

INTERMISSION #111

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com for EAPA, N'APA & the usual suspects. Follow @SFJournalen newstweets on Nordic sf/f/h&fandom. Typos vs Me 3-0. Early Aug 2021.

Editorially: PM Rises from the Grave, Eurocon, Footy, a Little Virus...

There's no reason to dwell too much upon You Know What. +80% of all Swedish adults are now vaccinated and they'll soon begin to jab 16-years old. Deaths hover at 0-1/day. lower than for the ordinary flu (which averages 1.5/day) and Sweden continues to drop in virus statistics, from 35 (lastish) to now 39 or maybe lower (see <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>). So despite desperate headlines of continued scaremongering by old-time media pundits, the epidemic is practically over. At least here. The Public Health Agency has even dropped their press conferences.

Lastish noted how Swedish PM Stefan Löfven lost a vote of no confidence. I wasn't exactly surprised that he bounced back a couple off weeks later. If the opposition wished to take over, they'd have only 1 year until next ordinary election, hardly optimal and not enough time to do anything. What made his comeback is that the Left-Former-Communist Party withdrew their No, and that was enough as the Centre Party abstained, though the Liberals switched to the centre-right. There's no need to dig deeper into silly Swedish party politics, so we'll leave it at that.

Great news is that the city of Uppsala (80 km north of Stockholm) has been awarded the 2023 Eurocon. Se <https://eurocon2023.wordpress.com/> GoHs and other details TBA and date will be June 8-11, 2023. Stockholm had the Eurocon in 2011, which was quite successful with 750 attendees from scores of countries, so I hope this will work out well too. The Eurocon began in 1972 in Trieste, Italy, and is usually the size of a US regional con or a British Eastercon, say 500-1500. Honestly, that's preferable to a monstrous 6-7000 attendees Worldcon, where you constantly walk around feeling lost, unable to find anybody and being unable to follow all the parallel prog tracks.

I will not follow the ongoing Olympics very much, except for the Swedish-American pole vaulter Mondo Duplantis, the world record holder who I believe I've mentioned before. And I'll also keep an eye on the Swedish women's football (soccer) team. They shocked everyone by beating the "unbeatable" American world champions by 3-0 in the opening match. The Swedish footy ladies are no pushovers. They won silver in the 2016 Olympics, were #5 in world ranking but are climbing and seems to have a good shot at the gold, though I don't want to jinx their chances... It's more fun to follow the women's than the men's team, since our girls are good enough to always be medal candidates, which the gents are far from. (More news on this last!)

This will also take you to Lapland, where I now earlier in July fed the mosquitoes, as you have seen also in previous summer issues. Papers say that the Esrange space base in Lapland is on track to later launch micro satellites! And in a few years a Spaceport Sweden may open there, for suborbital space tourists. The billionaires already have fun with their rockets. Buying a stairway to heaven, sort of...

#111 will of course offer more skiffy and fandom history. I've also been working on a longer article with thoughts and tidbits on fannish history, but it doesn't feel like finished yet. Maybe in a later issue. I am now for instance re-reading FT Laney's fascinating *Ah! Sweet Idiocy* and might want to add comments on that in my article. Something like: read after a dissertation on the Cuba crisis ASI doesn't come through as an anticlimax...

--Ahrvid Engholm, fanned, descending from a mimeo



Stina Blackstenius scores her first goal on USWNT, a bombshell girl!

Ps. I haven't been able to cut down the distribution as much as I've wanted yet (I feel hesitant to deny you this excellent and informative publication...) but I'll try harder. If you want to stay on the list send me a line. I won't publish LoCs so you can say what you want without fear...

Lap Dancing in the Midnight Sun

Devoted followers of *Intermission* have the last few summers been with me in Lapland. I was there 2021 too, so let me share some of the adventures. As if it was still an untamed, dangerous wilderness, with wolves howling and you'd run a risk of being trampled down by a stampeding reindeer herd... The only danger are the mini vampires called mosquitoes. My ma's and grandma's village Bellvik is a bit too much south to have real midnight sun, but believe me: the sun is so close under the horizon it's virtually daylight in the middle of the night. As long as the sun is over 6 degrees below the horizon (something called civic dusk or "borgerlig skymning") night is like daytime.

I spent the time reading, working with my computer, being around my brother and two cousins who were there, having an occasional trip to the closest town or on the lake with fire and hot dogs. I won't bore you with everything, but there was no "lap dancing"...unless counting the insects, doing the bug.



On the way up we had lunch. Beautiful view over the city of Sundsvall, from its Northern City Mountain.



Entering Bellvik. It was late but the sun hadn't set.



Stayed in grandma's old house, where she operated the village Post Office until 1969. In front my brother's old SAAB, bicycle on top.

All Knowledge Is Contained in Fanzines...'

**So why not replace Wikipedia with Hyphen!*



Nearby town of Dorotea. The parking lot. Left two supermarkets and Systembolaget liquor shop. Right the municipal council house. In a second hand shop I found ca 20 books by fan and my old pal Denis L (RIP 2006). Beside being a good sf author and a huge BNF from 1952 and on, he unfortunately had strange ideas of reincarnation and such. But tell us Roscoe, how did a stack of his books end up in a small Lapland town?



The books I found by famous fan Dénis Lindbohm. Bevingaren is a good sf novel, the rest psychic esoterica, eg on his "earlier life" on the planet Kvatur Glon (as he believed...).



Cousin Anders by our mailboxes. BTW, the main mail service Postnord will now only deliver mail 3 times/week! Another nail in the coffin for paper fanzines...



A lake excursion. Anders by the outboarder. Me in sunglasses.



Brother Johan (L) got the fire started. Cousin Erik (R) watching. Hot dogs were waiting.



Me after a swim. The water was warm!



Me, Anders and Johan giving dogs what they deserved!



Our neighbour Glenn held a flock of sheep.



Another neighbour, Margareta (by the bookcase in the back), summertime opens an antiques shop.



My cousins have their own cottage. Here by their breakfast table. Note the cosy fire in the fireplace (low to the left).



