



Science-Fiction Fanzine

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The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

**פרס עינת**

אגודה ישראלית למדע בדיוני ולפנטסיה ומשפחתה של עינת פלג ז"ל מכריזות בזאת על תחרות סיפורים מקוריים בתחום הספרות הפנטסטית והספקולטיבית: מדע בדיוני, פנטסיה, היסטוריה אלטרנטיבית, ריאליזם מאגי, אימה על-טבעית ודומיהם. התחרות נערכת מדי שנה לקראת פסטיבל אייקון, המתקיים בחוה"מ סוכות בסינמטק תל אביב, והסיפורים המוגשים יעסקו בנושא הכללי של הפסטיבל, כפי שייקבע מדי שנה. נושא פסטיבל אייקון לשנת 2009 הוא "מטרופוליס – עיר העתיד". תאריך היעד האחרון להגשת הסיפורים הינו 17.9.09 בשעה 23:00.

תוצאות התחרות יוכרזו במהלך פסטיבל אייקון, ומחברי שלושת הסיפורים המצטיינים יזכו בפרסים כספיים.

פרטים נוספים וכללי השתתפות ניתן למצוא בתקנון הפרס [http://www.sf-f.org.il/story\\_960](http://www.sf-f.org.il/story_960)

**מועדון הקריאה**

מועדון הקריאה בתל אביב יתקיים ביום ד', 24.6 בשעה 19:30, בבית הקפה רולדין (רח' אלנבי 46). מומלץ להירשם מראש באמצעות הדואר האלקטרוני: [isfsffbookclub@gmail.com](mailto:isfsffbookclub@gmail.com)

מועדון הקריאה של חודש יולי יוקדש לספר "חוף הפלדה" של ג'ון וארלי. השתתפות במועדון הקריאה אינה כרוכה בתשלום או בהגעה למפגשים נוספים, ופתוחה גם למי שאינם חברי אגודה. המעוניינים להנחות מועדוני קריאה בכל רחבי הארץ מוזמנים לפנות במייל למרכזת הפרויקט, ליאת שחר: [liat42@gmail.com](mailto:liat42@gmail.com)

**קול קורא להגשת אירועים – פסטיבל אייקון 2009**

המהדורה 13 של הפסטיבל יצאה לדרך, ואנו שמחים להזמין אתכם לקרוא את הקול הקורא לאירועים בפסטיבל ( [http://www.icon.org.il/2008/he/2009\\_general\\_submissions](http://www.icon.org.il/2008/he/2009_general_submissions) )

נושא הפסטיבל השנה – מטרופוליס: עיר העתיד – נבחר כבר לפני מספר שנים כמחווה לחגיגות מאה השנים לעיר המארכת את הפסטיבל, תל-אביב.

הקול הקורא מיועד בעיקר לאירועים עיוניים, אך אנו פתוחים לקבל פניות ולשמוע הצעות בנוגע לכל סוג של אירוע.

**שנתון האגודה -קול קורא לסיפורים!**

באוקטובר הקרוב, לקראת פסטיבל אייקון 2009, יראה אור הגיליון הראשון של "היה יהיה" – שנתון חדש לסיפורת ספקולטיבית שיוצא מטעם האגודה הישראלית למדע בדיוני ולפנטסיה. השנתון, שיצא בפורמט של ספר, יתמקד בסיפורי מקור של סופרים ישראליים בכל סוגות הספרות הספקולטיבית: מדע בדיוני, פנטסיה, היסטוריה חלופית וכדומה.

אנו מזמינים את ציבור הכותבים לשלוח סיפורים לשנתון. על הסיפורים להיות כתובים עברית, ויש לשלוח אותם בקבצי וורד או RTF לעורך השנתון אהוד מימון, לא יאוחר מהתאריך 1.7.2009. הכתובת למשלוח הסיפורים, וכן לשאלות וביורים: [ehmaimon@gmail.com](mailto:ehmaimon@gmail.com)

**כאמ"י קיץ**

ארגון מנגה אנימה ישראל (אמא"י) גאה להכריז על כאמ"י (כנס אנימה מנגה ישראלי) קיץ 2009. הכנס ייערך ביום חמישי, ה-20 לאוגוסט 2009 באולם סמולארש באוניברסיטת תל אביב ומיועד לכל קהילות חובבי האנימה, המנגה ותרבות יפן בארץ. בכנס תוכלו למצוא הקרנות, הרצאות, סדנאות וכדומה.

בנוסף, מחזמר המבוסס על הסדרה הפופולארית Death Note בהפקת הקבוצה Acmusical, מתחם קונסולות עם המשחקים החדשים והפופולאריים ביותר, מתחם דוכנים המארח את מיטב חנויות המנגה בארץ וכן תחרות קוספליי יוקרתית. כמו תמיד, הכנס צריך מתנדבים שיאפשרו את תפעול השוטף.

פרטים נוספים על הכנס ועל התנדבות ניתן למצוא כאן: [http://www.sf-f.org.il/story\\_1115](http://www.sf-f.org.il/story_1115)

More Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site: <http://www.sf-f.org.il>

## Book Review by Aharon Sheer

### *Stardance* by Spider and Jeanne Robinson (1977-1979), 278 pages

Can science fiction stories be dated – stories strongly based on speculation about future science and technology? Can a story about the future be painfully rooted in the past? This one seems to be. It comes out of some kind of a hippy drug-happy commune-living past life that hasn't existed for decades -- from the time in the 1960s when many very smart people were taking Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD, "acid") and having overwhelmingly colorful life-changing experiences. Most use of LSD became illegal in the U.S. starting in 1967.

