



The Drink Tank

EL NINTH ISSUE



DELIGHTFUL DISSENT

WRITTEN UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYES OF
CHRISTOPHER J. GARCIA

Oscar Music Watch

The Best Score Oscar is always a tough category. In 2003, I thought that Phillip Glass had it in the bag with his incredibly evocative score to *The Hours*. Phillip was trumped by Elliot Goldenthal's score for *Frida*, which was good too. This year, five films of unquestionable merit step up, though I think it's a two party race.

The Passion of the Christ is a good score, with moments of bombasticism. I'd say that it was a step below what I was looking for in a score to a major religious epic. Remember the scores to classics like *The Ten Commandments* and even *Jesus of Nazareth*. The score for *Finding Neverland* was good, I'd say very good at times, but it was slightly over-shadowed. Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* might be an outside horse running up on the pack. It set the stage for the film nicely, featured a very wide range of themes, though when I walked out, I wasn't talking about the score.

The first big beast has to be *Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban*. John Williams' themes to *Harry Potter* range from moving Irish Flute solo to a hot Jazz number for the Knight Bus' race to *The Leaky Cauldron*. The themes borrowed heavily from everywhere: the Industrial Symphonette, Wagner, Early Music, even Taiko. Williams, who I often find repetitive and playing off his older works too frequently, did a magnificent job with the score. I'd say this was the best of the *Harry Potter* scores.



My 100%, No Question favourite is the score for a film I didn't much like, but had to say that the music was the best I've heard since *The Hours*. *The Village*, by dramatic twist-meister M. Night Shyamalan, was not a great film, though it featured some fine performances. The star of the film had to be the music, and in particular, the performance of violinist Hilary Hahn. Hahn's in her early 20s and is amazing. She wrings an amazing amount of emotion from every note and the themes she plays are unbelievable. Seldom does a score live far beyond the film, but *The Village* is one of those times when it certainly will. This and *Pirates of the Caribbean* are the only film scores I currently own.

Some of My Other Oscar Thoughts

This is the first year that I'm not too interested in anything but the little details. I know that Jamie Foxx is going to win Best Actor, despite the unnominated star of *Sideways*, Paul Giamatti, being over-looked. Thomas Hayden Church and Virginia Madsen should both take home Supporting Oscars for *Sideways*. No clue on Actress nor Director. My guess is Best Picture goes to *Million Dollar Baby*. The ones I want to know most are the Screenplay Oscars. *Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind* and *Sideways* are my choices, but there is room for an upset.



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Dr. Marvin Minsky of MIT

The connections between science fiction and computer science aren't as deep as you're likely to believe. I once did a panel with a number of computer luminaries (Steve Wozniak, Lee Felsenstein) and none of them were really science fiction fans. Most folks tend to believe that all computer science had its roots in science fiction stories. This actually isn't true, as most of the great computer scientists actually weren't science fiction readers. In fact, of the people actively involved in the early history of computing, only Norbert Wiener and JR Pierce wrote any SF, J. Pres Eckert and John Mauchly both read it, Grace Hopper enjoyed early issues of AMAZING, and AI pioneer John McCarthy is said to have read more than his fair share in his youth. One gentleman is probably the best known for crossing over and getting involved with fandom. His name is Marvin Minsky.

Marvin Minsky is one of those guys who is out there and always has been. His theories are constantly updating themselves. He started out, after a stint in the Navy, studying under one of the true giants in the history of computing, John Von Neumann. He eventually headed off to MIT to become one of the founders of MIT's AI Lab, along with the aforementioned Dr. McCarthy. Marvin kept reading science fiction all along, and in 1967 was invited to speak at Boskone. This was the turning point for Marvin Minsky and Boston fandom specifically and fandom in general.



Minsky showed at a great many conventions, including Boskones, a few WorldCons, and I believe a Philcon or two. I'm sure there are many more, but he said that he found fandom a good place to sound ideas and concepts off of an audience. He appeared on many panels, including several with Isaac Asimov. Asimov and Minsky were friends, to what degree I never managed to find out from Dr. Asimov. Asimov wrote one of the better reviews of Minsky's *Society of the Mind* and I believe that he also did an intro to another Minsky book.

Sadly, Marvin Minsky, while beloved by many and probably the best known AI pioneer, is pretty much lost in the shuffle of greater contemporary giants of traditional hardware and software. Being one of the three biggest figures in the forming of modern AI research, there isn't a man or woman alive who had as great an effect on their field as Minsky did without getting the big awards. Even my museum's annual Fellows Award hasn't been given to this giant. Hopefully, we'll change that.

