

BRUM GROUP NEWS

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The monthly newsletter of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group

(Honorary Presidents: Brian W Aldiss and Harry Harrison)

Group Chair-Yvonne Rowse, Secretary-Martin Tudor, Treasurer-Alan Woodford, Publicity Officer-William McCabe, Ordinary Member-Anne Woodford, Newsletter Editor-Yvonne Rowse, Novacon 29 Chair-Carol Morton, Novacon 30 Chair-Tony Berry.

SIMON TAYLOR

**(editor with Transworld)
will address the BSFG on
Friday 14th May 1999, *
from 7.45pm, in the Lichfield Lounge,
second floor, Britannia Hotel, New Street,
(entrance in Union Passageway).**

**Drinks may be purchased from Harvey's Bar on the Mezzanine
level and taken up to the Lichfield on the second floor.**

**Admittance: Members £3.00 (£2.00 Unwaged), Non-Members £4.00
(£3.00 Unwaged). (*Unwaged discounts are at the discretion of the
Committee and will depend on satisfactory proof of status being
produced.*)** (*VB: the second Friday of the month.)

Forthcoming Meetings:***11th June – Ian Stewart******9th July – Robert Rankin***

The BSFG meets from 7pm in the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham, (entrance in Union Passageway), on the second Friday of each month (unless otherwise notified).

The annual subscription rates (which include 12 copies of this newsletter and reduced price entry to formal meetings) are £15.00 per person, or £20.00 for 2 members at the same address. Cheques etc. should be made payable to "The Birmingham Science Fiction Group" and sent to: Alan Woodford, The Treasurer, 81 Harrold Road, Rowley Regis, Warley, West Mids, B65 0RL, (e-mail enquiries via: bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk).

Book reviews, review copies and other contributions and enquiries regarding the Brum Group News to: Yvonne Rowse, Newsletter Editor, Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimpley, Worcs, DY12 1NP (or by e-mail to yvonne@hallsfarm.softnet.co.uk).

Simon Taylor

Simon writes:

The majority of my working life has been spent on the marketing side of things. First at Penguin, then at Sotheby's (a violent change of scene was required as I was becoming part of the furniture at Penguin). I wasn't given the opportunity to become part of the furniture there as the art market crashed and found myself working (very contentedly I might add) as a freelance writer. Clients included Transworld who subsequently persuaded me that being permanently employed might be a good idea and so I became their Film and Television tie-in person. During this time, I began to show what was deemed to be a rather perverse interest in Star Wars which ultimately led to the suggestion that becoming an editor might be a good idea as a) they had decided that they needed more boys' books and b) no one else was mug enough to volunteer to look after the Star Wars list. Realizing that a long-in-the-tooth editor is socially more acceptable than a similarly decrepit marketing person, I accepted. Admitting that I'd first read Lord of the Rings when I was nine years old and still rather liked it during a lunchtime session at the pub led to the notion that perhaps the whole SF and Fantasy side of things could be part of my editorial brief. That was nearly 3 years ago.

I feel I'm addressing the Birmingham SF Group under entirely false pretences as my knowledge of these genres is minimal - in fact I fully expect to learn rather more from you than you will from me (and I'm not exaggerating!). However, Birmingham IS responsible in a rather roundabout way for my coming to chat on 14 May: it was while at prep school in Birmingham (West House School in Edgbaston - God knows whether it's still going) that I discovered Tolkien. Spooky eh?

Signing Sessions

Forthcoming signing sessions at Andromeda, 2-5 Suffolk Street. For confirmation and/or further details call 0121 643 1999.

22 May, noon: Jonathon Carroll will be doing his only signing in the UK of his hardcover THE MARRIAGE OF STYX (Gollancz, £16.99) and his paperback KISSING THE BEEHIVE.

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3 June, noon: David Gemmell signing of MIDNIGHT FALCON (hardcover) and SWORD IN THE STORM (pbk).

Also in the first week of June the launch of THE SCIENCE OF DISCWORLD AND THE MAGIC OF ROUNDWORLD by Terry Pratchett, Ian Stewart and Jack Cohen. There will be a signing session at Andromeda.

