

SCIENTIFRICTION

DECEMBER 19, 1974 VIN1

//A sort of Christmascard of a fanzine sort of published before the Yuletide to be sort of delivered around New Year's given the conservative gait of our Post Office couriers who deliver despite snow, sleet, hail, rain or wind, but the weather's just so damn pleasant around LA they may take off to the beach a few days...//Written and published and all that by Mike Glycer with some help from his friends. The address is no longer Pike Street (those downstairs stereos that sound like they're in your desk drawer bum me out) but care of the Department of Popular Culture, BGSU, Bowling Green OH 43403. Despite that I'm here in LA for the holiday, and publishing this item on the side.

Don't ask me to explain it, I just teach it...

SCIENTIFRICTION has a nice sound to it; I may keep it unless somebody points out that it has been previously popularized. With the prospect of entry into sacred FAPA growing closer (I'm number one on the wait-list, which makes me only third in line for a membership -- huhn?) I must be looking around for a zine title. I never did find a newszine title that suited the majority of that minority that gives a damn what it's called. No facile, charismatic term came to mind. Now it doesn't matter -- both because I am suspending officially the publication of a newszine, and because if a title like SFinctor can survive, what does it matter what any newszine calls itself? I salute the editors of SFinctor for their iconoclasm.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

What is Popular Culture and where is it going? That became an in-group joke after the Midwestern Popular Culture Convention met in Chicago one weekend in October. It was a panel discussion title featuring the leading lights of the study, such as BGSU's Ray Browne, and the University of Chicago's John Cawelti. After they failed to answer the question of "What is

Popular Culture?" the rest of us felt a little less worried that we couldn't succinctly sum it up in a paragraph either. PC is everything except what other people have already staked out, you might get the impression. It's not just tv, radio, film, print, advertising, leisure activities and sports, it's fortune-telling chickens, mother pillows, fad religions, and outward into the human cosmos. (PC is expanding so much that one feels the science fiction students are of the opinion they're neglected, and they mutter about withdrawing into some separate SFRA-connected conference.)

Personally I'd say that PC is an existential discipline justified in the university scheme by circa 600 enrolled students. Neither a true discipline (as is history) nor a methodology, PC is more a standing question: what does it mean? Nobody asks that about comic books, or mother pillows, or tv advertising, or a lot of other things, except students of popular culture -- yet these phenomena proliferate and take up the time of a good many people.

Further justification of Popular Culture as a study is probably unnecessary for the audience this letter will reach. So I'll stop, for time prevents me from going over two pages. I'll try to provide more detail about what I'm doing at BG in the next issue of PRE which has an end-of-January deadline, and a February scheduled date of publication.

Though meanwhile, I could say that about 3pm EST on January 6th I'm supposed to take up the cudgels and teach my Very Own Section of PC 160 -- the freshman-sophomore level introductory course. After devoting the fall quarter in two classes (501, Graduate Intro. to PC, and 590, Teaching PC) to preparation for the job, it'll come my turn to get up there before 35 pair of dulled eyes, each of whom in his heart of hearts believes 160 is the original Mickey Mouse. Little do they know. It will never be Organic Chemistry (Ghu forbid!) but Disney is restricted to the syllabus, and ruled out of the grading schema.

You can make up your mind about my own text list, though:
BACK TO GODHEAD: the magazine of the LA Hare Krishna movement. THE NATIONAL LAMPOON 1964 HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOK. TROUBLE IS MY BUSINESS, by Raymond Chandler, including his essay on pulp detective fictional formulas. HARD TIMES, by Studs Terkel: interviews about the Depression. (B-but -- I had that in History 484, American Social and Intellectual History! Or something.) ALGOL: one of them fan-zines; I figure it couldn't hurt to throw some business Porter's way, and it'll provide contrast when I pass out copies of PRE and other zines. That is if the bookstore ever gets it ordered: I got back a slip claiming "no such address" -- it was missing the zip, and there must be 50 PO Box 4175's in New York. Of course if that's the wrong number too bad. I hope to get a copy of the last ALGOL out of the deal, too. My copy arrived in the mail horribly disfigured, and I never did get to read it.