A Very Short Story Programming

In the old days, the programmers wore shirts and ties and the operators wore white coats. They never met, as the ones who took the stacks of perfectly ordered cards were the high-haired secretaries who dropped them in a queue, ready for the running. Those operators fed in cards, searched for troubles in the programme that the programmer was too blind to see.

Constant-C, the latest in his long line, wondered at the fact that his ancestors had even allowed themselves to feel the touch of human flesh.



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Hunter S. Thompson- 1937-2005

I have a friend who started, though never finished, his dissertation on Hunter back in 1999. He spent a couple of days on his spread out in Colorado. The two of them walked around, did some target shooting, had drinks, played a game of chess and talked. He sent me the message on Sunday about Hunter's suicide. The only words he wrote at the top of the mail, above the article from the AP, were 'He died as he lived...shootin' stuff.'

My introduction to Hunter S. Thompson came through my Dad. Dad liked Hunter's stuff, especially Fear and Loathing. I read a few of Hunter's short writings, but I read Fear and Loathing while I was in college. At that moment, I was hooked. Hunter's voice, incredibly personal and deeply rooted in his own thoughts, had a major effect on my own writing. In many ways, The Drink Tank came about because of Hunter S. Thompson.

The defining voices of the early days of Rolling Stone were Lester Bangs and Hunter Thompson. His articles were famous for their style that Thompson referred to as Gonzo Journalism. His articles led to books that defined America. His look at the 1972 election led to a great book and several articles. Hunter had a mail-order doctorate in journalism, something he constantly reminded folks about.

There are two great films about Hunter. One, Terry Gilliam's Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, stars Johnny Depp doing an amazing imitation of Thompson,. Critically hated, it has a charm that is slightly beyond most normal film viewers, but for film geeks and Hunter fans, it's a wonderful experience. It is also the single most true to the source adaptation I've ever seen. The other was the film that got Bill Murray his first real critical notice. Bill plays Hunter in Where the Buffalo Roam. It's not quite Depp's performance, but it is good and visceral. doing an amazing imitation of Thompson,. Critically hated, it has a charm that is slightly beyond most normal film viewers, but for film geeks and Hunter fans, it's a wonderful experience. It is also the single most true to the source adaptation I've ever seen. The other was the film that got Bill Murray his first real critical notice. Bill plays Hunter in Where the Buffalos Roam. It's not quite Depp's performance, but it is good and playful.

With the death of Hunter S. Thompson, I'm fairly certain that we'll see more of his work adapted and re-released, including a film of 1959's The Rum Diary.



12 pt Courier New by Jay Crasdan

I wrote a short story. I called it Citizen Gonzo. I never quite finished it, I think it still lives on my TRS-80 Model 100. The story was simple, a 94 year old Hunter S. Thompson has become a God Figurehead by serving as the main advisor to a string of Presidents. He starts to bring up a new kid, name of Melanie Fisher, to make her the second woman President. Hunter ends up at a dinner party, following a major loss in the Senate for a bill that the President was pushing and he had his full weight behind. At the dinner, he leans over to Melanie and says "Why am I still here? I should have checked out a long time ago?"

On Sunday, when Hunter chose to check out on his own terms, he left behind four decades of work that influenced hundreds of writers. When I was writing Citizen Gonzo, I realized that, try as I might, I was going to have to ape Hunter's voice, and no matter how I tried, I'd still not get it right.



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COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS
SENT TO GARCIA@COMPUTERHISTORY.ORG
BY MY GENTLE READERS

Dear Chris:

Goodness -- I blinked a couple of times and you've posted several new issues between blinks. It's hard to keep up! But, please, take this as an observation, not a complaint.

I'm not much of a baseball fan, but know quite a number of fanzine fans who are and I've generally found what they have to say about baseball to be at least passingly interesting. (Harry Warner Jr., Arnie Katz and Andy Hooper have all written things about baseball in the past that have impressed me.) Since poor health has kept me from attending the past few, I don't know if Andy Hooper's baseball game is still a Corflu tradition -- but it was, at one point, and lets you know the company you're in. I wish I could remember more of the details, but since you're interested in fan history of both kinds, here's a little tidbit that might amuse: I know at least one (and possibly more) of the fans who attended what we now call NyCon I -- the first Worldcon -- went to see a Yankee's game while attending the convention. And the game he attended was the one at which Lou Gehrig gave his famous "I'm the luckiest man on the face of the earth" retirement speech. I've always found this little factoid to be particularly helpful in providing perspective regarding a part of fan history that took place before I was born. It's like, well, finding out what was going on in the rest of the world while the U.S.

Civil War was going on.

Curt Phillips has the right of it regarding the Star Trek phenomenon marking the first step toward the balkanization of fandom -- even though the letter-writing campaign John and Bjo Trimble instituted (to save the program) originated in mainstream sf fandom. There was a dichotomy that quickly developed between reader-fans who liked the show despite its short-comings and the other fans who didn't feel it had any. Plus, of course, there was a more deferential attitude on the part of the fans, which seemed to be necessitated by the fact that its "professionals" were not writers but tv stars -- an attitude which mainstream fandom has never gone along with. What I find amusing about all this, from a personal perspective, is the fact that for the longest time I was able to view what was happening with a rictus grin -- the most difficult feat in the pscience of psneerotics, i.e., sneering out of both sides of one's lips simultaneously -- of amused superiority. Went on for ages this way, perfectly top-lofty and secure in my snobbery and Olympian in my bearing. And then I got hooked on Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Comeuppance with a vengeance. It still has the power to make me laugh at myself ... which, I suppose, is a Good Thing.

Now, pretty much everything associated with sf in any way gets coverage under the Worldcon umbrella -- and under the umbrellas of many multi-media conventions as well -- but, getting to something you were saying about Dick Lynch's 1960s fanhistory outline, I think it's a mistake to say we can't continue to write fanhistory because the balkanizations have made things too diffuse. Frankly, I think Dick's outline was a little too ambitious, trying to cover too much unnecessary territory. The *origins* of many of these other-media fandoms were in sf fandom, and thus are legitimately part of our fan history -- but once they detach, their history becomes their own and not ours. And, lest you think I'm advocating arbitrary exclusionism, note that it is *they*



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and not *us* who make the distinction. The litmus test is what we regard as our common beginning. *Our* fan history begins with the publication of complete names & addresses of the readers who wrote letters of comment to the first all-sf magazine, AMAZING STORIES; amateur journalism, the Lovecraft Circle and other fandom-like phenomena constitute our *pre-history.* Just as we are the pre-history of (for just two examples) Star Trek fandom and Comics fandom -- since neither regard AMAZING's accommodation as *their* starting point. The areas that *do* regard AMAZING as their starting point are wider, but not much wider, than they once were -- they presently include paper fanzine fandom, SMOFdom (convention-running fandom) and some (but not all) on-line fan groups.

Which, to my mind, makes such a fanhistory do-able.

Regards,
rich brown (DrGafia)
drgafia@comcast.net
Arlington, Virginia

Well, I just can't seem to stop typing, so issues have been coming quickly. Corflu will feature my first slow-sown to once a week.

Baseball, so I was once told, is the science fiction of sports. I kinda see what they were saying with that. I was never much of a player, but I love the game. The recent push to bring hard-core math and computation into the game has only added to my admiration. I had heard that a couple of fans ran off to the Yankees game during that first magical WorldCon, but I had no idea that was the game that Gehrig did his speech. I guess I never associated July 4th, 1939, when I knew that speech took place, with the fact that NyCon was in the same city. Some connections almost never get made until the last moment.

Star Trek seems to be a turning point for much of fandom. The balkanization is pretty obvious even from a distant view. There has always been a separate and possibly equal film fandom and television fandom was around (there were, in fact, Lone Ranger conventions on an annual basis) but it was Star Trek that really changed everything, brought in big numbers to WorldCons (OK, the first wave of big numbers before the post-Star Wars explosion) and gave us the headaches of explaining the difference between cons like BayCon and those like Creation cons.

You got hooked on Buffy. That's the hard resist. I've known more people who normally stare down their noses at SF and Fantasy who got hard into Buffy. I'm fairly certain that Joss Whedon does something to the video feed that keeps folks watching.

One of the things that I like about Dick Lynch's outline is the vastness of the project. It's an ambitious work, and it's almost trying to be a one-stop shop. You've got a point about the fandoms that have leapt out. Many in Buffy fandom would completely resist being identified as Science Fiction fans, though the argument could be made. Still, there are good-sized portions of those spun-off fandoms that are important to the story of larger fandom. Looking at the sectors of fandom that cling to the AMAZING creations story, I'd say you'd have those that you mentioned, plus live fan clubs and I'd say game fandom.



