of something happening, a powerful sense of fellowship. Towards the end, when we were discussing whether to hold another convention next year and generally what to do next, I suggested that we could keep up the momentum and preserve some of the feeling of community by publishing a fanzine. The idea was well received, and people instantly started nominating editors: Harding! Ron Clarke! Baxter! Broderick! But over them all Lee Harding was saying — very clearly, magisterially even — I nominate John Bangsund. 'And so', John Foyster wrote two years later, 'the die was cast, since when the cast has been dying.' The die was cast indeed: that was the moment when I became an editor.

It's always fun thinking of titles for things, and there was no shortage of suggestions for the title of this fanzine. For a while I seriously considered *Jindivik*, which had a nice Australian sound and a connotation of flight. Unfortunately it was the name of a flying drone used by the military for target practice, so that was out. In my wilder moments I toyed with *The Invisible Whistling Bunyip*. If you have read Edmund Wilson on H. P. Lovecraft you will know where that came from. But on the principle that if you can't think of a name that is both clever and obvious, forget clever and go for obvious, I called it *Australian Science Fiction Review*.

The first issue appeared in June 1966. It ran 32 quarto pages and was printed on the Melbourne SF Club's Roneo duplicator in McGill's warehouse. I had typed most of the stencils in the basement of the Commercial Travellers' Club in Perth. The contributors included Brian Aldiss, Michael Moorcock, Langdon Jones, John Baxter, John Foyster, Lee Harding, Jim Ellis (as 'Jay Wallis'), and Bob Sessions (as 'Scribarius') — and Stephen Murray-Smith (a quote, with his blessing, from *Overland* 33) and Bernard O'Dowd (his poem 'Australia', probably reprinted with Lothian's permission, but maybe not). My editorial started and ended with quotes from Sean O'Casey. One of Lee's reviews had the title 'Communist Chulpex Raped My Wife!' Such things more or less set the tone of *ASFR* from the beginning: it was concerned with science fiction as literature; it was irreverent, often funny, serious about everything and grave about nothing; it was unashamedly Australian, and its outlook was international.

Now you know about fanzines, or about one of mine anyway. On the strength of *ASFR* I got a job as assistant editor of Materials Handling & Packaging; on the strength of that I got a job at *The Age*; on the strength of that, and a rigorous test, in 1972 I got a job as a Hansard subeditor in Canberra; from there I moved over the road to the Australian Government Publishing Service, where I first enjoyed the title of editor; from there I moved to Rigby in Adelaide; I went freelance in Adelaide in 1976, returned to Melbourne in 1978, worked part-time as assistant editor of *Meanjin* from 1988 to 1992, and now you know the lot, or most of it anyway. Since *ASFR* it has all been down hill, and I should have stayed in the library, or the tyre factory, but some people never know when they're well off and I'm one of them and that's how I became an editor.

— **John Bangsund**, September 1992

Farewell to Charles Taylor

[Many thanks to Nicolette Taylor and Elaine Cochrane when preparing this tribute.]

Charles Taylor's funeral on 14 March was mainly attended by members of his extended family, but a few close friends were also invited. As the casket was wheeled from the funeral parlour, we heard the sound of 'Always look on the bright side of life', chosen by Diana to try to lighten the mood. For about a quarter of an hour we had watched images from all eras of Charlie's life. He is smiling in every image. He was always trying to cheer up his family and friends. When Elaine visited the hospital on the last day of Charlie's life (28 February), he was still trying to be cheery.

During the funeral, his son Morgan braved his way through tears to tell how he suddenly acquired a new father at the age of six, and the stages by which Charlie became his father. As a father, husband, and teacher Charlie showed levels of his personality that reached deeper than the man of bonhomie that most of his friends met.

I met Charlie first at the 1972 Easter Convention in Melbourne. 'I believe you are a fan of Philip K. Dick,' he said. Almost all the people who have introduced themselves because of my known interest in the works of Philip K. Dick have remained friends for life.



In 1974, when I was living by myself in the top half of a terrace house in Carlton Street, Carlton, Charlie visited to say that he was now a student at Melbourne University and sharing a house with two friends. He brought them around to meet me: Elaine Cochrane and Francis. Elaine says she doesn't remember that first meeting, but it did lead in- directly into my involvement with the other members of the Melbourne University SF Association (MUSFA). They were somewhat friendlier than many of the members of regular fandom. Until the end of 1976 Charlie would visit me at Carlton Street, bearing bottles of beer and asking me to play a few LPs. Our favourite was Loudon Wainwright III, and our favourite singalong song was 'Wine with Dinner'.

I visited the house in Johnston Street, Collingwood, that Elaine, Francis, and Charlie were sharing with another person. In 1976 Charlie moved home, to be replaced by Roger Weddall. Roger ran out of money in the same year. The second-storey nineteenth-century terrace house in Carlton Street where I was renting for \$21 a week was sold, and I had to move elsewhere in February 1977. When Roger moved out of Johnston Street, I was invited to rent there. (The rest of that story can be found in the latest issue of *Portable Storage*.)

During the 1970s, Charlie was a constant friend to many people in MUSFA. He was editor of MUSFA's magazine *Yggdrasil* for a while. He trained to become a science/maths teacher, but to get a job as a teacher during difficult times he took a position for a year at a private school in the Western District. We saw him occasionally, including a memorable night when Elaine and I took Roger and him out to dinner at Two Faces, Melbourne's most prestigious restaurant.

Charlie, desperate to escape from teaching in private schools, joined a group of teachers recruited by Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser to work as a foreign aid project team in Zimbabwe shortly after it achieved independence. Charlie taught there during 1981 and 1982. Imagine our surprise when he returned in January 1983 with a wife and two children! Nic had been teaching in Zambia and had moved to Harare with her children Morgan, 6, and Diana, 1. Charlie placed an advertisement in the Harare newspaper for the Zimbabwe Science Fiction Association in order to meet people other than other teachers. When she



Charlie and Nic Taylor celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary on 29 January 2023, with Morgan (who took the photo).

attended her first meeting, she and Charlie hit it off immediately. They arrived back in Melbourne in January 1983.

The first thing they did was come around to visit Elaine and me after we had moved to Keele Street. As a joke we introduced Nic to our 'national dish', Tim Tams dipped in beer. For a while Nic believed this was true. The last night when Elaine and I had dinner at Nic and Charlie's place, 8 February 2023, was very close to the fortieth anniversary of our first meeting. A plate of Tim Tams was on the table, and forgetting the old joke, I delighted them both by asking for a bottle of beer.

Both Charlie and Nic had rich careers as teachers until they retired, but also faced some career problems. Charles was applied for and was appointed Deputy Principal at the Perth Campus of Study Group Australia. Less than a year later it was decided they did not have the numbers to warrant a Deputy Principal, so Charlie was unemployed, but still needed to pay the mortgage on the house they had bought in Ringwood, Victoria. So he had a brilliant idea — to make a lot of money very quickly by teaching for two years in Dubai, one of the Gulf States. Nic can tell you sometime about this ghastly experience. They jumped ship after a year and a half. Both were able to find teaching positions back in Melbourne. When Charlie retired, he was Head of Studies at Monash City Campus.

Nic retired a few years ago, but Charlie retired only a year or so ago. They had hoped to have rich years together, travelling, reading, watching movies, listening to music, and much else. (Charlie was one of the few Australian fans I know as interested in classical music as I am.)

And then ... and then ... here is a section of what

I wrote on Facebook a day after Charlie died on 1 March:

'Charlie developed myelodysplasia (pre-leukemia) more than a year ago. It made sense to try a bone marrow transplant to avert it. He was initially saved by a bone marrow implant thanks to his sister Yvonne. All seemed to be working well, although Charlie spent quite a while in hospital, and then in isolation at home during the second half of last year. A few people were allowed to visit as long as they definitely had no infection. However, rejection issues became important, and by the end Charlie was fighting off several infections, although it was pneumonia that killed him. A course of steroids was fighting the rejection, but made him even more vulnerable to infection. He had become an old man, with his back barely supporting him. Nevertheless Nic and Charlie invited Elaine and me to visit them two weeks ago, although neither of them was well. Nevertheless they said they enjoyed the company. We had Indian takeaway and watched a couple of Netflix films (since we don't have streaming). A week later, Charlie put on Facebook that he was in hospital with pneumonia, and Nic picked up Elaine yesterday to visit him for the last time. (I have my own health problems with a busted foot, so I wasn't going anywhere.) Charlie sent his own farewell message via Facebook late last night, and he died at 5 a.m. the next morning.'

Footnote: Charlie actually sent me a farewell message on Facebook Messenger at 3 a.m. on 1 March, but it didn't reach me. Nic has just been able to retrieve it. Charlie died two hours later.

— **Bruce Gillespie**, 21 May 2023

Charles Taylor's life and times

compiled by Nicolette Taylor

1955: Born January 27, Caulfield, Victoria, to Douglas and Nancy Taylor

1972: Completed secondary school at Glen Waverley High School/Secondary School
Friendship with Graeme Simsion (*The Rosie Project*) and Peter Thomas (*Bulldust and Pedal Power*)

1977: B.Sc. Physics and Mathematics, Melbourne University

1978: Dip. Ed. Physics and Mathematics, Monash University

Schools taught at:

Hamilton: Monivae College (boys school run by Sacré Coeur)

Korowa (Anglican, girls), Glen Iris

1981: January arrived Harare, Zimbabwe with contingent sent by Malcolm Fraser

Advertised in Zimbabwe newspaper for Science Fiction group: Met Harold Farmer, poet and lecturer, University of Zimbabwe, and Nancy Farmer writer of SF and winner of prizes for Children's Literature, Simon & Schuster

Attended party for Australian teachers.

Introduced to Nicolette by Wendy Probert

August 1981: Charles attended Madeleine Mattarozzi's party; met Nic's daughter Diana.

On reading a Gillespie fanzine, Nic decides there *is* intelligent life in Australia, or at least in Fandom in Melbourne

Charles met Nic's son Morgan; moves in with Nic; Diana's 2nd birthday

First Christmas as a family.

1983: Arrive Tullamarine Airport. Meet Elaine Cochrane and Bruce Gillespie and visit them in Collingwood. Beer and Tim Tams tradition born

Elaine gave us spices from Soul Food in Collingwood.

The importance of cats confirmed.

Nic introduced to outside dunny and red back spiders.

Charles starts job at Taylors College, St Kilda Road

(May holidays: Nic tutors at Taylors)

Wedding at Mum's/Nancy's house in Glen Waverley

Charles continues with B.A. in Literature at Melbourne University

1984: Nic gains Diploma of Education at Rusden College

1990: Charles gains a B.A. in Linguistics at Melbourne University

1994: Charles enrolls in M.Ed. Physics Education at Monash University

Masters course converted into a Ph.D. course; completed in 2002.

2003: PhD graduation ceremony October.
Title of thesis: *Conceptual Development in Mechanics*

2007–2008: Deputy Principal at Taylors College Perth.

2009–2010: Head of Mathematics, Dubai, Emirates, International School.

2010: Taylors College, Melbourne.

2011: Head of Studies at Monash College, City Campus, Bourke Street, Melbourne.

2019–2020: Charles retires.

Tribute to Valma Brown

(17 February 1950–2 March 2023)

The news of Valma Brown's death one day after our loss of Charles Taylor almost made us think our old fannish world was falling in. In fact I hadn't seen Valma since Aussiecon 4 in August 2010, but she was always a part of the 'Melbourne scene', even while living elsewhere for many years.

I remember Valma best from her early days in fandom in 1971. Recently arrived from Brisbane to begin a tertiary course in Drama, she had answered an advertisement to share half a house with John Bangsund in Bundalohn Court, St Kilda. To say the least, they did not get along. John's flat was a centre of fandom at the time — a continuous party around the kitchen table. One of the many visitors was Leigh Edmonds, at that time heavily involved in ANZAPA, his own fanzines, local conventions, and the Aussiecon bid. Leigh, who was then sharing a flat with Paul Stevens, sympathised greatly with Valma's dilemma. This led quickly to a close alliance that has lasted for life.

Valma and Leigh took a flat in Blessington

Street, St Kilda, if I remember correctly, and bought a car called Agatha that often threatened to break down, but usually reached its destination. Valma and Leigh were heavily involved in all sorts of fannish projects. I remember best *Joe Phan*, the musical that Leigh Edmonds and David Grigg wrote to be staged at the 1973 Easter Convention in Melbourne. Valma, heavily involved in theatre, was one of the stars.

For awhile Valma and Leigh were good friends to me. Also, Valma's birthday was the same as mine — 17 February. The greatest favour they did for me was standing in a queue in order to buy tickets for one of the three concerts that the Rolling Stones gave at Kooyong Stadium on 17 and 18 February 1973. Many old rock and roll hands remember these as the greatest concert they ever attended. Our tickets were for the afternoon



Leigh Edmonds and Valma Brown, Aussiecon 4, August 2010. (Photo: Cath Ortlieb.)



Valma Brown, 1971. Publicity photo by Glen O'Malley to launch Valma's acting career.

performance. It was at least 34 degrees out on the stand ('fu'in' 'ot,' as Mick Jagger opined from the stage), and most of us did not wear sun hats. I can't remember the support acts. My main memory is of the shock of being pounded by the loudest sound I've ever heard: the Stones' performance. Yeah, man, memorable.

Leigh and Valma worked in Canberra for a few years while he got his PhD, then moved to Perth for some years, then to Ballarat 25 years ago. I know how important Valma has been to Leigh over the years. She suffered unspecified illnesses for quite a long time. As care-giver, Leigh has not been

able to associate much with Melbourne fandom because he has been unwilling to leave Valma at home in Ballarat. Good fortune enabled them to buy a very large house in 2019. I had the impression that Leigh was putting in a huge amount of renovating work so that the two of them could enjoy a long, happy retirement. But this won't happen.

Best wishes to Leigh and to all those who were much closer to Valma than I was.

— **Bruce Gillespie**, March 2023

Eve Harvey

Deaths come in threes, so Elaine and I were both horrified and not quite surprised when we heard on 7 March that **EVE HARVEY** had died, only 72. I was not a close friend of Eve and John, as were other Melbourne fans who were able to travel overseas to visit them after they moved from Britain to France, but Eve and John were wonderful people to meet at at least two Aussiecons in

Melbourne. They looked forward to a long, celebratory retirement, but I'm told that both John and Eve had suffered major health problems in recent years. Eve had been a major participant in British fandom for many years, and I remember trading fanzines for her *Wallbanger* during the 1980s. She leaves a gap in many people's lives.



Art Widner, John Harvey, and Eve Harvey, at Aussiecon 4, 2010. (Photo: Tom Becker.)

Martin Morse Wooster (1957–2022)

Mike Glycer's tribute to Martin Morse Wooster

[File 770, 13 November 2022]

Martin Morse Wooster died Saturday night, 12 November 2022. He had been attending an ale conference in Williamsburg, Virginia and was walking along the highway from the convention venue back to the hotel where he was staying when he was struck and killed by a hit-and-run driver. A local news station says police are asking for help

in identifying the driver.

Martin's sister, Ann Wooster, notified a member of Potomac River Science Fiction Society (PRSFS), a group he co-founded. Kyle McAbee released it to their mailing list. That is all the information presently known.

Martin has been a daily contributor to *File 770* for years, and I will sorely miss him.

Bruce Gillespie's tribute to Martin

In 2000, I joined Fictionmags, an email-only e-list (long before 'social media') that includes several hundred people who know a vast amount more about everything, especially science fiction and fantasy, than anybody else I know. One of the most interesting members over the years has been Martin Morse Wooster. He fitted in perfectly, constantly asking questions and offering bits of esoteric information — but he did have an eccentric way of stirring other members into action. He would ask us all, 'What did you think about — ?' Which was okay, except when he would ask about obscure 1960s pop performers, whose songs Martin had just heard on the radio. I of course could join in such a conversation, but many of the other members are even older than I am, so were scratching their heads. But this didn't really matter, because Martin would often give accurate answers to questions about the most obscure corners of the SF/fantasy universe. And he never lost his temper, although a few members of Fictionmags became a bit short with him.

During the last 20 years Martin has become one of my favourite regular correspondents. He liked to ask me questions about the odder aspects of Australian culture, news of which had never reached Silver Springs, Maryland. One time he asked me about the men's shed movement, which I thought Australia must have imported from America. Not so, it seems. And I could tell him very little about the average Australian men's shed, since to me a 'men's shed' is a room lined with

books and a couple of computers sitting on a paper-filled desk. Just before lockdowns made it impossible to send any publication to America, I found a book called *Men's Sheds*. It was a coffee-table book and would have cost a fortune to send to Martin.

I met Martin Morse Wooster only once, at either Aussiecon 2 (1985) or 3 (1999). He was tall and heavily built, and not easy to talk to (but then, neither am I). He gave the impression of being rather naïve about many subjects, but this turned out to have been a false-modesty kind of disguise. Above all, he wanted to know about everything in the world, and share information about a vast number of literary topics.

I had gained the impression that all his activity



was fannish. I discovered only after he died that he had been a working journalist from an early age, contributing to national and local magazines and newspapers as well as to amateur magazines. He had a huge library, and expected to live to a great age, because his parents had done so.

He attended a wide variety of conventions, not just SF cons. He was an expert on beers, and it was while walking along a road walking to a Beer

Festival that he was struck and killed.

Nobody had a bad word to say about him, which is odd, because his official political opinions were way off to the right of those of most people in Fictionmags or fanzine fandom. He was a congenial fellow enthusiast, and that's what mattered.

— **Bruce Gillespie**, 30 April 2023

Thomas W. Hazlett: Martin Morse Wooster's front row seat

[From *Reason* magazine, 21 December 2022]

One of the gustiest windfalls to land in my account is to have made a friend of writer, editor, and blue-collar raconteur Martin Morse Wooster. More exactly, Martin made friends. The initial meeting was memorable. Attending a conference, Wooster had prepared by reading the program and what the various attendees had written (which I, most likely, did not). Martin saw my name and decided we should be pals. When our encounter came, he lumbered to his knees, flipped his 6-foot-4-inch frame into position, and initiated devout waving-bellowing the 'We're not worthy' *Wayne's World* refrain.

I'd still be laughing, but for a hit-and-run driver who ended Martin's excellent adventure on 12 November, just days short of his 65th birthday.

Martin Morse Wooster, of Silver Spring, Maryland, was a proud graduate of Montgomery Blair High School and Beloit College who then went on to have a unique career in journalism. The man

presented an improbable combination: an out-sized physical presence paired with an encyclopaedic memory and sharp libertarian instincts, he exuded wonderment, humour, and a personality as soft as Miss Kitty's.

Martin devoured entire libraries as after-dinner mints, emerging ever more curious about what great work of history, politics, biography, economics, sports, or science fiction (pardon me, 'SF') to hoist next. He cherished baseball, exhibits, museums, stage plays, conventions, the science of beer making, free market capitalism, and the United States. He was bogged down neither by car payments nor dependents. He lived richly on a tidy budget, zipped about on public transport, viewed every parade, and devoured each spectacle. When he paid for a movie, he would always — his sister, Ann-Sargent Wooster, informs me — insist on sitting front row. This past October, when his Washington Nationals were eliminated from Major League Baseball's postseason, Martin was disappointed but was quick to note the cost-savings. 'In 2019 my barber, Ricardo,' Martin emailed me, 'could afford tickets to the first round of the playoffs. Shail, who owns the apartment building next to mine, could afford the second round. No one could afford World Series tickets.'

At the moment where he would meet with destiny, Martin was enjoying himself at the Ales Through the Ages confab in Williamsburg, Virginia, to 'explore ancient ales and indigenous beers of the past'. Martin had been bubbly to attend, despite the fact that his 'opportunity to have a pint from the past' had gone dry (doctor's orders). His thrill was to take the train, meet some buds, and drink in the post-COVID conviviality.

Martin, who edited 11 books and wrote three others, nailed plum assignments early. He was a contributing editor at *Harper's Magazine* under editor Lewis Lapham in the mid 1980s and then



an associate editor at the esteemed *The Wilson Quarterly*. A longtime friend, Diane Weinstein, waited for Martin at Union Station for a lunch date not long after Martin had graduated college. Although not a sports fan, she became engrossed in a touching baseball piece in *The Washington Post*. At article's end, she was surprised to find the author was her soon-to-arrive friend. He had not said a word of it.

Martin went on to write dozens of essays for the *Post*, as well as articles for *The Wall Street Journal*, *Esquire*, *Reader's Digest*, *Commentary*, *File 770*, the *Australian Financial Review*, and *Elle*. He was a star at *All About Beer*, whose editor dubbed him a 'Renaissance Man'.

But here's a secret: Martin saved his best for these pages. As a columnist and Washington editor, Martin wrote 75 *Reason* articles between 1984 and 2010. He explained how the Reagan administration was defeated by the 'education bureaucracy', how the 'smutstompers' fumbled and stumbled, and how Christopher Jencks analyzed homelessness. In his own treatment of the topic, Martin was not intimidated by the

fashion police. He noted that the famous street activist, Mitch Snyder, was the rage among 'Hollywood stars such as Whoopi Goldberg and Martin Sheen' but — after interviewing him — found that he 'looks more like an actor playing a homeless person than an actual bum'. Not only was Snyder lacking 'dirty hair or holes in his pants', Mitch was sporting 'a bright-red ski cap and brand new hiking boots'. The activist was a 'former adman' who could bring it. 'Whatever you do,' one friend wrote [Martin], 'don't talk to Mitch Snyder about Gandhi.'

On the epic fall of the Soviet bloc, Wooster wrote frequently. In a 1989 *Reason* column introduced by Irving Kristol's observation that 'In Washington, people don't read enough magazines', it was game on.

'This may be true in Washington,' noted Martin, 'but out here in Silver Spring, we read magazines by the truckload ... Once each day, the factory whistles blow, the police officers stop traffic, and the double-wide tractor trailers lumber chez Wooster with the day's reading matter.'

Martin Morse Wooster's last letter of comment to SFC

MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER

Silver Spring, Maryland 20907 USA

The locs in *SF Commentary* 110 were all about Covid during the rise of Omicron. Things have calmed down somewhat since this year. Chicon, this year's Worldcon, required proof of vaccination, although the committee did not explain how vaccines delivered in March and April 2021 mattered in September 2022. They required masks, but I only heard one complaint about my mask during the convention and I cheerfully spent many hours in the con suite chatting without anyone complaining. Balticon had similar rules, and again, I was cautioned once. The theatres still require masks but have stopped requiring proof of vaccination. The American Film Institute has dropped their mask mandate but still requires proof of vaccination, but I am not sure if this rule is still enforced. I went to a free screening of *A Place in the Sun* two weeks ago and the ticket-taker refused to look at my vaccination card. There are still outliers that haven't relaxed their rules: the Folklore Society of Greater Washington still requires KN95 masks and proof of boosters.

On the matter of international postage: I sent a magazine and a book to Australia in September

and they both made it to Sydney. I'm not sure if the postage situation is normal, but it is better.

The most memorable theatre mishap I've seen this year came during a performance of *Red Velvet*, a play by Lolita Chakrabarti that the Shakespeare Theatre performed this summer. The play is about Ira Aldridge, a pioneering Black Shakespearean actor who encountered a great deal of bigotry when he performed *Othello* in London in the 1830s. I'd give the play a B plus, with a great deal of insight into acting styles of the time. Kimberly Gilbert was called at short notice for a moderately large part replacing someone who had got Covid, and did a good job.

The high point, however, was that the play was on a rotating set and one of the scenes was in an arch-filled courtyard. As the set rotated the arches slowly buckled and fell. It was like watching the pillars fall when Samson crashed the temple. Nobody was hurt but the crash was very memorable.

You mention that your first encounters with sf were with radio serials that Ken Saunders wrote in the 1950s. But you don't give any details! I'd like to know more about what these serials were. Would they be worth listening to today?

[*brg* I don't have the details of G. K. Saunders' SF serials from the 1950s, and I doubt anybody else has either. The *ABC Children's Hour* was broadcast live-to-air, and there remain only a few minutes of sound fragments. Nobody except me seems to remember Saunders' serials, which covered a lot of territory. The SF serials were very exciting for me, but equally informative were the serials in which his family, fictionalised, travelled all over the world along with their father. Saunders sent his fictional family, the Marriners, time travelling as well as space travelling. I picked up more information from the *ABC Children's Hour* than I ever did in school, or perhaps more of it stuck. (All children's contributions were broadcast anonymously, with the names of Greek and Roman gods and historical figures given to each 'ship' (as in Jason's ships) — so from an early life I could pronounce correctly the names of vast numbers of mythic and historical figures.)*]

I agree with Irwin Hirsh that Colin Steele's longer reviews are better than his shorter ones. I like the range of books that Steele reviews. I read Simon Kuper every week in the *Financial Times*, but I've never seen a review of *Chums* until Steele's, and I'm not sure that the book has had an American edition. I also remember when the new Stephen Baxter and the new Ken MacLeod novels were events, but I do not believe these books were even reviewed in *Locus*. So if you keep having Steele's mix of reviews similar to the range in *SFC* 100, that would please me.

You mention that *The Age* has stopped publishing its regular Obituaries. Do you mean staff-written obituaries? *The Washington Post* has stopped running short obituaries of local people, although they are happy to run paid notices. The *Post* also eliminated its section for longer political opinion pieces (or what in my country are called 'thumb suckers') in favour of a restored 'Book World', which once again has interviews with authors. I think this is a fair trade.

Kim Huett's discussion about his British bus adventures reminds me of a bus I took to Wolf Trap, a performing arts park 20 miles outside Washington, in 2005. The bus driver decided to

practise his comedy routines on us. He explained just as the President had Air Force One when he needed an airplane and Marine One if he needed a helicopter, he was going to be Bus One in case the president ever wanted a bus. He also taught us 'I want to be an Airborne Ranger (Hoo-ah!)/I want to live a life of danger (Hoo-ah!)'. He also added extra crashing noises when he was leaving the crowded parking lot after the Boston Pops concert.