Rog has pointed out to me that the report in last month's Jophan about publicity was a misreading of the situation. Andromeda have always been happy (indeed keen) to publicise the BSFG. Apologies to Rog and the staff at Andromeda – Ed.

Forthcoming Events

14 May: SIMON TAYLOR (publisher) will address the BSFG. From 7.45pm in the Lichfield Lounge, 2nd floor of the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham, (entrance in Union Passageway).

28-30 May: SECCON, in Stevenage. GoH Stephen Baxter. Attending £23 until May 1st 1999. Cheques payable to 'Seccon' should be sent with name and contact details to Seccon, c/o 92 Lichfield Road, Cambridge, CB1 3TR.

11 June 1999: IAN STEWART will address the BSFG. From 7.45pm in the Lichfield Lounge, 2nd floor of the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham, (entrance in Union Passageway).

25-27 June: Poets and Small Press con, Barlow Theatre, Langley, Birmingham. With Steve Sneyd talking on sf poetry. £4 advance reg to Geoff Stevens, 25 Griffiths Road, West Bromwich, B71 2EH.

13-15 August 1999: WINCON V, Unicon 1999, at King Alfred's College Winchester. GoHs: John Barnes, Diana Wynne Jones, Warren Ellis. Attending £20.00 to Wincon V, 53 Havant Rd, North End, Portsmouth, Hants, PO2 7HH.

17-19 September 1999: FantasyCon XXIII, at The Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham GoHs: Robert Rankin, Louise Cooper, Graham Masterton, Mike Tucker + others TBA Art Show: Dealer Room: talks: signings; launches; Banquet; numerous attending professional writers.

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editors, publishers, artists etc. Contact: SAE to: FantasyCon XXIII, 46 Oxford Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 6DT
<http://www.geocities.com/SolHo/6859/fconxx3.htm>

5-7 NOVEMBER 1998: NOVA CON 29, at the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham. Guest of Honour Ian Stewart. Attending membership costs £28.00 until Easter. Contact: Carol Morton, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, DY9 8SS.

Although details are correct to the best of our knowledge, we advise readers to contact organisers prior to travelling. Always enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope when writing to any of the above contact addresses. Please mention the BRUM GROUP NEWS when replying to listings or advertisements.

If you know of any events which you think may be of interest to members of the BSFG please send details to the Editor (e-mail yvonne@hallsfarm.softnet.co.uk).

If you have attended any events or seen any films or videos that you would like to recommend to other members (or warn them about) please feel free to write a report or review and send it to the editorial address.

Jophan Report #121 By Martin Tudor

Stiff competition from the MAC for this month's meeting with their staging of Kaos Theatre's version of Fritz Lang's film classic METROPOLIS. METROPOLIS is the story of two worlds: the labyrinthine workers' city deep below the earth where thousands work in unison and the pleasure gardens of the upper world where the rich dream in symmetrical lines of gold. METROPOLIS is ruled with an iron fist by a business mogul, who with his money controls the communication networks – everything from the telephones to the animated billboards that relay product placements and news. METROPOLIS tells the story of Peter, a son rebelling against his mogul father and finding comfort in the voice and teaching of Maria, a young visionary at the centre of a passive uprising. Revolutionary pamphlets have been found on the dead bodies of those killed by the giant machines at which they work. There is no call to arms but Business wants a war... The MAC has even pinched our start time of 8pm – tickets £7.25, £5.30 concessions. Contact the MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, on 0121 440 3838 for details.)

The MAC Cinema will be screening GODS AND MONSTERS (cert 15, dir Bill Condon, 1998) from 22-25 May. A tribute to the Dudley-born 1930s film director James Whale, maker of such classics as FRANKENSTEIN and THE INVISIBLE MAN: "the film effortlessly transports us between his impoverished childhood in industrial Dudley, brilliant revelations of Whale at work on his '30s horror masterpieces, and a complex portrait of the sharp, witty, ageing, gay director in late '50s Hollywood. Bitter about his treatment in the industry, he more or less trades off past glories in order to gain the attention of his good-looking decidedly heterosexual gardener. The Oscar-nominated Ian McKellen is brilliant as the flamboyant Whale, Lynn Redgrave adds poignancy and humour as his loyal housekeeper and there is much incidental pleasure in seeing work being done on such early films as THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN" (CINEMAC GUIDE). Call the MAC ticket office on 0121 440 3838 for details.