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Hi, Chris:

You seem to be Living in the Fast Lane -- the issues of Drink Tank are coming much too rapidly for me to keep up with them. And I think there's a double Generation Gap problem that's going to prevent me from being a regular Loccer. You have admirably fannish Broad Mental Horizons, touching on many subjects. Most of them are -- quite properly -- about three generations removed from my interests, and you just touch upon them, in the modern style, not dwelling long or deeply enough to cause me to become interested in them (assuming that would be possible).

All of that is perfectly okay, of course, and I'm not suggesting that you change your approach. Actually, I think you're producing something closer to a zine (& a very good one, at that) than to a fanzine; it probably appeals to a much wider (& younger) audience than just "members of s-f fandom" (whatever the definition of that might be), and I suspect that's the direction in which fanzines are headed -- or will need to head if they're to survive & retain vitality.

You know, Jay Crasdan has said the same thing to me the last time he called. I was raised by a mother television and I tend to write along the lines of flipping the channel or spinnign the radio dial. I'm not sure if this is the direction that a large number of future fanzinistas will tread, but there will probably be an attention span shortening which will play out in the pages of various pubs down the line.

Come to think on't, someone on one of the zinesters/zinelibrarians Lists was asking for recommendations for things to be used in a highschool class; if I can find the message I think I'll point her to efanazines and Drink Tank (& warn her against Earl's zine because porno appears to be the only no-no in her school's agenda (well... that and anything extolling the use of illegal drugs). It would probably be daunting for many of them as a goal for emulation, but the brighter ones could be expected to figure out that they could eventually become able to create something almost as good, and in the meantime they'd probably enjoy reading it.

I think that High School students could easily out-produce me in a matter of days. All that young energy and likely more experience with programmes that allow for better lay-out. There is a theory I heard mentioned at Silicon one year saying that Fandom was at it's peak when High School kids were the heart of the fanzine world. I think there's something to that. There's lot's of greta stuff on efanazines for a teacher to point kids to. I'd also mention to avoid some of Dick Geis' stuff due to adult content.

One topic you brought up certainly engaged my attention & interest. It must be a proud and lonely thing to have just about the only Hispanic surname in fandom, much as it used to be a proud and lonely thing to be a fan of science-fiction in the mundane world of the '40s. The question of why "minorities" (including, in the early days, females) are under- represented in fandom, and what should or could be done about it, has arisen regularly during the nearly- half-century I've been hanging around here, with as much input as we could get from the few representatives we have, and the general conclusions seem always to be about the same.

Modern/American Science-Fiction started out, in the 1920s, to fill a new marketing niche -- adolescent middle-class (& hence predominantly White Anglo- Saxon heritage) males who were interested in Science and Adventure, were literate (as the product of the new universal public education system), and had a certain amount of discretionary income to spend on magazines &



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books. Those are still, predictably, major threads in it, with the biggest change probably being ascribable to the presentation of s-f on Television (a medium reasonably available to people below the middle economic class).

SF on TV certainly helped bring people of mor eethnicities into fandom, and even into prodom. Wanda Height, who wrote the Star Trek episdoe A Matter of Honour, has said that Star Trek was what brought her into fandom and got her writing SF. She mentions this on every panel I've ever done with her.

Science-Fiction and fandom have, generally, been more accepting of "minorities" than has mainstream society as a whole, or than most sub-sets of it. (I can't speak of fandom as a whole, but the club -- the LASFS-- with which I'm familiar hasn't usually been welcoming towards newcomers. I think this has to do with lacking the courage to (as the teen-aged Greg Benford put it) hold our little world out and let people spit on it if they want to. We tend to ignore them at first, and if they keep coming around, indicating that they like us, we kinda shuffle-around & make room for them in our conversation groups.

I'd certainly agree that there is no bias against minorities in fandom, though I would argue that there are segments of fandom that are more than willing to suck anyone in. Convention fandom is exceptionally welcoming, perhaps due to the fact that if they weren't, they wouldn't last too long. There are some circles that are more weary. I can remember returning to fandom early in this Century, and feeling well-and-truly home, even though the people I had known from my previous stints were left and gone away, hey-hey-hey.

When/if they contribute anything of merit to the discussions, they're accepted as Part Of The Group. (Members of the LASFS, at least, tend to be a little more friendly & encouraging towards minority- group newcomers. Ken Porter has remarked that this made him feel a little uncomfortable at first because his experience had been that White Folks who were that friendly with him, initially, usually wanted to exploit him in some way. "I didn't feel comfortable until I said something really stupid at a Meeting and everyone jumped on me -- with hob-nail boots; then I felt that I was at home" is about the way he put it.)

