

This is PHILOSOPHICAL GAS number 23, published for members of the Tenth Melbourne Science Fiction Convention (or is it the Eleventh? - Are we counting the BYO-Con?), Easter 1973 by John Bangsund PO Box 357 Kingston ACT 2604

GREETINGS to both all my friends in Melbourne. I hope you have a rotten miserable time at the 1973 Eastercon, since I cannot be with you. I am, however, with you in spirit. Pickled, sort of. So you're not missing a thing, because if I were physically present I would most likely be pickled, sort of. I can't make it to Melbourne because I'm broke. Yes, you've heard that one before - and you know it's never stopped me doing what I want to do. But this time I am not only broke but embarrassed. You see, there's this book I'm supposed to be publishing, and if I don't spend Easter working on it you might never see it; not only that, but Mervyn Binns would probably hate me, and I wouldn't like that. So while you are having a ghastly time at your horrid convention you can cheer yourself up by thinking of me collating twenty-two thousand sheets of paper all by myself.

Leigh Edmonds - he's the tall creep with long hair and glasses - which one? did you say? - Gawd, how many are there? - really? - yeah, well he's the nice tall creep with long hair and glasses, and he probably has the complete score of Shostakovich's early string quartets or Britten's "Peter Grimes" under his arm - got him? - good - yes, he has a sexy redhead under the other arm; that's him - Leigh Edmonds, as I was saying, has invited me to add to your misery by composing more verses for my AUSTRALIAN NOTIONAL ANTHEM, which you will sing during the convention. Oh yes, you'll sing all right. If I have spent hours of valuable time which could have been devoted to something constructive, like sleeping, thinking about this Anthem, the least you can bloody-well do is sing it. If you couldn't care less how much sleep I get, let me add that you will be taking part in the First Public Performance of this doubtless immortal work!

Actually I haven't finished writing it yet, but another bottle or three of this gruesome 1970 Stonyfell shiraz-grenache should see me through it, and - just think'. - you will not only be taking part in the First Public Performance, but very likely you will also possess a copy of the very first Notional Anthem ever composed on-stencil. (I feel I should work Stonyfell's shiraz-grenache in somewhere, but I can't think of a rhyme.)

Let me tell you a tale.

When the competition for a new Australian national anthem was first announced. I composed the first verse of the following, and with a suitable covering note, sent it off to the Canberra Times. There, after a suitable delay, it was published. (An earlier version had been distributed furtively at the Bring-Your-Own Convention in Melbourne at the New Year.) In the Times I mentioned that it could be sung "to the grand old tune of The Internationale by those with a leftward inclination, and O. Tannenbaum by those without". A few weeks later a keen reader in Sydney pointed out that I had in mind The Red Flag - not The Internationale - and she was absolutely right. In a subsequent letter to the editor of the Times I admitted my error, but he has not seen fit to publish my apology. Since then a number of illustrious publications - including John Foyster's Chunder, and the journal of the Spelling Reform outfit - have published the original version of my notional anthem. But here, for the first time ever, is the final version. I hope you have as much fun singing it as I had/will have writing it.

It still goes to the tune of The Red Flag. If that tune is unfamiliar to you, ask John Foyster to hum it for you.

ORSTRILIA:

A Fair-Dinkum Orstrilian Notional Anthern

(Tune: The Red Flag - or O. Tannenbaum - allegro assai. ma non troppo.)

ALL: Orstrilia! Orstrilia!

Ya know we'll never filia! We'll fight fer ya and die fer ya Whene'er yer foes assilia!

Our sunburnt land is green in spots;

There's gold in sand - and we've got lots.

We're big on Truth and Liberty!
Orstrilia is the place for we!

SOLO: The East is Red, the South is not:

This is The Land That Time Forgot.
But Time has caught up with us now
And we're all reading Chairman Mao.

ALL: Yes, Time has-caught up with us now And we're all reading Chairman Mao,

But Chairman Mao is rather bleak
So now and then we read Newsweek.

SOLO: With E. G. Whitlam at our head

We'll soon be either Red or dead.
Whichever it turns out to be,

It is our Modest Destiny.

ALL: Whichever it turns out to be,

It is our Modest Destiny,
But destinies are born, not made,

But destinies are born, not made, So ours will likely be mislaid.

SOLO: We all have homes and cars and jobs:

We're all right, Jack - but we're not snobs.

If everyone was like we are
This world would be Utopia:

ALL: If everyone was like we are

This world would be Utopia;
There'd be a lot less strife and fuss

If everyone was just like us!

ALL: Orstrilia. Orstrilia.

Ya know we'll never filia!
We'll fight fer ya and die fer ya

Whene er yer foes assilia!

SOLO: Our blokes are beaut, our sheilas grouse -

And we have got an Opera House:

ALL: AND PIES WITH SAUCE, AND B. H. P.:

ORSTRILIA IS THE PLACE FOR WE:

And just in case (yes, you can stop singing now) any of you mercenary bastards have any smart ideas, the above is copyright. You don't like it? You won't sing it? I don't care, it's still copyright. It won't win me the \$5000 prize the Govt is putting up - mainly because I won't be submitting it - but if you dare print it without my permission I'll bloody-well sue you, friend or not. Anyway, have lots of fun at the Eastercon. One day I'll be rich and see you at every convention. Ciao.