On the way back to Stockholm we stopped for Johan to run in a local competition, the Beaver Race of 10 km. His time ca 41 min. In younger days he'd do it faster, being a former elite athlete (eg running for the national track & fields team). Here he is after the race.

Is there a vaccine against a viral tweet?

[illegible]

around 50 members... Every year Sigma TC organise a convention in Fisksätra inviting people from the rest of the country. In between there are meetings a couple of times a month where they prepare the convention, talk about sf books, films, records etc. Among the members there is eg composer Ralph Lundsten who has made a number of "space records"... They play meteorball at the convention, "which is stunningly similar to rounders" Wolf von Witting reveals. In addition they read poetry, where the worst poem wins, as inspired from the sf world. /D Adams and Vogons, of course./ "We have a lot of fun," Wolf von Witting stresses. "We don't take everything so seriously. It's easier to do things with humour. You can't just sit and talk about sf books, as we did first. But it is literature we deal with in our association, and the kind of world contained in sf literature. But we're not into space travel, that's something for the Space Movement. /The Swedish Space Movement was another group, which had just been launched./ We're not ufologist believing in flying saucers." /Wolf doesn't believe in saucers and.../ today you are OK if you deal with sf he says. It was different 30 years ago. The change is due to that we more and more live in an sf world, he thinks. "Reality beats sf. It was so eg with the moon landing. It happened earlier than predicted in sf circles." Says this "marzipans" who works as a conductor on Saltsjö Railways when he is on Earth. (Caption: Do you want to know what fanzines, fanac, egoboo, android, cyborg and ESP is? The answers are in the exhibition Wolf von Witting and his "marzipans" friends in Sigma Terra Corps show in Fisksätra Library.)

The club's convention was Nasacon, held for ten years in the 1980's, and once finally in the signature year 2000 (as Nasacon 2000). Sorry that the clip is a bit blurry for Swedish readers, but you can follow the English translation. On to another club's leading member...

En av de mest mångsidigt begåvade i vårt land, fil lic BERTIL STÅLHANE, Stockholm, har avlidit vid 90 års ålder.

Han var son till överingenjör Otto Stålhane och hans hustru Märta, född Ohlsson. Familjen bodde när Bertil var liten i Ludvika, där fadern var chef för växelströmsavdelningen vid Ludvika järnverk. 1923 blev han chef för Elektrovärmeinstitutet, EVI. Vid 25 års ålder blev Bertil Stålhane fil lic i kemi. Forskning hos fadern i EVI resulterade i många patent och 1942 fick Bertil IVA:s guldmedalj. Fadern fick utmärkelsen 1925. Bertil var initiativtagare till Institutet för halvledarforskning, Hafo, som sedermera blev ABB-Hafo. Han var innehavare av Elektrovärmeinstitutet 1945-69. Men om den tekniska sidan må någon annan som bättre behärskar den tala.

SOM DEN SANNE humanisten kunde inte Bertil stillatigande se att demokratin trampades ner av diktaturer och jag vet ingen annan tekniker, förutom Curt Nicolin, som haft samma moraliska mod att säga sanningar högt. Under ofredsåren skrev Bertil Stålhane böckerna "Barbari eller civilisation" (1940), "Tro och övertro" (1940), "Tala svenska" (1941), "Den röda faran och den gula" (1942) och



"Svenska folket undrar" (1943). Att han skulle bli angripen var självklart och som exempel kan nämnas boken "Ni bryter på engelska, hr Stålhane!", skriven av Ikke Ryding 1941.

Tisdagsklubben gav ytterligare "spänning" i tillvaron och sedan 1942 har han varit medlem i Publicistklubben. Han var oerhört beläst och hade ett stort bibliotek. Harry Martinson var god vän med honom och genom föreningen Atom Noak, FAN, där Bertil givetvis också var med, fick han den till "Aniara". DET FINNS mycket mer att berätta om Bertil, men en sak må nämnas som ytterligare belyser hans handlande. Under andra världskriget tillverkade han radioapparater till den norska motståndsrörelsen. Detta skedde i EVI:s källare på kvällstid.

Våra familjer umgicks sedan 1920-talet och för mig personligen är saknaden mycket stor.

It's the archive from the Atomic Noah club collected by Bertil Stålhane I have studied at the Royal Library. Stålhane was a chemist and writer (eg with articles and books against Nazism during WWII) who was active in - perhaps its most active member - what must be considered Sweden's first sf club. That's the group as that in fear of a nuclear WWII, right after Hiroshima, made plans for building giant spaceships, inspired by similar stories in the JVM sf pulp, to rescue mankind from atomic war to Mars. They had internal correspondence between all members on thin airmail paper (almost like a carbon APA!) and summer meetings with spouses, guests and lectures, almost like minicons, going on until the early 1970's. Members unfortunately began to die off, but the last two, Stålhane and Gunnar Dahlby (1906-1995), continued meeting until the early 1990's at Rosendals Wårdshus. Now from the obituary for Bertil Stålhane (1902-1992, Oct 17) in Dagens Nyheter:

...He became chief of the Electro Heat Institute, EVI /where they had space poet Harry Martinson one famous evening/ He became Phil Lic at age 25 in chemistry. Research together with his father at EVI resulted in many patents. In 1942 Bertil received the gold medal from the Royal Academy of Engineering sciences. Bertil took the

initiative for the Institute of Semiconductor Research...As a true humanist Bertil couldn't see democracy being trampled by dictatorships...during the years of unrest Bertil Stålhane wrote the books Barbary or Civilisation (1940), Belief or Superstition (1940), Speak Swedish (1941), The Red Danger and the Yellow (1942) and The Swedish People Asks (1943)...The Tuesday Club /famous anti-Nazi group during the war/ gave further his life further excitement and he became a member of the Publishers Club in 1942. He was very well read with a big library. Harry Martinson was a good friend and through the association FAN /Föreningen Atom-Noak,

"Association Atomic Noah"/ where Bertil of course was a member he received the ideas behind Aniara...during WWII he built radio transmitters for the Norwegian resistance. That was in EVI's cellar during the evenings.

