

It is TIME... Convention time!

Fans from across the country and it's imminent surroundings are gathering in Copenhagen to meet, drink, and discuss the genre. For yet another year, actually the SEVENTH year, Danish BNF Flemming R P Rasch has organized a large Danish convention for the Fantastic genre in Copenhagen. Venue is the traditional Vanløse Kulturhus, just next to the train station and metro, small enough to stay intimate for the approx 100 fans attending, but also large enough to run a two/three track programming, and with a beer serving café next to it! GoHs this year is genre luminaries Alastair Reynolds and Ellen Datlow - and of course a number of Danish writers and personalities are on the rooster too. This IS after all, the greatest national convention in Denmark!

First day on a three day con is always difficult. I got held up at work, and couldn't get there for the first couple of program items, though I would have liked to listen to the panel on optimistic science fiction – what happens if the world DOESN'T end? A fun and interesting angle in a time where so many dystopias are hitting the cinemas. With the line up of Alastair Reynolds, Danish film/comics trufan Tue Sørensen, the resident French voice in Danish genre fiction, H.H. Løyche, and prolific new genre writer Lars Ahn Pedersen, I think I would have been in for a treat! Well, I guess I'll have to bribe one of them with beer on Saturday to get the sketch of the discussion...☺

By the look of things, I wasn't the only one with difficulties getting there early enough, and at least one item, the workshop Portfolio Review (bring your drawings and get them appraised), was cancelled, but as time went by luckily more and more people showed up.

Just after "checking in", and getting my name badge, I could venture straight to the dealers room. This is an absolute necessity for all collectors on a con. Especially a Danish one. Not much material is ever offered here, so if one wants the goodies, one needs to get there early! This year, SFC, our national science fiction organization with a definite literary focus, was there with their growing number of books published, among them a collection of Reynolds short stories, and their magnificent fanzines: Proxima, SFCs twice-yearly posh magazine, is the only Scandinavian academic science fiction magazine, and always worth reading for new thoughtful angles on the

THE CONventional

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genre. NOVUM, SFCs quarterly memberzine, is simply fun and entertaining, and is in the process of changing it's editor. Also Fantastik, our other national organization for all genres in the fantastic and all media expressions of it, were there, presenting their ever growing number of issues of the memberzine HIMMELSKIBET ("sky ship"). And as becoming tradition, rising fan star Henrik Harksen had a place selling quite a new titles from his little horror shop of a printing press. Now with several titles in English as well. Nice to see initiatives like that! Very interesting for me were the tables from old timer Morten "My Name is NOT Marvel", who were still selling off parts of his immense collection. Now we were getting past the paperbacks and into the hardcovers and magazines, and I managed to find a nice bundle of zines and books that previously had escaped me: Danish 1977 fanzine PULSAR #1 – a rarity these days, a couple of 1979 issues of the Darkover Newsletter (M. Zimmer Bradley Fandom), some early issues of MEGAVORE -The Journal of Popular Fiction ed. by J. Grant Thiessen, and the likes. Yes, we are on the fringes here, but I DO have complete runs of all the regular pulp & magazine titles that he was also offering. You remember that scene in The Big Bang Theory – in the comic book store: "have it, have it, have it....." I had one of those moments going through the bundles there ☺. Finally Ellen Datlow – who I have yet to meet – had brought a selection of her MANY edited volumes of genre fiction,

and I managed to secure the 12th and 13th volume of hers *The Years Best Fantasy & Horror* in hardcover. A nice remembrance to bring back home of her visit to the little kingdom.

A funny note on the badge this year: it is a miniature of the (great) poster for the convention, placed on your chest (or wherever you want people to look for your name tag, really), but the outer design has ended up in a solution so that almost ALL attendees badges after a few minutes turn back side out, so you cannot see the names ☺. This will be the convention of the no-names☺

Naturally there is a convention booklet –this year a whopping 112 pages long! Containing contribs from one of the two GoHs (Reynolds, who gives us the short story” *Soiré*”), and the expected praise articles on the GoHs – both written by Lars Ahn Pedersen btw – Maestro is the word used for Reynolds, and Datlow becomes Queen of the Short Stories. Very fitting titles for such a kind of book. But the book also contains a (good) introduction to the THEME of the convention, *Cosmos and Disaster*, it’s the end of the world, people! Written by Danish BNF Klaus Æ. Mogensen. And then it prints three short stories and one poem, plucked from the best contributions to the Fantasticon Short Story Competition the past two years - another traditional element in a con arranged by Flemming Rasch. Finally, but not least, there is an essay/survey by our exiled fan (he lives in Jutland, which for us is far away so we call him an exile), Janus Andersen, on Danish Horror 2011. Somehow the horror has taken hold of the Danes in the past decade, and this survey shows just what (and how much) there really is going in this small nation at the moment.

I spent an hour or so drinking beer and catching up with co-fans: “Jophan” or Johan Anglemark of Sweden, my compadre in the secret workings of STIPPLE-APA (we produce fanzines that outsiders may not see or read – join up if you want illumination!); Carl-Eddy Skovgaard, the ACTUAL fan printing press of Denmark thinly disguised as a human being; Jan Andersen of Holland, Babylon 5 co-enthusiast, just home from the German Star Trek Convention; Tue Sørensen, our resident Mr. “Superheroes are GOOD for you” and film connoisseur ; Thomas Winther, HPL-fan No. 1; Lea Thume, SFCs current chairman and lover of romance SF; Jeppe Larsen, science fiction blogger and Hard SF fan no.1, Lise Andreasen,

blogger and science fiction award initiator; as well as all the other mentioned people in this issue. I spotted many more, and will have to find time to talk to them tomorrow ☺

At the end of the first day, I made my way to BNF Niels Dalgaards presentation of Niels E. Nielsen, our greatest science fiction writer. Last year, SFC & Niels Dalgaard came into contact with the daughter of NEN, and was introduced to the manuscripts and papers still in her possession. From this Dalgaard was able to not only save five short stories never before published, but also to find several only published in newspapers, and in general to fix the overall publication history of NENs work. SFC chose to publish all the short stories, *Oh Happy Fandom Heart!*, and Dalgaard has written a book length essay on NEN and his work. It was all this knowledge that Dalgaard was presenting in the talk/interview, and supported by the moderator Jesper Rugård Jensen (and the audience as well), we made our way well around the work and legacy of NEN.

To be continued tomorrow...

My next Convention will be the SFCD-Con in Kiel:

