



Jeanne Gomoll '86

WisCon 11

Science Fiction Convention

1987 FEBRUARY 20 - 22

at the Concourse Hotel ---
in downtown Madison

GUESTS OF HONOR

CONNIE WILLIS and AVEDON CAROL

Nebula & Hugo winning SF
writer, author of *Fire Watch* and
"Blued Moon"

Fan writer and critic, 1984 TAFF
winner, editor of *The Invisible
Fan*, and co-editor of *Chuch*

ATTENDING MEMBERSHIP PRICE

- * Before 1987 January 15 -- \$14.00
- * 1987 January 15 - February 19 -- NOT AVAILABLE
- * At the door, 1987 February 20 -- 22 -- \$20.00
- * Children under 12, if accompanied by a responsible adult member of WisCon 11 -- FREE

SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP PRICE (anytime) -- \$7.00

It's too early to give you details about our programming plans right now. But we can promise you our traditional multi-track program and event schedule featuring critical discussion and intellectual exploration on many topics in and around SF. You know... the sort of thing WisCon is famous for doing. This year we've invited Connie Willis, one of SF's best new women writers, to be GoH. If you've ever heard Connie Willis speak, you know about her charm and great sense of humor. To honor our second GoH, Avedon Carol, we'd like to do a bit more fanzine-related programming than usual. We hope lots of fanzine fans attend WisCon to welcome Avedon back to the US for a visit (from her new home in England). Come join us (Connie, Avedon and the WisCon crew) as we explore *written* SF and fantasy. Visit our dealers room, with its ample supply of booksellers. Our focus is still on feminism and feminist themes, which this year will extend to the masquerade and media presentations as well as panels.

WIS CON

Questions? Call 608/251-6226 (days) or 608/233-0326 (eves).

Please add my name and address to your mailing list. Please send the WisCon brochure (which will contain hotel reservation forms) to me when you publish it later this year. I would also like to receive information on the following:

- Art Show
- Dealers Room
- Masquerade
- Becoming a gopher
- Joining the WisCon Planning Committee

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Do you have a friend you think might like to attend WisCon? Send us their name(s) and address(es) and we will send them information.



SF³

Box 1624
Madison, WI
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Pulling Strings

Yes, it is true that the miracle occurred and that Jim Erickson did perform Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *Mythologies*, on the Saturday night of WisCon 10, February 22, 1986. But it's also true that no person could be said to have really heard the actual string quartet at the time.

You see, Jim didn't actually play the entire score that Saturday night. He didn't have enough time to prepare all six parts of the quartet. (*Mythologies*--a modern, impressionistic piece of music--is a "suite of six miniatures," including "The Ondine and the Knight," "The Mountain of Ice Spirits," "The Children of the Dawn," "Pecos Bill Rides the Wowzer," "Siva's Dance on the Burning Ground," and "Jupiter and Semele.") We gave Jim less than one week to prepare the cycle and he was able to offer the convention only four of the six miniatures.

Still, we refer to Jim's performance as a miracle, astonished that it occurred at all. The story behind it all is a complex and frustrating one; but mainly it's a tribute to the persistence of Nancy Cox and the professionalism and skill of Jim Erickson.

The story began many months before WisCon, when Yarbro offered the string quartet to WisCon for the performance at our tenth anniversary, when she would be honored as a guest of honor. The first time she'd been so honored (at WisCon 5), she gave us a piano concerto for which we hired a pianist to perform. And so it seemed like a good idea to try again. Though we recognized the fact that organizing a string quartet was a far more ambitious undertaking than arranging the concerto had been, we didn't realize at that point just how difficult it would turn out to be. Neither did Nancy Cox when she agreed to undertake the business of arranging for the concert.