A very active man, as you can see. I guess the "yellow" danger, from one of his book titles, must have been the Mao Tse-Tung communists, on the rise at the time, not Chinese in general (because a racist he was not!). You could almost say he had a Cosmic Mind! I wonder if any of the radios he built for the Norwegian resistance are still around? They should be in a museum!

From one Cosmic Minded to another: Lovecraft. This piece by Lennart Sörensen, who wrote a lot about skiffy, was perhaps first major presentation of HPL in Swedish press, in Aftonbladet August 2,



I fruktans territorium

The Gothic tradition har alltsedan Horace Walpoles, Lord Dunsanys och Poes dagar varmt omhulldats inom engelskspråkig litteratur. Det är en genre på gott och ont, dock tyvärr övervägande på ont; har man plöjt igenom majoriteten av alla dessa puerila historier om varulvar och vampyrer är det ett mildt omdöme att kalla det hela stereotyp. I synnerhet Poeepigoner är vanligtvis odrägliga i sina desperata försök att efterlikna Mästaren, även om det finns sådana glänsande undantag som Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

Lovecraft dog 1937 vid 47 års ålder men är i överensstämmelse med de övriga litterära lagarna mer känd och uppskattad i dag än under sin livstid, vilket i och för sig inte vill säga mycket. De noveller han själv publicerade uppenbarade sig vanligen i månadstidningen *Weird Tales*, som över huvud var en sällsynt god plantskola för den bättre Poetraditionens värdare. Lovecrafts litterära kvarlätenheter har sedan antologiserats av mer eller mindre lämpliga redaktörer; den otvivelaktigt bästa antologin är August Derleths "Best Supernatural Stories of H. P. Lovecraft", som utkom 1945. Förutom ett initierat förord innehåller antologin samliga Lovecrafts novellistiska mästerverk. Här återfinns man således "Pickman's Model", en delirium-tremensfantasi om en konstnär i förbund med underjordens makter, av Lovecraft själv troligtvis avsedd att vara något av en personlig bikt; här finns den sciencefiction-influenserade "The colour out of space" och sådana ljuvliga gastkramningar som "The thing on the doorstep" och "In the vault".

I Derlethantologin ingår vidare den långa novellen "The Call of Cthulhu", som kom att bilda första stenen i Lovecrafts stora mytbyggnad, ett arbete om vilket han själv skrev: "Alla mina noveller är, även om de förefaller utan sammanhang, baserade på en fundamental saga eller legend om att den här världen en gång var bebodd av en annan ras som utövade svart magi och därför förlorade fotfästet och blev för-

driven, men som nu lever utanför på språng att söka övertaga den här planeten igen." Teorien tillhör allmängodset inom science fiction- och fantasygenrerna men Lovecraft utvecklar den på ett personligt och övertygande sätt och, vilket är det primära, han blir inspirerad av den att skriva utmärkta noveller.

Lovecrafts upptäcktsfärder i det mänskliga själslivets okända regioner är nedtecknade på ett språk som oftast tenderar bli kanslmässigt. Just brytningen mellan form och innehåll ger en intensiv skräckstämning som erinrar om Kafkas novellkonst. På det hela taget är Lovecraft en författare som förtjänar bli mera läst. Visst var han en sjuk störning som älskade natten och skuggan men få författare har som han utan tanke på följderna sökt kartlägga den mänskliga fruktans territorium eller brukat det logiska vanvetet som nyckel till sitt eget jag.

LENNART SÖRENSEN.



1957, "In the Territory of Fear":

The Gothic Tradition has been strong in English literature since the days of Horace Walpole, Lord Dunsany and Poe. It's a genre of the bad and the good, unfortunately mostly the bad. If you have gone through the majority of all these puerile stories of werewolves and vampires it'd be mild to call it stereotyped. The Poe epigones are especially insufferable in desperate attempts to copy the Master, through there are brilliant exceptions like Howard Phillips Lovecraft. He died in 1937 at the age of 47 but is following the usual literary laws more known and appreciated today than when he was alive, which in itself doesn't say much. The stories he wrote himself usually appeared in the monthly magazine *Weird Tales*, which generally was a good incubator for the better parts of the Poe tradition. The literary heritage of Lovecraft has since been anthologised by more or less suitable editors; the without doubt best anthology is August Derleth's *Best Supernatural Stories of HP Lovecraft* that came in 1945. Beside a initiated introduction the anthology contains all of Lovecraft's short story masterpieces.. Here you may thus find "Pickman's Model", a delirium-tremens fantasy of an artist allied to the

powers of the underworld, by Lovecraft himself probably intended as something of a personal confession; here is the sf influenced "The Colour Out of Space" and such sweet scares as "The Thing on the Doorstep" and "In the Vault". In the Derleth anthology we further have the novelette "The Call of Cthulhu", which formed the first brick in Lovecraft's big myth building, a work about which he himself wrote "All my stories are, even if they may seem to be without context, based on a fundamental story or legend about that this world was once inhabited by another race that practised black magic and thus lost its foothold and was displaced, but now live on the outside busy trying to once more take back this planet". Such a theory is common within sf & fantasy but Lovecraft develops it in a personal and convincing manner and, which is important, he is inspired by it to write excellent stories. Lovecraft's expeditions into the human mental life's unknown regions are taken down in

a language which often tend to be bureaucratic. The contrast between form and content makes for an intense atmosphere of horror which reminds you of the story art of Kafka. All in all Lovecraft is an author deserving to be more read. Sure, he was an unhealthy hermit who loved the night and shadows but few authors have like him, without considering the consequences tried to map the territory of fear or used the madness off logic as a key to the self.

From Lovecraft to the Poem out of Space, Aniara by Harry Martinson, mentioned here many times. It was turned into a successful opera, of which we can learn more in Dagens Nyheter May 23, 1959, "New Martinson Poems in the Aniara Libretto".