Fandom is pretty much a middle-class (maybe even, in the case of Convention Fandom, upper-middle economic class) phenomenon. It requires having a considerable amount of leisure time, and a fair amount of money to spend. Quite possibly it needs to be second-generation middle-class. The socio-economic reality (*sigh*) appears to be that racial & cultural minorities are seriously under-represented in this group. Those who have achieved it (assuming it's to be considered an achievement) tend to be working so hard to retain and advance their economic position that they simply don't have time for a major social/intellectual hobby (or especially a Way of Life) like this.

Well, there is a large Mexican middle class in Northern California, certainly larger than Down South, percentage-wise. I know little about Florida fandom, and I'm not even sure if there is a South Florida Fannish presence) but if you're looking for Middle-Class Hispanics, that's the place to start. I wonder if there's a large Cubano representation in such a fandom, if it exists. I really should find out.

My experience/observation of people with Hispanic surnames -- many co-workers, several neighbors, my Dentist & a couple of Doctors, &cet -- makes this conclusion somewhat iffy because many of them are from families that have been middle-class (or above) for three generations or more, often being connected with the (38?) much-intermarried and somewhat snobbish First Families to settle in the Pueblo of Los Angeles. (Granted, those Families were



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mostly Andalusian (or even Mexican/Indos) peasants to start with, but almost all became prosperous within a generation or two.) About the only difference I could see between them and typical/Northern European stock middle-class people is that they celebrated the 5th of May as a Holiday, and considering the number of people I know who use St. Swithin's day, Sherlock Holmes' birthday, Newton's birthday, &cet as reasons to have a Party, I don't see anything remarkable about this. So why does the current LASFS Directory include only about 15 Hispanic surnames out of c. 500? (That's a distinct improvement over the days when Bea Barrio's was the only one, but even so....) I don't know, but doubt that it's because of anything we've been doing wrong.

Us Mexicans know that May 5th is a great time for a party. Easter's been over for a while, Summer isn't here yet, it's a good mid-point break where something significant happened to take place. I don't think fandom is doing anything wrong, in fact, I'd say that we are all doing something very right in retaining the levels of fans of ethnicity instead of seeing it plummet when the initial spike following films like The Matrix and the Star Wars movies. I'd say to greatly increase these numbers, it's the publishers of SF who have to step up and put out material that Hispanics are interested in.

Not knowing doesn't keep me from advancing a Theory, of course. I'd suggest that this club (and Fandom in general) places considerable emphasis on written s-f and a literary approach in general, that this attitude is not common in most local Hispanic cultures, and that when something like it does exist people are under considerable pressure to use it to advance themselves, socially & economically, rather than to indulge in what is perceived to be a trivial hobby. But you can speak more knowledgeably to this point than I possibly could.

Don Fitch

My Granma always said "Mio,we're a story-telling people". Sit around a campfire with a bunch of Mexicans and a few beers and you'll hear stories, some of which go back to the days of La Llorana. I'd agree that the emphasis on reading isn't there, but there is the emphasis on story. There has to be a way to capture that. My cousins are all a fair deal younger than me, and they grew up very much on the East Side of San Jose and none of them are into reading, though they all love SF and Fantasy films. My half-sister grew up in the Vanilla Burbs and she is a reader and less into movies (though big into Anime). It's a tough call. I like to think that the over-all numbers will change as the racial demographics of the country change.

M Lloyd- Geelong, Au

All is well, even though Jay has flown back your way. I liked the way you presented the article on The Oils. The front page story on Oscars was good, though you've done better on the same subject. Not a lot of Science Fiction nor fandom in the issue, either.

I noticed that after I finished. Weird.

Next Issue is Worthless Milestone Issue #10. Fiction from Johnny Eponymous will be the centrepiece, plus the usual. A special early review of the film X,Y will also be in there. The issue probably won't hit the bit-stream until after Corflu, likely on Wednesday. I'll also preview Cinequest some more and hopefully have my first real piece of fan art for the pages!

The Drink Tank El Ninth Issue was directed and edited by Christopher J. Garcia and kindly posted to efanazines.com by Bill Burns. Anything you wanna say to Chris, no matter what it is, can be emailed to garcia@computerhistory.org. Anything you wanna send to Chris can be mailed to 1401 N. Shoreline Blvd. Mountain View, CA 94043. If you happen to be at Corflu and see a guy with floppy curly hair and a beard wearing a t-shirt spouting a College Radio Station logo on it, that's Chris. Feel free to smack me for up-dating so frequently!