Seeing Colin Steele's list of newspaper sf reviewers in *SFC* 108 prompts me to discuss book reviews in the two newspapers I regularly read. James Lovegrove has been the sf book reviewer of the *Financial Times* for over a decade, and is competent. The paper occasionally has interviews with sf authors and artists; George R. R. Martin once took part in their 'Lunch with the FT' weekly interview and they once had a long profile of Shaun Tan. *The Washington Post* has Michael Dirda, who I cannot judge coolly because he is my friend. But I highly respect his range of knowledge and his regular roundups of books and zines of note (he even reviewed *Portable Storage!*). Their sf reviewer currently is Charlie Jane Anders, who does not review books I would find interesting. Before that, Silvia Moreno-Garcia and Lavie Tidhar had a joint review that looked like it was written in about 10 minutes. Elizabeth Hand is also a regular reviewer, and reviews sf and fantasy about half the time.

I'm glad Gillian Polack enjoyed herself at Flycon, but I don't think any online interchange would ever replace sitting in a room and talking to people in person. I decided early on that most of what was valuable about Zoom was the talking and I don't necessarily want the world looking in on my cluttered apartment, so I stuck to phoning in. I also found that calling my friends on weekends during the height of Covid helped me learn more about them. But all the bugs of Zoom and other things like it make me glad that I stuck with telephones to talk to people.

(8 November 2022)

[*brg* Amen, Martin, amen!*

Bruce Gillespie: Peter Ryan, supporter of the Nova Mob and the Melbourne Science Fiction Club

Peter Ryan's son let members of the Melbourne SF Club know that Peter passed away. Terrible news. I found it very difficult talking to Peter at the MSFC's 70th Birthday Party in 2022. We both found ourselves a bit hard of hearing in a crowded situation. I had hoped to catch up with him soon and take up our conversation where we left off in 2019. A wonderful man, enthusiastic about science fiction, one of the people I most enjoyed meeting at MSFC and the Nova Mob.

We did share one adventure — when the Club had

to move premises, I was handing boxes of books down the vertical ladder at the old Clubrooms in Brunswick to Peter; they were the last objects left in the loft. I saw a lot of the top of Peter's head that day.

Peter was the soul of quiet confidence in anything he did, but his last year or so was spent in isolation. His son had moved house, and like the rest of us Peter had no MSFC home to go to for many many months.

Murray MacLachlan remembers Peter Ryan (1945–2023)

[Murray's valedictory talk at Peter Ryan's funeral on 6 February 2023.]

I'm a former President of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club. I currently convene a science fiction literary discussion group called the Nova Mob, both of which Peter was a member of. Science fiction was one of Peter's great loves, among cricket, motorbikes, footy, and family.



Peter Ryan as I remember him. (Photo from the funeral site: Tobin Brothers Chapel, Moonee Ponds.)

I'm here to salute and acknowledge our friend Peter Ryan and to offer condolences to you — his family and friends — Katherine, Damien, Timothy, Kirsten, Evelyn, Judith, Jack, Felicity, Gloria, David, Angela, and everyone else here today.

We all know we've lost a good man here. Peter was a lovely man who brought out the best in people. We miss him.

I first met Peter two decades ago at the Melbourne Science Fiction Club. Peter showed a gentle good humour and a depth of knowledge about science fiction that guaranteed every conversation was interesting. He was always interesting. Peter not only knew his stuff, he knew the good stuff too, and what made it good. For decades he provided book reviews for the Club's magazine. English has three tenses, each with four aspects, and three cases. Peter, typically, was his own man. He wrote in a future imperfect tense, not commonly used and a challenge for an editor seeking a consistent 'house' voice throughout. (I was that editor.) I hope a collection of his criticism will be forthcoming.

I have since learned that prose was his business, in his role in the Communications Branch of the Meteorological Service.

At the MSFC Peter eventually took on a Committee role as the Club winkled him out of his decades-long relationship with Victoria's Cricket

Umpires Association, and by 2014 he was Secretary and Public Officer. Peter was key in the Club getting through a lean and demanding time. I believe he co-opted Katherine into production of the Club zine.

Peter kept a diary of every book he had read, a remarkable achievement and of likely historic interest to social history researchers. He used it one night for a talk on his favourite authors.

Peter was happy at the Nova Mob, sharing in discussions of the books he loved. We remember conversations of considerable acuity and with a wry half-smile. One of those conversations was a very pleasant discussion after a Nova Mob meeting on Robin Hood, during which Peter compared and contrasted the various film versions and concluded that the Alan Dwan version starring Douglas Fairbanks remained the definitive swash-buckling version.

I last saw Peter at the November 2022 meeting, which he attended even though his encroaching deafness caused him immense distress and frustration. There is a network of fans who appreciate greatly the arcane fantasy writers — de Camp, Vance, Davidson, Lafferty. These are writers the keen reader comes to, like discovering a fine wine,

and Peter loved them. To this list he would add Lem and Borges. Then the discussion could turn to the Trigan Empire, or the Carl Barks Scrooge McDuck.

Peter always seemed able to draw on a well of good humour in the face of adversities such as no longer being allowed to ride his motorbike, or dealing with health issues, flood insurance claims, or people who didn't want to play fair.

Peter, you expected people to act with goodwill but had the happy knack of doing it in a way where the people around you didn't feel forced to show our better nature, it was just what good people normally do. It's no surprise that you were surrounded by likeable people.

Farewell, Peter.

His death is a shock.

A note from Natalie MacLachlan

So sad. I remember when he joined the MSFC. I think I was Members Secretary. He sussed out the library, then joined because of the MSFC's library. A nice man.

Not fade away ... Broderick Smith

On 1 May 2023, I read on Facebook that **BRODERICK SMITH**, Australia's greatest rock-blues-country-folk singer, had died near the Victorian country town of Castlemaine at the age of 75. My sister Jeanette had attended one of his Castlemaine concerts only a few weeks earlier. More shocking than losing Brod Smith was the vast silence that greeted his death from mainstream media sources. Anybody in the Australian music industry, or any fan of the last 50 years of popular music, remembers the enormous power of his voice and personality as he led Australia's greatest rock group, the Dingoes. Not that my disc shelves hold many by the Dingoes. After the success of their first album in 1978, they tried to achieve success in USA. This was going to gain them notice as the support band for American rock-blues group Lynyrd Skynyrd. While on tour, the members of Skynyrd took a plane from one gig to another. The plane crashed, killing the two leaders of the group. The Dingoes had not boarded the same plane, but suddenly Lynyrd Skynyrd was no more and they had no way of touring. They did record two fine albums in USA, but their career

fell apart and so did the band. The members returned to Australia.

Broderick Smith as a solo performer then recorded two of the greatest Australian albums of the 1970s and 1980s, including *Broderick Smith's Big Combo*. David Pepperell, famous Australian rock journalist, remembers that the Combo drew the largest crowds of any band at the time.

However, Brod Smith tired of touring and the celebrity lifestyle, and from the late 1980s issued a string of magnificent, quietly brooding CDs that included rock, blues and folk elements. Fortunately for we Dingoes fans, he and the band re-formed a few years before the Covid lockdowns and conducted a Greatest Hits tour of the eastern states. The double CD of tracks taken from those concerts is one of my favourite albums of the last 30 years. I've never met Broderick Smith, but fans and friends reported him as a mesmerising figure, humorous but sometimes ferocious and eccentric, someone who refused to conduct his life in any way other than his own.

(Bruce Gillespie)

Marty Cantor 1935–2023

Bruce Gillespie: Thanks to Marty for my 2005 American trip



Marty Cantor, 2005. (Photo: Chaz Boston-Baden.)

It was Marty Cantor who made the original suggestion on Trufen to hold the Bring Bruce Bayside Fund to get me to San Francisco in 2005. Here's how I wrote about it in my trip report *American Kindness*.

At Corflu in 2004, Eric Lindsay and Jean Weber again bid to hold Corflu in Australia, in their home town of Airlie Beach, Queensland. On the Trufen email exchange list, Marty Cantor wrote on 30 March 2004: 'The problem for Bruce is, with Eric and Jean winning their Corflu bid, it will probably still be too expensive for Bruce to

get to Airlie Beach for a Corflu there. Now, winning DUFF could get Bruce to the US; however, he would be expected to go to the Worldcon ..., half a year away in time from when Corflu is usually held. What is needed for Bruce to get to Corflu — aside from Bruce suddenly coming into a windfall — is for a one-off fund to get him to the con. This would need many dedicated fans raising funds for this purpose.'

That was the message. I had one minute to accept or reject the offer. I accepted.

Arnie Katz from Las Vegas wrote: 'You can also count me among those who think the idea of a Special Fund to bring Bruce Gillespie to Corflu is a damn fine idea.' Robert Lichtman from California chipped in. I don't know how he did it, but he was able to do in Arnie and Joyce Katz to run the American end of the fund. They accepted the challenge, and called it the Bring Bruce Bayside Fund. Ted White made the first donation. Within a week, donations were pouring in and the whole idea was a goer. Now I really faced the possibility of an overseas trip.

It was Arnie and Joyce Katz who did all the initial organisation of the trip itself, and raised funds in the US, while Bill Wright raised several thousand dollars in Australia. Thanks to Robert Lichtman, everything worked out well when both Arnie and Joyce could not attend Corflu.

Marty was twelve years older than me, but had far more energy, as he took me around to his favourite museums in Los Angeles. He hated the idea of wasting a trip to LA on visiting Disneyland. I still have vivid memories of the places to which he took me, such as the Bradbury Building, the Huntington Museum, and the Tiny Town museum. He also showed me a genuine Los Angeles canyon where people lived in houses that perched on the sides of cliffs — it was where he grew up.

Mike Glycer: Marty Cantor (1935–2023)

Devoted fanzine fan and longtime LASFS member Marty Cantor died April 29 of cancer. He was 88.

Cantor started reading science fiction when he was 10 but did not find fandom until he was 40, joining the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society in May 1975.

Years before discovering fandom Cantor lived in the San Gabriel Valley in Sierra Madre Canyon. He helped save the wash — a natural channel for rain runoff — from being paved over by the Army Corps of Engineers, and was appointed to Sierra Madre's Downtown Youth Plan committee. I used to tell him the idea of a city where Marty Cantor helped run the government is awesome — of course, this is also the city where outdoor location shots for the Kevin McCarthy *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* were filmed.

As a brand new LASFSian in the Seventies Marty plunged into club life, writing for its weekly amateur press association, APA-L, eventually serving as its Official Collator. He later helped start a second local apa, LASFAPA, which he ran as official editor (or the title he preferred, 'Little Tin God'). Together with Mike Gunderloy he even briefly revived the club's legendary genzine *Shangri-L'Affaires* in 1980.

For many years Marty was married to Robbie Bourget (Cantor). As Marty told it, he arrived at Chicon IV, the 1982 Worldcon, 'as a 47-year-old, more-or-less confirmed bachelor and left in a lovely emotional turmoil, thoroughly in love'. A few weeks later he proposed and they wed in January 1983. No sooner had Robbie's name joined his on the masthead of their fanzine *Holier Than Thou* than they immediately scored three consecutive Best Fanzine Hugo nominations (1984–1986). They also were elected the Down Under Fan Fund delegates to Aussiecon II (1985). Each wrote a DUFF trip report, which they published in the format of a kind of Ace double — with Marty's *Duffbury Tales* on one side, and Robbie's *Tales of Duffbury* on the reverse, a single volume of over 100 pages.

Their marriage ended in divorce around 1998.

Originally, Marty was a tobacconist by trade. He had his own shop for a number of years, then later worked for another tobacco store owner. While that was a way to encounter Hollywood characters and gather colourful anecdotes, it never approached his bizarre experience in 1994 while working as the manager of a U-Haul facility — when he auctioned off an unclaimed locker, the winning bidder found several decomposing corpses inside. (Eventually the renter was tracked to Jakarta and arrested for murder.)

In later years he produced the genzine *No Award* (although I don't really believe he was opposed to the idea of winning one if offered).

On the conrunning side, he organised Lasfapacon, helped run Corflu 9, and chaired Corflu 34.

Late in life Marty continued to be one of LASFS' most active members, editing issues of the clubzine *De Profundis*. He was honoured with the club's Evans-Freehafer Award for service in 2016.

His remains will be cremated, says John Hertz, and there will be a memorial service.



(l. to r.): John Hertz; DUFF delegate Clare McDonald; Marty Cantor, LASFS Library 2016. (Photo: Mike Glycer.)

Denny Lien (1945–2023)

Mike Ward: Farewell to Denny

Fictionmags e-list, 16 April 2023:

I've just received a note from his brother-in-law that Denny Lien has passed on (16 April 2023):

'I am sad to say that Denny passed away at his home today under hospice care. A nurse was with him and he was comfortable. He had a fall last night and called hospice this morning. Page, his hospice nurse was with him. We had just arranged for 24 hr in-home care earlier today. His remains will go to the Cremation Society this afternoon. Please pass this on to his friends.'

Denny had hoped to hang around long enough to go to Minicon, and to see the Minnesota Spring. Karen and I got him to Minicon last week, but not the other.

Denny told me about FictionMags twenty years ago, and it's been part of my life ever since. His wife [Terry Garey] introduced me to the woman

who I am still married to, thirty years later. This is going to be a much less interesting world.

3 June 2023:

I was quite involved with putting this on, so my feelings are biased, but I think we honored Denny in appropriate fashion, with memories, jokes, artifacts, free books and magazines, a sing-along of the Marsupials song, and food and drink. The setting was the former street railway station at Como Park in St Paul, now a rentable public venue. When we arrived for setup, a small wedding party was taking pictures in front of the building.

I recorded video; will link when it's available. We counted eighty people: family, librarians from UMin, and friends/fans they knew. Terry's brother flew in from Tampa. It was hot, and the building AC labored. The PA refused to work, so



The celebration of the life of Denny Lien, 2 June 2023, St Paul, Minnesota. (Photo: Mike Ward.)

we presented loud. We ran an hour over, with talk, food, and hellos. Hail, Denny, and farewell.

You are also invited to access this folio of Denny Lien photos: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10163329560615620&type=3&mibextid=ncKXMA> This collection of photos was put together by David Dyer-Bennett for the memorial celebration on June 2. (Not screened due to equipment problems.)

Denny's online memorial board for further information as well as tributes, personal anecdotes, and photos: www.kudoboard.com/boards/xRExNJQo/dennylien

George Morgan:

A farewell to Denny from Fictionmags

Indeed a sad day here for us all at Fictionmags. Denny came on board at Fictionmags on 7 June 1999 as one of our earliest members and has always been our go-to resource for answers with his librarian expertise navigating internet highways and byways. His sense of humour was infectious and so often lightened life here on-list. Over the years he was always a supporter of our efforts at moderation and by example helped make this list the collegial gathering that it is. I've followed his posting over the last three years or so on the CaringBridge website where he shepherded Terry through her travels in and out of senior care



**Denny Lien at Minicon, one week before his death.
(Photo: Karen Schaffer.)**

facilities even as he was facing as it developed even harder perils for himself. Through it all he kept his sense of humour and dedication to her and to this list. He made the most of his time left in this life preparing his way out and, I suspect, left with a good measure of peace. May it continue for you, Denny, wherever you may now be.

(16 April 2023)

Bruce Gillespie:

Thanks, Denny, for your company

Mike Ward and Karen Schaffer live in California, but visited Denny Lien and his wife Terry Garey, who is in care, as often as possible over the last year.

Denny and I 'met' first through the joint membership in ANZAPA he had with Joyce Scrivner, his then partner, during the late seventies. In 1981 Joyce won DUFF to Australia, and Denny came too. After they had attended Adventon in Adelaide, we held a party in Melbourne to welcome them. As often happens at Melbourne fan parties, hardly anyone else was talking to me, but I had a wonderful long conversation with Denny. I wish I could remember what we talked about.

From then on I always sent him copies of my

fanzines, and he sent on to me copies of the many magazines he received, including *Rain Taxi*. They are what you might call 'literary fanzines' — offset, typeset, and printed, but a non-academic, non-formal layout, covering a huge number of topics, often including reviews of SF and fantasy books. Denny stopped sending his spare copies to me only when the magazines themselves changed to their digital versions. He sent me books as well, until it was too expensive to do so.

Throughout most of the last 20 years, our conversations have been via the Fictionmags email list. I'll remember Denny the way everybody else does — the one person who could zap out a wonderful funny crack to defuse some potentially

difficult disagreement among members, or clarify some bit of information that nobody else could track down. Like Dave Langford and Terry Pratchett, he was a patron saint of librarianship.

It's been very sad to read during the last three

years that Denny's wife Terry has had her own extreme health difficulties, followed by the decline in Denny's health. I'm glad to read that Terry has been left in good care, and most of Denny's vast book collection has been rescued.

Jeff Hamill:

Denny Lien: SF, terrible monster movies, and worse puns

You may have heard about this already, but last week Denny Lien died. (He had acute myeloid leukemia, diagnosed in January.)

I knew Denny from his days as a graduate student at the University of Arizona; when we met, he was 24 and I was 18, and we met, fittingly enough, at a used bookstore that sold old comics. We greatly enjoyed comics (especially *Wonder Wart-Hog*), SF, terrible monster movies, and worse puns. I started art school in Rhode Island at about the same time that he moved back to Minneapolis — 1972?? — so we rather lost track of each other, although I did visit him when I drove back to Tucson after I graduated in 1975. I would write to him once every 10 or 20 years, and he would reply; I moved around often after leaving school, so keeping track of me was tricky before the Internet age.

My next major contact with Denny was after seeing letters from both of us in *SFC* 80. Seeing his name in lights, so to speak, prompted me to write to him again, and Denny, always the polite one, replied. This resulted in a slightly-more-often-than-every-20-years exchanges of e-mails. Then I heard about his cancer diagnosis. The only good thing about that was that he didn't seem to last very long. (My father died from emphysema around the time Denny and I first met, and it had sucked the life out of him for what seemed to be years, so quick fatal illnesses in my view are a Good Thing. The quick part, of course.)



Denny Lien, early 1970s. (Photo: Jeff Hamill.)

Attached is a photo that I took of Denny in the early 1970s. It's the same one as I posted on the online memorial website dedicated to him (<https://www.kudoboard.com/boards/xRExNJQo/dennylie>).

Great guy, Denny. Smart and considerate and a sharp but never hurtful wit. One of the people you never forget.

(23 April 2023)

The Lienzine

LIENZINE

Intro by Karen Schaffer and Geri Sullivan

[Information made available by Moshe Feder.]

Denny Lien was Minneapolis fandom's gentle giant. He was a research librarian at the University

of Minnesota, and a mainstay of Minneapolis fandom back in the day. His height and impressive muttonchops could be intimidating on first encounter, but his quiet and calm demeanor was reassuring. He was also a prolific, erudite, and funny writer, with a fondness for parodies, puns, and imaginative flights of speculation. His letters

to newspapers range from stern factual corrections to delightful skewering of logical fallacies. He wrote columns and articles for science fiction fanzines and APAs (Amateur Press Associations). He exercised his skill for parody in musical lyrics, especially in the beloved local production of *Midwest Side Story*. He even enlivened the minutes from the local science fiction club Minn-StF during his times as secretary.

For this memorial fanzine, we tried to include a representative cross section of his prodigious output, though we undoubtedly missed many gems. Perhaps you, the reader, will discover more someday.

Co-editors Karen Schaffer and Geri Sullivan produced this 32-page sampler and distributed hard copies at the memorial held 2 June 2023 in St. Paul, Minnesota. The print run was very limited: Geri printed 73 copies of each page. At the time of this writing, it remains to be seen how many completed copies survive the collation process. We thank eFanzines.com, Fanac.org, and other fannish venues for making a linked PDF widely and readily available.

Letters of comment welcome. Please send to Karen <kschaffer@hidden-knowledge.com> and Geri <gfs@toad-hall.com>.

LienZine



Covert art: Jeanne Gomoll and Geri Sullivan.

If *LienZine* leaves you looking to make a donation in Denny's memory, we suggest DUFF or Habitat for Humanity. (Denny donated his large house in south Minneapolis to Habitat for Humanity. Well, technically he sold it to them: the agreed-on price was \$1.)

From *LienZine*: two pages from Denny's report on his trip to Australia in 1975.

MARSUPIAL FANDOM
by Denny Lien!

FIRST OF

Excerpt from Marsupial Fandom (part 1)
From issue 45

It may have been a dark and stormy night. Or day. Or maybe not. Mostly because I don't recall just when I first seriously thought about attending Auscon. I know it must have been before August 5, 1975, because on that day I was already on a plane headed out over the Pacific, and I suppose it must have been after the Labor Day weekend of 1975, because previous to that time the Auscon was only a gleam in the collective eye of various fans. But that still leaves a couple of years to narrow down, and I can't quite do it. Somewhere in that period I slipped from thinking about Auscon as a nice daydream to an outside possibility to a half-hearted plan worth the investment of a refundable deposit. Somewhere around spring of '75 I began to realize I might actually make the trip instead of simply being The First Fan on My Block to try to impress the others by talking about it. In early summer the Second Fan on My Block, Don Bailey, decided Australia seemed somewhat more interesting than his previously-selected vacation spot of Nebraska, and I suddenly had a traveling companion and a roommate and a commitment to throw the Minneapolis in '75 party.

Which explains what I was doing on August 9 on a plane headed out over the Pacific. (At least everyone assured me it was the Pacific; all we can look like to me.)

On the night of the 15th in '75 party:
This evening we didn't have to ask where the party was.

Quotation from the next day's issue (#46) of THE DAILY CON:

"Yesterday evening two fans from Minneapolis held the traditional 'Minneapolis in '75' bidding party. 'Minneapolis in '75' is a very strange thing and the only person who can explain it properly is somebody from that city - if you see a tall gentleman (sk) with

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LienZine

OR: Through Darkest AUSTRALIA
Without Gun But With Camera
(But without flashbulbs)
[...profusely illustrated by Reed Waller]

TWO PARTS

a mustache and the name tag which says Denny Lien (also sk) he is the person to ask about it. Anyhow...back to the party. When your humble editor arrived the room was packed. At one point it became even more overcrowded until there was hardly standing room and the bathroom was holding its own party at which at least seven people were attending. As other parties collapsed the 'Minneapolis in '75' party went from strength to strength and all the best people were seen there at one time or another. Late on in the evening it was impossible to move so everyone moved up to the State Suite where the party lasted well on into the early and/or late hours of the morning."

It perhaps remains to be noted that the affair was conducted in Minneapolis Federal Wear on the part of the hosts consisting mostly of propeller beanie and such items as a "Minneapolis Parking Squad" shirt and Minneapolis in '75 buttons; that the soft drinks as usual gave out first; and that the transfer to the 15th floor was courtesy of Robin Johnson and probably about one jump ahead of the hotel moving in to shut down the party altogether after various warnings to pull people in from the hall and keep the doors closed. I began to feel like calling room service for 12 hard-boiled eggs and one duck egg, but kept getting distracted by people and bottles instead.

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LienZine



Jennifer Bryce (1944–2023)

Tony Thomas to Jenny's family and friends, 28 April 2023

Jenny died peacefully yesterday afternoon. Jamie [her brother] and I were with her, and she had been surrounded by family and friends all the days she was in hospital, in the excellent care of the doctors, nurses and staff of the Cabrini Malvern Palliative Care unit, and before that at home.

This is the notice that will appear in *The Age*:

'BRYCE
Jennifer Louise
14/8/44–27/4/23

Dearly loved partner of Tony, big sister to Jamie & Barbara, much loved auntie of Johnny, Lucy, Toby, Miranda, Nick & Lyndal, great auntie to Baby N.

Jenny was always the creative spirit in our

family: musician, writer, educator, traveller, inspiration & friend. She will be missed by many.

A celebration of Jenny's life will be held on a date and venue to be confirmed.'

Thanks to all those many, many friends who sent messages of support and love during the weeks of her illness. I couldn't acknowledge everyone individually, but I passed on all these messages until her last days when Jenny couldn't hear them.

I'll contact you again when details are known for the celebration of Jenny's life.

Regards to all and thank you for your love

Tony



Irene Pagram: The world is a lesser place without Jenny Bryce

The world is a lesser place without Jenny Bryce. We worked together at Lincoln Institute, socialised often in those days and even house-sat her incredible place on Marine Parade a lifetime ago. She

reached out to be friends on Facebook, even though as she said she didn't post often. Such a warm compassionate human being. Condolences to her family and friends.

Jenny Bryce: fifty years of friendship

Bruce Gillespie

[Thanks to Tony Thomas for his corrections and additions to this article.]

This issue of *SFC* has been held up because I have spent too many weeks busily not writing my memories of Jenny Bryce. Elaine and I have nearly fifty years of memories of friendship with Jenny. Losing her is like a losing a great part of our own lives.

This is how Jenny described herself in 2019 on her blog *Littlemackereel*:

Jennifer Bryce is a first-time novelist and has previously written widely in the educational field including, *Engaging Secondary Students in Lifelong Learning* (first-author, ACER, 2003), a PhD thesis, and a range of academic journal articles. In fiction she has published a number of short stories such as 'Three Sisters-in-Law in a Mercedes', 21D, and 'Benjamin' in the recently released *The Sky Falls Down*, edited by Gina Mercer and Terry Whitebeach (Ginninderra Press, 2019). Her travel pieces, reviews, and stories have been published in *SF Commentary* and *The Wild Goose* and on her literary blog at jenniferbryce.net. Jennifer was a founding member of Elwood Writers (elwoodwriters.com) and co-founded her music ensemble Trio Con Brio some years ago. She continues to play the oboe in her spare time and for occasional gigs. She is now working on her second novel.

Or take a look at the blurb for her first novel, ***Lily Campbell's Secret***:

It's 1913, and Lily's comfortable middle-class Melbourne life is completely upended when she falls in love. As she sits in the hall of her private school, portraits of past headmistresses frowning at her, she realises the 'glaring, unalterable fact' that she is pregnant, the father a young stablehand called Bert. Her parents disown her: the first of many wrenching challenges she must face. She marries Bert and they have a few happy months together in rural Woodend, where their daughter is born. When the war

starts, Bert volunteers and Lily is thrown very much on her own resources. After Bert returns home, Lily has to face the most momentous decision of her life. Lily's role as mother, musician, wife and lover, leads her to confront issues of patriarchy, nationalism, love and the value of a human life.

Jenny did not have children, but she did want them. She was a musician, wife, and lover — and above all good friend to many. This is the Jenny Bryce most of her friends and family knew. But the most important quality that Jenny shared with her character Lily was resistance to taking paths that other people had chosen for her. She was in her own quiet, cheerful, unwavering way, a rebel. She led a much richer life than anybody might have expected.

In late 1976, many of us in Melbourne fandom had been shocked when we had heard that John Foyster had parted from Elizabeth Foyster, and had moved into his own flat in Richmond. They had married in the 1960s. John held a party to welcome his friends to his new pad. At that party I met a dazzling young lady, about my own age, not only good looking but with a large range of interests, especially in music.

That was Jennifer Bryce. In spite of my fundamental shyness, I asked her out. She suggested meeting at the University Cafe for lunch. She brought along her friend Virginia Duigan, who was (and is) married to film director Bruce Beresford. Jenny and Jinny had been friends since university. Together they were a bit intimidating, but delightful company. I've never met Jinny since, although Jenny has often mentioned her exploits. There was no hint at the end of lunch that this 'date' would lead to another.

I soon found out why. John Foyster had met Jenny when they were both working at the ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research). Within a few weeks it soon became clear that the reason for the change of John's marital status was

meeting Jenny.

Many years later, Jenny sent me a letter that I cannot find at the moment (but which I did publish) about the disapproval she felt from everybody in her family when she parted from her first husband and moved in with John. At the time only her grandfather understood her and approved of her action. Truly, Jenny as Lily Campbell.

After they got together, John and Jenny met fannish friends, including John Bangsund and Sally Yeoland, after work every Friday. Elaine and I, who had got together in March 1978, were not invited, so it was only some time during 1977 and early 1978 we began to see Jenny and John socially. We learned of Jenny's professional interest in music, and the fact that she played the oboe. Some years later she formed and performed with a trio called Trio Con Brio. Her specialty at ACER was music education.

Sometime during that period, Jenny and John took over a gigantic upstairs flat in an older building on Marine Parade in St Kilda. Its veranda looked out over Port Phillip Bay. Jenny made it a condition of moving to the flat was that her piano could come too. It was hauled up the side of the flat and brought in from the veranda.

In my memory, the first time Elaine and I visited the flat was for the one-day celebration of the tenth anniversary of ANZAPA (Australia and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association) in August 1978. John Bangsund was at the centre of the social circle. We met for the first time Leanne Frahm, who had travelled down from Queensland for the weekend, and Irwin Hirsh, who was then an impossibly young 17 years old. Elaine was meeting many of my fannish friends for the first time. I remember that she took part in a long chess game with Wynne Whiteford. Jenny played unflustered and genial host to all this fannish chaos, as she did so often in later years.

Life for Elaine and me was very busy at the end of the 1970s. After we were married in March 1979, we were both busy with editing work. We lived in Collingwood, in the middle of fannish activity north of the Yarra. John and Jenny lived in St Kilda, the centre of fannish activity south of the Yarra. People visited us often, and we visited many people who lived nearby. One night, Jenny and John came to dinner. The nearest I have ever seen Jenny going rigid with shock was when our black-and-white cat Apple Blossom leapt onto her lap — shedding white fur onto her gorgeous black dress. Our friendship survived that incident.

In 1980, Jenny and John moved from the Marine Parade flat after buying a house in Shake-



Tony and Jenny.

speare Grove, St Kilda. The street led down to the St Kilda bayside beach. On the other side of the road was Luna Park. The screams of the self-tortured riding the Scenic Railway could be heard on summer nights.

The house's floor area included an annexe out the back, John's office, and part of his library, so it was much larger than the flat. Its very large living room seemed designed for entertainments and meetings, so at the beginning of 1981 John decided to revive the Nova Mob after it had disappeared for two years. The first meetings attracted Melbourne's SF luminaries, as well as Nova Mob fannish diehards. We would meet at the Danube Restaurant in Acland Street, St Kilda. While drinking far too much wine, we would attempt to eat the gigantic serves of food delivered to our table by the equally gigantic waitress. 'Eat!' she would command us, pointing at one of the world's largest veal schnitzels. 'Eat!'

Some of the luminaries and fans were well tanked by the time they reached the meeting, leading to some extraordinary verbal battles between Damien Broderick and Lee Harding, for instance, and some very lively discussions of Weighty SF Topics. Russell and Jenny Blackford had joined the group, and Russell could perform the academic critical tango with the best of them. John Foyster began to tape all the meetings. I have no idea what happened to the cassettes. Damien

did manage to purloin the tape of one meeting and transcribe it. You can find most of the discussion in his novel *Transmitters*, with the only the names of the guilty changed.

It is my memory that Jenny would retreat from the meetings to some other part of the house, while remaining the perfect host when needed. Her piano had made a successful move from Marine Parade to Shakespeare Grove.

There were some famous parties at Shakespeare Grove, including the night that Harlan Ellison visited Melbourne in 1981. I became famous for not turning up at parties, so I missed that one. On another occasion, there was a party for a European fan who was visiting Melbourne as part of his GUFF trip. I cannot remember his name, but I do recall a wonderful night of nattering to Alan Sandercock and Sue Trowbridge, his first wife. Alan had moved from Adelaide to the USA a few years before, and that was his first visit back to Australia. He and Sue had been walking out on London Bridge, a sandstone structure, part of the Twelve Apostles, stretching out into the sea near Warrnambool on the south coast of Victoria. A few hours after they returned to shore the central span collapsed, leaving some tourists stranded.

1982! Ah! A golden age, although Elaine and I had our own difficulties earning a living and paying off a mortgage. One day in March I decided to go cold turkey on coffee. That was because I had been suffering regular headaches, and I was a coffee addict. The result? Within 24 hours I was vomiting badly, and was lucky enough to arrange an appointment with my GP, who gave me an injection to stop the vomiting. I was physically addicted to caffeine. (And still am.) I stayed off the coffee for a whole week, but the headaches remained. On the next Sunday morning I woke at 5 a.m. and decided to end the misery. That first cup of coffee was one of the most wonderful experiences of my life. My head cleared. I was alive again. About 9 o'clock in the morning we received a phone call. It was Jenny Bryce, inviting us to come down to St Kilda and join her, John, Lee Harding, and Irene Pagram for bagels and coffee. We arrived as soon as possible, and enjoyed one of the most delightful Sundays of our life — sitting on the veranda in the sun, drinking coffee, and nattering and eating many good things.

In November of that year, Jenny and John had a bright idea. Would we like to join them for dinner at the Danube, then toddle off to the Bridport Cinema in Middle Park to watch Ingmar Bergman's film of *The Magic Flute*? Er ... yes, okay ... but we didn't know much about opera. No matter, it seemed. For those readers who have

seen this most delicious of all musical or operatic films, you can guess our wonderment at watching it for the first time. What I had not known is that *The Magic Flute* is a *singspiel* (a 'sing-and-talk') rather than an opera. What always puts me off operas are the recitatives — the bits between the arias where the characters sing-natter to each other. None of that in *The Magic Flute*: just one magnificent aria after another with bits of spoken dialogue in between. This was one of the most transformative experiences of our lives, because it began a period of catching up with some famous operas on film, either at the cinema (*La Traviata* and *Don Giovanni*) or on TV (during a period when the ABC still broadcast operas on Sunday afternoons).

After a year of holding Nova Mob meetings at Shakespeare Grove, Jenny and John politely asked us if we could hold our meetings elsewhere. The Blackfords had moved into a large house in Albert Park, but I found it difficult to visit there because I relied on public transport. If we joined the others at the Danube before the meeting, I had to find somebody who could take me to the meetings. Meetings during 1982 and 1983 took place all over inner Melbourne, including the house in which Damien Broderick and Diane Hawthorn were living Brunswick.

Why was Shakespeare Grove no longer available? As she has often done since, Jenny confided in us and few other people. She and John very much wanted a family, but Jenny suffered from three miscarriages and an ectopic pregnancy. In 1984 their baby James was born at 26 weeks. Jenny and John put all their care and love into supporting their son, but he lived only to one year and four months.

When Jenny later wrote about the loss of James, both in articles and in a story called 'Benjamin', we could see that it was one of the most anguished periods of her life. However, whenever we met her, her cheerfulness was always there. Her cheerfulness was always creative as well as reassuring to her friends.

I still don't know how Jenny's generosity of spirit survived 1987. I offer nothing more than the following facts. At the beginning of 1987, John Foyster announced that he had taken an education job in Adelaide and had asked Jenny not to follow him. Jenny stayed in the house in Shakespeare Grove, and John moved his vast collection interstate. At the same time, Yvonne Rousseau, another of our best friends, told us that John had asked her to move to Adelaide to be with him. This did not happen immediately, as Yvonne's daughter



Jenny reading her work. (Photo: Barry Lee Thompson.)

Vida was in school in Melbourne. John and Yvonne were obviously a couple at the SF convention held in St Kilda in August 1987. Yvonne moved to Adelaide at the end of that year, and she and John bought a house that was as large as the one in St Kilda.

In 1988, Elaine and I visited Jenny. She seemed as cheerful as ever. She had converted the room where John had kept his collection into a music room. It was now an empty room with walls of stained golden wood, with the piano in the middle. The acoustics were magnificent.

What happened then? And when? As I remember, Jenny became dissatisfied with working at ACER. She wanted a complete change of direction. She let half the St Kilda house to John Foyster's brother Graeme. I've never been able to natter to Graeme, but Jenny did say that he was a very companionable tenant. She left her job at ACER.

Somewhen in the very early 1990s, Jenny and Graeme became a couple, but never in the traditional sense, although they clearly loved each other. Graeme was a gay man and continued having a series of gay relationships before and during all the time he was with Jenny, which she was fully aware of. Many of Graeme's partners became and remained her friends. Jenny and Graeme first moved together to Bendigo and operated antique businesses in a number of locations, including markets, and lastly out of the front room their house in Golden Square, a suburb of Bendigo. Then in the 90s they sold the Bendigo

house and bought the one in Woodend. There was never a shop in Woodend, but they continued to sell antiques from the house to a small extent, and more through markets. None of these shops ever made much money. It was when they were in Bendigo that Jenny took up teaching again for a couple of years in a distant town to which she had to commute daily by car. Once they moved to Woodend this commute was impossible, and she again started working for ACER.

Graeme had contracted AIDS somewhere during this time and became gradually sicker over years. Elaine and I were invited to his wedding to Jenny and the reception, a very happy event under the trees at the house at Woodend. By the time of his wedding to Jenny Graeme was using a walker, but by mid 1997, when Myfanwy and Tony looked after him while Jenny was overseas for work, he was confined to a wheelchair and greatly incapacitated. He died in October.

Despite this melancholy blow, Jenny stayed at Woodend, playing music, writing, and organising her large garden. Elaine and I attended some wonderful garden parties there. At these parties we met many people we hadn't seen for years, including Tony Thomas and his wife Myfanwy (who was John Foyster's sister), and their (by now grown-up) children Lyndal and Nick. Tony also introduced me to his friend Evan Jones, the well-



Photo: Lyndal Thomas.



known Melbourne academic and poet. Myfanwy was a music teacher, and Tony was about to retire from his public service job. He planned to read through his vast collection of books. He became a reliable guide to me about what to look for when browsing the bookshops of Melbourne.

After Jenny went back to work at ACER in Melbourne to work as an educational researcher, she became busier each year. The organisation began to send her to overseas countries to help establish teacher education centres. The arrival of the internet in the late nineties enabled her to set up her own weblog. She began to write about these expeditions, including many photographs, and sent to me the articles and photos for republication in my magazines. During the last 20 years she had also been writing about her Favourite Books, Concerts, Films, and Theatre Events on her blog, and she began sending her Favourites for the Year to me. Her writing style was impeccable, and her observations of people and places amusing and precise. She usually left herself out of her photos, and concentrated on buildings and landscapes.

She had to commute by country train from Woodend every day. She and a group of commuters set up their own group in facing seats and each brought contributions to the breakfast club. However, commuting on a country train is not only

tiring in itself, but country trains running on single-track lines are often delayed at intermediate stations to allow trains to pass the other way. Jenny decided to move back to town.

Elaine and I were surprised and pleased to discover that she had bought an upstairs flat in Elwood. The flat was in a quiet street with busy Brighton Road at one end and at the other end a short walk to the centre of St Kilda. Jenny had found a quiet and welcoming refuge for writing and playing and listening to music, a place for welcoming visitors who loved books and music and good cheer.

I remember best the small party she gave when Merv Barrett and Janet Horncy visited from New Zealand about 15 years ago. Merv was a famous NZ fan who lived in Melbourne during the late 1960s (the ASFR years), but had moved to England just before I joined Melbourne fandom. He met and married Janet, and they returned to their home country. I remember that Tony Thomas was at the gathering, and he and Merv discovered a mutual interest in community broadcasting. Tony had already begun his Tuesday night program on radio 3MBS, 'Contemporary Visions', which features music from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

In May 2008, Myfanwy Thomas died. She had the same quality of ironic, high-tensile cheerfulness that Jenny had, a cheerfulness based on the premise that one lived one's life as best one could no matter what happened. One day she told Elaine that she had mentioned to her GP that she was feeling a bit tired. Alerted, the GP ordered all the tests, and discovered that Myfanwy was suffering from bowel cancer. During her final months she was supported totally by Tony, Lyndal, and Nick. After she died, life for her family and her friends must have felt rather empty.

From then on we saw Tony every now and again. For a few years he was in a relationship with a lady called Eva, who was very involved in the local music scene around Melbourne. She and Tony split up after a trip they took overseas.

Only Tony could tell you about the process of getting together with Jenny in late 2015. I guess that it had something to do with them attending many of the same concerts. When Jenny rang to tell us, the news struck us as both surprising and absolutely correct. We felt that it was a perfect meeting of paths each had been taking.

She and Tony revived the Bagels and Coffee Sunday Morning, their own special St Kilda tradition. (These were held until Covid lockdowns hit Melbourne in March 2020.)

Tony moved from Ferntree Gully into Jenny's flat in Elwood, and much later began to move his book collection to yet another flat in Elwood. Jenny's career gathered strength, to the extent that ACER asked her to keep working for some years after the usual retirement age. When she retired, she finally could finish the novel she had wanted to write for many years. She co-founded the Elwood Writers, which met every second Tuesday, usually at her flat. Eventually it became a group of four ambitious writers who developed their projects during long discussions every fortnight, and in between by email. They published an anthology of their work, *Every Second Tuesday*, which contained Jenny's 'Benjamin'. It gives a powerful insight, using the medium of the short story, into the saga of the brief life of James nearly thirty years earlier.

Jenny did her best to persuade a major publisher to take on her novel, *Lily Campbell's Secret*. She was given the usual runaround. She was reassured that yes, the publisher liked it, but would Jenny please do this to it? And this? And this? ... Over a year later, she decided to publish it herself. David Grigg, long-time Melbourne fan, fiction writer, and computer programmer, also recently retired, had set up Rightwords Enterprises in order to publish books for both online and paper audiences. He designed a beautiful book, available as a Print on Demand publication from some bookshops or on Amazon. Many of Jenny's friends and colleagues turned up to Readings Bookshop for the launch in 2019, and later most of us enjoyed a wonderful dinner in Carlton.

It's hard to list all the enjoyments of meeting up with Jenny and Tony since 2015:

- Bagels for Breakfast on Sundays — and much discussion about books and music and everything else.
- The most wonderful New Year's Eve party I've ever attended. Mutual friends I had not seen for some time as well as new friends. On a perfect January night, after the party ended a group of us found ourselves wandering down Brighton Road looking for a tram to get home. No sign of a tram, so I gave up and finally caught a train at nearby Balaclava Station. I arrived at Flinders Street station about 3 a.m., to find what seemed like the whole population of Melbourne in mid-celebration.
- Wonderful restaurant meals for birthdays for both Jenny and Tony. And endless talk about the good things of life.
- The enjoyment of catching up with Jenny and

Tony at monthly Nova Mob meetings before the Covid lockdowns of 2020. The first Nova Mob meeting had taken place at Tony and Myfanwy's flat in 1970. Jenny had hosted Nova Mob meetings in 1981 at Shakespeare Grove. Every good thing comes around again.

And then ...

Tony reminds me that Jenny had been treated for breast cancer in the late 1990s, and had continued working and commuting to Melbourne, undergoing chemotherapy and surgery, which were successful. Although Elaine and I had had this in the backs of our minds, it was still a great shock when we learned that Jenny had had a bile duct blockage in early 2021, which turned out to be caused by pancreatic cancer. She had a major Whipple operation which removed or partly removed a number of internal organs, including part of the pancreas, and which was successful in that cancer could no longer be detected. She then went on a series of drug trials intended to prevent recurrence, and this continued to the end of 2022 when another blockage occurred, again operated on successfully. She came out of hospital and continued on the drug trials and was able to go to the Adelaide Festival in late February. Symptoms were progressing, however, and Tony tells me that she could no longer eat normal meals by this time. She was back in hospital and then on palliative care at home soon after her return from Adelaide.

Nevertheless, Jenny felt she had enough time to say goodbye to all her family and friends. She organised a gathering to be held on 23 April at the Linden Gallery (the magnificent old house and gardens in St Kilda where the memorial gathering for John Foyster was held 20 years earlier), but a few days before the event, Tony emailed everybody to say that Jenny had returned to hospital and would not be able to attend. He had to cancel the event. On 27 April, only a few days later, Jenny left us.

I hope I've given some idea of the inspirational influence that Jenny had on all who met and knew her. She and Tony became two of my favourite writers for my magazines. In recent years both of them reported on the Booker Prize nominations lists and winners. For about ten years Jenny has sent me her accounts of her Favourites for the Year. Probably the last thing she wrote before she went into hospital was her list of Favourite Books for 2022. Here is that article.

— **Bruce Gillespie**, 4 June 2023

Jennifer Bryce

Best ten books of 2022

In 2022, the 34 books I read for pleasure were (in this order):

- Pat Barker: *The Women of Troy*
- Richard Powers: *Bewilderment*
- George Saunders: *A Swim in a Pond in the Rain*
- Diana Reid: *Love & Virtue*
- Lucy Treloar: *Wolfe Island*
- Lily Brett: *Old Seems to be Other People*
- Tim Reeves: *The Death of Dr Duncan*
- Clem Bastow: *Late Bloomer*
- Emily Bitto: *Wild Abandon*
- Toni Jordan: *Dinner with the Schnabels*
- Kelly Rimmer: *The Warsaw Orphan*
- Kate Thompson: *The Little Wartime Library*
- Hannah Kent: *Devotion*
- David Williamson: *Home Truths: A Memoir*
- Sulari Gentill: *The Woman in the Library*
- John Stuart Roberts: *Siegfried Sassoon*
- Kingsley Amis: *The Green Man*
- Claire Keegan: *Small Things Like These*
- Graeme Macrae Burnet: *Case Study*
- Elizabeth Strout: *Oh William!*
- Sian Prior: *Childless: A Story of Freedom and Longing*
- Leila Mottley: *Nightcrawling*
- Colm Tóibín: *The Magician*
- Sophie Cunningham: *This Devastating Fever*
- Alan Garner: *Treacle Walker*
- Percival Everett: *Trees*
- Nino Strachey: *Young Bloomsbury*
- Shehan Karunatilaka: *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida*
- Ceridwen Dovey: *Life After Truth*
- Stephen Downes: *The Hands of Pianists*
- Ian McEwan: *Lessons*
- Amy Witting: *After Cynthia*
- Jessica Au: *Cold Enough for Snow*

I have forced myself to choose the ten best of these books, although on another occasion, my choice might be a bit different. The top five would definitely feature.

1. Colm Tóibín: THE MAGICIAN

I am a bit surprised that this book is described as a novel. It is an intimate biography of the Nobel Prize-winning writer Thomas Mann. By using fiction, Tóibín can bring the writing to life with conversations and get right inside Mann's thinking by writing the book from Mann's point of view. This certainly brings the book to life. It seems to have been painstakingly researched.

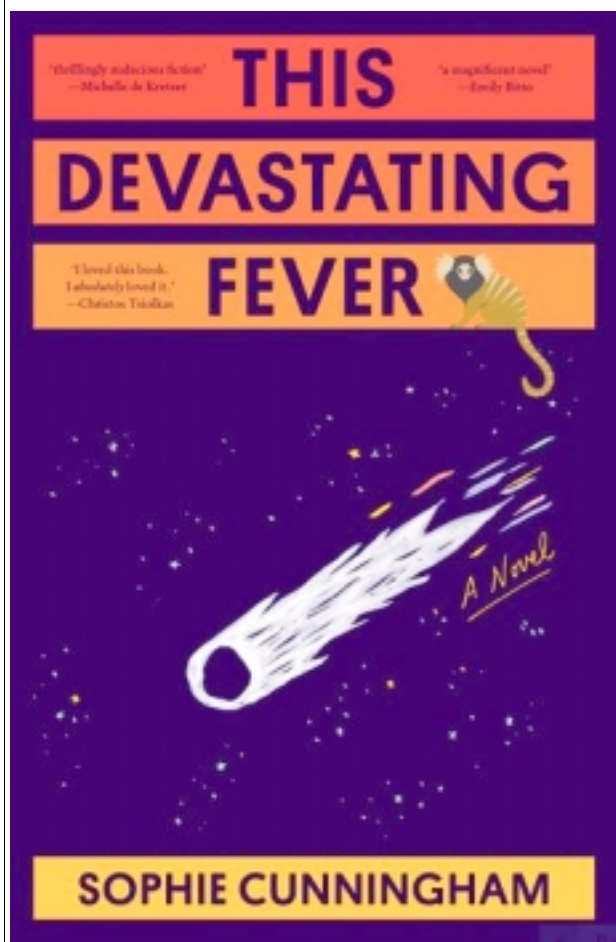
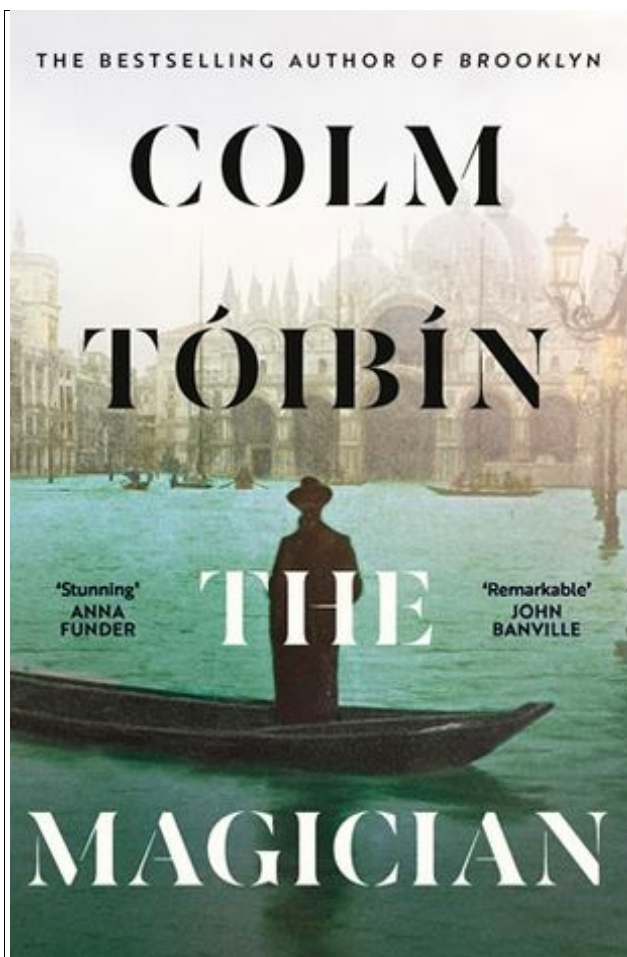
We are taken through the writing of Mann's well-known novels, starting with *Buddenbrooks*. Lying on the beach in Venice, Mann surreptitiously lusts after a young man prior to writing *Death in Venice*. Because of the fictional approach,

there can be many times when Mann is quietly but surreptitiously attracted to young men. But he never has an affair with a young man.

I had not been aware of Mann's very comfortable upper-class existence, even when he had to flee Germany with the rise of Hitler — his wife Katia was (non-practising) Jewish and Mann's views on most topics would not have been tolerated there.

The book ends with Mann's return to Germany as an elderly man. We know that he will die soon. He has reached the age of eighty. We finally see him in Lübeck, town of his childhood, recalling a story his mother used to tell of Bach meeting Buxtehude.

I found the whole book very readable and felt that Tóibín had been faithful to Mann — although, of course, we will never know for sure.



2. Sophie Cunningham: THIS DEVASTATING FEVER

‘This devastating fever’ was, I learned, Leonard Woolf’s term for sex. I was drawn to this book partly because I know Sophie and have taken one of her courses, but mainly because of the unusual approach. Described as a novel, yet a kind of biography of Leonard Woolf, with the intriguing placement of the author (of Leonard’s biography) as a character in the novel. Alice Fox has been struggling to write a novel about Leonard Woolf for years — not about Virginia, the writer. (It did take Sophie 16 years to write this book.) Interesting parallels are drawn between Leonard’s time and the present day — two world wars, particularly the new world ushered in by the First, the Spanish flu, and Twin Towers and the COVID pandemic.

Leonard is treated with understanding: Leonard the Empire’s civil servant in Ceylon, Leonard the caring husband — particularly with the huge regret of having told Virginia the story of a boy in Ceylon who filled his pockets with stones to drown (thus maybe giving Virginia that idea as a means of ending her life) and Leonard the executive and manager of his wife’s legacy.

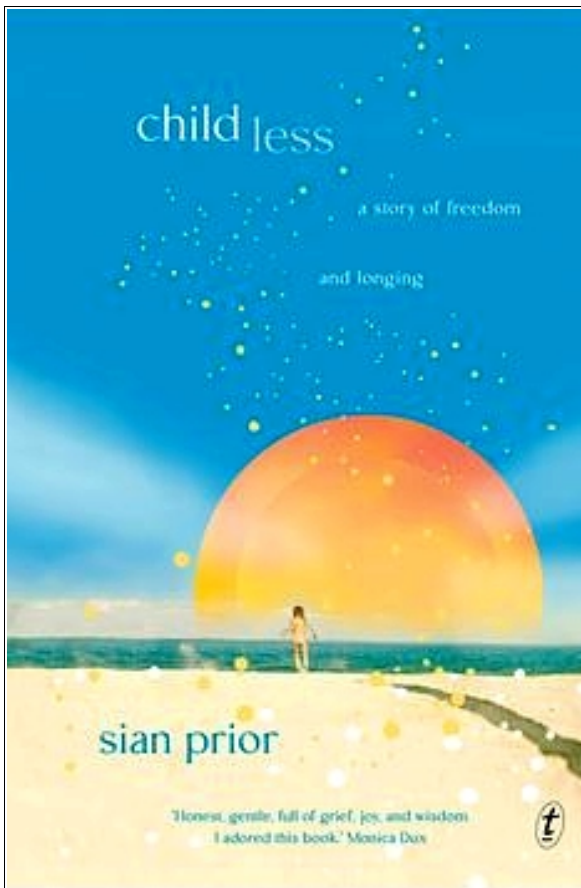
There is even a taste of what we might call magical realism with an ‘Imaginary Leonard’ who appears and has conversations with Alice, the author. Virginia has to be there too, but is definitely not the main character — the ghostly Virginia mainly appears as a skeleton.