My 160 section won't rely on texts so much that they serve as a teaching crutch; though the difference between assigning a reading, and lecturing on material that you could have assigned as a reading is probably insignificant. On certain topics my (and every other instructor's) hope is to generate active discussion. However the facetious existence of the "Dumb Thesis of 160 Students" indicates uneven success. Within very broad limits -- ie, concepts one must get across in the course -- it is my course and my responsibility: if it is more challenging than having to lead a rinky-dink history discussion section out of some big lecture course, it is also a lot less safe. The teaching conscience comes into play: do they really need ten weeks on the need to reform the Hugo, and the glories of a worldcon?

* * *

No Discon report. Though I took notes at the convention, in the end it just wasn't a con I cared to write a report about. I enjoyed it, it wasn't that kind of a problem -- more a case of do I really want to publish what I experienced at that con? You had to have been there...

* * *

Discon gave me the chance to collect a Hugo, anyway. This is the time of year to be rounding up one's Hugo nominating votes, but if I don't sound properly enthusiastic over my chances of getting nominated (much less whether PRE ought to be nominated) I'm sure you'll excuse me. Ahem. OUTWORLDS for the Hugo, end of advertisement.

... and to those who are interested. For example:

FRANKE DECLARES BULLSHIT! In a petition sent to me by Jackie Franke (Box 51-A RR#2, Beecher IL 60401), dated September 7, protests were registered against possible prejudice on the part of costume judges at the Woridcon...

"We, the undersigned masquerade enthusiasts, have had an ugly rumor called to our attention: to wit, that one or more of the judges at the Discon II costume ball automatically discriminated against any costume involving nudity, no matter how artistic or tasteful its execution. In particular we wish to protest that portion of the rumor concerning the Harpy's failure to win a First Prize due to her nudity. None of us were nude at the Discon II costume ball; none of us knows the girl who came as the Harpy; but after reviewing numerous color slides of the competition, we feel it imperative to protest her exclusion from the major awards.

"Nudity, when done properly, is a legitimate tool of the costumer and can produce striking and beautiful results. Certainly no one can deny the quality and effectiveness of Koh-I-Noor and the Black Queen from LACon, 14th the Golden Witch from Torcon, and the Harpy from Discon II. To have discriminated against the first three costumes would have been criminal; to have discriminated against the fourth was indeed a breach of trust between the contestant and those charged with judging her.

"We are not in favor, per se, of nudity; indeed, we saw many nude costumes at Discon II that should never have been presented. But whether nudity is extraneous or an integral part of the costume, to discriminate against it is both stifling to the costume's creator and destructive to the spirit of a science fictional costume ball.

"[Signed] Jon and Joni Stopa, Mike and Carol Resnick, Bob and Anne Passavoy, Ann Cass, Hank and Martha Beck, and Jackie Franke."

It was carboned and sent to eight others besides me, and I haven't seen anybody mention it yet. Jackie's accompanying note elaborated, "By this protest, it is not being implied that we object to any of the judges' choices at Discon per se, but only our displeasure at use of such blatant discrimination. We heard of this bias from too many people, at too many places, to ignore it. It is hoped that future judging panels will take note, and pause before applying arbitrary criteria..."

Given the number of nude masquerade prizewinners from past cons, it just had not occurred to me that this problem would arise. But perhaps future cons should ascertain -- or directly inquire -- whether the people they propose as judges have objections to nudity, or certain other features of masquerade costumes; and if the candidates do have such objections, get other judges.

DROPPED POINTS (Der: debating): In August Moore Feder sent me an item that among other things was intended to draw response and clarification from Ted White. This item, in part, was published in **MARASS** and having seen no reply I may as well run the full piece here. Not that I myself have any burning desire to have Ted affirm or deny the matters -- but

because I refuse to give them credit for their own work. I don't mind if they do it themselves. K. R. B. omitted all the names, probably for unimportant reasons. But the Magazine letter was "pre-edited" -- had marks as to what paragraphs to cut. I don't mind having editors drop as long as they printed the substantive portions. Well, I feel that fanzine generally starts out distorted enough without me editing out any of the possibly significant nuances when I print it. Hence if somebody sends me an item in a form adequate for publication, I'll quote them instead of rewriting. If somebody sends me an item as well as a cover letter, I'm apt to excerpt the cover letter too. Not only do I feel that is more effective reportage, I also feel it's more interesting since it keeps the personal touch. Now my newsline doesn't come out so often that my editing method is going to make an impact, but for those of you who were wondering why this zine worked the way it did, that's one of the reasons.

STATEMENT: Moshe Feder: Regarding certain accusations.