Harry Martinson wrote on his poetry epos Aniara and for a long time he didn't really know what he was doing, he said on the big press conference at the Opera before the world premiere of the Aniara opera. Atomic physics for him seemed like a fateful science and he felt a need to interpret the hubris of mankind in relation to matter and a worldview of emptiness. After a while his imagination built the spaceship Aniara and it brought forth the poems and gave it shape. "My poetry is a bit sneaky," Martinson said, "But most is quite clear and the simple meters are chosen to increase clarity. Aniara was written long before sputniks and space rockets began to haunt space. I would have written it even if they were around, it has nothing with such technical experiments to do. It is a situation of disaster I wanted to illustrate with Aniara." Harry Martinson has been around the rehearsals of Aniara and for him the opera stands as an entirely new work. He thinks it is exciting to have been the incentive for the new Aniara. When Erik Lindegren worked with the opera's libretto on the basis of Martinson's poems, there were scenes where new poetry was needed, and he then went to Harry Martinson who added new portions. So in the opera there are poems which are previously unknown and unpublished. Harry Martinson wasn't sure if the twelve note music was his cup of tea and wondered what kind of honking it would be when he came to the first rehearsals. But he left emotional and convinced. Erik Lindegren have had the delicate task of transforming poetry to an opera libretto and that has meant a selection and a dramatic concentration. He wants to call it an interpretation of Martinson's poetry made out of love. When Lindegren wrote the libretto to The Masquerade Ball he displayed a skilled quoting technique and it will show also in Aniara. In the end there will be lines from a couple of Edith Södergran's list poems and they are chosen with an artistic purpose, which Harry Martinson warmly approved.

/STEREOPHONIC MESSAGE/ It took a year after reading Aniara that Karl-Birger Blomdahl had the idea to make an opera. He had for a long time sought a libretto and here he found it. Harry Martinson was kind enough to give his permission and they both agreed that Erik Lindegren, who earlier had cooperated with Blomdahl, would do the libretto. Blomdahl has worked with the music for two years. The opera is of normal length and has the normal crew in the orchestra ditch, only with some extras on percussion. There are sections of electronic music in the opera, but it isn't mixed with the orchestra and is recorded on magnetophone tapes and played stereophonically through two loudspeakers on the stage. The electronic component has purely a dramatic task in the opera

I "ANIARAS" LIBRETTO

Harry Martinson skrev länge på sitt versepos "Aniara" utan att egentligen veta vad han höll på med, berättade han vid den stora presskonferensen på Operan inför "Aniaras" världspremiär. Atomfysiken tedde sig för honom som en ödesvetenskap och han kände ett behov att tolka människans hybris inför materien och en världsbild som är tomheten. Så småningom byggde hans fantasi rymdskeppet "Aniara" och till det förde de färdiga dikterna och gav dem form.

— Mitt versepos är litet lurifaxigt här och där, sade Martinson, men det mesta är klartext och de enkla versmåttan är valda för att öka klarheten. "Aniara" skrevs långt innan sputnikar och rymdraketer började att spöka i rymden. Jag skulle ha skrivit mitt epos även om de funnits, det har ingenting med sådana tekniska experiment att göra. Det är en katastrofsituation jag ville skildra med "Aniara".

Harry Martinson har varit med om repetitioner av "Aniara" och för honom står operan som ett alldeles nytt verk. Han tycker att det är spännande att ha varit incitamentet till den nya "Aniara". När Erik Lindegren arbetade ut operans libretto på basis av Martinsons versepos uppstod scener där nydikningar behövdes och då gick han till Harry Martinson, som skrev till vissa avsnitt. Det finns alltså i operan dikter som varken är kända eller publicerade tidigare. Harry Martinson var inte säker på att

Blomdahl, skulle göra librettot. I två år har Blomdahl arbetat ut musiken. Operan har normal längd och en normal besättning i orkesterdiken, endast med någon förstärkning i slagverket. Det förekommer inslag av elektronisk musik i operan, men den blandas inte med orkestern utan är inspelad på magnetofonband och sänds stereofoniskt genom två högtalare på scenen. Det elektroniska inslaget har en rent dramatisk uppgift i operan och förekommer vid tre tillfällen, nämligen då miman talar och återger intryck från okända världar eller budskap från jorden. Ljudspelet i högtalarna har både elektroniska och konkreta klanger, men Blomdahl är mycket hemlighetsfull om deras ursprung. Han låter folk gissa.

Från att vara ett versepos har "Aniara" förvandlats till ett polyfont konstverk, där ljus och rörelser och musik utsäger det som finns att läsa mellan raderna. Det är också i sällsynt hög grad en fö-



Harry Martinson i diskussion med "Aniaras" regissör Göran Gentele.

tolvtonsmusiken skulle vara något för honom och undrade smått vad det skulle bli för ett tutande när han kom till första repetitionen. Men han gick därifrån gripen och övertygad.

Erik Lindegren har haft den delikata uppgiften att förvandla ett versepos till operalibretto och det har inneburit ett urval och en dramatisk koncentration. Själv vill han kalla det en kärleksfull tolkning av Martinsons dikt. När Lindegren gjorde librettot till "Maskeradbalen" visade han prov på en skicklig citatteknik och den kommer till synes även i "Aniara". I slutet kommer rader ur ett par av Edith Södergrans sista dikter och de är valda i en bestämd konstnärlig avsikt, som varmt tilltalade Harry Martinson.

Stereofoniska budskap

Först ett år efter genomläsningen av "Aniara" kom Karl-Birger Blomdahl på idén att göra en opera. Han hade länge sökt ett libretto och här fann han det. Harry Martinson gav vänligt sitt tillstånd och man kom överens om att Erik Lindegren, som tidigare samarbetat med

reställning som tillkommer under samverkan. Sven Erixson underströk hur intimt han och regissören Göran Gentele samarbetat om det visuella, till slut har det blivit svårt att urskilja vars och ens insatser.

Operan har lagt ner mera möda på instuderingen av "Aniara" än kanske på något annat verk, sade Operachefen och man är nu inne i slutfasen av repetitionerna. Åtskilliga föreställningar har ställts in på senaste tiden och andra åtaganden har avböjts för att "Aniara" skulle få all behövlig repetitionstid. Göran Gentele och Sixten Ehrling, som leder instuderingen av det sceniska och musikaliska, har ingen lätt uppgift, men den är fascinerande. Göran Gentele hoppas att föreställningen skall förmedla diktens poetiska vision och skapa rymdkänsla. Det har varit viktigt att undvika karaktären av science fiction, men ge rymd åt Martinsons poetiska vision. Varje antydning till science fiction har omsorgsfullt undvikits. "Aniara" är "ett sorgespel om den moderna mänsklighetens situation", skriver Martinson i programmet till operan.

and is there on three occasions, when the Mima speaks and replay impressions from unknown worlds or messages from Earth. The soundplay from the loudspeakers is both electronic and concrete twitter, but Blomdahl is secretive about their origins. He lets people guess. From being epic poetry Aniara has become a polyphonic artwork, where light and movement and music says what there is between the lines. It is also to a high degree a performance out of cooperation. Sven Erixon emphasized how intimately he and director Göran Gentele cooperated on the visuals, and in the end it is difficult to separate the work of each. The Opera has spent more on rehearsing Aniara than perhaps any other piece, the Opera director said, and they are now

near the end of rehearsals. Many plays have been cancelled lately and other commitments have been rejected to give Aniara the needed rehearsal time Göran Gentele and Sixten Ehrling, who leads the scenical and music aspects, has no easy task, but a fascinating one. Gentele hopes that the performance will convey the poem's vision and feeling of space. Any hint of sf has carefully been avoided. WHY!!! Aniara is a tragedy about the situation of modern man, Martinson writes in the opera program.

(Caption: Harry Martinson discussing with Aniara's director Göran Gentele.)

Yeah, atomic war and a spaceship heading for the stars...avoid sf at all cost! Intermission has

ANIARA BLEV VIKINGATÅG TILL LONDON

Av HARRY OLOFSSON

LONDON (Blinken)

— Jag har aldrig någonsin sett en bättre föreställning på Covent Garden efter kriget och jag har ändå sett varenda en, skrev Daily Express efter Stockholmsoperans premiär i går på Karl Birger Blomdahls "Aniara". Och en annan av de ledande kritikerna sade i pausen:

— Inte sedan vikingarna tog sig i land här har någonting liknande kommit till England från andra sidan Nordsjön.

● Operan sjöngs på svenska, men publiken hade tydligen ändå inte svårt att följa med. Redan från början var det en förtätd stämning i salongen. Det var som om två tusen barn suttit där och lyssnat till en saga.

● Först sedan Margareta Hallin, den blinda serskan, sjunkit in i sin ordlösa aria brakade applåderna lös.

● Sedan orkestern klingat bort i den sista ändlöst ödsliga stråktonen blev det först en gripen konstpaus i salongen och sedan dånade en applåderask i 15 minuter.

Set Svanholm, som stod i kulissen sa: "Jag tror inte någon operachef i hela världen har upplevt större glädje och lycka än den jag mottagit i dag."

● Naturligtvis var det ändå lite blandade tongångar i recensionerna.

* Spännande teater

"Dels imponerande, dels gäckande, men mest gripande", skrev Daily Express.

"Blomdahls musik lyckades inte hundra procentigt hålla uppmärksamheten, men operan är överväldigande, spännande teater. Den inspirerade svenske producenten Göran Gentele drog ut varje dramatisk droppe..."

"Det här är mycket goda sångare", skrev Express.

London Times tyckte inte riktigt om själva operan men lovprisade i stället sångarna.

"Operan stod på den billiga science fiction-litteraturens nivå i stället för att framstå som en slående framtidsversion av en universell myt."

"Kanske är det ett alltför stort ämne för att det skall kunna göras verkligt på två timmar", skrev Times. "Kanske är det för att karaktärerna används symboliskt i stället för att någonsin vinna vår sympati som individer — eller kanske beror det endast på att författarna har konverterat det sublima

Svanholm

rusig av lycka

hos skolgossen (om också inte det löjliga) med elektronisk utrustning och komiskt naiva rymddräkter för männen medan kvinnorna reser klädda som för ett arbetarmöte."

* Kören enastående

News Chronicle's kritiker skrev att "jag anser operan felproportionerad. Icke desto mindre hade Aniara iscensatts lysande av Göran Gentele och dirigerades överdådigt av Sixten Ehrling. Körsången var enastående."

"Ingenting liknande har någonsin förut setts på en opera eller teater i London."

Daily Mail fann operan vara "en djärv, tankeväckande idé, som iscensatts på ett nytt sätt."

Daily Telegraph förklarade, att fastän Aniara måste räknas som en musikalisk besvikelse var Kungliga Operans föreställning "enastående". Samtliga londonidningar prisade framför allt sopranerna Elizabeth Söderström som Daisy Doody och Margareta Hallin som den blinda serskan samt Olle Sivall som clownen Sandon.

earlier presented many examples of how Martinson actually liked sf, collected books, read AE Van Vogt, had it in a May 1st speech, etc - so this must come from the Royal Opera or perhaps be something the reporter (sign "Age") has burped up. And director Gentele, can't have been far from sf, as he a few years earlier made the atomic bomb film "At the Gates of Hell", covered in *Intermission* recently. Anyway, the opera Aniara, became big success, and even Londoners had the opportunity to tune in, as told in Aftonbladet September 2, 1960, "Aniara Became a Viking Raid to London":

I have never ever seen a better show at Covent Garden since the war, and then I have seen all of the, the Daily express wrote after the Stockholm Opera's premiere yesterday of Karl-Birger Blomahls Aniara. And another leading critic said in the break: "Not since the Vikings stepped ashore here has anything like it come to England from the other side off the North Sea. The opera was sung in Swedish but the audience didn't seem to have any problems to follow. Already from the start there was a tight atmosphere in the saloon. It was as if 2000 children sat there and listened to a fairy tale. It took until Maragreta Hallin, the blind fortune teller, sank into her wordless aria for the applauses to break out. After the orchestra went down with the last endlessly desolate violin tune there was first an artistic pause in the saloon and then came thundering applause for 15 minutes Set Svanholm who stood backstage said: "I don't think any opera director in the world have experience greater joy and happiness than what I have received today." But of course there was a little more of a mixed bag in the reviews: /EXCITING THEATRE/ "Partly impressive, partly elusive, but most of all gripping," the Daily Express wrote. "Blomdahl's music didn't to 100% manage to catch the attention, but the opera is overwhelming, exciting theatre. The inspiring Swedish producer Göran Gentele caught every dramatic drop...It is very good singers," The Express wrote. The London Times doesn't really like the opera but praised the singers."The opera was on the level of cheap sf literature /HUH!!!/ instead of coming out as a striking future vision of a universal myth. Perhaps the topic is the big for it to be made real in two hours," the