Without Nancy's professional knowledge of music and her many connections to the music community in Madison, we would never have been able to organize the performance at all. Even so, Nancy encountered almost unsurmountable problems. Politics in the University Music Department nearly foiled her from the start. The *Mythologies* score languished in the *in box* of the department chair for many months before Nancy decided to discount his vague promises to find us a graduate group to perform the quartet. Nancy contacted Jason Thomas, the leader of the Strelowe Quartet, one of Madison's prestigious graduate groups, and he expressed much enthusiasm for the project and accepted the commission we offered for the performance of Quinn's composition. Unfortunately, Thomas' fellow musicians didn't share his willingness to take on the extra work. Performing a premiere as complex and demanding as is Yarbro's *Mythologies* is indeed a major undertaking. The Strelowe Quartet's crowded performance schedule and school pressures convinced the other members of the quartet to veto Thomas' acceptance. Thus, several weeks were lost to these negotiations.

Jason Thomas was disappointed, Nancy was discouraged, and the rest of us in the SF group were ready to give up. But not Nancy. She kept working on other possibilities and finally succeeded in rounding up a younger, but still very good group--the Youth Symphony Orchestra String Quartet. With only a month left till WisCon 10, the four young people went to work. Then, a week and a half be-

fore the convention, two of them came down with the flu, forcing the group to cancel.

You would think that Nancy would have thrown in the towel, right? Unbelievably, Nancy consulted with a rock musician friend and developed another idea: to hire a synthesizer artist to perform *Mythologies*. The rest is history. Jim Erickson agreed to do the cycle despite his heavy performance schedule for the upcoming week (4 gigs, including one on the *same night* as the performance of Quinn's music). And though he performed only 2/3 of *Mythologies* we count Jim's last moment rescue as nothing short of miraculous.

Programming a synthesizer to produce sounds that approximate those of a string quartet--two violins, a viola, and a cello--is no easy job. Interpreting and learning the complicated score of Yarbro's *Mythologies* had intimidated even the famous Strelowe Quartet. And so the fact that Jim completed those four pieces was an incredible accomplishment.

But, in fact, he performed quite brilliantly. Nancy Cox expressed her reaction this way: "Yarbro's *Mythologies* creates a new musical language for string quartets. Its complex rhythmic cadences and unearthly sonorities comprised an ancient freshness that both haunts and astounds the ear."

The composer, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, said afterward that she was very pleased by Jim's interpretation and performance. The music held several hundred science fiction fans spellbound for the 20-minute performance of a string quartet by a man and a machine. (Nancy introduced Jim by asking the audience to imagine that they were living in the future--long after the obsolescence of archaic *string* instruments.) At the end, Jim, his synthesizer, and Yarbro's music received a happy enthusiastic, standing ovation.

But still, no one has heard the actual string quartet yet. (And they won't for a long time if you want to quibble and insist that two violins, a viola and a cello will be required for the "real" premiere.) No one has heard the thing in its entirety yet.

Well, here's your chance. Did you attend the performance at WisCon and wish you could hear the rest? Did you miss the performance all together? Would you like to hear it complete? Send \$12.00 payable to SF³, and we'll send you a cassette recording of Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *Mythologies*, performed by Jim Erickson. This recording includes *all six parts*, and was completed by Jim during the months after WisCon 10.

This is a Once-In-A-Lifetime Offer! We will not keep extra copies of the cassette on hand for later sales. The number of orders received from this offer by October 1, 1986 will determine the number of cassettes produced. We do not intend to continue selling *Mythologies* beyond this single sale! And neither can you walk into your favorite specialty bookstore and find *Mythologies* on the SF racks along with mass-produced paperbacks. That's what makes this particular sort of SF so unique and why we're so pleased to have been able to give you a chance to experience it.

We hope other innovative musicians will be encouraged to perform this lovely work. It deserves further exploration.

Jeanne Gomoll
May, 1986

Please send me _____ cassette tape recordings of Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *Mythologies*, as performed by Jim Erickson on synthesizer. At \$12.00 per copy, plus \$1.50 postage, insurance and handling (\$2.50 outside US), I enclose a total of \$ _____.

Name _____

Street/Box No./Apt. No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

DEADLINE: October 1, 1986
Please make checks payable to SF³

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