"In the September issue of FANTASTIC, Ted White states in his editorial on page 117, that a 'staff member in New York City' is using rejection slips that say only 'Sorry' and that that same staff member is penning 'caustic notes' over his (White's) initials despite his objection to this practice.

"Some of my friends have pointed out to me that some people may interpret this passage as referring to me. That may indeed be Ted White's intention, I have no way of knowing, but I would like to assure all present and future contributors to AMAZING and FANTASTIC that I have never and will never do either of these things.

"Unlike Ted, who, as he admits in that same editorial, uses 'checklist' rejection slips, I have always used personal notes to explain my reasons for rejection a story. Obviously, a specifically written note can be a lot more meaningful and helpful to an author than a rather mechanical checklist. I have received letters from many authors thanking me for my comments. In the rare case where my reasons are purely intuitive and unexplainable (or would take two or three pages of depressingly negative comments to explain), I type up a paraphrase of the rejection slip most magazines use. In either case, the note is always signed with my name, and, if space permits, my signature. No one has ever received one of my 3x5 slips with anything but my name on it. The very idea of signing someone else's is repugnant to me.

"Whether or not my notes are ever caustic is a matter of opinion, of course. I recently wrote an angry note to a plagiarist and I'm aware of one occasion on which Barry Malzberg misinterpreted my sincere gratitude (for seeing an ms. that I nevertheless rejected) as sarcasm. But aside from these notes and others like them in rare cases, I have written no "caustic" notes over Ted's, my own, or anyone else's initials. I hope that Ted will clarify his position on this situation at the earliest opportunity. (Signed) Moshe Feder, Assistant Editor, Ultimate Publishing Company."

A LEXICON REPORT. AGED IN THE CASK FOR GREATER FLAVOR: By now I can present this as fanhistory, though that would not be very clever. Derogation aside, Paula Lieberman can write an interesting conreport that keeps my interest, anyway, even three or four months later. So let's get on down to cases here...

"The MITSFS (Massachusetts Institute of Technology Science Fiction Society) Library is not officially a part of the MIT library system, but it remains under student management. MITSFS, in its everlasting quest to find money to buy every

new science fiction magazines are being printed in the US, and other countries, funds and space permitting, is managing to get a sum of money out of MIT (neat trick, that) and library funding to buy books, as the student financial committee has decided to ~~not~~ give the largest student activity its usual \$800 (the balance of the money for book acquisition derives from the membership fee) or more. (sic The only difference being partially funded out of the Library System will make is that if the management of the MITSFS Library gets into a position where it can no longer run the library, the whole collection will be taken over by MIT. The way things work it's a lot cheaper for MIT to fund MITSFS than have a science fiction section of its own in the Humanities Library -- it costs more to file a book in the library system than it costs to buy that book, usually. MITSFS has a small fanzine collection -- because of funds, space, and not too much inclination on the part of either the people who run it or the rest of the 200 to 300 members, it doesn't actively do much to acquire fanzines, other than occasionally putting out a Twilightzine.

"Humm, that certainly wasn't a conrep.

"In or near Hartford, Connecticut A-Con was held at the Camelot Motor Inn the weekend of July 19-21. I went down for part of Saturday with some other Greater Boston fan. There seemed to be about 50 fans in and around the swimming pool, from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and even a few from Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The 'program', if you insist on saying that a relaxicon has one, consisted of playing Irisbee in the pool, looking at the artwork Louise Spooner and Rick Gellman put in the committee room, folksinging, and watching movies that Mal Worob brought along.

"The following weekend was Lexicon vol. III, in Framingham, Mass., less than a two hour drive away from Hartford. Again there were about 50 people, none of them the same. The same swimming pool activities went on (though there was a moment of high drama, when someone yelled 'Where's Elliot? We can't possibly have Chaos games in the swimming pool without Elliot!') but there were neither movies nor artwork around.

"Friday night the fans were entertained by mundanes; it stood around watching a pre-wedding stag party's members throwing one another in the pool. Quite a change, that, when the fans stand around the outside of the pool watching the antics of the mundanes inside. There was also an impeachment hearing to be heard on television, so various people were sitting in rooms watching that, while doing whatever else fans do at quiet parties. There was a party in the committee room almost all night, but somehow the hotel managed against all advice, logic and instruction to put a non-con party pooper in the adjacent room. He rejected all offers to join the party and/or switch rooms with other people. Saturday was spent poolside during the day, and in the Great Marshmallow War at night. Up til then, Johann Wood had been threatening to write a conreport, then and after, she said the events were too unbelievable.