Times wrote. "Perhaps it is because the characters are used symbolic instead of ever getting our sympathy as individuals - or perhaps it's only because the authors have converted the sublime of a schoolboy (if not the silly) with electronic equipment and comically naïve to spacesuits for the men, while the women travel dressed as for a labour meeting," /CHOIR

EXCELLENT/ The critic of News Chronicle wrote that "I think the opera ha the wrong proportions. None the less, Aniaya has been brilliantly staged by Göran Gentele and was directed superiorly by Sixten Ehrling. The choir singing was excellent. "Nothing like it has ever been seen on an opera or theatre stage in London." Daily Mail found the opera to be "a bold, thoughtful idea which has been staged in a new way." The Daily telegraph explained that though Aniaya must be musically be counted as a disappointment the Royal Opera's performance was outstanding. All London papers praised most of all the sopranos Elisabeth Söderström as Daisy Doody and Maragerta Hallin as the blind fortune teller, and Olle Sivall as the clown Sandon.

Svenska Dagbladet covered the London performance the day after, September 3, 1960, "Press Praise for Aniaya, Fascinating Experience"

The Stockholm Opera could hardly ask for better reviews than those from the London press given on Friday after the first performance in London Thursday. Aniaya was on the program as the opera guested

Edinburgh last year /OK, they had done Scotland too!/, but the stage then available was less suitable for the task and critics note overall that this year's performance was better than last year's. The Times talks about a fascinating theatre experience and especially praise Sven Erixon's decorations and Göran Gentele's direction. Sixten Ehrling's conducting is also praised without reservations and of the singer Margareta Hallin's interpretation of the blind poet was something the audience also expressed appreciation of. It's a drama appealing to the imagination, says the music critic of Financial Times, Andrew Porter /Not, the Fan, I guess.../, who thinks this piece becomes more fascinating the more you think about it. It is good, the critic thinks, that

"Aniaya" får pressrosor: Fascinerande upplevelse

LONDON. (SvD:s Londonred.) Stockholmsoperan kunde knappast begära bättre recensioner än dem som Londonpressen på fredagen ger Aniaya efter det första framförandet i London på torsdagen. Aniaya stod på programmet vid operans gästspel i Edinburgh förra året, men den scen som då ställts till förfogande var mindre lämpad för ändamålet och kritiken konstaterar överlag att årets framförande var bättre än fjol-årets.

Times talar om en fascinerande teaterupplevelse och ger Sven Erixons dekorationer och Göran Genteles regi en särskild eloge i sammanhanget. Sixten Ehrlings musikaliska ledning prisas också oreserverat och av de enskilda sängarprestationerna framstår Margareta Hallins tolkning av den blinda poetissan som publiken också uttryckte sin speciella uppskattning över.

Det rör sig om ett drama som tilltalar fantasin, konstaterar Financial Times musikkritiker Andrew Porter som anser att detta verk blir mer fascinerande ju mer man reflekterar över det. Det är bra menar denne kritiker att Stockholmsoperan tagit över Aniaya till London. Daily Telegraph är liksom andra tidningar inte beredd att ge Karl Birger Blomdahls musik högsta betyg men kan inte undgå att prisa Stockholmsoperans uppsättning. Av sängarna ger denna tidning särskilda lovord åt Margareta Hallin, Elisabeth Söderström och Ove Sivall.

"SCIENCE FICTION"

Vad själva dramat Aniaya beträffar har Londonkritiken bland annat på grund av språksvårigheterna inte varit beredd att komma med oreserverade lovord. Såväl Times som Daily Telegraph faller för frestelsen att tala om science fiction (Daily Telegraph medger dock att det rör sig om en raffinerad sådan) vilket ju är helt främmande för såväl Harry Martinsons som Erik Lindegrens intentioner. Andrew Porter i Financial Times har större förståelse för det martinsonska dramat. Han riktar emellertid en välbehövlig upmaning till alla som avser att se denna föreställning under operans Lon-

dongästspel att noga studera program- mets presentation i förväg. Denna synopsis upptar sex sidor och ger också engelsk publik en uppfattning om Martinsons vers som presenteras i en god engelsk översättning.

På fredagen fullföljde operatruppen sina intentioner att poströsta på Londonambassaden eftersom operan kommer att vara i Köpenhamn den 18 september. Ett hundratal personer med operachefen Set Svanholm i spetsen infann sig i två busslaster på ambassaden där fyra valförrättare väntade på att ta emot deras röster. Det tog cirka 20 minuter för alla att fullgöra sin medborgerliga plikt ty ambassaden var väl förberedd och kunde snabbt ta emot alla rösterna.

Set Svanholm och ett par andra i Londongästspelet medverkande operatister spelade efter röstningen in ett intervjuprogram i TV som den svenska TV-publiken får se på lördag.

HANS VON FRIESEN



the Stockholm opera has brought this to London. The Daily Telegraph isn't, just as other newspapers, ready to give the music of Karl-Birger Blomdahl the highest grades but can't avoid giving praise to the performance of the Stockholm opera. Of the singers this paper gives special praise to Margareta Hallin, Elisabeth Söderström and Ove Sivall. /"SCIENCE FICTION"/ When it comes to the drama itself the London critics haven't been able to bring unreserved praise, among other things due to language difficulties. Both The Times and The Daily Telegraph fall for the temptation to talk about science fiction. /What a CRIME!! (but The Daily Telegraph admits it is of an advanced kind) but that would be alien to the intentions of both Harry Martinson and Erik Lindegren, Andrew Porter in the Financial Times has more understanding for the Martinson drama, but he has a necessary message to all considering to attend this performance during the opera's guest appearances, to study the program presentation in advance. It has a synopsis of six pages and will give also an English audience a grasp of Martinson's poetry presented in fine English translation. On Friday the opera group went through with their intentions to cast absentee ballots at the London embassy since they'll be in Copenhagen September 18 /There was an election coming, and here we learn they guested Denmark too./ Around 100 people lead by the opera chief Set Svanholm came in two bus loads to the embassy, where four election officials waited to receive their votes. It took around 20 minutes for everyone to fulfill their civic duties since the embassy was well prepared and quickly could receive all ballots. Set Svanholm and a couple of the others of the London guest group after voting recorded an interview program for TV which the Swedish TCV audience can see on Saturday.

It seems the London press was generally satisfied with the Aniara opera. Despite that they sang in Swedish... But as they say, in opera you never hear what they sing anyway, so maybe it didn't matter! Note how the reviews try to distance themselves from this awful thing called science fiction... As *Intermission* has shown in earlier issues, Aniara was a huge thing, and it still is. In recent years it has been made into a musical, another (different) opera, a comic book, a feature film. The book collection became a bestseller (rare for poetry) and has been translated into over 20 languages, with two separate English translations, and even to Chinese and Esperanto. Forry Ackerman would be happy with that, as he could speak Esperanto as a native.

But now I see a fat lady backstage preparing to sing, so it's time to finish. But before that a special report...

Sheilas, Lumberjackettes & Vikings Having a Ball

Garth, I know you hate sports. (Said to the EAPA OE.) But, listen here! Not only are the Swedish ladies through to the gold game of Women's Olympic soccer, but Canada is too! Just before finishing this, Canada beat US with 1-0. (The USWNT has perhaps kneeled too much to both pressure on the pitch and virtue signalling.)

The Swedish football ladies have shined on the pitch, winning all their five games this far. Even though the semi against an inspired Australia was tougher than expected, victory was snatched by the ladies, in Blue for the day, by Fridolina Rolfö early in the second half. But the Matildas shouldn't be down under a US looking uninspired and tired, in the bronze medal match.

It's the second Olympic final in a row for the Blue-Yellow dames, having to settle for silver in Rio in 2016, playing 2x45 minutes after which, following Gary Linker rules, Germany won. But the Swedes are probably favourites this time, even if I expect an uncertain, eventful and tough match! Canada has a slight historical upper hand in games won between the teams, but the Swedes have the advantage counting recent years (if Uncle Google is correct).

It's more fun to follow the Swedish women's team than the men's. They are simply better. The gents' national team has won nothing for many years, despite Zlatan. Their greatest moments are ancient history, like the only title, the Olympic gold in 1948 (in London), the World Cup final in 1958 (held in Sweden, so a slight home turf advantage) and the bronze in 1994, a summer all Swedish football fans remember, and all the girls we have forsaken. In comparison, the girls have the last 20 years



Australia got the blues as ladies in blue scored.

won two silvers (finals in World Cup 2003 and Rio 2016) and four bronze medals in the Olympics, World and Euro championships. But the Viking-descendant soccerettes lone international title and gold medal is being 1984 Euro champs. May they now finally conquer the summit of Mount Olympus?



WHAT IF FLYING SAUCERS ARE JUST BILLIONAIRES FROM OTHER PLANETS!



Mailing Comments

First EAPA mlg 207 comments, then N'APA mlg 253:

William McCabe: As for corona statistics I often go to www.worldometers.info, which I think is just as good as any source. They all take their figures from each country's official statistics. However, those are difficult to compare because the criteria for how each one counts vary a lot! A couple of examples: figures of excess deaths indicates that corona deaths in Russia are *six times* the "official" figures. I guess Vlad Putin wants to seem doing better. And for Sweden, official figures claimed ca 9500 corona fatalities in 2020. But the government's Social Board said excess deaths were only 3200, and figures from the government's Statistics Agency indicates excess deaths were 4700. Whatever figure is right, is is much *less than half* the "official" one. The numbers indicate people were dying *with* but *not from* the virus. I understand that the UK has also had this kind of over-reporting. (But it doesn't change in the very beginning there were big problems with care homes, in the UK as well as in Sweden. Though many there were old and fragile and would die anyway.) "Confirmed infection rates" going up or down is a poor indicator, since it depends heavily upon a) how many you test, b) the underlying principles for who'll take the tests. If media coverage, group psychology, government advice or other factors makes it more likely that those who feel ill take tests, "infection rates" figures go up, while the real infection rate very well could be unchanged. It's called selection bias. "Infection rate" depending on test rate and possible selection bias are muddy statistics, not far from worthless. Example: official curves seem to show that the "second wave" in Sweden was about on the same level as the first. But for the second wave, the level of testing was 3-4 times as high! In reality, the second wave was probably only 1/3 or 1/4 the size of the first. Finally: BBC has - despite your claim - been criticised a lot or heavy left leaning bias!

Henry Grynsten: Another amazing issue of *Wild Ideas*! It was very interesting to read the alternate interpretation of "2001" as a musical about film making! The arguments seem not that implausible. On a subconscious level those elements could very well have played a role. To me it seems that Kubrick has always been very careful with what film music he selects. I won't go into all details, however. The shuttle docking with the space station to "An der Schönen Blauen Donau" was a central scene. "2001" was a great film! More: I stand by that consciousness of the kind we'd recognise in humans must be a gradual thing before it awakens. If we really think hard about how it appeared during our childhoods I'm sure most will remember it was something that came gradually. I'm not sure that animals seeming to "mourn" other animals are a sign of consciousness (except with apes perhaps, I keep the door open there). Animals living in herds and flocks have an instinctive attachment to those in the herd. If a member stops moving, that instinct makes them stay with the body as inbuilt herd-programming - for a while at least. There have been many bids for the "number of possible plots", Heinlein thought they were only three: the little tailor, the man who learned to know better, an boy meets girl (go to the Heinlein essay in AL Eshbach collection *Of Worlds Beyond*.) Georges Polti thought there were 46 "dramatic situations", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Thirty-Six_Dramatic_Situations But one could argue that there are anything from just *one* basic plot ("How to deal with a problem") to an *infinite* number ("On the other hand, there are an infinite number or possible problems!"). Anyway, the basic thing is that a plot must deal with something that develops, a number of actions where one thing leads to another. A "story" where basically not much happens (which is too common...) isn't a real story, but what is called a vignette. Finally: you put so much of work into these issues of *Wild Ideas*, it seems almost incredible! I commend you for that, Sir!