The Birmingham International Film and TV Festival has announced the launch of the Rosebud Movie Club, a place where like-minded people can get together and share their passion for film. As well as monthly meetings, membership gets you discounts on selected screenings in Birmingham, and each session will cover a different area of the cinema. They will host visiting speakers and offer the opportunity to get your thoughts printed on the Internet – all suggestions warmly received. You don't have to be a movie buff but they expect an interest in film and a willingness to talk about it. A free introductory meeting was scheduled at All Bar One, 43 Newhall Street in Birmingham city centre from 7.30 on 5 May. The second session is scheduled for Monday 10 June and will look at the changing face of Hollywood comedy, with classics like BRINGING UP BABY (special screening at the MAC 6pm on 27 May) to be considered alongside recent releases like YOU'VE GOT MAIL (at the MAC 7-13 May). Quarterly membership costs £6.00 (conces. £4.00), call the Festival on 0121 212 0777 for details.

The brand new £20 million BFI London IMX Cinema opened on the 1st May featuring two educational adventure films: ONTO THE DEEP (a 3D deep-sea-story) and DESTINY IN SPACE (a 2D adventure which makes the audience feel like astronauts on an exploration of distant stars). The venue is located on the South Bank and boasts the largest screen in the country (about five double-decker buses high), an 11,600-watt digital surround-sound system (*almost* as powerful as Mr Stannard's stereo system...). Call 0171 902 1200 for further details.

The Hugo nominated PLEASANTVILLE (dir Gary Ross, 1998) is being screened at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham from 21-27 May. "When their tv breaks down, two teens are transported from the 1990s into a 1950s black-and-white sitcom. In Pleasantville there is universal love, the temperature never changes, and cookies and milk wait on every dinner table. Proceedings are soon enlivened." The Electric Cinema will also be screening the latest Dreamworks blockbuster ANTZ from 28-31 May. Wherein Woody Allen supplies the voice of Z-4195, a neurotic worker ant who isn't happy with his lot as a soil relocation engineer or the lack of attention he gets as the middle child in a family of five million. Call 0121 643 7277 for details.

"A long time ago in a galaxy not a million miles away, two robots called Mike and Gaby came up with an incredible experiment. It was called mankind. Unfortunately, experiments do not always go to plan... But as their spaceship twinkles in the night sky over Bethlehem, Mike and Gaby's miraculous plan to save mankind is about to unfold." MIKE AND GABY'S SPACE GOSPEL is the debut novel by internationally acclaimed and controversial film director, Ken Russell. According to the Little Brown Press Release I received the other week it is "a wickedly funny work of comic science fiction putting an hilarious intergalactic spin on events which may be recognised from The Bible..." Er, yeah. I think I'll wait for the movie. (MIKE AND GABY'S SPACE GOSPEL is scheduled for publication in hardback on 10 June, price £15.99.)

Moving on, one of Ken Russell's most famous leading men, film star Oliver Reed, died suddenly on Sunday 2 May after being taken ill in a Maltese bar. The 61-year-old star, best-known for his portrayal of Bill Sykes in the 1968 musical OLIVER!, died on his way to a hospital near Valletta. His most famous genre roles were probably the lead in CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF (1961) and Tommy's stepfather in TOMMY (1975), although he did appear in 53 films throughout his career. A Malta police spokesman told PA News: "He was in a pub called The Pub in Archbishop Street, Valletta, at 2.30pm our time when he was taken ill. They called an ambulance about five minutes later and 10 minutes after that he died on the way to hospital." The spokesman said there would be an autopsy but there was not thought to be anything suspicious about the death. Reed was in Malta filming GLADIATOR, being produced by a Steven Spielberg company and was looking forward to appearing in a new Yorkshire Television series for ITV, based on the Victorian melodrama Uncle Silas.