This is a most extraordinary book — ghosts and humour (I love the page that lists who fucked whom in the Bloomsbury set) and a lot of things I didn’t know about Leonard Woolf — a clever melding of fiction, fact, and a kind of fantasy.

3. Sian Prior: CHILDLESS: A STORY OF FREEDOM AND LONGING

I was attracted to Sian Prior’s memoir for two main reasons. My experience is a little different from hers (Does anyone have exactly the same experience?), but, like Sian, I have no living children. Secondly, I learned oboe from Sian’s mother, Margot, not long after the tragic time when Sian’s father drowned rescuing two young people in the surf.

Like so many of us, Sian assumed she would have children one day. Her descriptions of her relationships with other people’s children suggest she would have been a wonderful mother. She



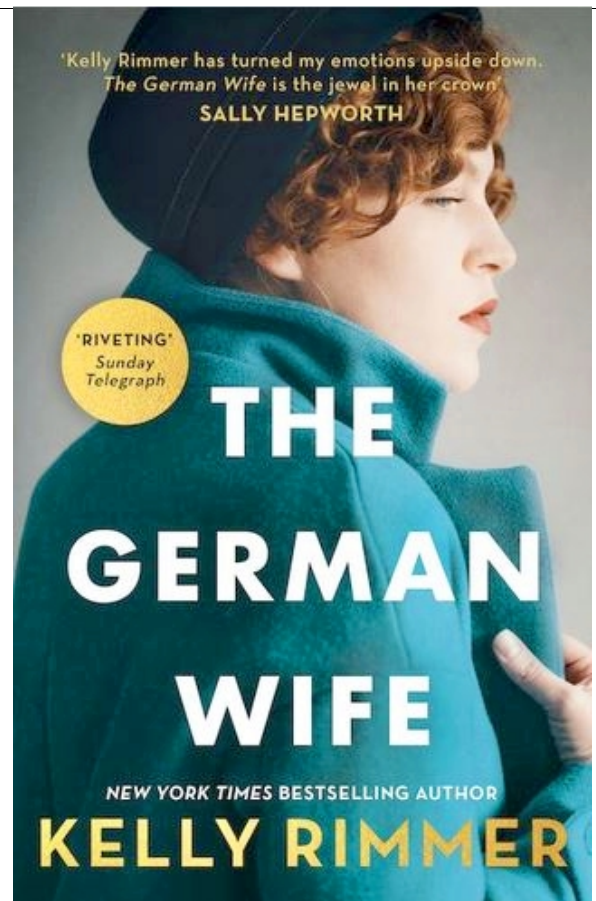
questioned her desire for motherhood in a world we are destroying through climate change — but her drive to have children eclipsed her perhaps more rational beliefs.

Remarkably, this is not a book of anger. And it is not a book of asking, why me? Sian investigated every possibility. She weathered the heartbreak of miscarriages of babies conceived with her loving partner, and later, stoically, perhaps, she undertook IVF solo when her new partner had a large family of children already and didn't want to produce any more.

Sian has a special affinity with the sea. Surely it brings her closer to her father. Maybe now that there is no hope of becoming a mother, life has become bittersweet. At the end of the book, we leave her in the sea catching the waves: 'I catch wave after wave, tasting my fifty years there in the sea. Clean, neutral, bittersweet.'

4. Kelly Rimmer: THE GERMAN WIFE

Rimmer has developed a character, Jürgen Rhodes, who in some ways resembles Wernher von Braun, the engineer who developed rockets for the Nazis, then, at the end of World War II surrendered to US troops and worked on the US space program,



heading the team that launched America's first satellite, *Explorer I*, in 1958. But Rimmer's story of von Braun's wife and family life is fiction. By using this device, Rimmer can draw us into the situation that may have been faced by Nazi families and can show the degree to which they may have been compelled to carry out the instructions of the Führer.

I found this book a compelling read. The heading of each short chapter outlines which character's point-of-view we will have, the year and the place. We move from Berlin in 1930 through to Huntsville Alabama 1951. We learn essential background details of the characters: the 1930s Dustbowl experience of Lizzie and Henry who will become key characters in the Huntsville population that initially detests the Germans who have come to work in their town, particularly Jürgen and Sofie because rumour has it that Jürgen was a member of the SS. Henry does service in World War II and sees evidence of the Nazi atrocities — his experience summed up by the US authorities of the time as 'combat fatigue'.

Does everything end too happily? Maybe more should be made of the terrible memories that will haunt Jürgen and Sofie all of their lives. Is that sufficient punishment for putting self and family first — going against what one really believes to be right?

Lessons Ian McEwan



Kelly Rimmer's book encouraged me to stop and contemplate what it must have been like trapped under the Nazi regime and forced to act against one's beliefs. I don't think that my views have changed, but I appreciated being dropped into the lives of Jürgen and Sofie and being put in a position where I had to try to take stock of just what that experience was like.

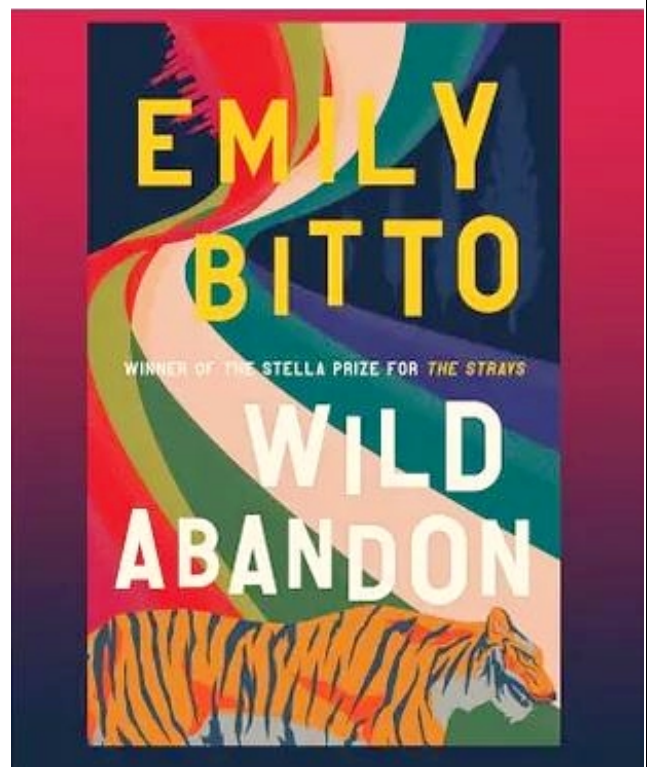
5. Ian McEwan: LESSONS

Ian McEwan has admitted in an interview that *Lessons*, his seventeenth novel, is 'indulgently long'. What is it about? I can't really answer that question. A 'baby boomer' man drifts through life — all the significant things that happen: the Suez Crisis, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the ending of the 'cold war'. Is this man a drifter because of the startling experience he had as an adolescent with his piano teacher, causing him to arrive at her doorstep 'twitchy with eroticised terror'? When I read about this adolescent experience at the beginning of the novel I thought it a vivid fantasy — it couldn't really happen. But I was wrong. It did happen to Roland Baines. Did it mark and shape the rest of his life? According to a lover, much later in life, it 'rewired' his brain. It clearly had an effect, but nothing like the dramatic effect

I would have expected. Roland Baines is an ordinary 'baby boomer' man — a not very successful poet. Through circumstance, he is a wonderful father to his son, for whom he is the sole parent from when Lawrence is about seven months old. This is because Roland's wife suddenly and, seemingly inexplicably, leaves. In her note she says, mysteriously, 'I've been living the wrong life'. I did not forgive her, leaving her little son in order to become a writer — even though she became a very good writer. There are countless excellent writers who do not totally sever connections with their children. After years of loneliness, Roland does find happiness although, because of the death of the woman he comes to love, it is fairly short-lived.

6. Emily Bitto: WILD ABANDON

Away from the constraints of home (a remote Australian country town), Will can experiment with different ways of being, and at first he throws himself into the New York art scene — that is, the art scene available to him through a friend of his older brother, who has lived in New York for a few years. There is a brief time of nihilistic hedonism — a few beers for breakfast is nothing; he is constantly drunk and high. Bitto has said that she wanted this writing to mirror excess and she seems to have achieved this admirably. The people Will meets in the New York art scene are desperately trying to prove themselves — the only way to escape is to get high. Fortunately, before he



becomes totally unaccountable for his actions, Will decides to hire a car and set off on the inevitable road trip.

He ends up in Littleproud, Ohio, where a girl he knew at school (absolutely no romantic interest) now lives with the husband, JT, she met on line and she's about to have a baby: a domestic scene very different from Will's experience of New York.

Will badly needs to earn some money, but he doesn't have a Green Card. Through JT Will meets Wayne, who seems to be modelled on the Vietnam Vet Terry Thompson. Wayne needs help with feeding his exotic animals. Initially Will is scared of many of the animals — lions, tigers, bears — but he loves some of the baby cubs who are still being bottle-fed.

People who know the story of the 2011 Zanesville massacre can probably anticipate what will happen in the story. It came as a shock to me. Reports of escaped animals and then, Wayne's dead body found. But the horror above everything else is the fate of those exotic animals innocently foraging outside the fence because Wayne had opened their cages. Those animals were used to kind treatment from humans and wouldn't attack unless provoked. But a large proportion of them were slaughtered.

Will returns to Melbourne and, without using cliché, Bitto describes how life goes on, the world keeps revolving. And then there is a coda, where we see Wayne years before in Vietnam — one of the many traumatic experiences he had and the solace he found in feeding a little monkey.

7. Richard Powers: BEWILDERMENT

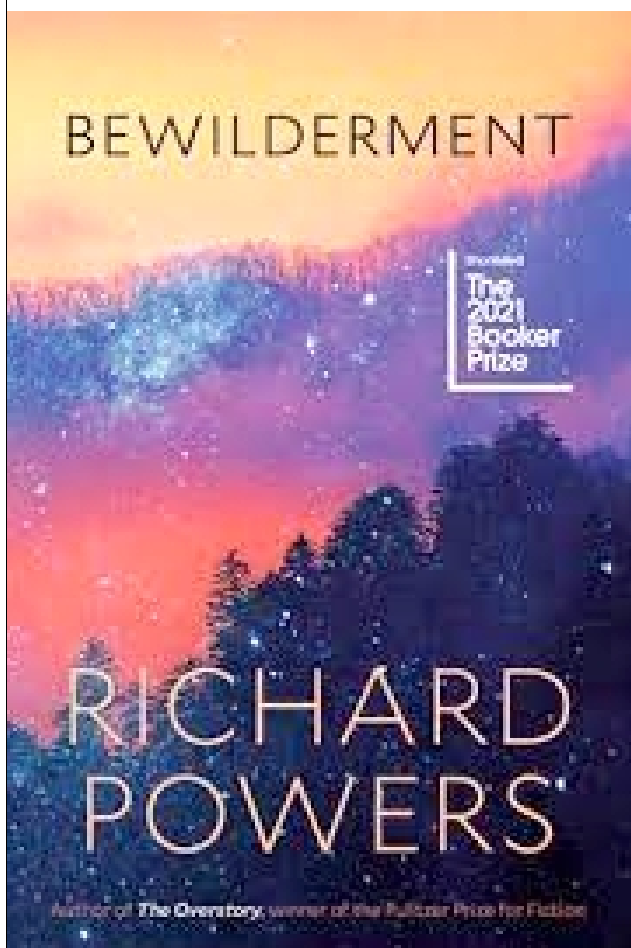
This book describes an intense father-and-son relationship — they are still both grieving the death of their wife/mother two years ago. The son, Robin, is described as 'neurodivergent' and his school sees him as potentially 'on the spectrum', which Theo, his astrobiologist father, points out, everyone is on.

The book is set in the near future; it might be a second term of Trump. Ultimately things get bad at Robin's school and to avoid having him put on medication, Theo decides to home school him. Through university connections (particularly those of his late wife) Theo involves Robin in a project that uses Decoded Neurofeedback (DecNef) — through neural imaging participants can 'approximate' the neural structures of other people's brains. In this case, Robin's mother had participated before her death, so Robin learns some of the structures of his dead mother's brain. His behaviour improves.

Robin is often obsessed with projects to save endangered animals — he spends hours meticulously drawing them. In a naïve nine-year-old way, he protests about them outside of Congress, when his father has to go to Washington to deliver a paper on his scientific work. Then the funding for the DecNef project is cut. Robin's behaviour starts to regress. In desperation, Theo takes Robin on a holiday to the Smoky Mountains, where they had spent a beautiful time around Robin's ninth birthday. But they can't stay in the mountains observing wildlife for ever. Hauntingly sadly, Robin's determination to follow his mother's example provides a solution.

8. Claire Keegan: SMALL THINGS LIKE THESE

This novella was on the 2022 Booker shortlist. Until 1996, the Catholic Church and the Irish government financed Magdalene Laundries, where young women were sent if they were destitute, particularly if they became pregnant out of wedlock. They were hidden from the rest of the community. Records of these institutions have



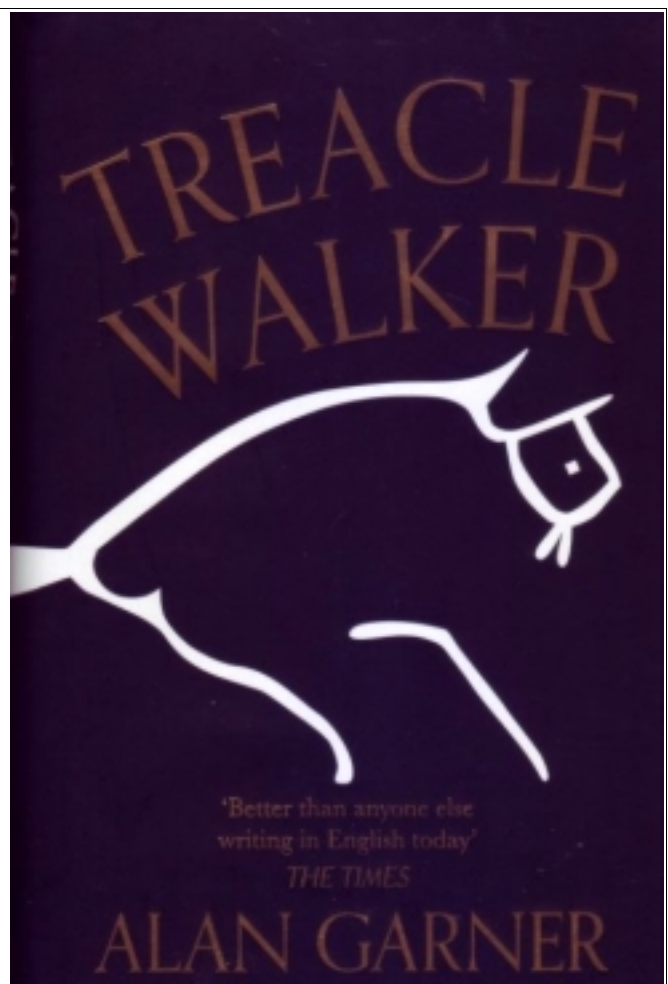


been, conveniently, lost, but according to Keegan as many as 30,000 young women may have been locked away in these places — never to have the hope of living a fulfilling life — always made to feel ashamed of their existence.

Furlong (now almost 50) had been born out of wedlock when his mother was sixteen — had his mother not been taken in by a wealthy Protestant woman, she would most likely have been consigned to one of these laundries and Furlong might not even have survived.

Furlong is leading what seems a good and worthy life. There is enough money to get by — from his coal business — he doesn't drink excessively, and he has a good capable wife and five daughters who are all doing well.

What will go wrong? I wondered. Will he take to drink, or fall for a younger woman? No — although those possibilities are present. One day, near Christmas 1985, when delivering coal to the local convent, Furlong comes across a young girl locked in the coal house. When he hands her to the nun in charge, there is pretence at treating her well — poor girl, she needs breakfast, etc She said to Furlong that she wanted to see her baby and perhaps feed him one more time (he is 14 weeks



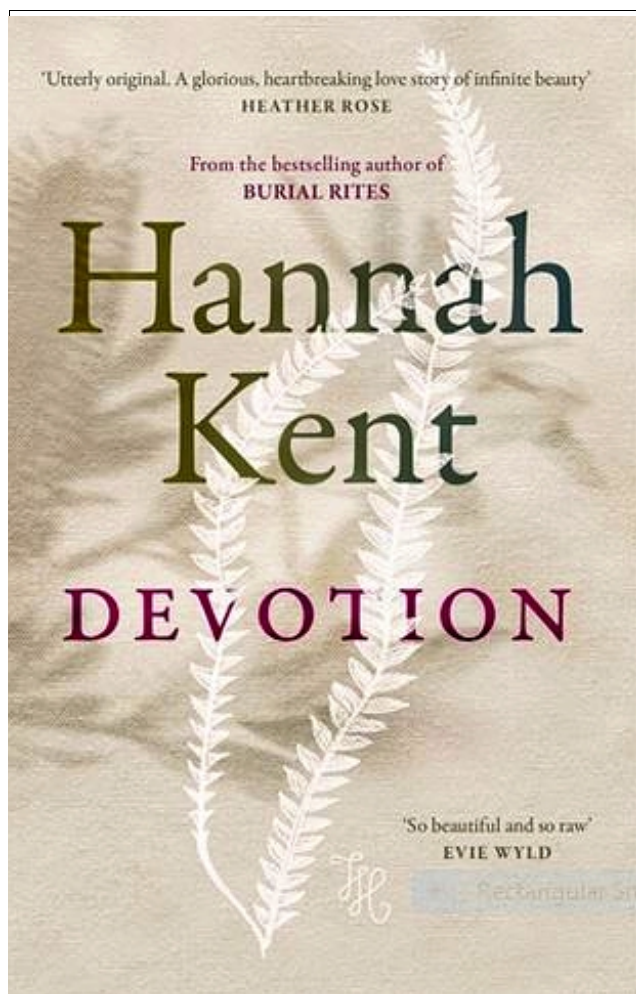
old). Furlong lingers; there is nothing much he can do but leave her there. This plays on his conscience and just before Christmas he returns quietly on foot to the convent, checks the coal house and finds the girl locked there, once again. This time he rescues her. It is as though he is rescuing his mother.

This short novella says so much. The Irish countryside is poignant. The people, living wholesome lives and yet the blot of the Magdalene Laundry — run by the church, so uncaring and cruel.

9. Alan Garner: TREACLE WALKER

I haven't read Alan Garner before. He has written a number of books that appeal to science fiction readers. This book was shortlisted for the 2022 Booker Prize. One reviewer said that in this book, Garner crams more ideas and imagination than most authors manage in their whole careers.

In the front of the book is a short quote by Carlo Rovelli: *Time is ignorance*. How would we experience the world if we could escape time? Joe, the hero, has extraordinary vision. He wears a patch



over his good eye to try to correct the bad one. He's a bit of a loner (no parents in evidence) and he measures out the days by watching the passing of Noony, the train, through the valley below. With his lazy eye, Joe can see time collapsed: the eternal is now. Sometimes I was reminded of *Alice in Wonderland* when with his friends, the naked Thin Amren and Treacle Walker (a rag-and-bone man), and comic book characters, Joe tackles a world of shatterless mirrors that he can walk through.

The book is most beautifully written — so much

is said in about 150 pages and the structure is superb: the first sentence is also the last.

10. Hannah Kent: DEVOTION

This book, whilst beautifully written, could not be read quickly. It starts in late 1830s Germany where an oppressed Lutheran community flees to settle in an area modelled on Hahndorf in South Australia, near Adelaide. The detail of daily life seems to have been meticulously researched, but I also gained an understanding of those people's reliance on a vibrant metaphysical world. The narrator is teenage Hanne, who falls in love with Thea at a time when lesbian love is so suppressed that there are no words to describe what is happening to them. The many months' long trip to South Australia is as one expects — utterly horrific with the steerage class (not even given a classification) below decks most of the time in the stench of vomit and decaying food.

Not surprisingly there is a lot of illness, and Hanne succumbs to typhus. Her sea burial is described from her point of view and then, extraordinarily to me, the dead Hanne continues to be the narrator. She is a presence. The people who loved her, particularly Thea, sometimes sense her there, although they can't see or touch her. She sees life when South Australia is ultimately reached. She sees her twin brother marry. And then, unbearably, Thea — reluctantly it seems — marries the person whom Hanne overhears saying would like to have married her, had she been alive.

As I predicted (when Hanne died), years later, Thea is killed by a snake bite and she and Hanne are united in a kind of heaven. There are evocative descriptions of how Hanne views nature — hearing, for example, the sound of walnut trees.

— **Jennifer Bryce**, January 2023

Bruce Gillespie: My favourite things 2022

Favourite books read for the first time in 2022





- 78 books read during 2022.
- 37 four-star books read.

TASTING NOTES

Several themes link these books: biography, old documents, and music. As well as fantasy and science fiction, of course.

Two biographies are at the top of the list. They have been chosen because they bring to life not only the people biographed, but also the life and times of the era in which they lived.

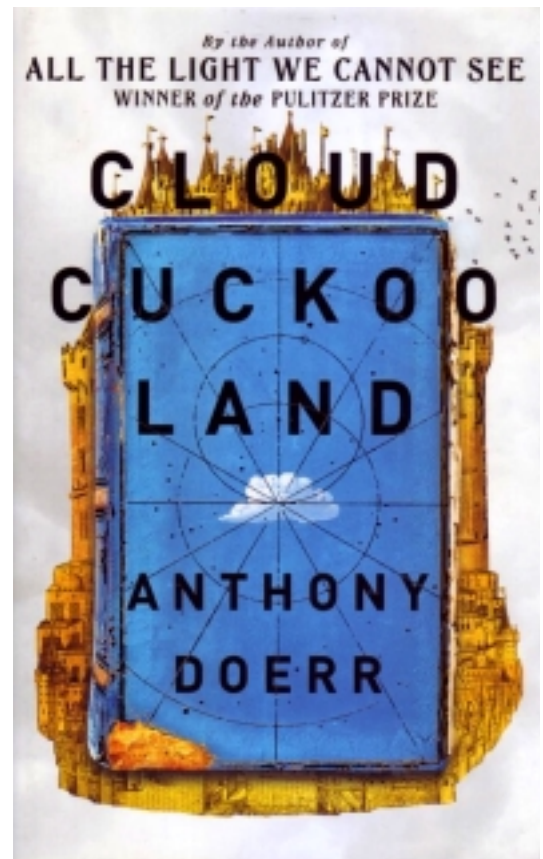
Last year I placed as No. 2 *Blessed City: Letters to Thomas Riddell 1943*, by **Gwen Harwood**. Then growing up in Sydney, she was a very vivid and original letter writer in 1943, and she continued as such during her whole life. She married and moved to Tasmania, wrote poetry most of her life, but found it difficult to break through the barriers raised against women poets/Tasmanian writers in Australia. She also kept trying to come to terms with a marriage whose limitations became ever more galling. Not only does she come to life in **Ann-Marie Priest's** *My Tongue Is My Own: A Life of Gwen Harwood*, but so does the Australian poetry scene after World War II, during its most distinguished period. Poets are like some SF writ-

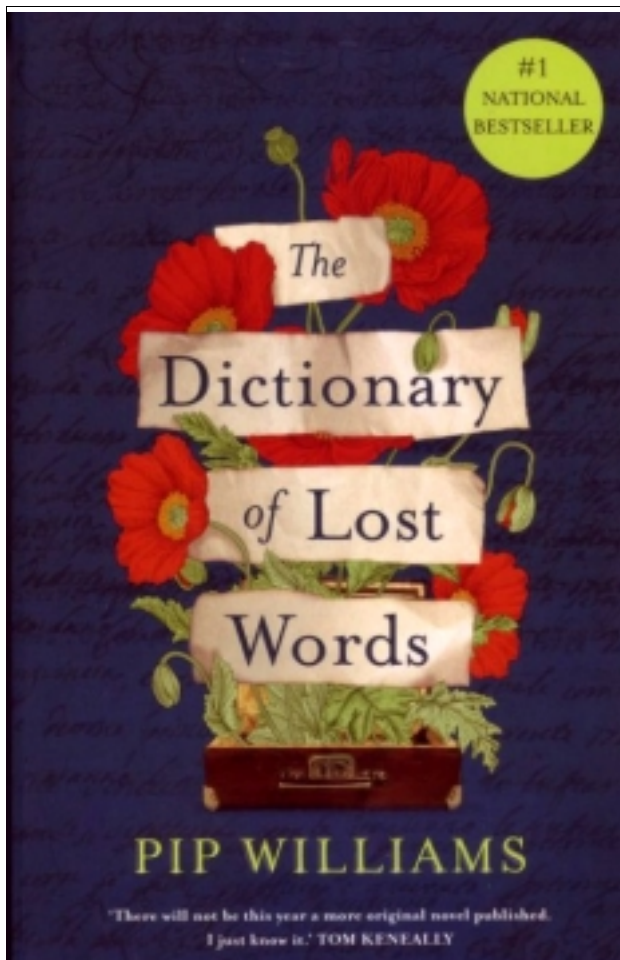
ers; they make little money from their profession, so they tend to battle over privilege and prestige. Gwen Harwood did eventually emerge as one of Australia's major poets, but it took a lot of work and some bitterness to reach that position.

Samuel Johnson is the greatest representative of English intellectual life in the eighteenth century. **John Wain** brings to life this rather awkward man, who lived much of his life in what would now be regarded as dire poverty but whose capacity for work and intellectual achievement is unrivalled by almost anybody in the two centuries that followed him. John Wain comes across as an eighteenth-century man living in the mid twentieth century; he is able to illuminate the assumptions of a period about which I knew little.