John Thiel: Interesting observations about the trends that began in the 1960's - alternative culture,

environment, and much more. Sf had a heavy taste of it through what was called the New Wave. On music: Have you made recordings of the music pieces you've written, that one could listen to? If so, give me links to where to find them. Has any of it been what we call filk songs?

Garth Spencer: Thanks for the link to your piece on "Creative Planetology". You mention a lot of things there that many writers ignore. I have at times noted how fantasy authors - in particular - are too lazy in creating their "worlds". They will usually give the worlds 100% Terra conditions. But if the gravity varies ever so slightly, the biosphere will be very different. The size of plants and animals will be different, and a heavier planet will have a thicker atmosphere, the chemistry will be different, and so on. A lighter planet will probably have less metals. The oxygen content of the atmosphere plays a huge role! If there is just slightly more oxygen fires will take off much more easily, and forests will be impossible - they will just burn up. Atmospheric pressure will change cooking temperature and weather. Lazy fantasy authors just assume all is 100% as on Earth, There's a good book on World Building (Stephen Gillett/Ben Bova) https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1992184.World_Building I still think that political leaders are much more powerful than business people. Politicians have: a) the right to instigate laws, unlike private companies, b) in principle endless amounts of money (by taxing, by printing money - it may create inflation and other problems, but in principle they have a bottomless cashbox), c) a monopoly for using violence (the police and military), d) and they have a much wider access to media and influencing the general public. The corona pandemic, for one one thing, has shown the scope of the power of politicians, locking up entire populations in their homes - folks innocent of any crimes! I can make *Intermission* smaller, as small as you want, by simply changing the compression ratio when I convert the file. Just ask me, but the drawback is that illustrations will become more blurry, in my case newspaper articles some may want to read (those who know some Swedish).

Jefferson P Swycaffer: One must conclude that the "restrictions" in the society have had very limited effect on the spread of corona infections. Sweden has had very light restrictions and has fared better than (at the time of writing) 38 other countries, counting deaths/million, and all those had tougher restrictions (source <https://worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>). It may even be that restrictions of the type house lockdown could have *increased* infections, as some studies claim, since people mandated to stay at home in a limited space are more likely to infect each other. What has



A tip to the billionaires on how to reach space, from artist Lars LON Olsson: Try a very strong spring!

been of importance are things like people's private behaviour, willingness to keep social distance, vaccination speed and the structure of the society (work at home, multi-generation families, medical system, health, age pyramid, etc). If masks have been "massively successful" why do 38 (!) mask-mandate countries have worse deaths/million than Sweden? (Worldometers.info above.) We've only had a *recommendation* to use masks in public transport at rush hours, for a short time, now skipped - and most ignored it anyway. I think politicians just want people to wear masks as walking symbols, a constant reminder of corona. A mask won't stop the virus, it's too small and passes through. It only stops outgoing droplets, from coughing and sneezing. Masks don't protect you, they to a limited degree protect others *from* you. If you're not coughing and sneezing a mask makes no difference, since there are no droplets to stop. At the same time, however, you constantly handle your mask's outside, where virus may have stuck, and then you put your fingers in your eyes and ears. And in a mask you may feel false security and forget distancing... Any limited protective effect seems to be outweighed by infections from non-distancing and faulty mask handling. There have been studies showing their very limited efficiency. Anyway, the epidemic is virtually over here. In Sweden "people are still dying" at a rate of a couple *per week*. Over 80% are now vaccinated here, something like 95% of the risk groups and elderly, so the virus has fewer and fewer targets. It will continue to exist, on a much lower level like the measles or mumps. Corona vaccines will in the future be included in standard multi-vaccine mixes that eg children get, but cases will pop up from time to time.

Samuel Lubell: Yes, I agree that restrictions on big gatherings had an effect against the virus. But I think the Swedish limit of 50 was enough. This limit of 8 during the winter and spring was too restrictive. 50 made it easier for some culture activities, small businesses etc to keep afloat. But big concerts, sports events etc weren't a good idea. I agree that the sf books were better before. Activist politics, like we see besieging the Hugo lists, is one explanation but the introduction of word processing has also played a part. To write with a computer is very fast, and you can edit and re-write with ease. You don't painstakingly have to do several "drafts". Books become longer and longer and get more unnecessary "padding". Novels used to be 200-250 pages, but now they are 500-700 pages! And for the publisher it costs only marginally more to print 700 instead of 250 pages, so they go along. And it's only extra, tedious work to go through a manuscript to cut out all junk. But "junk" isn't a term we should apply to Cordwainer Smith, which I have read much of (not sure if I have read everything). He was one of the old, fine writers. As for the aftermath of the corona thingy... Far fewer things have been affected here, but the few general advice we've had from the Public Health Agency are being eased. The unnecessary, as far as I can see, 8 rule was in spring increased to 30 and now I believe it's 300, and outdoors 3000. Masks are basically only worn by medical staff. All over 16 are about now (when you read this) eligible for vaccination. Deaths are in single figures per week, less than for the ordinary flu! I guess the virus will continue to be around, popping up here and there, but vaccination will keep it down.

Time to sign Oscar-Foxtrot-Foxtrot...OFF! So until Nextish!

--Ahrvid E, editor on the loose

THIS TRANSLATION PROGRAM STINKS.

I ASKED FOR FISH AND CHIPS,

AND GOT MICROFILM AND BOATS!' ★

**Courtney's perhaps?*