The 1999 Nebula award winners have been announced by SFWA, the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, as follows:

Novel: *Forever Peace*, Joe Haldeman (Ace)

Novella: "Reading the Bones", Sheila Finch (F&SF Jan 1998)

Novelette: "Lost Girls", Jane Yolen (Realms of Fantasy Feb 1998)

Short Story: "Thirteen Ways to Water", Bruce Holland Rogers (Black Cats and Broken Mirrors, Martin H. Greenberg and John Helfers, eds., DAW, Jun 1998).

The following awards, which had already been announced, were also presented: Grand Master: Hal Clement; Ray Bradbury Award: J. Michael Straczynski; Author Emeritus: William Tenn [Philip Klass]

The British Fantasy Society have announced that worldwide bestselling fantasy author Raymond E. Feist will be appearing at Fantasycon XXIII 17-19 September 1999, at the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham. Feist, whose acclaimed books include *MAGICIAN*, *FAERIE TALE*, *PRINCE OF THE BLOOD*, *SHARDS OF A BROKEN CROWN* and *KRONDOR: THE BETRAYAL* will be at the con for the weekend, speaking about his work and taking part in their Public Signing on the Saturday afternoon. He joins other guests, authors Robert Rankin, Louise Cooper and Graham Masterton and BBC Visual Effects technician Mike Tucker. They also announced that after further negotiations with the Britannia Hotel beer will cost £1.50 a pint for the duration of the convention and that rooms will now cost £30 per person per night regardless of whether it's a single or a double. For further information on Fantasycon, please e-mail howe@which.net, or go to the Fantasycon pages at <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/6859/fconxx3.htm>, or send a SAE to: FantasyCon XXIII, 46 Oxford Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 6DT

UK GUFF Administrator Joseph Nicholas has announced the final voting figures, with a correction after some Australian votes were initially counted as UK on the final totals.

	UK	Aus	Total
First Round			
Steve Davies	29	2	31
Julian Headlong	20	6	26
Paul Kincaid	20	7	27
No Preference	2	-	2
HoldOver Funds	-	-	-

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Second Round

Steve Davies	38	3	41
Paul Kincaid	31	12	43

The two votes for No Preference in the first round gave no second preference, and hence were not redistributed.

So congratulations to Paul Kincaid who will represent Europe at Aussiecon Three the 57th World SF Convention in Melbourne 2-6 September 1999.

The bidding session at Reconvene, this year's National British SF Convention held in Liverpool over the Easter weekend, awarded the 2001 Eastercon to Paragon, in Blackpool. Paragon beat Sarkasm, a spoof bid for the Channel Island of Sark, by 114 to 34, with no abstentions and no votes to hold over the decision. Paragon's guests are Michael Scott Rohan, Stephen Baxter, Lisanne Norman, Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer. Attending membership costs £25.00, supporting £15.00 cheques made payable to Paragon to Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. Further details are available from www.keepsake-web.co.uk/paragon/.

Amongst the awards presented at Reconvene at Easter were the British Science Fiction Association awards which were awarded as follows: Best Artwork - Jim Burns, for Lord Prestimion, the cover of Interzone #138; Best Short Fiction - Gwyneth Jones, for "La Cenerentola", from Interzone #136; Best Novel - Christopher Priest, for THE EXTREMES; and the first Richard Evans Award for an author who has contributed significantly to the SF genre went to M John Harrison. Other awards were the Ken McIntyre award, this year given to the best unpublished artwork in the art show, was won by Tom Abba, and the Doc Weir award for contributions to fandom went to Arthur ("1/2r") Cruttenden. Millennium [sic], the convention that was to be held at the end of 1999 "somewhere in North-West Europe", has folded, citing reasons including the unavailability of affordable hotel and function space. Members can choose between a full refund, the donation of their membership to charity or a transfer to Hogmanaycon (in Glasgow over the real millennium, at the end of 2000) or ConTreaty (in Maastricht on the first weekend in November 2000). For full details and further information contact Larry van der Putte, ~Kotter 5, 1186 WH AMSTELVEEN, the Netherlands.

Janice Gelb will represent North American fandom at Aussiecon 3 in September having won the 1999 DUFF race in the first round of voting.