Some of the novels of my list have been influenced, directly or indirectly, by **David Grigg's** reviews in *Through the Bibloscope* during recent years. The influences have sent me in directions he might not have guessed.

It was only because of David's insistence that I read **Anthony Doerr's** *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, a novel composed of multiple strands. It's 600 pages long, but even at page 300 I wasn't sure I would continue reading it. Doerr begins to tighten the twists, braiding them into the magnificent last 150 pages or so. The novel revolves around an ancient Greek document, *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, that keeps turning up as a factor in the lives of various



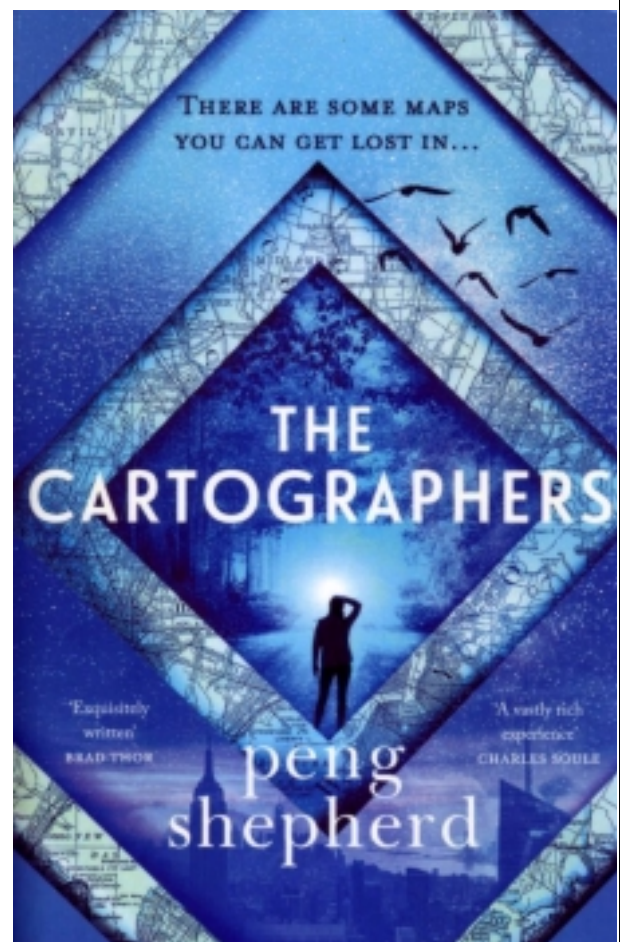


characters throughout the centuries. The document survives many centuries as it follows several story-lines. Two of its characters are involved in the Fall of Constantinople in 1453. Their actions help to save the old document, which turns up again in the twentieth century, twice. Then, improbably, it becomes a vital part of the story of a woman trapped on a generations-starship voyage. The poor old document has been battered, nearly drowned, and has lost pages, words, and bits of words over the centuries, but it continues to inspire people and motivate them.

We retain nothing of our civilisation except what's written down. This has become an important consideration now that vast amounts of our current history has been moved to a medium that can disappear with the push of a button. In **Pip Williams' *The Dictionary of Lost Words***, its hero does her best to pay special attention to the words that make up the first edition of the Oxford English Dictionary. She realises that many words have been discarded over the years because they refer to matters of vital importance to women. Williams' fictional main character becomes a major participant in the construction of the Dictionary over its 70 years. Her contributions have been forgotten, however, because she is a woman and does not have the correct qualifications. This is a very

moving story by an Australian author who is about to publish her second novel.

You are looking along a line of books in a bookshop. Your eye alights on a book and you pick it up and read a few pages and you just know this is going to be brilliant, even though you've never heard of the author or the book. (It's called 'browsing', and will no longer be possible if you don't support our bookshops.) That's what happened when I bought ***The Cartographers*** by **Peng Shepherd**. I know nothing about the author, but the book's story-line reminded me very much of that of one of my favourite fantasy novels, Jonathan Carroll's *The Land of Laughs*. The document at the centre of the novel is a small map of a small backroads part of the east coast of USA. Only a few hundred copies were printed in the 1920s before it was withdrawn. Now somebody is taking all possible measures, including murder, to destroy all remaining copies. This leads to the murder of the main character's father, the Head Librarian of the New York Public Library, and the theft of what appears to be the last copy of the map. The hero of the novel, the daughter, makes herself into a relentless amateur detective in order to find the answer to the puzzle. I will say no more — except to note that the astonishing conclusion of the novel is followed by the even more



astonishing 'Acknowledgments', which tells the real story that inspired *The Cartographers*.

I read *The Prague Sonata* by **Bradford Morrow** because it appeared on an internet list of the Top Ten Novels About Music. I didn't know most of the titles on the list, although it did include Richard Powers' *The Time of Our Singing*, one of the greatest American novels of the last 50 years. *The Prague Sonata* is as moving as *The Dictionary of Lost Words*, but the centre of its story is a lost piece of music rather than lost words from a dictionary or a lost ancient Greek document. During the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia, a woman realises that her Jewish father owns a manuscript that might well be a lost piece by one of the great Classical composers. She has no idea whether her family can survive the events to come. She divides the manuscript into four parts and distributes them among people she hopes might survive the war, and then she flees Prague. The woman gives her section of the manuscript to another person when she reaches New York. Meanwhile, the main character is alerted to seek out all four sections, if they exist. The plot is complex, but everything falls into place at the end, leading to a powerful final section. Again this book centres on the importance of great documents, because many manuscripts of great works were destroyed during World War II.

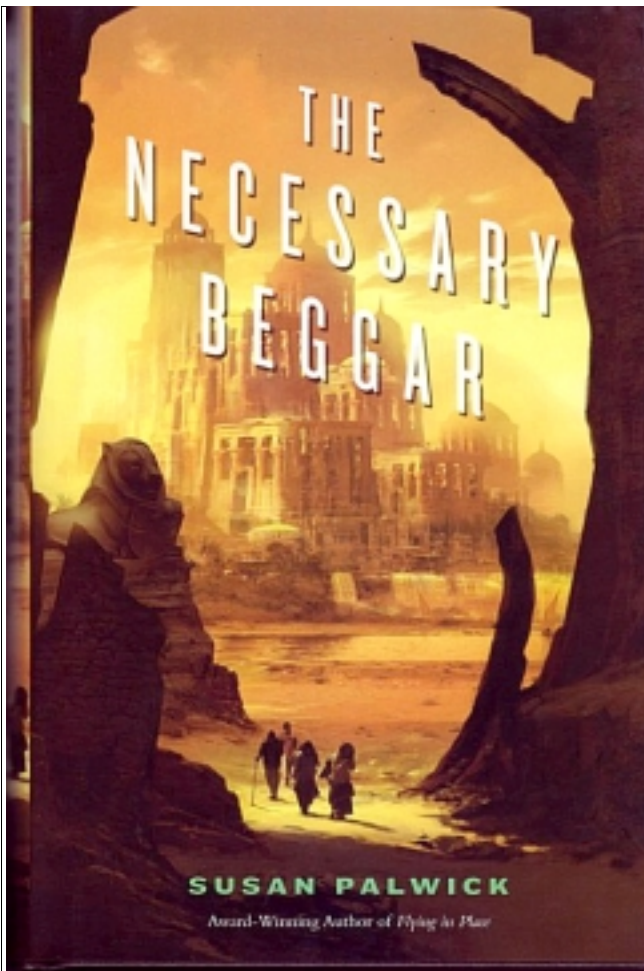
Ryka Aoki's *Light from Uncommon Stars* is a can't-put-down narrative of great interest to many groups within the SF world, especially the transgender community, but its main interest to me is its deep knowledge of the world of music. Its main character, a transgender female, has been traumatised by the experience of being rejected by family and society, but the book itself does not deal with the process of transition. It mainly deals with the profound loss of self-confidence that can affect a person who is otherwise highly talented. The book also has a magical/supernatural strand that I thought was unnecessary, but the interaction between an ancient woman blessed and cursed with great personal and musical talents and her new pupil gives the novel its backbone. My special interest is in the piece of music that becomes the obsession of these characters: Bartok's *Violin Sonata*, written shortly before his death in 1944. Elaine and I have been able to listen to it because Dick Jenssen gave us a few years ago a three-CD set of the recordings of Leon Gitlis, one of the great violinists you don't hear often on the radio. After reading *Light from Uncommon Stars*, I discovered the piece of music to be just as challenging and exciting as is described in the book.

I read **Jack Vance's** *Space Opera* (1965) because Dick Jenssen gave me a copy of the new



Spatterlight edition. I had heard about it when I joined fandom, but it was unavailable by 1968. I didn't know that it is *about* opera. An opera company goes wandering among the various planets of what seems like a huge galactic empire. Its impresario is trying to convince the universe that terrestrial opera of the last thirty years is superior to any other forms of music. Various planetary audiences are amused, bored, or appalled by this assumption, and take their revenge in amusing ways. This is a comic opera, based on Jack Vance's deep knowledge of music. (Thanks also to Alan Stewart for lending me **Jack Vance's** collected *The Demon Princes*, five novels that seem to be in the Count of Monte Cristo revenge mould, but are actually excuses for Vance to flit among the planets of a universe rather like the one featured in *Space Opera*. Wonderful reading, but the plots become wearying by the end of 965 pages.)

Another major theme of this year's novels is the difficulty of finding oneself a refugee in today's world. During the year I read four books by **Susan Palwick**, including *Flying in Place*, her best-known novel. The book that hit me most forcefully,

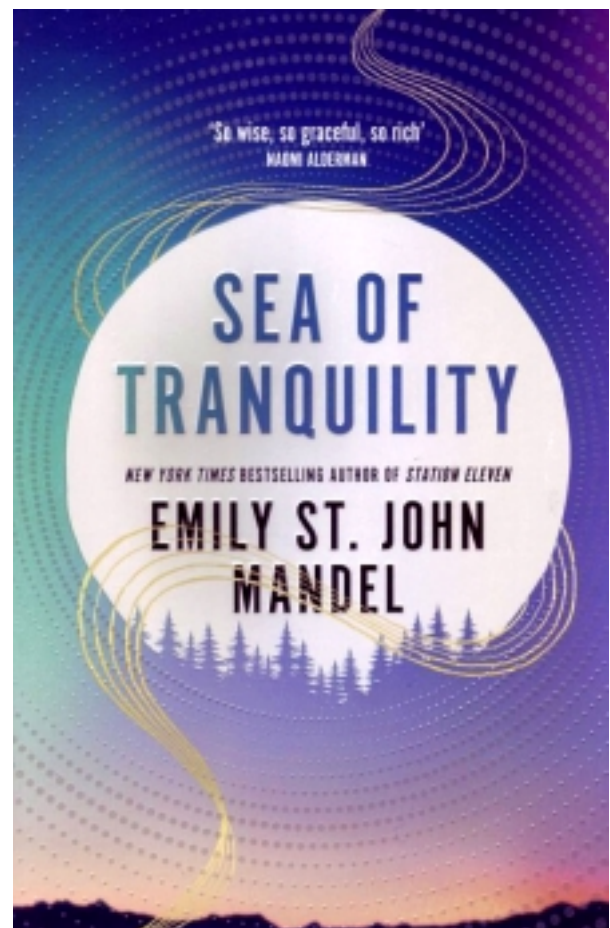


though, is ***The Necessary Beggar***. Surely this won prizes all over the place in 2006? I hadn't heard of it until Justin Ackroyd presented me with a free copy after I had bought from him two other Palwick titles. *The Necessary Beggar* tells the story of a family from what seems like a vaguely Middle Eastern country who are forced to leave because of the crime of one of the family members. The 'country', however, is Lémabantunk, a country on a planet in a different reality stream. All the family members are banished by being projected into our reality stream, a slightly in-future exaggerated version of the USA. The family is treated with much the same harshness as has met other refugees who have managed to reach USA from Asia or Latin America in recent years. They do not understand any of the assumptions of the society into which they have landed. The assumptions of the society they have left are vaguely Muslim/Buddhist/genteel animism without the burden of a God sitting in the sky. Family is everything in their own society — hence the whole family suffers for the sin of one of them. The novel is a riveting account of people discovering a way to come to terms with their own misfortune and the assumptions of the society that treats them brutally.

I read a few books of poetry during the year, but none has the punch-you-in-the-cosmic-

infundibulum quality of the lyrics to **Lou Reed's** songs (***I'll Be Your Mirror***). True, many of them are just repetitive pop lyrics, but many are deep explorations of the brutal society in which Lou Reed became a singer and performer. You might already be familiar with the lyrics to Lou's tributes to Andy Warhol and Doc Pomus (*Songs for Drella* and *Magic and Loss*), but the best set of lyrics are those for his later album *Growing Up in Public*. I looked for it among our CDs. Not there. I looked among the LPs. Not there. I thought I had collected all of Lou's albums of the last 40 years, but there's a gap. I would thank anybody who would like to sell me a copy.

A. G. Riddell's *Lost in Time* is a good old-fashioned SF time-travel mystery yarn, the kind of book that has almost disappeared. A family runs the only corporation that offers a time-travel service — sending capital criminals back to prehistoric times — but on an alternative time stream so they can never return. One of the family is murdered. A member of the family takes the blame. A daughter is determined to solve the puzzle. This is a nice mixture of time-travel adventures and a locked-room mystery. I knew about it only because of Colin Steele's review in *SFC*. I would have thought the audience who has enjoyed Andy Weir's novels and nominated them for awards would have discovered this novel, but not



so far.

Emily St John Mandel's *Sea Of Tranquility* is also a time travel story, although it took me a second reading to work out the twists and turns in the life of time-corrector. He is one of those people who work for the time travel agency, who observe the past but are forbidden to change it. The main character bungles the job. The time tangles here are sketched much more subtly than in *Lost in Time*, and the prose is more interesting. One of those few books I read twice in one year, and enjoyed even more the second time.

In *SFC 111* I reviewed ***When the Fire Comes By: A Year of Poems*** (2022), poems by **Don Ashby** and paintings by **Yoland Oakley**. Born of the

bushfires that nearly obliterated the Victorian coastal town of Mallacoota at the end of 2019, these poems and paintings compose one of the finest Australian books of 2022.

I don't know how to describe **Carmel Bird's *Telltale: Reading Writing Remembering***. Every page is filled with quotable prose, but don't expect a straightforward autobiography or reminiscence or philosophical enquiry. Take a mixture of events from a Tasmanian childhood, the books that formed Carmel's mind when she was a child, the Aboriginal experience in Tasmania, and a variety of ghosts from the past and you have a potent reading experience.

THE CHART

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | MY TONGUE IS MY OWN: A LIFE OF GWEN HARWOOD (2022) Ann-Marie Priest (Latrobe University Press/Black Inc.) | 11 | TELLTALE: READING WRITING REMEMBERING (2022) Carmel Bird (Transit Lounge) |
| 2 | SAMUEL JOHNSON: A BIOGRAPHY (1974) John Wain (Viking) | 12 | I'LL BE YOUR MIRROR: THE COLLECTED LYRICS (2019) Lou Reed (Faber) |
| 3 | THE CARTOGRAPHERS (2022) Peng Shepherd (Orion) | 13 | LIGHT FROM UNCOMMON STARS (2021) Ryka Aoki (TOR) |
| 4 | THE DICTIONARY OF LOST WORDS (2020) Pip Williams (Affirm Press) | 14 | SPACE OPERA (1965/2005) Jack Vance (Spatterlight) |
| 5 | THE PRAGUE SONATA (2017) Bradford Morrow (Grove Press) | 15 | SHRINES OF GAIETY (2022) Kate Atkinson (Doubleday) |
| 6 | SEA OF TRANQUILITY (2022) Emily St John Mandel (Picador) | 16 | FLYING IN PLACE (1992) Susan Palwick (TOR) |
| 7 | THE NECESSARY BEGGAR (2005) Susan Palwick (TOR) | 17 | BEASTS (1976) John Crowley (Doubleday) |
| 8 | CLOUD CUCKOO LAND (2021) Anthony Doerr (Fourth Estate) | 18 | WHEN THE FIRE COMES BY: A YEAR OF POEMS (2022) Don Ashby and Yoland Oakley (self-published) |
| 9 | ALL OUR SHIMMERING SKIES (2020) Trent Dalton (Fourth Estate) | 19 | FUTURELAND (2001) Walter Moseley (Warner Books) |
| 10 | LOST IN TIME (2022) A. G. Riddell (Head of Zeus) | 20 | THE GLASS PEARLS (1966/2022) Emeric Pressburger (Faber) |

OTHER FOUR STAR CONTENDERS, IN ORDER OF READING

- | | |
|---|---|
| FISHING FOR LIGHTNING (2021) Sarah Holland-Batt (UQP) | (Tachyon) |
| A FEW LAST WORDS FROM THE LATE IMMORTALS: 50 SHORT STORIES AND POEMS (2021) Michael Bishop ed. Michael Hutchins (Fairwood Press/Kudzu Planet) | MENDING THE MOON (2013) Susan Palwick (TOR) |
| LOVE STORIES (2021) Trent Dalton (Fourth Estate) | ELSA LANCHESTER HERSELF (1983) Elsa Lanchester (Michael Joseph) |
| THE FATE OF MICE (2007) Susan Palwick | THE MILLENNIUM JOB (2022) Rob Gerrand (Norstrilia Press) |
| | MERMAIDS SINGING/PEEL ME A LOTUS (1956/1959/2021) Charmian Clift (Harper Collins) |
| | THE HANGING GARDEN (2012) Patrick White (Knopf) |

WHERE SHALL WE RUN TO? (2018) Alan Garner (Fourth Estate)
 TREACLE WALKER (2021) Alan Garner (Fourth Estate)
 LYING BESIDE YOU (2022) Michael Robotham (Hachette Australia)
 LOVE AND SUMMER (2009) William Trevor (Viking)
 POIROT AND ME (2013) David Suchet and Geoffrey Wansell (Headline)
 THE DEMON PRINCES

(1964/1964/1967/1979/ 1981) Jack Vance (Science Fiction Book Club)
 THE MAGIC PUDDING: THE ADVENTURES OF BUNYIP BLUEGUM (1918/2008) Norman Lindsay (Angus & Robertson)
 EXPECT ME TOMORROW (2022) Christopher Priest (Gollancz)
 OSLO'S MELBOURNE: ILLUSTRATED ADVENTURES IN THE WORLD'S MOST TOLERATED CITY (2022) Oslo Davis (Black Inc)

Favourite films seen for the first time in 2022

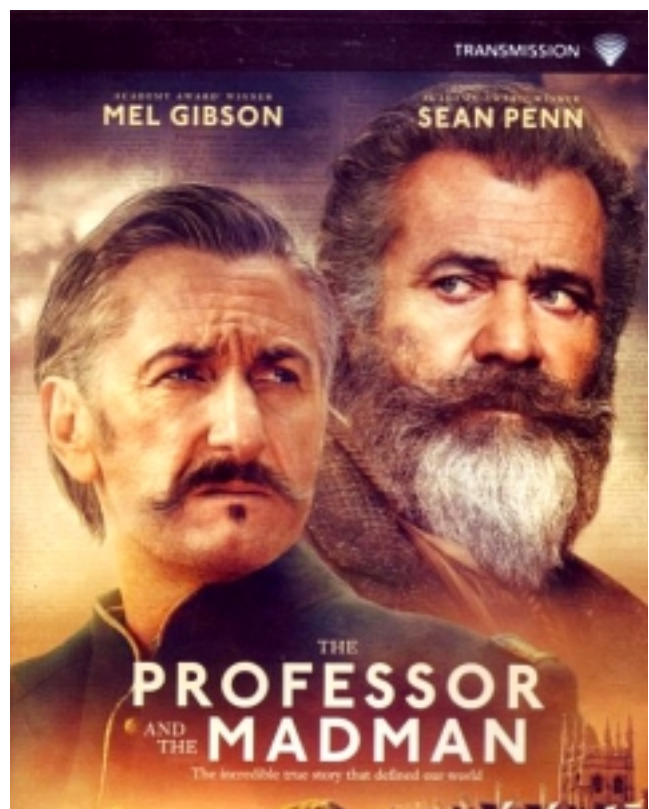
TASTING NOTES

Note 1:

It's impossible for me to keep my film watching up to date, because I don't have access to streaming services. For instance, I missed watching Jane Campion's *The Power of the Dog* because I didn't want to go into a cinema during the continuing Covid crisis. The film disappeared from the cinemas, but is not available on DVD or Blu-ray, only on Netflix. So I am robbed of my opportunity to watch it. Surely if a movie is nominated for

several Oscar awards, and wins one, it deserves permanency on disc? Otherwise it will just disappear from sight at the whim of Netflix.

So all the films on this list were watched on DVD or Blu-ray. I started watching movies in cinemas again at the end of 2022, with mixed results. The projection and sound quality of *Matilda The Musical* at the Lido Hawthorn were appalling. Fortunately, I've been able to watch what it's really like when we visited Nic and Charlie. I enjoyed watching *See How They Run* at the Palace Balwyn — tolerable projection and clear sound. But both would have been much better on Blu-ray, and



there's no sign of it being released on disc either.

Note 2:

Thanks to several people to whom I owe much for widening my screen experience. Thanks very much to **Dick Jenssen** for the Blu-rays he's imported from overseas for my collection, or those he's lent me; and to **John Davies** for his sometimes unexpected presents of Blu-ray packages. Thanks also to **Geoff Allshorn** for his contributions to our mini-Film Nights. (Sorry, folks, I can't send out a general invitation; we have very few front-row seats.)

Sting movies are my delight, this year as last year — the kind of movies in which the motives and methods of the lead characters are totally untrustworthy and you can't work out who's fooling who until the last few minutes. In 2021 my top four movies were sting movies: Régis Roinsard's *The Translators*, Stefan Ruzowitcky's *The Counterfeiters*, Dan Friedkin's *The Last Vermeer* (based on an actual case), and Rémi Bezançon's *The Mystery Of Henri Pick*.

The Good Liar is a wonderful tussle between Ian McKellen as a plausible elder gentleman trying to romance Helen Mirren as a plausible vulnerable older woman with a fortune. You know from the beginning that each character is trying to sting the other. The man's motives are transparent — money, money, money. The woman's motives are not revealed until the end. Lots of fabulous dialogue between the two best screen actors currently working in Britain.

The Burnt Orange Heresy is, like *The Last Vermeer*, an art-fraud sting movie. The motives and methods of one of the characters are transparent, but the motives and methods of two of the characters remain obscure until the end of the movie. One of the triumphs of the movie is its deep knowledge of the modern art world, combined with the rich textures of the photography. Mick Jagger shows once again that he is quite a good actor.

Apollo 13 is **Ron Howard**'s reconstruction of the voyage to the moon that nearly killed its astronauts. It is the most suspenseful film Elaine and I saw in 2022, even though we already knew the ending. Howard combines fine characterisations with the meticulous details of the accident that nearly destroyed the *Apollo 13* expedition and the measures taken to save it.

Dick Jenssen, who is a great fan of dictionaries, especially the *Oxford English Dictionary*, alerted us to **The Professor and the Madman**, a biopic about James Murray, played by Mel Gibson, and

W. C. Minor, played by Sean Penn. It is based on **Simon Winchester's** *The Surgeon of Crowthorne*. James Murray was the originator of and main contributor to the first 40 years (of 70) of the creation of the OED's first edition. For years he was grateful for innumerable contributions of individual word meanings sent on cards through the mail. Not until Murray fronted up to the gate at Crowthorne Mental Asylum did he discover that his favourite contributor has been an incarcerated madman, an officer of the US Army who had shot a man in London because of mistaken identity. Their friendship forms the skeleton of the story, which also involves Natalie Dormer as the widow of the man mistakenly shot.

Everybody everywhere all at once has been praising **Everything Everywhere All At Once**. Even the Oscar voters agreed with them. So I won't repeat what everybody else is saying. It's a time-travel romp — a time-squashing romp. It's remarkable for the number of SF ideas that are taken for granted in the plot.

I don't have room or time to mention all my quirkier choices, but I should mention **Brigsby Bear**. David Russell gave it to me for a birthday a few years ago. To judge from the cover, it is a light entertainment about a children's fictional character, something like Paddington. At first that's what we seem to be watching: the tale of a kid and his father living alone, where the kid's main entertainment is a video game called *Brigsby Bear*. And then the whole film changes abruptly, and becomes an surprising and absorbing family drama.



My list includes lots of films you've probably watched in recent years, especially **Armando Iannucci's** *The Death of Stalin*. Every line of dialogue was said by somebody in power after Stalin died, but all that mad dialogue adds up to a British black comedy.

One of my main film activities in 2022, thanks to a lot of help from friends, has been finding and watching films from the true Golden Age of cinema, i.e. Hollywood films from the mid 1930s to 1954 and British films from World War II until the end of the 1960s. A variety of Blu-ray manufacturers, especially ViaVision, BFI, and Flicker Alley, are remastering legendary films that had long been thought lost. The lavish Blu-ray packages include many new features, interviews, and commentaries. Most of these films are in black and white. The mastery of the medium by the great photographers can now be appreciated, after being seen in fuzzy prints on late-night TV for 60 years.

Such classic films you might like to seek out for yourself include **Basil Dearden's** *The Halfway House* (1943), a film featuring supernatural elements that is a vivid representation of Britain during and just after the Blitz.

The Man Who Cheated Himself (1950) features Lee J. Cobb acting against type. Already middle-aged, Cobb had just starred in a 600-performance run on Broadway of *Death of a Salesman*, the best-remembered Willy Loman. In *The Man Who Cheated Himself*, he doesn't look at all like the character he seems to be trying to play: the lead romantic actor in the role of a detective trying to solve a case. That's because his character changes rapidly during the drama. He becomes the villain in the same film, a switch that only an actor as astute as Lee J. Cobb could bring off.

A film with a similar dynamic is *The Beast Must Die* (1952), recently rescued from obscurity. It is a film noir masterpiece made by Roman Vinola Bareta, a leading director of the Argentinian film industry, which during the early 1950s was as active as its Hollywood equivalent. In the newly remastered Flicker Alley Blu-ray, the black-and-white photography is magnificent. The dramatic style reminds me of that used by Orson Welles in *Touch of Evil*: film noir plus an extra dash of Latin grandeur.