"I missed the start of the marshmallow fight. Jon Turner was throwing a party in honor of his permanent release from the Army, which had come through shortly before the con. Among the usual items present at parties, there was also a bag of marshmallows. I'm not sure whether Ellen Nye Franklin was responsible for the bag of them being there, but I have heard that she was responsible for what

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...writing industry) can prove that Bruce Gillies really does have a great deal of knowledge is considerable, and he combines this with insight, and great ability to write clearly and well. I don't always agree with his view of current SF, but I always enjoy his opinions.

The mixture of material in this issue makes SFC #40 a good way to enter the world of Bruce Gillies and Australian fandom. I recommend a subscription to anyone who would like a little food for thought in his fanzine reading.

Another long-established fanzine that is the definite leader in its class is STARLING, although in its case, the class is somewhat smaller. The 29th issue of this neat and intelligent counter culture fanzine is typical of the quiet competence that has become the STARLING trademark. Whereas SFC is primarily a magazine, STARLING makes good use of both handcut and electrostencilled illustrations, colored inks, and neatly lettered titles to produce a fanzine that is nice to look at as well as interesting to read. There may not be any miracles of design here, but the aesthetic thing is done with an air of knowledge that shows the definite advantages of experience in the field of fanzine production.

The material in STARLING is oriented to music, films and the more praiseworthy aspects of comic art, along with an ongoing discussion of mystery and other series type fiction, the occasional mention of science fiction and intelligent and stimulating arguments over a variety of other topics concerned with living one's life in this somewhat nasty age of ours. What distinguishes the STARLING stable of writers from many of their colleagues in the fan press is that all seem to be competent and knowledgeable in the fields they write in, and they combine this with an obvious enthusiasm for the material under consideration. The result is a well-researched, well-written and extremely interesting journal that generates a large amount of reader response. If you're interested in other branches of popular culture as well as in science fiction, STARLING is the type the fan press has to offer and is well worth your investigation.

However, it's nice to know that you don't have to have published thirty issues before you're putting out a damn fine fanzine. There are some really fine fanwriters who never put out fanzines, but are content to contribute a steady supply of top grade material to other people. Others can have trouble writing their own press out fanzines by the dozen, and shudder them upon an unenthusiastic audience. A smaller third group consists of fans who have been around for many years, writing well but not prolifically, who wait until they've garnered enough knowledge to put out a really good fanzine before succumbing to the fatal urge to publish. Such a fan is Jerry Jauffen, who, in partnership with Suzie Tompkins, has produced THE SPANISH INQUISITION, probably the best new fanzine of the year.

SPANINC, as the in-crowd calls it, began as an apazine for the film apu but has happily enlarged itself into a genuine. Both Jerry and Suzie have much experience with fanzines, both in the production and consumption thereof, and the happy result of this knowledge is obvious. SPANINC is attractively designed, well reproduced, and happens to contain a lot of really excellent writing. If more fans would have the patience to wait until they were capable of producing something of quality, fanzine readers would sleep better and more often, opticians would lose business, and the influx of money to the economy from savings on paper and ink would go far towards eradicating the US national debt.

The contents of SPANINC #3 are typical of the better type of personality-oriented fanzine, and hence are completely different from SFC and STARLING. You pay your money and you make out what you like. There is personal anecdotal writing by some of the artists featured, respectively, Ginjer Buchman and Loren Hadzregor. There is a narrative and thoughtful article by Jerry about the possible significance of the

THE LAST RIDER. There is a lively letter-column about films, and comics and other things more trivial. And there is the excerpted writings of Sazle's brother Ken, who is as potentially the greatest fanwriter of them all. It's a relaxed, informal but never sloppy fanzine that shows perfectly what can be done with this style of magazine. SPANINC lacks the academic clout of SFC, the thematic unity of STARLING, as well as the semi-professional inclinations of offset PRZ, but it succeeds in what it wants to do as well as any of these three. What higher recommendation can I give any fanzine?

