

An Fleghes Hager-Na Yu Canjeons



June 2010 – 1.0 Secret Origins

Introducing...

Right what's all this here? A perzine from Doug Bell...well, it's been a while.

It all started with Corflu this year, a very enjoyable and revitalising affair, where I spent far too much time (and money) drinking, hanging around with Alun Harries and pondering why I don't do more fanzines. Following hot on the heels of Corflu, there was a recent article in *Banana Wings* where Claire B. took *Head!* and other infrequently appearing zines to task. Now I could defend myself, mention all the personal/work stuff I've been through in the past couple of years but the long and short of it is that a) I'm lazy and b) I don't think I'm a natural writer.

The laziness doesn't need any explanation, but to expand on that second statement a bit, I really struggle with writing. I find the process of putting words down on paper long and frustrating. I often have ideas for articles that never come to anything as I never get quite the right angle on them, or can't find the voice I want to write in. I'm stuck in headspace that says I can't write anything until I know how it will turn out, and so I tend not to write as much as I want. I frequently hear authors say that to be a writer you have to write, and through the process of doing so you get hopefully into good habits. That is what I'm trying to do here. I want to keep my more focussed articles for *Head!* but try things out here, get my word count up and hopefully develop a bit as a fan-writer.

As such, I'm switching to electronic publication for this zine. I love publishing *Head!* and as

long as I can afford it, it will be a paper-first affair, but the cost of printing and sending out a paper-zine is not light, hence the e-zine model. My inspirations in doing so are Chris Garcia, Steve Green and Bill Burns.

So after a couple of months of thinking about it since Corflu, I've finally taken the time out, just prior to going on holiday, to sit down and write. Hopefully it'll be worth reading.

-X-

Fanzine Stuff

Whenever the subject of zines from other fandoms raises its head at fannish convention panels I've always found any discussion about them tends to be quite superficial; mostly they concentrate on how:

- A. different they are from SF zines, or
- B. they don't recognise the importance of Science Fiction zines in the development of zine culture.

I find the concentration on difference odd as during my life I've read football, ice hockey, Munro bagging, cryptozoology and music zines and spotted quite a few similarities. For example, in the current issue of the excellent music magazine *Shindig!* which covers garage and psychedelic rock, and coincidentally started out life as the music zine *Gravedigger*, I spotted the following snippets in their roundup of the current psych music zine scene:

"After three successful issues, *Psych Trail Mix* has moved entirely to a download only entity to the delight of

cyber-kids but the chagrin of old farts (like me) who still crave printed matter."

And...

"One of the many early '90s garage zines that inspired me was Australian girls Beccy and Yasmin's *Born Loser*. Issue 6 is the first in, what 20 years?"

-X-

SF Election Night

And so Election night happened in the UK this May. And while my intention is not to step into a full blown political argument in #1 of a brand new zine (we'll save that for at least the third!) one interesting thought occurred to me.

Much has been made, by all commentators about the fact that no party gained an overall majority in the House of Commons. The facts are the conservatives ended up with the most seats, while the centre-left gained the most votes. The standard narrative being spun by the three main parties (Labour, Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats) is that the electorate was divided – i.e. they liked our party, but after the expenses scandals, Iraq war, etc had lost faith in politics and were not sure the opposition were up to the job either.

So the upshot was a hung parliament for the first time in UK politics since the seventies. Following polling night the Lib Dems (the third place party at the ballot box) spent a couple of days in hectic negotiations with both the then incumbent Labour party and the Tories who were waiting in the wings to come to power. A

coalition with Labour still wouldn't have yielded an outright majority, and would have had to include pretty much every other minority party in it to govern, which would have been damn hard to pull off. In the end the Lib Dems formed a coalition with the Conservatives, and put themselves into the Cabinet for the first time since WW2.

There was a third option on the cards, no deal – let the Conservatives rule with a minority government, which would have lasted a couple of months, and a new election called. This was seen as the least favourable option by some political commentators, as the current financial crisis demands, as they keep reminding us, a stable government for resolution.

Now my point is did we in the UK just witness a Jonbar hinge point?

Over that weekend there was a high degree of uncertainty going on, about which one of the three outcomes explained above was going to result. (The lack of real facts about what went on behind closed doors was easily seen in the vast amount of speculation shown on the 24-hour television news stations). At any point the discussions between the Tories and the Lib Dems could have collapsed, resulting in a minority government, or if the rumours were true some sort of deal with Labour may have happened.

Given that the last government took us into war with Iraq against the wishes of a sizeable chunk of the population, introduced some pretty draconian civil liberty legislation and had a completely different plan for managing the

current economic crisis than the Conservatives are proposing, have the events over the last weekend in May produced a possible point of divergence for our future history? Only time will tell...

-X-

24 fps: Centurion

I like the films of Neil Marshall. In the filing system of my brain I put him in the same category of film makers as Sam Raimi and Peter Jackson, that is essentially a very competent B-movie director who can make something look far bigger than the budget they have been given. *Centurion* is no exception.

Essentially the film is a grim action adventure based on the legend of the lost Roman Ninth Legion. The plot is very basic – the Ninth are given the task of wiping out the Picts and their king Gorlacon. However the mighty Roman army are soon stripped down to a handful of soldiers as the Picts wage brutal guerrilla war on them. The survivors then have to struggle all the way home from deep behind enemy lines.