John Davies gave me a set of **Mae West's** early films (remastered; with umpteen extras). I'd heard much about these films, but had seen only one of them — on late-night TV, many years ago. From the boxed set, my favourites so far are *I'm No Angel* (1933), *She Done Him Wrong* (1933) — the film with the most-quoted Mae West one-liners — and *My Little Chickadee* (1940), in which she

and W. C. Fields seem to be acting in separate films (with separate sets of self-written pages of dialogue) within one film. Each of the films in the set exploits a different aspect of the Mae West persona. The oddest film of these I've watched so far is *Klondike Annie* (1936), in which Mae plays the role of a demure missionary.

I bought a set of the **Marx Brothers** early films, also from ViaVision. Again, the films have been fully restored, but I find it hard to separate them in my mind. The Marx Brothers formula had been already established for 20 years within the family vaudeville act. The best of the films are the ones in which Groucho, Harpo, and Chico are most unhinged. Harpo is always my favourite, especially when he plays the harp. The films include *The Cocoa-Nuts* (1929), one of the first sound films, *Animal Crackers* (1930), *Monkey Business* (1931), *Duck Soup* (1933), and *Horse Feathers* (1932).

Of recently released films, I would recommend for satisfying oddness **George Miller's** *Three Thousand Years of Longing* (2022), a two-hander fantasy film starring Idris Elba and Tilda Swinton. The presence of Tilda Swinton in a film guarantees its quality.

Also very odd, but satisfying, is *Crimes of the Future*, the first Cronenbergian **David Cronenberg** film for years. Dick Jensen alerted me that this film had received an Australian Blu-ray release. The film features lots of images that many viewers would find repellent, but the film is a surprisingly sober and deep meditation on original ideas about the nature of a dystopian near-future.

Rewatching *Matilda and Me*, **Nell Minchin's** tribute to the career of **Tim Minchin**, made me yearn to see *Matilda*, the musical that Minchin is bringing into existence during the film. I rewatched **Danny DeVito's** 1996 movie of *Matilda*, which has its faults as well as strengths — but I wanted to see the musical itself. There seems to be no DVD of the stage musical. At the end of 2022 I went to the cinema for the first time in three years to watch *Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical*. All I can say is about the total experience (at the Lido Cinema, Hawthorn) is that it would be hardly surprising if people are no longer returning to the cinema. The colour projection was washed-out and ugly, and the sound amplification was so loud and distorted that I could not understand any of the Tim Minchin lyrics during most of the songs.

This experience almost stopped me from watching any more films at cinemas, but I did see *See How They Run*, a lively pastiche of and homage to Agatha Christie mysteries, at the Palace Balwyn. Result? Clear projection and under-

standable dialogue.

The reason I'm listing **Matilda the Musical** in my Best Of list is that two months later Nic and

Charlie Taylor invited us to their place to watch it on a 70-inch screen from Netflix. I felt I had watched the film at last.

THE CHART

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|----|--|--|--|
| 1 | THE GOOD LIAR (2019) directed by Bill Condon | | |
| 2 | THE BURNT ORANGE HERESY (2019) Giuseppe Capotondi | | |
| 3 | APOLLO 13 (1995) Ron Howard | | |
| 4 | THE PROFESSOR AND THE MADMAN (2019) Farhad Safinia | | |
| 5 | EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE (2022) Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinarts | | |
| 6 | BRIGSBY BEAR (2017) Dave McCary | | |
| 7 | DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID (1946) Jean Renoir | | |
| 8 | THE DEATH OF STALIN (2017) Armando Iannucci | | |
| 9 | SPECTRE (2015) Sam Mendes | | |
| 10 | THE FRENCH DISPATCH (2021) Wes Anderson | | |
| 11 | THE MECHANIC (1972) Michael Winner | | |
| 12 | PLAYING BEATIE BOW (1986) Donald Crombie | | |
| 13 | THE HALFWAY HOUSE (1943) Basil Dearden | | |
| 14 | HE WALKED BY NIGHT (1948) Alfred Werker & Anthony Mann | | |
| 15 | THE MAN WHO CHEATED HIMSELF (1950) Felix D. Feist | | |
| 16 | CRIMES OF THE FUTURE (2022) David Cronenberg | | |
| 17 | THE BEAST MUST DIE (1952) Roman Vinola Bareto | | |
| 18 | THREE THOUSAND YEARS OF LONGING (2022) George Miller | | |
| 19 | VAMPYR (1932) Carl Theodore Dryer | | |
| 20 | DECOY (1946) Jack Bernhard | | |
| 21 | ROALD DAHL'S MATILDA THE MUSICAL (2022) Matthew Warchus | | |
| 22 | I'M NO ANGEL (1933) Wesley Ruggles | | |
| 23 | COMA (2020) Nikita Argunov | | |
| 24 | SEE HOW THEY RUN (2022) Tom George | | |

OTHER FOUR-STAR CONTENDERS IN ORDER OF WATCHING:

NO TIME TO DIE (2021) Cary Jogi Fukunaga
THE NIGHT HAS 1000 EYES (1948) John Farrow
THE NAKED JUNGLE (1954) George Pal and Byron Haskin
ENCANTO (2021) James Bush and Byron Howard
LOVE AFFAIR (1939) Leo McCarey
SHE DONE HIM WRONG (1933) Lavell Sherman
NIGHT AFTER NIGHT (1932) Archie Mayo
MY LITTLE CHICKADEE (1940) Edward F. Cline
DEATH ON THE NILE (2022) Kenneth Branagh
MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS (2017) Kenneth Branagh
I BELIEVE IN YOU (1952) Basil Dearden and Michael Ralph
MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS (1997) Sidney Lumet
A STAR IS BORN (1937) William A. Wellman
THE COCOA-NUTS (1929) Robert Florey and Joseph Santley
ANIMAL CRACKERS (1930) Victor Haeman

NIGHT AND THE CITY (1950) Jules Dassin
MONKEY BUSINESS (1931) Norman Z. Macleod
CONQUEST OF SPACE (1955) Byron Haskin
DUCK SOUP (1933) Leo McCarey

When you have to stay focused,
so you put your thinking cat on



HORSE FEATHERS (1932) Norman Z. McLeod
ISLAND OF LOST SOULS (1932) Erle C. Kenton
SHAZAM! (2019) David F. Sandberg
GOIN' TO TOWN (1935) Alexander Hall
KLONDIKE ANNIE (1936) Raoul Walsh
BELFAST (2021) Kenneth Branagh
THE VOLUNTEER (1944) Michael Powell &
Emeric Pressburger

REPEAT PERFORMANCE (1947) Alfred Werker
MAIGRET (2022) Patrice Leconte
DEAD RECKONING (1947) John Cromwell
SIROCCO (1951) Curtis Bernhardt
TOKYO JOE (1949) Curtis Bernhardt
NOPE (2022) Jordan Peele
NOSTALGIA (1983) Andrei Tarkovsky
SAVING MR BANKS (2013) John Lee Hancock

Favourite films seen again during 2022

TASTING NOTES

Enigma is **Michael Apted's** World War II spy movie set at Bletchley Park. The main character is a straight version of Alan Turing played by Dougray Scott, Kate Winslet is the Bletchley girl who's mad about him. A siren beauty is played by Saffron Burrows, and the MI6 spycatcher is played by Jeremy Northam in one of his best roles. The photography and acting are excellent.

It was a very pleasant experience to return to **M. Night Shayamalan's** **The Sixth Sense**, which I was watching for the third or fourth time. Knowing the Big Reveal makes later viewings even more enjoyable than seeing it for the first time. **The Sixth Sense** has a perfect script, with astonishing performances from Bruce Willis (surely his best), Joel Hayley Osment, the brilliant child actor who never achieved his potential, and Victoria Williams in an early role.

Clint Eastwood's **Space Cowboys** is one of his two or three best films.

Russian Ark's characters are rather odd, but its venue, the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, is the star of the film, which is famous for the being the first to be filmed in one take. (Hitchcock's **Rope** included eight takes stitched together.)

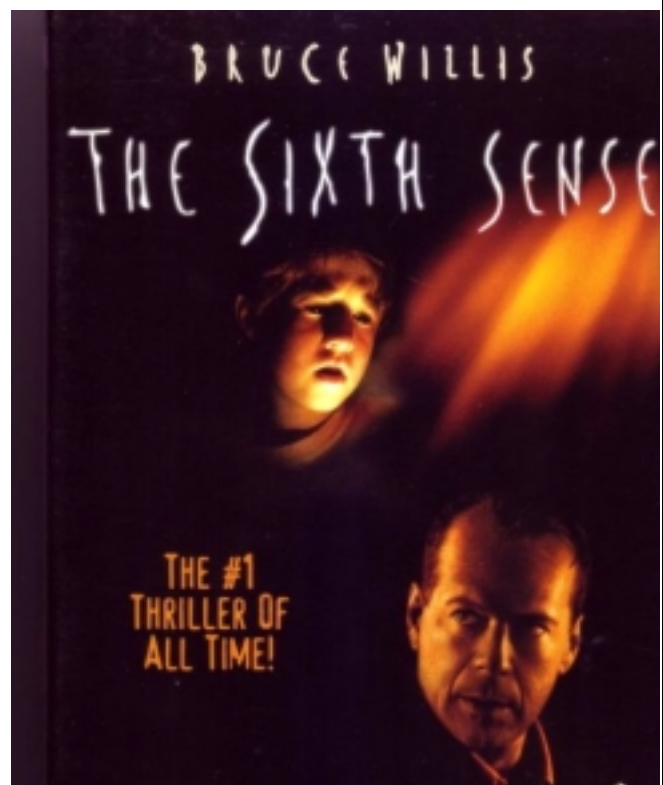
Dick Jenssen obtained for us a copy from overseas of the Blu-ray of the recent remastered **Star Trek The Motion Picture**, which is wonderful to watch not only because of the remastering of the colour images but also the inclusion of special effects not included in the 2000 Director's Cut. The new Blu-ray includes many extras, including three commentaries. I'm told that **Star Trek** fans didn't like it when it first appeared, because they regard it as 'too slow'. I rather enjoy ponderous, immersive movies that allow me to wallow in the images.

If Australian film critic David Stratton ever saw

my lists, which of course he won't, he would be horrified that I had placed any film higher than **Singing in the Rain** ('the happiest film of them all'). I've seen some very good prints of this film, but nothing as dazzling as this recent Blu-ray remastering from ViaVision Imprint. The disc includes many extras.

My 70th Anniversary Edition of **The Wizard of Oz** is not the latest whizzbang remastered version, but at least it restores the correct Technicolor balance, and the colour tints to the tinted sections. I've seen prints that consist of nothing but muddy half-colours. I discovered during this viewing that I like the songs a lot more than I did when I was a kid. The approaching tornado in the first few minutes was the most terrifying experience during my childhood.

John Milius's **Conan the Barbarian** is a





genuine work of art that I would never have watched if Dick Jenssen hadn't recommended it about 20 years ago. Boris Polidorus's music score is one of the best ever, and works very well on CD without the images. Arnold Schwarzenegger

doesn't have a lot to say, but he's rather impressive. This is heroic fantasy done seriously, with no concessions to easy-solution plotting.

Paddington and **Paddington II** are films I wouldn't have watched if Yvonne Rousseau hadn't recommended them when they were first released. I like the humour and the wild fantasy, of course, but most of all I love the meticulous production design, which rivals that in any recent Wes Anderson films.

I keep watching every few years **Stanley Kramer's** *On the Beach*, from 1959. Yes, I know it plods along at a 1950s blockbuster Hollywood snail's pace. Yes, I know it includes some dull performances, but also includes Fred Astaire's finest dramatic role, and John Meillon's moment as the submariner who volunteers to 'go home' to certain death in a radioactive San Francisco. It is almost the only major movie that offers a glimpse of Melbourne as a place and a living population — and is still credited as the film that more than any other might have stopped nuclear-weapons-owning countries lobbying missiles at each other during the early sixties. The recent ViaVision Imprint boxed set includes a documentary by **Lawrence Johnson**, *Fallout*, which explores the influence of both the Nevil Shute book and the film.

THE CHART

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|---|---|----|---|
| 1 | THE SIXTH SENSE (1999) M. Night Shayamalan | 8 | CATCH ME IF YOU CAN (2007) Steven Spielberg |
| 2 | SINGING IN THE RAIN (1952) Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly | 9 | ON THE BEACH (1959) Stanley Kramer |
| 3 | THE WIZARD OF OZ (1939) Victor Fleming | 10 | STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE (1979/2001/2022) Robert Wise (Remastered) |
| 4 | SPACE COWBOYS (2000) Clint Eastwood | 11 | RUSSIAN ARK (2002) Alexander Sokurov |
| 5 | CONAN THE BARBARIAN (1981) John Milius | 12 | MATILDA AND ME (2016) Nell Minchin |
| 6 | PADDINGTON (2014) Paul King | 13 | A NIGHT TO REMEMBER (1958) Roy Baker |
| 7 | ENIGMA (2001) Michael Apted | 14 | GUN CRAZY (1949) Joseph H. Lewis |
| | | 15 | DUNE (1984) David Lynch |

OTHER FOUR-STAR CONTENDERS, IN THE ORDER SEEN

STAGE FRIGHT (1950) Alfred Hitchcock
 THE SAINT STRIKES BACK (1939) John Farrow
 THE SAINT IN LONDON (1939) John Paddy Castairs
 DEATH ON THE NILE (1978) John Guillerman
 EVIL UNDER THE SUN (1981) Guy Hamilton

FATHER BROWN: THE DETECTIVE (1954) Robert Hamer
 THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS (2001) Wes Anderson
 ALICE IN WONDERLAND (2010) Tim Burton
 ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS (2016) James Bobin
 MATILDA (1996) Danny Devito

Favourite documentaries and performance films seen for the first time in 2022

THE TASTING NOTES

Many documentaries and concert films no longer appear on DVD. However, I've still managed to gather a pot pourri of documentaries, concert videos, films about music, films about art, and anything that doesn't fit in the general list.

When we discussed the songs of Australian First Nations singer **Archie Roach** in ANZAPA, several ANZAPAns mentioned that they had attended concerts by Archie and his wife **Ruby Hunter**. This has never happened to me, so I enjoyed all the more *Wash My Soul in the River's Flow*, a combination of a documentary about the lives of Archie and Ruby in 2008, when they were both healthy (Ruby died in 2010), and a concert when they were performing at their best. **Paul Grabowsky**, well-known Melbourne band leader and record producer, organised the concert. **Philippa Bateman**'s direction is imaginative and complex, evading most of the clichés of the concert

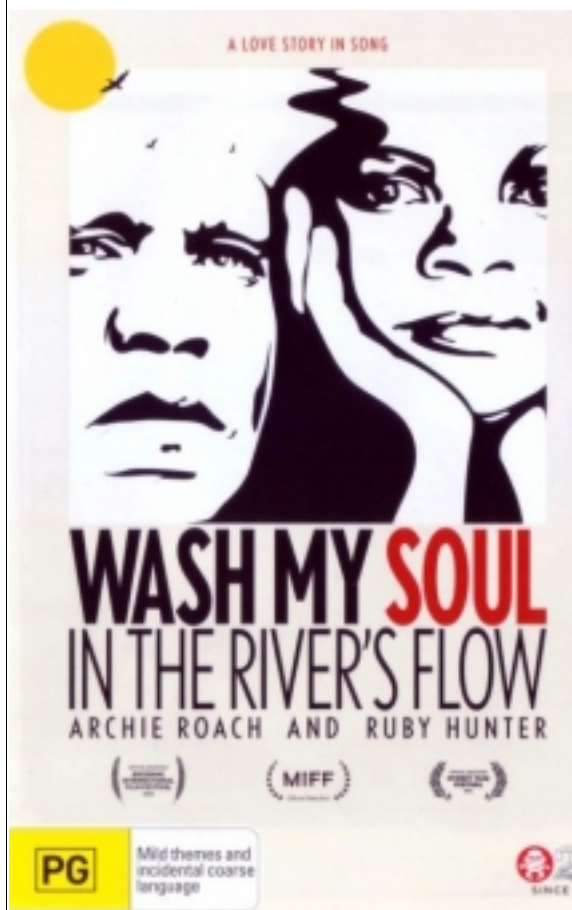
film. Now I can return to listening to Archie's and Ruby's CDs.

Dick Jenssen again made it possible for Elaine and me to watch movies that we would never have known about, let alone been able to watch. *South* includes all reels of film that were rescued from **Frank Hurley**'s coverage of the Ernest Shackleton expedition to Antarctica in 1911. The remastering is excellent. We might have been watching the film for the first time in 1919. Hurley stayed behind with the members of the expedition who remained marooned on an ice floe while three members set sail on the 800-mile journey to South Georgia Island to raise help, so none of that later part of the journey is recorded. What we see are the failed attempts to push through the ice to the mainland of Antarctica, the disintegration of their ship the *Endurance* under the pressure of the ice, and the methods used to survive.

The same Blu-ray includes *Shackleton's Boat Journey*, a modern documentary by **Harding Dunnett** and **John Bard** that uses both maps and photos to give an idea of the astonishing achievements of Shackleton and his crew. When they set sail in a small boat to row and sail to South Georgia Island, they arrived on the wrong side of the island. The three of them had to spend three days climbing over a 20,000-foot mountain range covered in snow and ice in order to reach the whaling station on the north side of the island. In stages the rescue mission reached all the other members of the expedition. No member of the Shackleton expedition was lost.

The other items on my list are a bit less exciting than the Top 3. However, *Love in Bright Landscapes*, telling the story of **David McComb** of the **Triffids**, gives an excellent overview of his musical achievements and his personal failures. I keep looking for missing Triffids CDs, but they don't seem to be around.

Bruce Springsteen is not my favourite rock and roll performer, despite the excellent account given of his achievements written by Perry Middlemiss in a recent issue of *Perryscope*. But along with the Rolling Stones, Springsteen is one of the most exciting stage acts I've seen on film. (I've never had the chance, or the ready cash, to see him in concert.) His Hyde Park Concert DVD from a few years ago gives the best coverage of the



sheer inexhaustibility of Springsteen and his band during a long concert. Also very enjoyable is a DVD that popped up in my collection: ***Born in the USA Live London 2013***. I can't remember how I acquired this, perhaps from a music magazine cover. Each member of the band feeds off the others' enthusiasm, and the song selection is excellent.

Willie Nelson on stage is hardly as exuberant as Springsteen or Jagger. With a penetrating voice which lets you hear every word, a magic guitar called Trigger, and a mesmerising jazz-country style, Willie Nelson is a little guy who can command an entire huge audience. ***Live at Budokan 2/23/84 Tokyo*** might seem to some merely a relic from the past, but I've also seen much later film of Nelson where he performs with the same absolute sense of authority and brilliant guitarwork.

I recommend two surprising documentaries that might pass you by. **M. C. Escher**, by **Robin Lutz**, not only tells about Escher and his work, but also incorporates Escher's mind-bending images into the film itself. It's as if Escher directed

a film about his own work.

Three Identical Strangers seems like a mere entertainment when you start watching. Three strangers do discover that they are all related — all from the same family. Much celebration. They enjoy discovering each other, but only slowly do the implications of the discovery sink in.

Tim Minchin's *Live: Ready for This* is one of three concerts in a DVD boxed set. Somehow I had thought he was just a stand-up comic and sit-down cabaret performer. But no! Minchin comes across as a total madman on stage, hurling his show at the audience and constantly taking them by surprise.

James Morrison (*Live at the Sydney Opera House*) is a great showman, as both a jazz trumpeter and all-round entertainer.

And what can you do but celebrate the life and work of **Dr John (Mac Rebennack): *The Musical Mojo of Dr John***? Lots of guest stars, and many songs I'd not heard before, as well as the Dr John standards, such as 'Such a Night'.

THE CHART

- 1 WASH MY SOUL IN THE RIVER'S FLOW: ARCHIE ROACH AND RUBY HUNTER (2021) Philippa Bateman
- 2 SOUTH: ERNEST SHACKLETON AND THE ENDURANCE EXPEDITION (1919) Frank Hurley
- 3 SHACKLETON'S BOAT JOURNEY (1999) Harding Dunnett & John Bardell
- 4 LOVE IN BRIGHT LANDSCAPES (2021) Jonathan Alley
- 5 BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & THE E STREET BAND: BORN IN THE USA LIVE: LONDON 2013 (2013) Chris Hilson
- 6 WILLIE NELSON LIVE AT BUDOKAN 2/23/84 TOKYO (1984)
- 7 M. C. ESCHER (2018) Robin Lutz
- 8 TIM MINCHIN LIVE: READY FOR THIS (2009)
- 9 JAMES MORRISON: ON THE EDGE: LIVE AT THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE (2009)
- 10 THREE IDENTICAL STRANGERS (2018) Tim Wardle

- 11 CODEBREAKER (2011) Claire Benson & Mac Stacey
- 12 RIVER (2021) Jennifer Peedom
- 13 THE MUSICAL MOJO OF DR JOHN: CELEBRATING THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC (2016) Justin Kreutzman
- 14 LYGON STREET: SI PARLA ITALIANO (2013) Shannon Swan

OTHER FOUR-STAR CONTENDERS, IN THE ORDER SEEN:

JOHN MELLENCAMP: THE GOOD SAMARITAN TOUR 2000 (2001) Shan Don Horan
 CONQUEST OF SPACE (1955) Byron Haskin
 THE MARX BROS: HOLLYWOOD'S KINGS OF COMEDY (2016)
 MUMFORD AND SON: LIVE FROM SOUTH AFRICA: DUST AND THUNDER (2016) Dick Carruthers
 FALLOUT (2013) Lawrence Johnston
 THE SOUTH BANK SHOW: BOGART: HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU (1997)

Classical concert films

TASTING NOTES

Once upon a time I could buy DVDs and Blu-rays of classical concerts at shops such as Discurio and Thomas'. They are no more. Worse, there seems to be no classical music store left in Australia. Fortunately, Dick Jenssen has kept buying classical concert Blu-rays, and he gave us some during 2022. The visual style varies a bit: from pop concert-style jittery photography to well-directed photography that dwells more on the individual instruments as they are playing than they do on the conductor. Each offers a top performance in 24-bit sound.



THE CHART

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | EUROPA KONZERT 2003:
BOULEZ/BERLIN PHILHARMONIC/
MARIA JOAO PIRES: RAVEL/MOZART/
BARTOK/DEBUSSY (2003) Bob Coles | | BERLIN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA:
ELGAR: CELLO CONCERTO/LIGETI:
ATMOSPHERES/WAGNER: PRELUDE TO
LOHENGRIN/STRAVINSKY: RITE OF
SPRING (2014) Torben Schmidt Jacobsen |
| 2 | MUSSOURGSKY: PICTURES AT AN
EXHIBITION/BORODIN: SYMPHONY NO.
2: Simon Rattle and Berlin Philharmonic
Orchestra (2008) Elizabeth Maizer | 4 | KORNGOLD: DIE TOTE STADT (2021)
Kirill Petrenko (cond.)/Marianne Hoyer
(dir.) |
| 3 | SIR SIMON RATTLE/SOL GABETTA/ | | |
-

Favourite television seen on disc for the first time in 2022

TASTING NOTES

Many TV shows are now not being issued on disc. Fortunately, many of my favourite shows have been issued on boxed sets.

Foyle's War is the best long-run TV show I've ever watched, so I watched all episodes again during 2022. (I don't binge. I watch one episode per night.)

That box was followed by a viewing of the complete David Suchet **Poirot** episodes, which became steadily more interesting as Suchet be-

came more and more involved in production as well as being the star actor. For example, his production of **Murder on the Orient Express** is very much better than either of the two cinema versions.

It's up to the viewer as to whether **Lewis** or **Endeavour** is the best series, although neither is as interesting as **Inspector Morse**, the show that spawned them both. The quality of the scripts for **Lewis** is consistently very high. The producers of **Endeavour**, however, have done very peculiar things to the early professional life of Endeavour Morse, including casting an actor (Sean Evans as

young Morse) who looks nothing like John Thaw (Inspector Morse). It's not clear how the young Morse ever survived the rigorous police environment of the sixties in order to become a Detective Inspector in the eighties.

Vera has settled down into a strictly formulaic police detective show, but I enjoyed the episodes of Season 11.

The script writers for **Shetland** seem to have decided to torture their main character to within an inch of his life. The continuing story featured in Season 5 becomes very peculiar by the last episode.

THE CHART

- 1 FOYLE'S WAR, Seasons 1–9 (2002–2014)
- 2 AGATHA CHRISTIE'S POIROT, Seasons 1–13 (1992–2013)
- 3 LEWIS, Seasons 1–9 (2006–2015)
- 4 ENDEAVOUR, Seasons 7–8 (2020–21)
- 5 VERA: Season 11 (2021)
- 6 SHETLAND, Season 5 (2021)



Favourite popular CDs heard for the first time in 2022

TASTING NOTES

- 213 CDs heard for the first time in 2022.
- 174 popular music CDs.
- 39 classical music CDs.

Which of the art forms gives greatest pleasure? I vote for music listening, although watching films also has a great ability to let me detach myself from what is derisively called 'the real world'. Every little silver disc box is an education, especially as most of them still print song lyrics and information about the performers.

I keep being told that the CD is on the way out. If so, my bank account would be a lot healthier. The lists below includes only those CDs listened to for the first time. I do not keep a list of every CD I listen to —



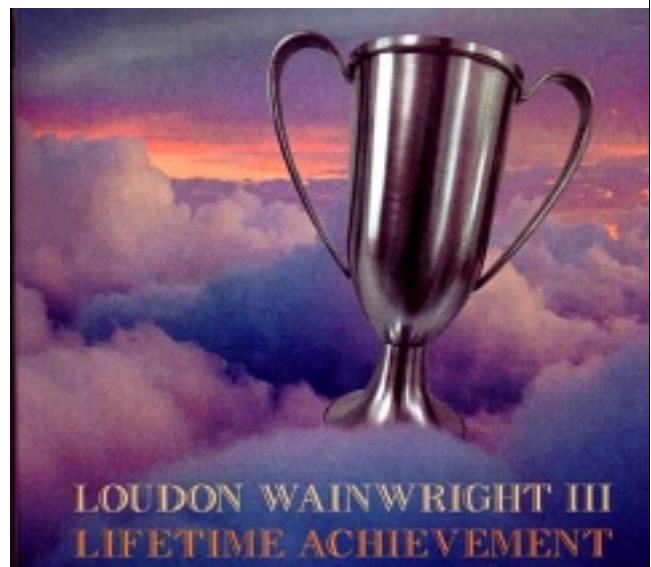
such a list would probably be over 300 per year.