The contrast between the established fan-turned-faned and the newcomer is made well by examining SPANINC 3 and TWIBBET 6. Jerry and Sazle have been around long enough to have the contacts necessary to put out a better-than-average fanzine. Apart from the fact that both can write well, they know other talented people and can convince them to contribute. Tim Kyger, newly selected editor of TWIBBET, a sort of former floating clubzine, lacks these much-needed resources to draw upon. As a result, TWIBBET is weak in written material, and Tim lacks the writing skills to compensate for this. Nevertheless, this is not as bad as many fanzines that reach me and could well have a promising future. (Any editor who includes a paragraph in the Table of Contents promising a week of proofreading on the next issue, then dedicates that paragraph to Mike Glickshon ((sic)) has got to go far. And it better be soon, too...)

The surprising thing about TWIBBET #6 is that it reverses the usual trend of beginning issues, providing the reader with some unusually good artwork amid at best competent material. Most neophytes to the editing-publishing game find good artists harder to find than good writers. With wider fan-ish contacts and a larger pool of writers to draw on, Tim may well turn TWIBBET into something worthwhile. The written load this issue is carried by a long interview with Norman Spinrad which astonished me, since Spinrad's views on fandom are not exactly a secret. Even more astonishing is that he put up with the insensitivity of many of the questions in the interview. It's a frustrating thing to read what could have been one of the most interesting articles to appear in a fanzine all year and see the huge amount of wasted effort that went into it. A more competent questioner could have turned this into a tour de force: as it is, it's merely an interesting curiosity.

The other major piece in the issue is a partial history of Phoenix fandom by Paula Ann Anthony. The writing is fair, and the style is competent, but it's not the sort of material that will excite too many outsiders. Still, I once wrote a history of Ontario fandom that was infinitely worse, so I'm not complaining about its insertion here. Some future Harry Warner will find it useful for a fan-ish history of the late 1960s. I'm sure.

Right now TWIBBET is a nice but uninspired fanzine that just might be going places. It's the sort of fanzine that the newer fan should feel comfortable serving a fan-ish apprenticeship in.

When a clubzine gets turned into a fanzine, much of the load must be carried by the editor chosen to make the switch. Tim Kyger lacks the depth of experience needed to make a completely successful transition in TWIBBET. Fred Haskell seems to be pulling it off with RUNE, though. RUNE is the club organ of the Minnesota W Society, and for those two fans in Fargo, ND who may not know it, Minneapolis people form one of the nicest, most creative groups of fans in the country. RUNE was always a cut above the usual clubzine, thanks to the writing ability of people like Denny Lien, the only fan I know who has made the compilation of meeting minutes into an artform, and the stencilled cartoons of Ken Fletcher. Now that Fred has taken over the magazine, it shows tremendous promise as a fanzine.

Fred is both knowledgeable about things fanzine and science fiction and a fairly opinionated about the future of his magazine. His personality dominates the magazine and makes this an interesting and enjoyable low-key fanzine. RUNE is still feeling its way into the ocean of genres, but with Fred at the helm, it should be going far. My advice is to get involved right now and enjoy the trip.

Let's switch topics completely, and discuss the state of the fanzine art in Britain. (Not even my fetid brain could connect that up to RUNE.) It's a bit sad, I'm afraid. Economic realities are forcing the collapse of many fine British fanzines, which at the best of times tended to be in lamentable small circulation over here. Add to this the fact that time lag caused by trans-Atlantic boat mail made real participation in English fanzine fandom something limited to a half a dozen North American fans, and you get a very unfortunate situation indeed. But hope is in sight, and relief on the way, although a couple of ingeniously British circumlocutions.

Alan and Elke Stewart mail their English fanzine from its German home by air mail, so that a healthy exchange of ideas with North American fans should be possible. And although TILL THE COWS COME HOME #3 is neatly offset on German presses, it is basically an English fanzine, produced by an expatriot, and as such it has a different flavor from most North American fanzines.

I'll be honest in admitting that most of the material in this particular issue did not appeal to me: I don't enjoy fiction, for example. But I found Elke's editorial interesting, for the viewpoint it gives into her own beliefs, and in part for some glimpses of life in Germany, and I enjoyed the fanzine material, including the lengthy lettercolumn. Alan and Elke are still drifting around a bit, seemingly not too sure of the type of magazine they'd like to publish, but if you care to care to drift with them I think you'll be entertained at the same time as you get some ideas about what fanzine life and thought is like in other countries. And that, too, is a valid reason for getting a fanzine.