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announces DUFF administrator Janice Murray via a (fairly faintly printed) postcard. The results of the 1999 race were as follows:

	North America	Australasia	Total
Lise Eisenberg	58	9	67
Janice Gelb	154	15	169
Andy Hooper	76	6	82
Write-In	1 (Jeanne Mealy)	1 (Moshe Feder)	2
No Preference	7	-	7
Hold Over Funds	2	-	2
Total Votes	298	31	329

To obtain an absolute majority of votes on the first round 165 votes were needed, so Janice Gelb, with more than half of the total votes cast, won in the first round with no redistribution of votes necessary. The names of all voters and a report on the state of DUFF's finances will appear in June. For further information contact Janice Murray, PO Box 75684, Seattle, WA 98125-0684, USA.

This year's Hugo nominations have been announced, for the awards will be presented at Aussiecon Three in Melbourne in September:

Best Novel

CHILDREN OF GOD by Mary Doria Russell (Villard)
DARWINIA by Robert Charles Wilson (Tor)
DISTRACTION by Bruce Sterling (Bantam Spectra)
FACTORING HUMANITY by Robert J. Sawyer (Tor)
TO SAY NOTHING OF THE DOG by Connie Willis (Bantam Spectra)

Best Novella

"Aurora in Four Voices": Catherine Asaro (Analog, Dec 1998)
"Get Me to the Church On Time", Terry Bisson (Asimov's, May 1998)
"Oceanic", Greg Egan (Asimov's, Aug 1998)
"Story of Your Life", Ted Chiang (Starlight 2, Tor, Nov 1998)
"The Summer Isles", Ian R. MacLeod (Asimov's, Oct/Nov 1998)

Best Novelette

"Divided by Infinity", Robert Charles Wilson (Starlight 2, Tor, Nov 1998)

"Echea", Kristine Kathryn Rusch (Asimov's, Jul 1998)
"The Planck Dive", Greg Egan (Asimov's, Feb 1998)
"Steamship Soldier on the Information Front", Nancy Kress (Future Histories 1997; Asimov's, Apr 1998)
"Taklamakan", Bruce Sterling (Asimov's, Oct/Nov 1998)
"Time Gypsy", Ellen Klages (Bending the Landscape: Science Fiction Overlook, Sep 1998)
"Zwarte Piet's Tale", Allen Steele (Analog, Dec 1998)

Best Short Story

"Cosmic Corkscrew", Michael A. Burstein (Analog, Jun 1998)
"Maneki Neko", Bruce Sterling (F&SF, May 1998)
"Radiant Doors", Michael Swanwick (Asimov's, Sep 1998)
"The Very Pulse of the Machine", Michael Swanwick (Asimov's, Feb 1998)
"Whiptail", Robert Reed (Asimov's, Oct/Nov 1998)
"Wild Minds", Michael Swanwick (Asimov's, May 1998)

Best Related Book

THE DREAMS OUR STUFF IS MADE OF: HOW SCIENCE FICTION CONQUERED THE WORLD by Thomas M. Disch (The Free Press)
HUGO, NEBULA & WORLD FANTASY AWARDS by Howard DeVore (Advent:Publishers)
SCIENCE-FICTION: The Gernsback Years by Everett F. Bleiler (Kent State University Press)
SPECTRUM 5: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art by Cathy Fenner & Arnie Fenner, eds. (Underwood Books)
THE WORKS OF JACK WILLIAMSON: An Annotated Bibliography and Guide by Richard A. Hauptmann (The NESFA Press)

Best Dramatic Presentation

BABYLON 5: "Sleeping in Light"
DARK CITY
PLEASANTVILLE
STAR TREK: INSURRECTION
THE TRUMAN SHOW

Best Professional Editor

Gardner Dozois
Scott Edelman
David G. Hartwell
Patrick Nielsen Hayden

Stanley Schmidt
Gordon Van Gelder

Best Professional Artist

Jim Burns
Bob Eggleton
Donato Giancola
Don Maitz
Nick Stathopoulos
Michael Whelan

Best Semiprozine

INTERZONE, David Pringle, ed.
LOCUS, Charles N. Brown, ed.
THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF SCIENCE FICTION, Kathryn Cramer,
Ariel Haméon, David G. Hartwell & Kevin Maroney, eds.
SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE, Andrew I. Porter, ed.
SPECULATIONS, Kent Brewster, ed.