I'm no historian, archaeologist or classics scholar so I'm not even going to go anywhere near whether this film is historically accurate or not, that is for others to decide. Frankly I don't care - all I know is it is well directed, and full of brutal, bloody fun. It's the sort of film I'd have expected Quentin Tarantino could make if he'd rein in some of his more excessive qualities (such as filling his films full of knowing in-jokes, including too many "cool" scenes that don't serve the plot, and being a bit lax on editing out some of the flabbier moments).



Centurion was shot on location in the snowy Cairngorms and in the Forestry Commission woods of Hampshire. The shoot looks like it could have been a cold muddy hell, but if it was, none of it comes through in the acting where well known British actors such as David Morrissey, Dominic West and Michael Fassbender turn in good performances.

The set pieces such as the large scale battle near the start of the film are handled well and are directed with a good deal of energy. Although I found myself wincing a couple of times at the gore, the impressive sound design coupled with fast cutting meant that the film feels far more brutal than it is in actuality.

Following the highly enjoyable homage to post-apocalyptic eighties movie *Doomsday*, this is the second film where Neil Marshall walls of Scotland and leaves it the country to be ruled by psychopathic nut-cases. I'm interested to see if he can make it three times in a row with his next film.

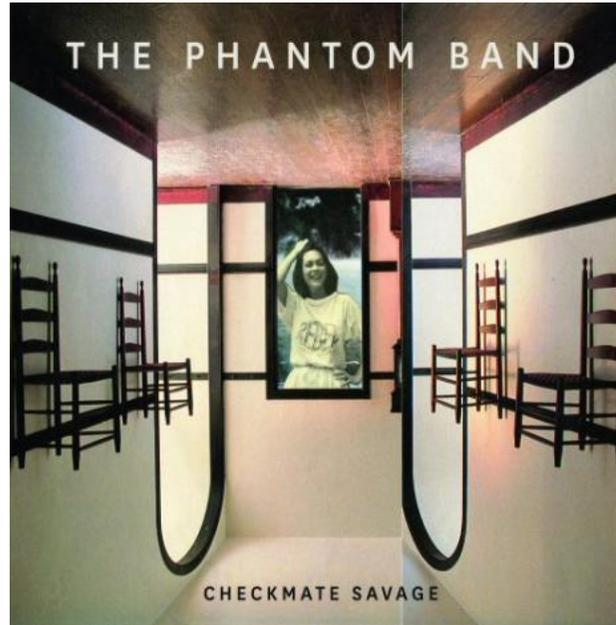
-X-

Future Sounds: The Phantom Band

I discovered *The Phantom Band* at last year's *Green Man Festival* lost somewhere deep in the Welsh mountains. As I lay out on the grass in the late afternoon sunshine, something about their music woke me from my late afternoon real ale induced slumber. Initially I think it was the rhythm, as *The Phantom Band* has a genuine motorik beat reminiscent of Krautrock bands such as *Neu!* but the more I listened, the more I got hooked by the strong song-writing. As such I couldn't wait till the release of their debut album *Checkmate Savage*.

Nowhere is the krautrock rhythm more evident than in the opening track *The Howling* or in the instrumental *Crocodile* where perhaps the protracted nature of the jam builds in a similar way to the extended guitar work-outs of *Neu!* This is music that takes its time to reveal its glories but when it does, boy is the pay-off worth it!

But this band just isn't about being krautrock apologists, this album is full of hints of folkiness, which is why presumably they were booked for Green Man. Warning though, this is not your traditional folk-rock group with amplified fiddles churning out loud and fast traditional songs, but an altogether different and deeper beast. It is a contemporary rock group, where the lyrics to songs like *Folk Song Oblivion* make you feel that we have moved on beyond folk-rock, through folktronica and nu-folk to emerge at an entirely different place altogether. I'd call it something like post-industrial folk, but I'm not entirely sure what I mean by that, it just sounds right.



The Phantom Band's instrumentation is fairly standard drums, bass, keyboards, guitars and vocals, but in amongst this normal ignoring the Scottish accents, there are enough hints to let you know this is a celtic band. While we're not in *Big Country* guitars that sound like bagpipes territory, there are enough folky guitar licks and vocal harmonies to let you know this is not an Anglo-Saxon band.

I like this album a lot. It has everything I want in my music –a band with their own voice, great musicianship, good songs, and it holds up to repeated listening.

-X-

This Month...

I have mosly been re-reading Garth Ennis and Darick Robertson's *The Boys*, (I want to write

more fully this at a later date). I've also been bogged down with M. John Harrison's *The Centauri Device* - I don't know but for such a small book I took me a real while getting through it.

On TV I've been re-watching season 1 of *Twin Peaks* (to tie in with the long awaited release of Season 2 on DVD), *Mad Men* Series 3 and when the new politics has been making me feel queasy, *The Thick Of It Specials*. Oh yes and saying goodbye to Gene Hunt and *Ashes to Ashes*.

Top films have included Alex Cox excellent *Searchers 2.0*, Chris Morris's controversial *Four Lions*, *Iron Man 2* (I want one of Tony Stark's briefcase suits) and Herzog's *Aguirre, Wrath of God* which I watched on election night.

Coming up in June, sees my first visit stateside since the 2000 Seattle Corflu. This time I'm re-visiting Seattle and taking in San Francisco for the first time. As a result I have spent too much time listening to old *Grateful Dead* gigs. Well someone has too.

This has been the first issue of **An Fleghes Hager-Na Yu Canjeons**. More here real soon now.

Special thanks to the great **Bill Burns** for hosting this ugly child on **efanzines.com**.

Any comments, abuse, etc drop me a line at doug_bell@tiscali.co.uk or follow me on Twitter or Facebook as dhunterbell.

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