For a more relaxed and fanzine fanzine that reflects British style, try THE MAGNIFICENT QWERTYUEDP, the only English fanzine published in Florida. Sam Long became a fan in England, and so obviously his heart is still there, because the fanzine he puts out from Patrick AFB is as English in appearance, tone, and style as SCOTTISH or YIPPEE. Complete with handcut cartoons to illustrate the surrounding text and the cluttered but comfortable layout one associates with the great English fanzines of the past, Q represents England extremely well in this age of the vanishing English fanzine. The contributors tend to be English, the conversations have an English ring to them, and the whole thing is fun. Great fun. There are puns, Psghocta, word plays, and the occasional serious idea slipped in for leavening. It's a fanzine by and about people, and one of the most enjoyable I've read in ages. I found it impossible not to participate in this fanzine and on that basis I recommend it heartily.

The key to a proper enjoyment of the world of fanzines (take note Dr. W.) it seems to me, is participation. For one reason or another, the above seven fanzines strike me as the kind that invite your sharing in their creation. There's something there for everyone, it's simply a matter of finding your own particular taste in reading matter and then plunging in and having fun. And what else could a fanzine possibly be for?

SCIENCE FICTION COMMENTARY #10: Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne Victoria 3001, Australia. 66 Pages, quarto, mixed well, no art. \$1 per copy, no checks. Irreg.
STARLING #29: Hank and Lealeigh Luttrell, 525 W. Main, Madison WI 53703
36 pages, good mixed, 50¢ or 5/\$2, or the usual. Approx. quarterly
THE SPANISH INQUISITION #3: Jersey Kaufman & Sulae Tompkins, 622 W. 111th St. #52A

New York, NY 10025. 36 Pages, very neat mimeo. 25¢ or the usual. Approx quarterly.

TWIBBET #6: Thm Bygar 702 E. Vista Del Cerro, Tempe AZ 85281. 52 pages, slightly sloppy offset. 75¢. 3/82, or the usual. Thrice yearly.

RUNE: Minnesota SPS Inc., 343 E. 19th St., Minneapolis MN 55404. Available for the usual, expression of interest, or ~~because~~, 25¢ would probably get it too. Biweekly.

TTCCH #3: Alan and Elke Stewart, 6 Frankfurt am Main 1, Eschenheimer Anlage 2, Fed Rep of Germany. 44 pages, quarto, neat offset. Contrib. loc, trade, but offer them some money for that first issue.

THE MAGNIFICENT QWERTYUIOP #7: Sam Long, Box 4946 Patrick AFB, Fla 32925. 38 pages, comfortably sloppy mimeo. 25¢ or the usual. Irregular.

A NONPROFESSIONAL LOC

Ted White

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Falling Church, VA 22046

((When I first received this letter, I turned it over to Rick Wadholm, who wanted to write a reply. I tried to get it in time to publish in PRE 13.5, but failed. So now that I have it, rather than delay I shall print it and the reply furnished by The Mighty Wad. I'm a little

leery of the tone of them both, but as long as this looking-down-the-nose-at-~~my~~-distinguished-colleague attitude doesn't get any heavier, we can live with it.))

PRE 12 arrived today, and I thought I'd try writing you a noncontroversial, still nonprofessional loc:

Actually the first item which caught my eye was Rick Wadholm's review of the Tangerine Dream's PHAEDRA. As a Tangerine Dream freak (and as a collector of European avant-rock groups in general) I was pleased to see the review, but bothered by several things which Wadholm did (or didn't do).

The first thing he didn't do was explain the availability of this and previous TD albums. Had this been a book, you'd have run the publisher, the price, and possibly the number of pages. But nowhere does Wadholm even identify the label on which PHAEDRA was released. Well, in the interests of supplying that information I'll point out that unlike the first four albums, PHAEDRA was released on the British Virgin label with US release by Virgin through Atlantic, VR 13-108. (The Virgin label is one of the best of the small new labels and is responsible for not only TUBULAR BELLS but for such British groups as Hatfield & The North and Henry Cow, as well as another German rock group, Faust.) The first four TD albums were released in Germany on the Ohr label, an affiliate of the German Heteronome label.

One of the things which Wadholm did do was to describe their "last album" as something titled Breath, and say that it was "done entirely in a li uid classical style" The only sounds remotely electronic were rolling backdrops of helicopters and birds, filtering in behind music that sounded like a partnership between Igor Stravinsky and Salvador Dali. The title of the album was Atem, and although there's a lot of organ on it, "classical" is not a word I'd use to describe it.