Best Fanzine

ANSIBLE, Dave Langford, ed.
FILE 770, Mike Glycer, ed.
MIMOSA, Richard & Nikki Lynch, eds.
PLOKTA, Alison Scott & Steve Davies, eds.
TANGENT, David A. Truesdale, ed.
THYME, Alan Stewart, ed.

Best Fan Writer

Bob Devney
Mike Glycer
Dave Langford
Evelyn C. Leeper
Maureen Kincaid Speller

Best Fan Artist

Freddie Baer
Brad Foster
Ian Gunn
Teddy Harvia
Joe Mayhew
D. West

John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer (Not a Hugo)

Kage Baker*

Julie E. Czerneda*

Nalo Hopkinson*

Susan R. Matthews*

James Van Pelt*

(* denotes second year of eligibility)

(Many thanks to Janice Murray, WHAT'S ON, PLOKTA NEWS NETWORK, breathe news and the Paragon web page for the above.)

Book Reviews

THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT by Harry Harrison, Orion £4.99, 185pp

THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT'S REVENGE by Harry Harrison,

Orion £4.99, 199 pp

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

The opening scene of *The Stainless Steel Rat* must go down as one of the classics of all time - as must both these books. It is well over thirty years since the first of this pair was originally published, and, not only have they stood the test of time, they show many of the more recent pretenders to this field how comic space opera should be written.

The first book, *The Stainless Steel Rat*, introduces us to Slippery Jim DiGriz. In a universe where crime has practically been eliminated, Slippery Jim is a big time crook. Because he is also extremely intelligent, he also knows exactly when to abandon one enterprise and move on to the next. Eventually, though, he gets caught. And is given the job of catching others. And runs up against Angelina, who is every bit as clever as he is. The difference between them is that Jim has knowingly never killed. Angelina enjoys it.

In *The Stainless Steel Rat's Revenge*, Angelina - now rehabilitated - coerces Jim into marriage. This means an end to their freedom and he has to go back to work, this time trying to discover why a planet seems to be able to do the impossible - invade and subjugate others. When he lands in trouble, he has ingenious ways of getting out of it. He is never stuck for

an idea.

If you are too young to remember these books first time round, start here. If they are memories of your youth, revisit them. You will not be disappointed.

THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT GOES TO HELL by Harry Harrison,
Orion pbk
Star rating ****
Reviewed by Alan Woodford

Where do I start? Well, I liked the book a lot, and it has now gone into my re-read when I need cheering up pile, along with the other Rat books and the Lensman series.

As you would expect, it is not the most intellectual of books, but there was more than enough action and gadgetry to keep me engrossed. The basic story can be summarised as Angelina is kidnapped, Jim rescues Angelina, the kidnapper meets a suitably unpleasant but non-lethal fate. Along the way, there is the usual drinking, restrained admiration of beautiful women, and serious mayhem. Through it all, our hero shows every sign of growing old disgracefully, and has a serious dig at the "Pay now, heaven later" school of religious thought.

All in all, probably the most entertaining book I have read this year, with some wonderfully silly images - E-meters made out of string, and looking up Cherubs in a copy of "Everything you wanted to know about religion, but were afraid to ask"

If you are looking for entertaining and humorous SF, go and buy a copy now, just ignore the awful cover.

DIPLOMACY OF WOLVES: Holly Lisle, Millennium, hbk, 332pp,
£16.99, Star rating ****
Reviewed by Yvonne Rowse

This is the first book in 'The Secret Texts'. I don't read a lot of fantasy these days and it's been a long time since I started a series that didn't have an end in sight. 'No', I have said to myself. 'I will not wait with

barely controlled patience for the release of each book of a series like I did with the Belgariad.' Or then again...

I've been looking for 'new age' werewolf stories. Over the last few years vampires have been rehabilitated and are often more lust objects than objects of terror. Tanya Huff has done this for werewolves but I haven't found much else and now here's Holly Lisle with her books.