Some of the tracks on the **Rolling Stones' *El Mocambo 1977*** appeared as the extra LP side on the *Love You Live* double-LP back in 1977. The performances sounded very low-fi then. In 2022 arrived the CD with the complete concert, remastered. The Stones have always performed best in small halls, as can be heard on the *Stripped* boxed set from a few years ago. It's a pity we have no similar concert from the Mick Taylor days (1969–74), but it's good to find on this *El Mocambo* performance Ronnie Wood at his best.

One slight problem: how could I get a copy? My friend Dave from Readings was told that the local distributor was not even going to import the CD! I placed an order anyway. Then suddenly a copy appeared at our local JB Hi Fi store, despite its usual stock practices, which can only be described as 'slack'. Julian Warner was able to obtain his own copy from JB Hi Fi in the city. Two months later, Dave told me that the copy I had ordered through Readings had finally turned up from overseas. I'm sure Readings was able to sell the copy immediately. *El Mocambo 1977* has a special place in my musical heart. Truly, play this record loud!

As I've already written in *SFC* and in *ANZAPA*, **Loudon Wainwright's** songs have been the bellwether for my own fortunes over the years. We're not quite the same age, so Loudon was 76 late last year. I suspect that he is not so much feeling his age as feeling that he should feel old. The songs on ***Lifetime Achievement*** are as sprightly as ever, often very amusing, but also tinged with an awareness that this could be his last CD.

Loudon and I are mere whippersnappers compared to **Willie Nelson**, who celebrated his ninetieth birthday at the end of April with a gigantic concert featuring most of his old friends (some nearly as old as him). Willie and his recent song-writing collaborator **Gus Cannon** have produced a series of CDs in recent years that reflect both the amusing and sad aspects of getting old. The songs are somewhat more astute and amusing than those of, say, Mick Jagger during the last 30 years. The songs on ***A Beautiful Time*** are as splendid as ever, and Willie (and his trusty guitar Trigger) sound little different than they did in 1984. The recently released ***Live at Budokan: Tokyo Japan 2/23/84*** (2 CDs and a DVD) gives us, if what I read is correct, pretty much the same performance and song-list formula as can still be heard at any Willie Nelson concert. He starts and ends with the song 'Whiskey River', and combines self-written songs (but not enough of them), newer songs, and quite a few standards. There's an absolute reliability about Willie Nelson's performance that is re-



assuring, and it's great to hear more of Willie's magnificent guitar playing than is usually heard on his studio albums.

Neil Young has been blasting from the past for some years now. Most of his recently released concert CDs are a bit disappointing, because they are derived mainly from the period from 1971 to 1974 that Neil recalls with greatest nostalgia. The 10 CDs of ***Archives, Vol. 2*** feature mainly concerts from that era. Therefore it has been a great pleasure to listen to ***Toast***, recorded at the Toast Studios in California in 2000 with Crazy Horse. Here are some very good songs (new to us, although he's probably been performing them for the last 23 years) and an intense quality in the singing that hasn't always been heard on his other recent CDs. For instance, ***World Record***, his new studio album with Crazy Horse, features one CD of tepid performances, plus a 16-minute CD-EP of a new song, 'Chevrolet', a classic Neil Young guitar-blast-epic.

It will not surprise you to be told that many of my CDs have been put onto the shelf before being played. During 2022 I've been playing more and more CDs from the past. Elaine has been playing her CD of the Day for some years now. This process often turns up CDs that neither of us has heard. She draws the line at playing all my Bob Dylan or Willie Nelson CDs. Elaine does suggest from time to time that such-and-such CD might not be worth keeping, and sometimes I agree with her. Some of the best oldies that turned up in 2022 include **Fred Eaglesmith's *Milly's Cafe*** (2006), his best CD (i.e. the one with the funniest lyrics), two of **Bob Neuwirth's** very occasional CDs — he wrote magnificent songs and had a beguiling voice but recorded very few albums before his recent death — **Gary Clark Jr's *Live*** double-CD, which reminds me of why I started buying his records in the first

place; and several historical performances by **Bruce Springsteen**.

I keep looking out for new CDs by my old favourites, but the search can be difficult. For instance, I'm sure I saw in a tiny one-paragraph review in *Mojo* magazine that **Joe Ely** released a new CD last year. I've just trawled through my copies of *Mojo* and *Uncut*, but cannot find that review. And Joe's Wikipedia entry is not up to date.

So when Lyle Lovett released **12th of June** last year, I hoped that I had not missed out on one of his CDs. Not so. For reasons best known to him and his record company, this is his first CD for 10 years. The mixture is the same, a nice combination of jazz-style and country-style songs delivered in that sardonic precise voice, plus a band of America's best session musicians. Lyle sounds all the better for the 10-year layoff.

THE CHART

- 1 Rolling Stones: EL MOCAMBO 1977 (2022)
- 2 Loudon Wainwright III: LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT (2022)
- 3 Neil Young: TOAST (2022)
- 4 Fred J. Eaglesmith: MILLY'S CAFE (2006)
- 5 Willie Nelson: LIVE AT BUDOKAN: TOKYO JAPAN 2/23/84 (2 CDs + DVD) (2022)
- 6 Willie Nelson: A BEAUTIFUL TIME (2022)
- 7 Lyle Lovett: 12TH OF JUNE (2022)
- 8 Bob Neuwirth: 99 MONKEYS (1999)
- 9 John Cale & Bob Neuwirth: LAST DAY ON EARTH (1994)
- 10 Sierra Ferrell: LONG TIME COMING (2021)
- 11 Dr John: THINGS HAPPEN THAT WAY (2022)
- 12 William Creighton: WATER AND DUST (2022)
- 13 Corb Lund: SONGS MY FRIENDS WROTE (2022)
- 14 Mose Allison: YOUR MIND IS ON VACATION (1976)
- 15 Aaron Lee Tasjan: SILVER TEARS (2016)
- 16 Bruce Springsteen: IN CONCERT: MTV PLUGGED (1992)
- 17 Various: THE MUSICAL MOJO OF DR JOHN: CELEBRATING MAC AND HIS MUSIC (2 CDs + Blu-ray) (2016)
- 18 Bruce Springsteen: CHIMES OF FREEDOM (1987)
- 19 Various: LIVE FOREVER: A TRIBUTE TO BILLY JOE SHAVER (2022)
- 20 Gary Clark Jr: LIVE (2 CDs) (2014)
- 21 Neil Murray: OVERNIGHTER (2007)
- 22 Lou Reed: NYC MAN (2 CDs) (2003)
- 23 Neil Murray: THE WONDERING KIND (2000)
- 24 Dolly Parton: RUN ROSE RUN (2022)
- 25 Eva Cassidy: LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY (1996/2021)
- 26 Calxico: EL MIRADOR (2022)

- 27 Patti Griffin: TAPE: HOME RECORDINGS AND RARITIES (2022)
- 28 Todd Snider: LIVE: NEAR TRUTHS AND HOTEL ROOMS (2003)
- 29 John Mellencamp: STRICTLY A ONE-EYED JACK (2021)
- 30 Buddy Guy: THE BLUES DON'T LIE (2022)
- 31 Mose Allison: THE WAY OF THE WORLD (2010)

FOUR-STAR ITEMS IN THE ORDER IN WHICH I HEARD THEM:

- Ramblin' Jack Elliott: A STRANGER HERE (2001)
- Todd Snider: FIRST AGNOSTIC CHURCH OF HOPE AND WONDER (2021)
- David Olney: DON'T TRY TO FIGHT IT (2007)
- Courtney Barnett: THINGS TAKE TIME, TAKE TIME (2021)
- TEX PERKINS & THE FAT RUBBER BAND (2021)
- Lucinda Williams: BOB'S BACK PAGES: A NIGHT OF BOB DYLAN (LU'S JUKE BOX No. 3) (2021)
- BUDDY & JULIE MILLER (2021)
- Tony Joe White: SMOKE FROM THE CHIMNEY (2021)
- Tony Joe White: UNCOVERED (2006)
- Herbie Hancock: TAKIN' OFF (1962)
- Roy Rogers: SPLIT DECISION (2005)
- Sam Teskey: CYCLES (2021)
- Etta James: THE RIGHT TIME (1992)
- Etta James: BLUES TO THE BONE (2004)
- Various: BROKEN HEARTS & DIRTY WINDOWS: SONGS OF JOHN PRINE, VOL. 2 (2021)
- Sting: THE BRIDGE (2021)
- Pat Metheny: SIDE-EYE NYC (2021)
- Dire Straits: LIVE AT THE BBC (1995)
- Commander Cody & His Western Airmen: LIVE FROM THE SUNBANKS FESTIVAL (2018)

Colin Hay: FIERCE MERCY (2017)

Flatlanders: TREASURE OF LOVE (2021)

Various: GARTH HUDSON PRESENTS A CANADIAN CELEBRATION OF THE BAND (2010)

John Sebastian & Arlen Roth: EXPLORE THE SPOONFUL SONGBOOK (2021)

Mike Campbell & Dirty Knobs: ETERNAL COMBUSTION (2022)

Ray Wylie Hubbard: CO-STARRING TOO (2022)

Stephen Cummings: LOVETOWN (1992)

Del-Lords: BASED ON A TRUE STORY (REISSUE) (1988/2009)

Drive-by Truckers: THE FINE PRINT: A COLLECTION OF ODDITIES AND RARITIES 2003–2008 (2009)

Nanci Griffith: RUBY'S ARMS (2006)

Woody Guthrie: THIS MACHINE KILLS FASCISTS (3 CDs) (2005)

Sue Foley: PINKY'S BLUES (2021)

Bill Evans Trio: SUNDAY AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD 1961 (2008)

Warumpi Band: WARUMPI ROCK: PANUNYA SESSIONS 1982 (2021)

Xavier Rudd: JAN JUC MOON (2022)

Lou Reed: LIVE IN ITALY (1983/1992)

Old Crow Medicine Show: PAINT THIS TOWN (2022)

Ry Cooder & Taj Mahal: GET ON BOARD: THE SONGS OF SONNY TERRY & BROWNIE McGEE (2022)

Molly Tuttle & Golden Highway: CROOKED TREE (2022)

Waifs: LIVE FROM THE UNION OF SOUL NATIONAL TOUR 2008 (2009)

Neil Young: ROXY: TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT LIVE 1973 (2017)

Bonnie Rait: JUST LIKE THAT (2022)

Beth Hart: A TRIBUTE TO LED ZEPPELIN (2022)

Fred Eaglesmith: CHA CHA CHA (2010)

Various: LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL: 16 TRACKS OF THE WILDEST NEW ORLEANS SOUL AND R&B (2003)

Shovels & Ropes: MANTICORE (2022)

Tord Gustavson Trio: OPENING (2022)

Tom Petty: ANGEL DREAM (2021)

JOHNNY CASH SINGS HANK WILLIAMS ... AND OTHER FAVOURITE TUNES (2003)

BOBBY CHARLES (1972)

Various: SOUND BLASTERS: A RAISING SAND COMPANION: 15 SONGS CHOSEN BY ROBERT PLANT & ALISON KRAUS (2021)

Jerry Lee Lewis: 18 ORIGINAL SUN GREATEST HITS (1984)

Drive-by Truckers: THE BIG TO-DO (2014)

Various: A TRIBUTE TO WOODY GUTHRIE (1968/1970) (1972/1976/1989)

Keri Leigh: ARRIVAL (1995)

Neil Young: THE MOJO COLLECTION: 10 CLASSIC AND RARE NEIL YOUNG TRACKS (2022)

Various: GUS DUDGEON PRODUCTION GEMS (2021)

Whitlams & Sydney Symphony: LIVE IN CONCERT (2008)

ZZ Top: RAW: 'THAT LITTLE OL' BAND FROM TEXAS' ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK (2022)

David Olney: THIS SIDE OF THE OTHER (2018)

Various: OUTLAW: CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF WAYLON JENNINGS (2012) (+ DVD)

Son House: FOREVER ON MY MIND (2022)

Bill Evans: THE COMPLETE INTERPLAY (2 CDs) (1957/1962/2022)

John Mellencamp: OTHER PEOPLE'S STUFF (2018)

Various: EVERYBODY SLIDES, VOL. 2 (1993)

Various: JOY (2000)

Johnny Cash: SONGS OF OUR SOIL (1959/2002)

Bobby Charles: WISH YOU WERE HERE RIGHT NOW (1995)

Kris Kristoffersen: LIVE AT GILLIE'S 15 SEP 1981 (2022)

Various: YOUNGER THAN YESTERDAY: 16 TRACKS INSPIRED BY THE BYRDS (2012)

Jakob Dylan: WOMEN & COUNTRY (2010)

Fred Eaglesmith: TINDERBOX (2008)

Bob Geldof: THE HAPPY CLUB (1992)

Flatlanders: HILLS AND VALLEYS (2009)

OI' 97s: GRAVEYARD WHISTLING (2017)

Ben Harper: BLOODLINE MAINTENANCE (2022)

Jerry Lee Lewis: MEAN OLD MAN (2010)

Various: A TRIBUTE TO JONI MITCHELL (2007)

Vikka & Linda: GEE WHIZ, IT'S CHRISTMAS (2022)

First Aid Kit: PALOMINO (2022)

Neil Young & Promise of the Real: NOISE AND FLOWERS (2022)

Mavis Staples & Levon Helm: CARRY ME HOME, 2011 (2022)

Neil Young & Crazy Horse: WORLD RECORD (2 CDs) (2022)

Nitty Gritty Dirt Band: DIRT DOES DYLAN (2022)

Alison Kraus & Union Station: PAPER

AIRPLANES (2011)
Neil Young: YOUNG SHAKESPEARE (2021)
Lucinda Williams: RAMBLIN' (1978/1991/2001)
Freya Josephine Hollick: THE REAL WORLD
(2022)
Various: RHYTHMS 30 YEARS 1992–2022

(2022)
Creedence Clearwater Revival: AT THE ROYAL
ALBERT HALL APRIL 14 1970 (2022)
The Chieftains: THE BELLS OF DUBLIN (1991)
Steve Earle and the Dukes: JERRY JEFF (2022)

Favourite popular boxed sets bought during 2022

THE CHART

Blossom Dearie: FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS PLUS
(2 CDs)
Various: THE WINNERS: 50 GOLDEN GUITAR
AWARDS (4 CDs)

Tedeschi Trucks Band: I AM THE MOON (4 CDs)
Iggy Pop: A MILLION PRIZES: THE ANTHOLOGY
(2 CDs)
Willie Nelson: LIVE AT BUDOKAN (2 CDs + DVD)

Favourite classical CDs heard for the first time in 2022

TASTING NOTES

Should I include my classical chart or not? All the music that Elaine and I hear on the radio is classical, and we do have friends for whom a knowledge of classical music is as natural as breathing. I kept meeting fans in America during my 2005 trip who enjoyed classical music as much as I do. Discovering classical music in 1968 was one of the great liberating experiences of my life. I felt as if I had leapt upward and outward from the emotionally flat world of the limited pleasures of popular music into a vast sky full of vast new pleasures, and I still feel that way. To listen to a great work played by great performers is still a liberating experience.

Even so, there is classical music and there is classical music. Most performers in orchestras are hired hands, and many sound as if they are merely going through their paces playing very familiar pieces. My quest is to find those magical performances that transform great works, even those with which I am very familiar.

Occasionally I find performances that I overlooked many years ago. When in 1974 I bought the LP set of **Ole Schmidt's** versions of **Nielsen's symphonies** I was not impressed. They are, after all, one of the great achievements of twentieth-century symphonic music, and I do have other LP and CD versions of each of the symphonies (especially Jascha Horenstein's version of Symphony No. 5). The Schmidt recordings sounded very

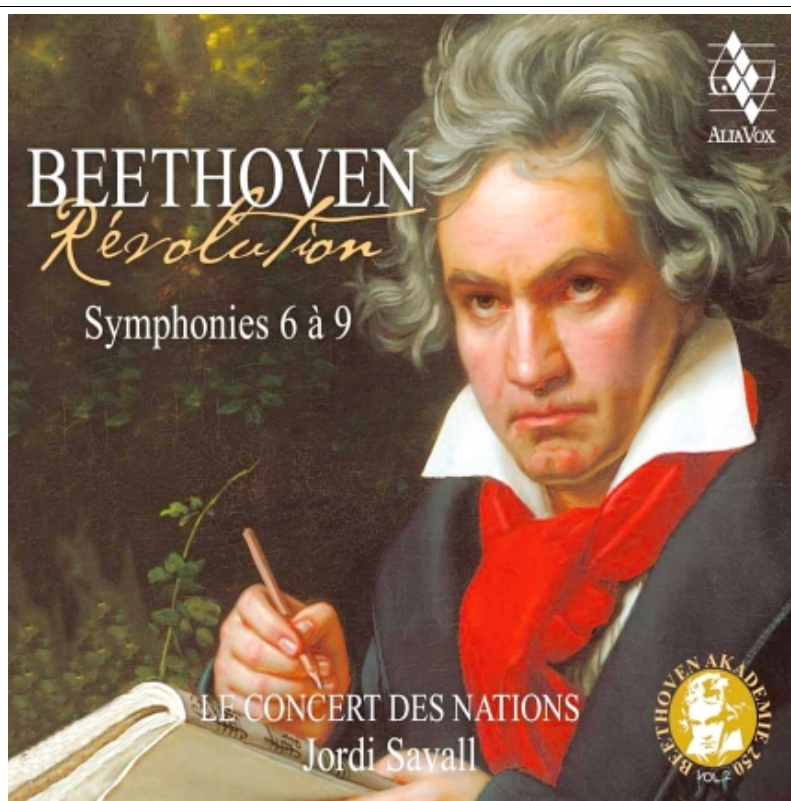
recessed when played on the turntable and speakers I owned at the time. I had seen a recent re-release of these recordings on CD, but had not bought them. But in 2022, I started playing my old 1970s LP set on the Rega Planar turntable I bought



nearly 40 years ago. Magic! On my first turntable I had not heard their richness of detail and the brilliance of the recording sound. I started with Symphony No. 4, aptly named 'The Inextinguishable'. It does sound like being swept along in the torrent of an inextinguishable river.

It's hard to believe that any orchestra could do something quite new with the **Beethoven symphonies**, but that's what **Jordi Savall** and **Le Concert des Nations** have done over the last three years. I'm not quite sure how they achieve the transformation found on their two sets of SACDs (the first issued two years ago), but it is startling. A combination of small orchestra, perfect acoustics, an emphasis on the percussive section of the orchestra, and fiery conducting produces sound layers in the Beethoven symphonies that I have never noticed before. The highlight of the new set is the Symphony No. 7, as the Symphony No. 3 was the highlight of the first set.

Elaine and I are still playing our way through the boxed sets that I bought a few years ago when I thought I had the cash to do so. Hence we keep finding remarkable performances by **Arturo Toscanini** and the **NBC Symphony Orchestra**, recorded in the 1930s to the 1950s, now remastered and available on the RCA boxed set of his complete recordings. The sound is very low-fi, of course, but we can still hear Toscanini performances that are original and still unsurpassed — even pieces I've never liked much in the past, such as Tchaikovsky's 'Manfred' Symphony. His performance of



Brahms' Symphony No. 3, which is hardly my favourite piece of Brahms, sounds fresh and interesting, although recorded nearly 80 years ago.

Australia's **Sir Charles Mackerras** could usually be relied upon to produce fresh-sounding recordings of familiar music. His specialty was Czech music, especially that of Leos Janacek. I've long been familiar with Karel Ancerl's version of Janacek's greatest work, his *Sinfonietta*, but had never played the CD of Mackerras's version, which is even more exciting. The 'fillers', **Taras Bulba** and **The Cunning Little Vixen** are also fresh and interesting.

THE CHART

Abbreviations:

- cond. = conductor of an orchestra
- symph. orch. = symphony orchestra
- v = violin
- c = cello
- bar. = baritone
- p = piano
- t = tenor.

- 1 Ole Schmidt (cond.): London Symphony Orch.: **Nielsen: Symphony No. 4 ('Inextinguishable')** (LP set)
- 2 Jordi Savall (cond.)/Le Concert des Nations: **The Beethoven Revolution: Beethoven: Symphonies Nos 6-9** (3 SACDs)
- 3 Charles Mackerras (cond.)/Vienna Philharmonic Orch.: **Janacek: Sinfonietta/Taras Bulba/The Cunning Little Vixen** (1978/1980)
- 4 Jacques Loussier Trio (jazz piano quartet): **Four Classic Albums** (2 CDs) (1960-62)
- 5 Gil Shaham (v)/Neeme Jarvi (cond.): **Arvo Part: Fratres/Tabula Rasa/Symphony No. 3** (1997/1999) (Gil Shaham Complete DG Recordings, CD 10)
- 6 John Storgards (cond.)/Tempere

- Philharmonic Orch./Marko Ylovven (c): **Peteris Vasks: *Symphony No. 3/Cello Concerto*** (2006) (SACD)
- 7 Arturo Toscanini/NBC Symph. Orch.: **Tchaikovsky: *'Manfred' Symphony/'Romeo and Juliet'*** (1949/1946) (*Toscanini on RCA*, CD 19)
- 8 Mario Giulini (cond.)/Chicago Symph. Orch./Furtwangler (cond.)/Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (bar.): **Mahler: *Symphony No. 1/Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen*** (1952) (*Mahler Complete Works*, CD 2)
- 9 Leonard Bernstein (cond.)/Concertgebouw Orch./Netherlands Broadcasting Foundation Chorus: **Beethoven: *Missa Solemnis Op. 123*** (1979) (*Bernstein on DG*, CD 10)
- 10 Ruth Slenczynska (p): **My Life in Music: Rachmaninoff/Barber/Chopin/Grieg/Debussy/Bach** (2022)

FOUR-STAR CLASSICAL CDs IN ORDER OF LISTENING

- Max Brogado-Darman (cond.)/Asia Polo (c)/Mikhail Ourutsky (v)/Castille and Léon Symph. Orch.: **Rodrigo: *Cello Concerto in Modo Galante/Violin Concerto/Cello Concerto Condo un Divertimento/Violin Concerto*** (2002)
- Richard Tauber: **Rendezvous with Richard Tauber** (LP)
- Georg Solti (cond.)/Chicago Symph. Orch.: **Bartok: *Concerto for Orchestra/Dance Suite*** (1981) (*Solti Chicago SO Complete Recordings*, CD 42)
- Georg Solti (cond.)/Chicago Symph. Orch.: **Bartok: *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta/Dance Suite/Divertimento/Miraculous Mandarin Suite*** (*Solti Chicago SO Complete Recordings*, CD 76)
- John Cargher: **Australian Singers of Renown** (LP)
- Murray Perahia (p)/Radu Lupu (p): **Mozart: *Sonata for Two Pianos K 448/Schubert: Fantasia for Piano Four Hands D 940*** (1985/1992)
- Herbert von Karajan (cond.)/Berlin Philharmonic Orch.: **Verdi: *Messa da Requiem*** (2 CDs) (1972) (*Karajan Sacred and Choral Recordings*, CDs 9–10)

- Arturo Toscanini/NBC Symph. Orch.: **Brahms: *Symphony No. 3/Double Concerto*** (1952) (*Complete Toscanini at RCA*, CD 8)
- Arturo Toscanini/NBC Symph. Orch.: **Mozart: *Bassoon Concerto K 191/Divertimento No. 15, K 281/Symphony No. 35 ('Haffner')*** (*Complete Toscanini at RCA*, CD 10)
- Klaus Tennstedt (cond.)/London Philharmonic Orch.: **Mahler: *Symphony No. 5*** (1988) (*Complete Mahler Works*, CD 7)
- Richard Auldson Clark (cond.): Manhattan Chamber Orch./Chris Gekker (t): **Hovhanness: *Mountains and Rivers Without End/Prayer of St Gregory/Aria from 'Haroutium'/Symphony No. 6/Return and Rebuild the Desolate Places*** (1994)
- Wilhelm Kempff (p)/Sviatoslav Richter (p)/Ferdinand Leitner (cond.)/Karl Böhm (cond.)/Berlin Philharmonic Orch.: **Beethoven: *Piano Concerto No. 5/Rondo for Piano and Orchestra/'Fidelio' Overture/'Leonore III' Overture*** (1962/1963/1969)
- Craig Ogden (gtr)/Alison Stephens (mandolin): **Music from the Novels of Louis de Bernières** (1999)
- Silesian Quartet/Piotr Szymyslik (clarinet): **Penderecki: *Complete Quartets and Clarinet Quartet*** (2021)
- Eder Quartet: **Shostakovich: *String Quartet No. 2, Op. 68/String Quartet No. 12, Op. 133*** (*String Quartets Complete*, CD 4) (1995)
- Wilhelm Kempff (p): **Beethoven: *Piano Sonatas Nos. 16–19*** (*Wilhelm Kempff Solo Piano*, CD 9)
- Arturo Toscanini/NBC Symph. Orch.: **Sibelius: *Symphony No. 2/Pohjola's Daughter/The Swan of Tuonela/Finlandia*** (1940/1944/1952) (*Toscanini on RCA*, CD XX)
- Rudolf Kempe (cond.)/Staatskapelle Dresden: **Richard Strauss: *Till Eulenspiegel's Lustige Streche, Op. 25/Don Juan, Op. 20/Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40*** (*Strauss Orchestral Works*, CD 3) (1975)
- Emerson String Quartet: **Brahms: *String Quartet No. 1 Op. 51/1/Schumann: String Quartet No. 3 Op. 41/3*** (1984) (*Emersons on DG*, CD 9)
- Arturo Toscanini/NBC Symph. Orch.: **Tchaikovsky: *'Manfred' Symphony/'Romeo and Juliet'*** (1949/1946) (*Toscanini on RCA*, CD 19)

John Hertz

The Worldcon I Saw:

Chicon VIII the 80th World Science Fiction Convention, 1–5 September 2022

Chicon VIII was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, USA. Attendance 4500 (3574 in person including 493 joining at the door + 947 who put in at least 1 hour ‘virtually’ i.e. *via* electronic media; we’re trying to get better at this hybrid style); in the Art Show, sales \$US82,000 by 83 artists, about half of what was for sale being sold, a success (our Art Show is both a sales gallery and a museum). Author Guests of Honor, Steven Barnes and Tananarive Due his wife; Fan Guests of Honor, Joe Siclari and Edie Stern his wife; special First Fandom Guest of Honor, Erle Korshak (1923–2021; invited while alive, then honored after death). The Website is <https://chicon.org>.