Later on in the review Wadholm refers to "Wahn" as a piece on that same last album. The correct spelling of the title is "Wahn", and I think he means "role" and not "roll" when he refers to "Sequent C plays the same roll..." In his last paragraph he says "Tangerine Dream started out -- with Zeit (Time) -- to explore..." Actually Zeit was their third album. The first album was Electronic Meditation, and it was followed by Alpha Centauri.

So much for picking nits. From the tone of the review I'd guess that Wadholm is familiar with other European Kosmische Musik groups -- he mentions Kraftwerk -- but not too many of them. He presents a case for

... as a really unique musical concept -- but largely ignoring the extremely similar outputs of groups like Ash Ra Tempel, Popul Vuh, and individuals like Klaus Schulze and Achim Reichel. He also ignores their common antecedents -- the middle period Pink Floyd and Stockhausen et al.

Frankly, I agree with Wadholm about the importance of Tangerine Dream, but I don't think reviews like this one help much. Phaedra is easily the most bland of all TD's albums, and someone unfamiliar with the genre who sampled it on the basis of Wadholm's raves might be quite disappointed. Better to spend one's time in such a review doing two things: (1) presenting facts about the group -- its history, its previous albums, etc.; (2) and presenting an impressionistic view of what it actually sounds like. Wadholm tries to do the latter, but fails to present a meaningful picture to anyone not already familiar with at least the group. He talks too much about the intellectual structure upon which he thinks the music is based and too little about what it actually sounds like. If, for instance, I were to attempt it in one sentence I'd say: "Imagine the Pink Floyd of Mezz, carried to new extremes of floating, shifting sound patterns, as created by organ, synthesizer and mellotron -- spacey 'sound effect' oriented, and as lulling as an Environments album." And that's off the top of my head.

Contemporary US rock is so moribund, I think it's really of value to call attention to what's happening in Britain and Europe; I just wish it was being done better.

((The following is Richard Wadholm's reply; after its conclusion I'll finish reprinting Ted White's loc on PRE.))

RICHARD WADHOLM: "I get the feeling that you don't read PRE on a regular basis. This has its advantages, I suppose, if all you're looking for is good literature (?), but it doesn't help much fannish criticism. Most of the things you mention -- about Ohr and Tangerine Dream's German albums, plus a host of well-dropped names appeared in a column devoted to European impressionistic and science fiction rock I wrote several issues back. My reason for not going on heavily about Klaus Schulze, Kraftwerk, Neu, Prumpy, Popul Vuh, Ash Ra Tempel, Amon Duul, Amon Duul II, Utopia, Epitaph, Magma, Axis, Mektar (who are more dependent on Germany than on Britain no matter where they're from), Brainbox, Triumvirat, Nucleus, Can, Guru Guru, Atlantis and others is that name dropping is low-class. The same is true for those common antecedents you mention. I mentioned them then. I should have clarified what I meant when I called their last album "Breath", and in the final copy of the review (which went to Phonograph Record Magazine in vain) I cut out reference to it, as irrelevant. "Breath" is the English translation. So much for one-upsmanship. A few words also went into the final draft about how Phaedra lacks the warmth and hushed majesty of Atem or Zeit, but not many and I'm willing to stand by the review the way you read it. After all, these are American audiences. Unlike you and me they expect electronic music to sound like electronic music and an album sold as a rock album to have some kind of rhythm. All the reviews I've read of it have been good, and all the people who I've played both albums for seem to prefer Phaedra to Atem, so Edgar Froese's condescension seems to be paying off. And maybe mine too. As far as your comments on Atem go, I would have to say that they illustrate the difference between our ears. You mention a lot of organ, and yet, while I haven't listened to Atem in awhile ((which you should have to write this reply)) I can't remember any particular spot where an organ emerges from behind the wall of mellotrons and synthesizers long enough to make its presence known. To me the album is extremely classical. How would you classify the thundering, flight-of-the-Walkyries opening on side one if not as "classical"? The whole tone of the thing makes me think of a surreal symphony."

TED WHITE: Paging on to the letters, it will no doubt come as a profound shock to him, but I emphatically agree with Dave Locke in his comments on Lester Del Rey's fannishness. I think he's pegged it exactly. I've known Lester on and off over the past decade -- he was our Guest of Honor in 1967, you'll recall-- and he means it when he says he considers himself a fan. He is a fan of science fiction, and that leads him into almost all aspects of fandom at one point or another. Lester loves sf with genuine devotion and high ideals. You may not always agree with his opinions, but don't knock his sincerity.