The hero of the book, Kait Galweigh, is Karnee. She changes into a beast when in danger or after too long since the last change. The Karnee are immensely strong and have abilities beyond those of traditional werewolves. They are the result of a magical curse from the last time magic was used openly in the power struggle for control of the world. Almost all Karnee are discovered in childhood and put to death.

The first book in a series often suffers from excessive scene setting. Although a lot of information had to be given it was so fascinating that I didn't fall into boredom. The society depicted is well thought out, the descriptive writing is beautiful, the characters are interesting and the adventure story that carries all this along is well done. Just when I thought I couldn't read another story revolving around a young adult finding their powers I find I can. At least when it's as well written as this.

So now I'm waiting with barely controlled patience for the next in the series.

WHERE THE CHILDREN CRY by Jenny Jones, Gollancz £16.99,
384 pages

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

Since Jenny Jones moved away from traditional fantasy, her writing has become more interesting. As she no longer has to convince the reader that her landscapes and societies are real, she can spend more time developing character. In this novel, the main character is the city of York. Joss Fletcher is sent back to York by the company he works for and he is forced to relive some painful childhood memories. He also discovers that three of his childhood friends are also in the city. The coincidence, and the fact that his wife is Jewish, start a chain of events which have resonances with the past. In 1190, Jews were massacred in York.

The only non-Jew to die during the events of that March, still haunts the city, looking for revenge. The only Jew at Joss's school was bullied and died in strange circumstances. The way that these events are linked to the characters present lives makes an intriguing tale.

In essence, this is a horror novel though the horrific elements are relatively low key. The emphasis is more on the way that childhood events shape our lives and the appalling effect bullying can have on individuals. Even if you don't normally read horror, give this one a go.

THE MEMORY OF WHITENESS by Kim Stanley Robinson; Harper Collins; £5.99; 351 pages, pb. Star Rating ****
Reviewed by David A. Hardy

"Bestselling author of *The Mars Trilogy*", states the cover (the art on which bears little relevance to the story). True, but this novel was first published in 1985. . . Don't let that put you off, though, and it does contain some seeds which later took root in *RED MARS* et al.

This is a most unusual book, and quite original. I didn't know whether I was going to like it when I started reading. More, I didn't know whether I was going to understand it, because the whole concept is based around music-- almost literally the Music of the Spheres. Music, it seems, can explain life, the universe and everything. It is a language through which we can understand the movements of planets, of atoms, of quarks, 'glints', and other, yet undiscovered, particles and forces. In reading Stan Robinson's books I often get the feeling that he knows an awful lot about his subject -- and intends to make sure the reader knows it. Now I enjoy music, but (despite being married to a music teacher) I don't claim to know that much about the deeper complexities of musical theory. I listen to all kinds, from rock 'n' roll to not-too-heavy classics, and I know the difference between a glissando and glitter rock. But this author can not only blind you with science but deafen you with music. Again, don't let that put you off (though the more you know about music, the more you will enjoy this book, I suspect).

The centrepiece of this novel is *The Orchestra*. Imagine a one-man-band taken to the nth degree, and you have some idea of *The Orchestra*, designed and built by Holywelkin in the 33rd century. A massive work of art as much as a mechanical contraption, this incorporates every instrument with which we are familiar, along with many with which we

aren't (the godzilla?). And Johannes Wright, blind man with electronic eyes, is the ninth Master of the Orchestra, who will take it on tour from Pluto inwards to Mercury, and on to Prometheus, from whence all the power of the Solar System comes, directed from the Sun via whitelines. What an extraordinary concept! True, The Orchestra incorporates computers and taped (TAPED?) music, but in this age, when digital devices can already produce any sound we wish to hear, what an anachronistic idea to entertain millions of people on far-flung settlements with a mechanical instrument. . . But there we have it, dear Reader (to paraphrase the author's style), and there is mystery, intrigue (who are the mysterious 'Greys'), crime, detective work' murder and attempted murder. Surely enough to keep any SF reader (or muso) happy for a few hours? Try it -- and stick with it.

The 'Star Ratings' are:

- * Utter dross
- ** Not totally unbearable
- *** Worth risking it
- **** Pretty damn good
- ***** BUY IT!!

Colophon

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