Historically, First Fandom is those active at the beginnings of fandom as we know it; in our early years we took the date of 1 January 1938; later, many thought we should calibrate by Nycon I, the first Worldcon, 2–4 July 1939; to name a few of these fine folk who were my friends, Dave Kyle, Jack Speer, Art Widner. Then there’s the First Fandom club some of them founded in 1959 (see for example https://fanac.org/fanzines/First_Fandom_Publications/), although when Bob Madle left our stage in October, that was the exit of the last of the historical First Fans; Madle was the first President, currently John L. Coker III.

The Hyatt Regency, one of few locations that can hold an entire Worldcon, had thus also been the site of Chicon IV–VII, each of which I was able to attend. These numbers by custom reflect some continuity in the hosting fandom; so, for example, LAcon II was not the second Los Angeles Worldcon, having been preceded not only by LAcon I (yes, we quarrelled over whether to capitalise the C for II) but by Pacificon I and SoLaCon (physically in LA although proclamations of both mayors put it formally at South Gate).

I went via Midway Airport. In 1931 it was the world’s busiest. It got its present name in 1949 honouring the Battle of Midway (4–7 June 1942, near Midway Atoll in the North Pacific; ‘one of the most consequential naval engagements in world

history’ (C. Symonds, *World War Two at Sea*, pp. 293, 2018). Newer O’Hare Airport to the north-east has surpassed it, but it’s plenty busy. Among its displays I saw four dozen colour photos *From Earth to the Universe from the International Year of Astronomy* (2009; 400th anniversary year of Galileo’s and Harriot’s observations, Kepler’s *Astronomia nova*); the electronic may see a video of this project (alas, called FETTU) around the world at <https://www.astronomy2009.org/resources/multimedia/videos/detail/iy1002a/>.

Chicon VIII required all to wear nose-and-mouth masks as an anti-COVID precaution. At Masquerade Registration, I was given a neat-o mask that said *Workmanship Judge*, which I wore throughout.

The Masquerade, once a fancy-dress party as its name suggests, evolved into an on-stage costume competition. Wonders appear. I’m often a Masquerade judge, sometimes the Master of Ceremonies. The main judges sit in the audience, seeing and hearing what everyone else does. Workmanship judging, developed later, is backstage, and optional; it can be *Only this gauntlet* if an entrant so chooses. Although I can’t sew, costumers evidently want me, possibly as Kelly Freas put it when I asked why he’d told a con committee I should be asked to lead an Art Show tour: ‘You seem to be able to say what you see.’ I’ve never forgotten that. I try to keep worthy of it.

We drift into factionalisation. Too few filkers (our home-made music, named after a 1950s typo of ‘folk’) do fanzines. Too few fanziners do costuming. Too few costumers attend the Business Meeting. If I may say so, it’s mundane to suppose there’s no interest but a special interest. Just the other day at a restaurant, with a book, I was asked ‘Are you a priest?’ Who else would have a book? Within living memory we in SF knew better. One of us said, *He sold his birthright for a pot of message*.

Alas for conversation-pieces, not even one person at the con asked me about the Masquerade, or judging it. Are we also drifting into the mundane

tendency to say and do nothing?

I had a few panel-discussion assignments and helped in the Fanzine Lounge.

I was also Chief Hall Costume Judge, recruiting my other judges on-site. Masquerade costumes are meant to be seen at a distance. Hall costumes, which some people wear for strolling the halls, are meant to be met, in the Dealers' Room, on an escalator, at a panel, in the hotel restaurant. The late great Marjii Ellers called them *daily wear for alternative worlds*. They can be original, or recreations of known images from magazine illustrations, video games, motion pictures, television, book jackets, comic books. Prowling judges acknowledge good ones by giving a rosette labelled *Hall Costume Award*, to be worn only with that costume.

David Ritter's 'First Fandom Experience' hosted a 1946 Project — the year for which C8 could have administered Retrospective Hugo Awards (Constitution of the World Science Fiction Society, Section 3.14) but chose not to — mounting sixteen panels and presentations. I was on three of the panels: 'A Vintage Season for SF' moderating Dave Hook, Trish Matson, and Alec Nevala-Lee (you accent the *Neu*); '1940: the first Chicon' with Sue Burke, Ritter, Alex Mui moderating; and 'Undiscovered and Forgotten Gems of 1946' with Michael Haynes, Nevala-Lee, Connie Willis, Matson moderating.

The First Fandom Experience had built a 1940s Fan's Den for the Exhibit Hall, with an (almost) working mimeograph and typewriter. The mimeo was the same model used by Bob Tucker, which the electronic may see at, for example, <https://file770.com/fanziners-too-convene/>. On the FFE, <https://firstfandomexperience.org>.

I was on two costume-interest panels: 'My First Masquerade' with Byron Connell, Seaboe Muffinchucker, Karen Purcell moderating; and 'Masquerade Magic: putting together a great presentation' where I moderated Connell and Muffinchucker.

The Fanzine Lounge was in the Riverside Exhibit Hall, lowest (which the hotel called Purple) level of the East Tower. There we were also able to put the Dealers' Room, fan tables (where clubs, coming conventions, bidders for future con sites, and others hoping to make friends, could be found saying *Learn more — Join us*), Richard Man's *Worldbuilders of SF* photos, site-selection voting for the 2024 Worldcon and 2023 NASFiC (North America SF Con, since 1975 held when the Worldcon is overseas), and some all-purpose hanging-around space. We had to put the Art Show in the West Tower, on the Gold level.

I may have coined 'Fanzine Lounge' for LAcon II the 42nd Worldcon. Alison Scott was in charge at C8. Across a big tabletop were, on one side, fanzines anyone could take; on the other, fanzines for looking through only. I brought her an armful myself. On another table was a place for contributions to WOOF (Worldcon Order Of Faneditors, founded 1976 by Bruce Pelz; an apa collated and distributed at Worldcons); this year Chris Garcia was in charge; the electronic may see the result at <https://efanzines.com/WOOF/WOOF-47.pdf>. Geri Sullivan hosted a Silent Auction to benefit the traveling-fan funds (for example, TAFF the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund, sends fans in alternating directions between North America and Britain–Republic of Ireland–Europe; DUFF the Down Under Fan Fund between Australia–New Zealand and North America).

I believe Noreascon III, the 47th Worldcon, invented what some of us have been calling the Concourse: exhibits, of which N3 had many; ideally also the Dealers' Room, the Art Show, fan tables, and lounge space. The N3 Concourse was 30,000 square feet (2800 square metres) in Hall C of the Hynes Auditorium, which attenders more or less had to pass through. It may have been devised to placate management of the Sheraton Boston Hotel worrying over our traffic. Anyway we've had it since, although the strangeness of our demands upon hotels, auditoriums, Convention Centres, has sometimes split it up or otherwise lessened its convenience. The C8 Concourse was on the lowest floor of the East Tower (the East and West Towers each had a floor the hotel named a 'Concourse Level', but never mind).

Filthy Pierre's freebie racks were near a bank of elevators and the Fanzine Lounge. Some years ago this big-hearted fan, seeing lots of fliers for one thing and another, but no good place for bringers to put them, or lookers to find them, built a set of racks — sturdier than office file folders, lighter than packing-boxes — labelled them as usefully as he could, and began installing them at cons he attended.

I miss his Voodoo Message Board; feeling it unappreciated, he won't do it now; I haven't been able to do it myself or get it done by anyone else. It's so called because you push pins into it. Filthy would get a list of Attending Members printed on strips of paper, say 6' (15 cm) wide, and mount them on vertical panels. On a table he'd put a box of map pins (short with big coloured heads, the ones he used being, naturally, red), memorandum paper, pencils, and a box of alphabetical index tabs for 3 x 5' (8 x 13 cm) cards. When you arrived at the con you underlined your name. Should you want to send someone a message, you looked to

see whether that person's name was underlined; if so you stuck a pin next to it, then put your message (with its date and time if you were smart) behind the addressee's index tab. During the con you would now and then look to see if your name had a pin; if so, you returned the pin to its box and took the message. You could only leave messages that (i) you didn't mind other people's seeing, and (ii) weren't too urgent. But you didn't need to know people's mobile-telephone numbers or electronic-mail handles, or where or with whom people were staying. You could tell whether a message had been received. And, for the ecology-minded, you consumed much less power than mobile phones, the rise of which led to declining use of the Message Board. I respectfully suggest it isn't obsolete, any more than, for example, pencils are obsolete; but such a thought few fans manage, alas.

Thursday, 5:30 p.m.: The title given to the 'Vintage Season' panel surely alluded to the superb novelette by Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore (writing as 'Lawrence O'Donnell'; after he and she married in 1940 both often said that everything they published, under any name — HK, CLM, O'Donnell, Lewis Padgett, a host of others — was a collaboration) in the September 1946 *Astounding* and often anthologised (starting with one of our best ever, *A Treasury of SF*, edited 1948 by one of our best ever, Groff Conklin). We talked of re-reading. Matson said she sometimes found that a book hadn't changed but she had. I quoted Nabokov's *You never appreciate a good book until you read it at least a second time*. Nevala-Lee said 'I'm a Campbell guy' (editor of *Astounding*, under him renamed *Analog*, from 1937 until his death in 1971; editor of *Unknown* through its four-year life) and spoke of how pivotal 1946 was — and Campbell was. ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator And Computer) was introduced in 1946. The first photo of Earth from Space was taken, by a United States rocket. H. G. Wells died. Leinster's pioneering short story 'A Logic Named Joe' was in the March 1946 *Astounding* (author's name rhymes with 'penster', like the province of Ireland). From the audience: the SF community was ahead of the curve. This brought up 'Is SF in the prediction business?' Matson said fiction could have many purposes. Hook said 'A Logic Named Joe' had characterisation.

Friday, 2:30 p.m.: 'My First Masquerade'. Karen Purcell ('Dr. Karen', 'Dr K'; she's a veterinarian) had been the Masq Director for Discon III (79th Worldcon). Connell had been Masq Director for Chicon VII (70th) and Anticipation (67th); he'd served as President of the International Costumers Guild; he'd been in the LAcon II Masq; he and

Cat Devereaux developed the Masq Green Room. Dr. K said 'I had horrible stage fright'; as many who've done theatre will tell, this can happen even to veterans; there are various ways over, around, through it. We turned to general discussion. From the audience: 'Practise with people who know you.' I said 'Do what you do, don't do what you don't do', in other words, play to your strengths. A con may have on-site rehearsal space available, ask the Masq Director. Generally, ask the Masq Director. How is a Masq Green Room like and unlike other theatre's? The Masq GR — as in vaudeville? — accommodates rivals. It has sub-groups, 'dens', each with a Den Mommy (who of course may be a man) to help as may be. I'll just hint to you what a logistical exercise the Green Room is. Dr K said, the Masq Director will try to arrange a show-and-tell session afterward for questions, complaints, applause. Connell said: 'We can seldom manage a true dress rehearsal, but usually have a tech rehearsal for lights, sound, familiarity with the stage; the Master of Ceremonies should be there; surprise the audience but not the tech crew and MC.'

7 p.m.: 'The First Chicon'. Chicon I in 1940 was the second Worldcon. At the time of the Japan Worldcon, the 65th and the first in Asia, I had said the Japan Worldcon was the most ambitious — except for the second. But this didn't come up. The C1 chair had been Mark Reinsberg; I understand he, Korshak (C1 secretary), and Tucker (C1 treasurer), were equal partners; some have called them a triumvirate. Dean Ziff, nephew of MR through MR's sister Helene, was at C8, as was Stephen Korshak, son of EK. Ziff and SK told our panel MR had been cautious, EK had been *go for it*. Tucker, it need hardly be said, was smooth (<https://fancyclopedia.org/Smooth>). E. E. Smith, the C1 Guest of Honor, Burke reminded us, was active both as a pro and a fan. Thanks to film historian Eric Grayson we saw *Monsters of the Moon*, a short silent that was never finished, introduced at C1 by Forry Ackerman, Ray Bradbury, and Ray Harryhausen. Ritter read from Smith's C1 speech — which, I later learned, Art Widner printed for Denvention I the 3rd Worldcon, and the electronic may see at <https://fanac.org/conpubs/Worldcon/Chicon%20I/Chicon%20I%20E.%20E.%20Smith%20speech.pdf#view=Fit>. Smith began:

'From the contemplation of any one isolated object or fact, a completely competent mind could envisage the entire Cosmos.' This thought ... not original with scientific-fiction authors ... [or] Goethe ... Aristarchus, Diogenes ... probably not ... even with the almost mythologically ancient, anonymous sage of

Thebes — or was it Chaldea? — whose glyphic writings seem to be its oldest known source.... such is [its] cogency ... fundamental rightness ... it must have [come to] the first real thinker of our human race.

and went on to say, *inter alia*,

I have attended dozens of conventions — for business, for work, and for play — but this one is unique. It is entirely different, in almost its every phase, from any other.

No Regency dancing (see, for example, 'The English Regency and Me', <http://www.jophan.org/mimosa/m29/hertz.htm>). I offered to host it, as I have at Worldcons and elsewhere for decades (at Noreascon II the 38th Worldcon, Judy Blish danced with me); no reply. But I took the costume along, because I like the custom of Masquerade judges' dressing up, and it's the funny-suit I'm known for.

I went to a combined-travelling-fan-funds party. TAFF and DUFF I've already mentioned; completing the triangle is GUFF, which when sending a fan from the United Kingdom–Republic of Ireland–Europe to Australia–New Zealand is the Going Under Fan Fund, and when sending a fan the other way is the Get-Up-and-Over Fan Fund. Also involved was FFANZ, the Fan Fund of Australia and New Zealand, which likewise alternates directions. This year was the 50th anniversary of DUFF, which started in 1972; Lesleigh Luttrell, the first DUFF delegate, was present. I the 2010 DUFF delegate rejoiced to meet her in person.

Saturday 10 a.m.: 'Undiscovered and Forgotten Gems of 1946'. I wish the title had been 'Neglected Gems'. We had a full house, about 60 people. Matson said, 'I enjoy seeing from different perspectives.' Haynes said, 'Today there's the help of the Internet Speculative Fiction Database' <https://isfdb.org> (maintained, I understand, by volunteers). Willis said: 'Originally I didn't know the pulps [born 1945]; but 1946 was a pivotal year.' Haynes mentioned the machine in Allison Harding's short story ('The Machine', *Weird Tales*, Sep 46; AH can also be found under the name Alice), which could map and graph the soul; also Bradbury's 'Rocket Skin' (*Thrilling Wonder Stories*, Spring 46; first reprinted in J. Eller ed., *The Collected Stories of Ray Bradbury: A Critical Edition*, Vol. 2, 2014), with 'riding the rails' magnetically on the outside of a ship. Willis asked how much 'Skin' sounded like Ray Bradbury. Haynes said, 'RB said RB was finding his voice in '46.' Willis said, "Vintage Season", an all-time favorite, mustn't be omitted.' Nevala-Lee said: 'Clarke had "Loophole" in the April 46 *Astounding* and "Rescue

Party" in the May issue.' Willis said: 'Jack Williamson was himself a gem.' Nevala-Lee mentioned 'two goofy stories', 'Placet Is a Crazy Place' [F. Brown, May 46 *Astounding*] and 'Meihem in ce Klasrum' [essay by K. W. Lessing as 'Dolton Edwards', September 46 *Astounding*]. Matson mentioned *It's a Wonderful Life* (F. Capra dir.) and *Stairway to Heaven* (E. Pressburger and M. Powell dirs.) for fantasy on film. I said: 'Don't forget seeing all these as they were seen then.'

2.30 p.m.: 'Masquerade Magic: Putting together a great presentation'. The real title was what followed the colon, alas. Also I think *presentation* poor terminology (terminology is not our strong suit): we have two sets of Masq judges, which we've taken to calling 'Presentation' and 'Workmanship'; I've done both; but 'presentation' is whatever a Masq entry does; good costumes that walk on, pose, turn, pose, walk off, beat ill-done comedy, drama. I've said so; those panelists knew I thought so, nor did I urge it there, being the moderator.

Roche said he was a song and dance man; he'd been in several entries that evoked large response; I add here he also was Masq Director at Dublin 2019 the 77th Worldcon, Masq Master of Ceremonies at Sasquan the 73rd, Chairman of Worldcon 76 (which was indeed the 76th, but we could do better with these names), and he a few hours later would win Best Reproduction in the C8 Masq. Muffinchucker said presentation had been her weak point; she'd learned from joining group entries. She advised a judicious use of props, and *be brief*. Roche said he'd been removing words (that is, for the MC to give); likewise he advised *no complicated choreography — or acting*. I said: 'Play to the audience, not the judges; play to your strengths.' Roche said: 'You can record narration so the MC needn't give it; also, words mustn't get in the way of image.' From the audience: 'Once we put our image on a banner.' Muffinchucker said: 'Friends may help'; for example, she knew a sound-engineer. From the audience: 'The tech crew can be your friend.' Roche said: 'On a stage which isn't raked [*raked* = back of stage higher], lower things upstage, for instance, footwear can disappear.' Connell said: 'The audience doesn't care about your dance ability.' I said: 'You can be forgiven', telling of the Worldcon Masq where a glittery motorcycle ridden by a giant glittery insect collapsed — but, no one hurt, got up, resumed, and in fact won Best in Show.

Time to go judge the Art Show. My fellow judges were Joni Dashoff, Jane Frank, Bob Passovoy (*inter alia* a high-school friend, and Fan GoH with his wife Anne at Chicon VI the 58th Worldcon). There were conspicuous absences: Vincent Di Fate was the only top pro artist (plus some fine Not For

Sale images by Kelly Freas); no Rotsler Award winners: ongoing sorrows in recent years, about which I've been unable to do more than guess. Lucy Synk's 'Strange New Worlds' got Director's Choice. We gave Best 2-D to Eric Wilkerson's 'Alien Lives Matter'; Best 3-D to John Douglass' 'Green Auto Tanker'; Best in Show to Di Fate's 'Outer Reach'. I was particularly happy to see work by Karisu, her husband Richard Man, Margaret Organ-Kean, España Sheriff. Sara Felix the ASFA (Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists) President had arranged an electronic-media Showcase, <https://chicon.org/home/whats-happening/exhibits/art-show/showcase/>; half the exhibiting artists accepted, one image each. Also at <https://chicon.org/home/whats-happening/exhibits/art-show/exhibiting-artists/>, about four-fifths of them (not always the ones in the Showcase) had links showing some of their work.

8 p.m.: The Masquerade. Our Original and Re-Creation Divisions acknowledge that some entries aren't meant to be original, but faithful; a Re-Creation entry should submit what we call documentation to the judges, and not assume familiarity with the source. Our Novice, Journeyman, and Master Classes are based on experience: after a major award at a comparable Masq you can no longer enter as a Novice; after three, no longer a Journeyman; any entrant may 'challenge up'.

What makes the task of the main judges so hard is that we've learned, over the years, there may not be a Most Dramatic or Most Beautiful or Best Comedy or any other category; too much individual variation, which is indeed a good thing. When we retire to deliberate, we have to consider *what were we shown? what was outstanding about it?* and invent awards. We have to be right and we have to be fast. If there were 50 entries, and we spent one minute on each, we'd be away for an hour. Too often we're at a table just in front of the stage. Sometimes — clearing it first with the Masq Director — I've taken my clipboard and conspicuously walked to the back of the hall, for perspective. I've discussed this in the costuming community, but I'm not aware that it's been done by anyone else.

At C8 my fellow Workmanship Judges were Karen Berquist-Dezoma and Leah O'Connor. We gave Best Workmanship, Novice to 'Tech from *The Bad Batch*' (Betsy Scott); Best Workmanship, Journeyman to 'Post-Apocalyptic Plague Shaman' (Snail Scott); Best Hidden Details—Toe Beans & Judge Bribes (Master) to 'A Tale of the 9 Lives that Sailed the 7 Seas' (Janine Wardale, Theresa Halbert, Tina Riggs, Lisa Satterland); Excellence in Hobbit Feet and Best Documentation (Master) to

'Arwen's Lament' (made by Rae Lundquist, Bill Hendricks, Ellen Rustad, Amáda Márquez Simula, Kevin Rustad); Best Workmanship, Master to 'Sadric the 86th and his Empress' (Pierre & Sandy Pettinger); Best Workmanship in Show to 'The Ocean Goddess' (Courtney Rayle). There was no Official Photographer, but Keith Stokes got some good photos, which the electronic may see at <http://www.midamericon.org/photoarchive/chicon8/22chicon22.htm> and <http://www.midamericon.org/photoarchive/chicon8/22chicon23.htm>; also some in the newsletter — electronic-only, alas; I learned of it much later — <https://chicon.org/2022/09/04/masquerade-astounding-faces-on-parade/>.

Sunday: I spent five or six hours taking Chengdu people around. When at Discon III their bid won for the 2023 Worldcon, I quoted Confucius to them, 'When you know something, to know that you know it; when you do not know something, to know that you do not know it: that is knowledge' (*Analects* 2:17). They seemed to recognise it, even in English; I discussed its application too. And here we were. The Dealers' Room was more or less self-evident. The Art Show wasn't: some things Not For Sale; not a juried show, that is, no authoritative body decides who exhibits or what or how much, but artists reserve space if they care to, with the side effect that some of our best art might not appear. The Exhibit Hall wasn't, partly because it too is not juried (the display of Hugos was good — we all use the same rocket ship, each Worldcon designs its own base; and the gadgets in the History of Worldcon Bidding were fun to explain). The Fanzine Lounge — samples on display helped. The Chengdu folks hadn't heard of *Fancyclopedia III* (https://fancyclopedia.org/Fancyclopedia_3) or the FANAC History Project (<https://fanac.org>); happily both had stations near the Fanzine Lounge. Happily the Rotsler Award exhibit (by Elizabeth Klein-Lebbink and me) showed fanart.

Site-selection results: We choose where the Worldcon will be by bidding and voting; Winnipeg, after losing to Chengdu in 2021, had resiliently bid for the 2023 NASFiC, and was unopposed; Glasgow for the 2024 Worldcon was unopposed. Worldcon voting is two years in advance, NASFiC voting one year; both votes were tallied at C8. Winnipeg and Glasgow each won — no foregone conclusion; they still had to get enough votes. The Winnipeg NASFiC will be called Pemmi-con. Glasgow's Fan Guests of Honour will be Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer.

White tie for the Hugo Awards, a man's most ceremonial costume, which I relish wearing for Hugo Night, our greatest event. I couldn't be disappointed by the Hugos; I already had been by the

ballot. I'll omit comment on the pro categories; the fan categories again were tragic. I don't mind people's nominating what they think best; I grieve over people's not nominating what they think best. Reaching the Best Fanzine ballot needed 29 nominations: *File 770* (File 770.com), despite having declined nomination, got 20; *SF Commentary* got 12, *Banana Wings* 11; not even that for *Alexiad*, *Beam*, *Far Journeys*, *Lofgeornost*, *Perryscope*, *Portable Storage*, and *This Here*. Best Fanwriter needed 32: Brialey got 7; not even that for Sandra Bond, Justin Busch, Nic Farey, Andy Hooper, Lucy Huntzinger, Fred Lerner, Ulrika O'Brien, Plummer, and, for that matter, me. Best Fanartist needed 15: Alison Scott got 9; not even that for Teddy Harvia, Sue Mason, O'Brien, Marc Schirmeister, España Sheriff, Taral Wayne. People for whom these names were worthy were silent.

Awards that ought to have been given on Hugo Night — and there aren't many — had been demoted to Opening Ceremonies. Mark Linneman received the Big Heart, our highest service award. George Price was placed in the First Fandom Hall of Fame. Doug Ellis and Deb Fulton received the Moskowitz Archive Award. A special C8 Committee Award was given to the Internet Speculative Fiction Data Base.

Monday: As with Discon III last year, the most important thing was that we managed to hold a Worldcon, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and other distractions. The Hugo Awards (and the *Astounding* and Lodestar Awards) were given. There was a Masquerade. There were panel discussions. There was a Fanzine Lounge. There was an Art Show, a Dealers' Room, an Exhibit Hall, fan tables. There was filking, a Hospitality Suite (often called the Con Suite because sponsored by the con itself). There were evening parties and other more or less organised occasions for socialising and for general hanging around (the colloquial shortening of which expression could lead to misinterpretation of 'We must all hang together or we shall hang separately' [B. Franklin, 2 Aug 1776]).

I've left out a lot. Conversations, the heart and soul of our cons — as it happened, many of mine at C8 were off the record. Convention tours — a fine notion, I should have taken one or two to see how they were managed. Table talks — a terminological improvement over 'Kaffeeklatsches'; we're seldom able to serve coffee. Art Show tours — usually I arrange these, and lead one myself; I don't know who ended up doing this. I had grievances, some of which I thought substantial; other people had some; in my perspective they were, not to excuse them, outweighed. The test of 'You'll be glad you did' applied.

During *Closing Ceremonies*, the Committee particularly thanked two volunteers — *volunteers* being another expression which could lead to misinterpretation: at our cons, in an important sense everyone is a volunteer; as with high spiritual institutions (if I may be excused for mentioning such things) East and West, *Everyone works, everyone eats* — David Kushner, who with MIMO (Move In, Move Out) alone put in 50 hours, and Marinda Darnell, who'd been voted Staff Member of the Year. Tamora's Legends, a project with Tamora Pierce, had sponsored 20 children and their families. The Worldcon Community Fund raised US\$24,000 from 140 sources to support 100 people. Siclari said it was the 50th anniversary of his first Worldcon, and 30th of the Worldcon he chaired (Magicon, the 50th). The Chengdu committee sang.

Supper with Sara Felix and Teddy Harvia. She had designed the Lodestar trophy, arranged the Showcase, headed Publications, designed a tartan for the Glasgow Worldcon duly accepted and placed in the Scottish Register of Tartans. As I was beginning to thank her, a runner came seeking me and escorted me to an evening party or other more or less organised occasion for socialising and for general hanging around.

— **John Hertz, March 2023**