I'll have to disagree with Mike Glicksohn, though, when he says that "Only in very recent years has the problem of a proper definition of fanzine had any real importance..." Actually, within the context of the fanzine Hugo, this has been a problem from the very start. Since con-goers, even in the fifties, were often unfamiliar with most fanzines, the high-circulation fanzines were usually the winners, and the highest-circulation zine of the fifties was SFTIMES, nee FANTASY TIMES, which won two Hugos -- the first fanzine Hugo in 1955 and the third in 1957. (The second winner was INSIDE & SF ADVERTISER -- a far better fanzine, but photo-offset and also large-circulation.) None of these fanzines paid for their material (as far as I know), but SFTIMES at least was run on a profit-making basis and had a large paid-subscription list. (But then, until the fifties most fanzines had a respectable number of subscribers...) (at least in terms of their total circulation.)

There was no fanzine Hugo in 1958 (instead Walt Willis was given a Hugo as "Most Outstanding Actifan"), and the 1959 and 1960 Hugoes went to FAN-AC and CRY, but the 1961 fanzine Hugo went to a one-shot publication ostensibly circulated only through SAPS and sold outside that apa on a cash-only basis, Earl Kemp's "Who Killed Science Fiction?" Since that time the rules have been tightened to avoid repetitions.

Wallace Macfarlane (who is a fine writer) asks "Well, what is going to happen to the magazines and the new anthologies?"

Good question. My opinion is that the magazines are going to continue to eke out an existence for the next ten years at least, although if VERTEX turns out to be a viable zine over the long haul you may see some radical changes in format and price. And I think the new anthologies have carved a niche for themselves as well, but that we'll see less for awhile, due to the overexpansion of the field caused by Roger Elwood, and the subsequent collapse that has created. (The flood of Elwood anthologies has already proved itself an overkill. Publishers are now cutting back their sf lists.) If anyone remembers the "sf boom" of the early 1950s (when there were more than forty sf magazines simultaneously in print) and its subsequent collapse, I'd guess we're experiencing another one.
Sigh

You printing and layout still seem sloppy, Mike, but maybe that's just as well. PRE avoids the machine-tooled look of most photo-offset fanzines and for that I'm grateful.

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/ALPHA FIVE review continued from page 6/ effort in fact is the best story in the bunch, that "page of wows" Silverberg likes to save to close out a collection. It is a tale of a System, yes, with interlocking social implications attentively explored. Its characters go off to war with no more idea of Vietnam than Kimball Kinnison had, but who confront the horrors of war rather than glorify than as does the verage run of sf. In recent pulps, Haldeman and Pournelle have been the genre's chief military

fictionalists: they do somewhat different things within the context of their realism, but they both deal with forces of the semi-near future similar/reminiscent of current navies and infantries. Dozois extrapolated society and its weaponry into a future so infinitely removed from ours that guerilla-fashion, personal-risk fighting becomes a lethal threat: both to the victim society, and to the sanity of the new infantry. His detailing of the social and economic basis of the attacked society is one of the really unique futures produced by the genre, as extreme as Cordwainer Smith's though more traditionally told.

The rest of the stories are lagniappe (there's a good Twain/Mencken word -- take that!) Delicately styled all, some even intricate in construction, none of them seemed to rise above the norm either as stories or as conceptions. To call attention to "You Were Great Baby" (Kate Wilhelm) "Live from Berchdesgarten" (Geo. Alec Effinger), or "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" (Philip K. Dick) by the special act of including them in a series collection intended to preserve remarkable sf forces them to submit to a kind of skeptical examination they don't really hold up under. They're Blackstone the Magician doing the Four Fireman card trick: amusing, but not reputation-makers. Yet the anthology is worthwhile; grab it.

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Due to teaching and all, the time available to do a newszine any longer is gone -- so those of you who have been hanging on for months and months I'd like to hear whether you want a refund, or, as I have considered trying to arrange, would you rather have your sub picked up by another fannish newszine like SFInctor or KARASS? Mind you I'm not as of this moment giving choice of titles, just asking for a reaction to that option. I still haven't discussed the matter with anyone seriously, because that means raising the ticklish question of Cash on the Barrelhead. Just keep in mind I'll work something out for you.

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