This book first presents the novella, "Stardance", a story which received both Hugo (1978) and Nebula (1977) awards for best novella. This is followed by the novella, "The Stardancers", which continues the tale. And ends with the third novella of the trilogy, "Starseed".

For years the authors have been trying to get the story, or parts of it, made into a movie. They even have an internet site for that purpose, in case you want to contribute:

[http://www.stardancemovie.com/about\\_stardance.html](http://www.stardancemovie.com/about_stardance.html)

We all know how excited children (and some adults) are even today, when they see people floating around in null-grav, free fall, in the space shuttle or the space station. Watching adults have fun tossing things to one another, as they float in the air upside-down or sideways, is amusing. Even today there are people willing to pay a lot of money to go up in a pseudo-spaceship, float in orbit above the earth, look down at the earth from above, and experience weightlessness for a few minutes. The greatest experience of their lives, they say.

Their idea behind *Stardance* is that in the future we should be able to do ballet in free fall. Perhaps there will be a really big space station, with a huge open area

inside, and skilled dancers will be able to do three-dimensional dancing in which there is no up or down – every direction is equally valid. No vertical, no horizontal. For people who love ballet, for those who love to see those Russian dancers leap into the air, throw their legs and arms out, and appear to be floating for seconds, the idea of free fall dancing must open up fabulous pictures in their minds. In free fall, when you pirouette, you don't have to come down.

Even more spectacular, suppose future technology allows a really light weight space suit (a p-suit) which protects you from the cold and heat of space, provides oxygen to breathe, and gives you complete freedom of movement. Then you can go outside the space station (called "Skyfac") and start dancing in space! The viewers of such dancing – video filmed for the earth-bound ballet lovers – may watch it in the same way that people today watch acrobats in circuses swinging through the air, being passed from hand to hand. We watch such shows terrified that someone will be dropped – and fall to his death. In space a dancer might lose one's place in such a dance, and find oneself accidentally flung away, flying out into space, steadily receding from Skyfac and its safety, as one's oxygen supply decreases and death threatens. What thrills there might be in zero-G dancing!

**"Wherever humans go, we bring our arts — and in zero-gravity, we will create amazing new forms of art never before seen, as our imaginations are set free by weightlessness."** - Jeanne Robinson

Another complication is added, starting from the first novella, "Stardance". Aliens. Thousands of little alien firefly space dancers come to visit Earth from way out near Saturn. They

have come to communicate with the people of Earth. But they do not talk, they dance. And they seem threatening, as if they might want to take over the Earth for their own needs. The only way to communicate with them is by dance. The heroine, having learned to dance in zero G in the huge Skyfac, has to communicate with the aliens by going out into space and dancing for them. She has to tell mankind's story to the aliens, and persuade them that they should not harm us.

One of the undercurrents of this story – part of why it is dated – is the strange idea that if you stay too long in space you will be doomed. Remember this was written before there were any space stations or shuttles. Nobody had spent many months in space, and returned to Earth to tell the tale. So they thought that you will never be able to go back to earth. A few months in space, and you would be marooned, you body forever a slave to null-G.

Hence the heroine dancer, having stayed too long in space, has no choice but to give up her life in order to dance for the aliens, knowing that once she has done that, she might as well die. A sacrifice for mankind.

Another strange idea is that almost no one will be able to dance in space. Few people, we are told, can function without a local horizontal and vertical. Many come up to the Skyfac dance studio to try and learn null-G dancing, but almost no one succeeds. Out of the billions of people on Earth, less than a dozen can learn to dance in space. I find the idea absurd – out of all Earth people, less than a dozen can do it? But from this comes the commune idea. Those few who can do it form *homo caelestis*, a new and unique community to which almost no one can ever belong.

So when the aliens come back, and orbit around Saturn, at the Trojan point near Saturn's moon, Titan, the stardancers must be sent out there to meet with them. But this is a one-way trip, for the trip will

all be in free fall, for months, and they will never be able to go back to Earth. Not only will the dancers go, but also diplomats who will want to negotiate the future of mankind. But the diplomats cannot be part of the commune. They are not *homo caelestis*. Quite a trip.

Here are some quotes for flavor:

“Being without a local vertical – a defined ‘up’ and ‘down’ – is more confusing and distressing than can possibly be imagined by anyone who has never left Earth. For that very reason, all Skyfac structures are aligned to the same imaginary ‘ecliptic’, but it doesn’t help very much. I wondered if I would ever get used to it...” [p. 53]

And then there's the set designer who wants to go to Skyfac:

“I'm going to design free-fall sets and visuals and do the scores, and they'll both work integrally together and with the dances.... I'll design you a sphere of trampolines, with cameras at the joints, and the framework'll be tubes of colored neon. For free-space work I'll give you rings of laser-lit metal flakes, loops of luminous gas, modified fireworks, giant blobs of colored liquid hanging in space to dance around and through – singing Jesus, as a special effects man I've been waiting all my *life* for zero gravity...” [p. 99]

Skyfac functioned at sixth-gee, local normal for the Lunar surface. There is a restaurant on Skyfac, the “Lounge”:

“The Lounge staff likes to show off for the tourists; it increases the tip. Our waiter decided to come to our table the same way George Reeves [Superman] used to leap tall buildings, and we were a good fifteen meters from the kitchen. Unfortunately, after he had left the

deck, committing himself, a gaunt tourist decided to change seats without looking, and plotted herself an intersecting course. The waiter never flinched. He extended his left arm sideways, deploying the drogue (which looks just like the webbing that runs from Spiderman's elbow to his ribs); tacked around her; brought his hand to his chest to collapse the drogue; transferred the coffee to that hand; extended the other arm and came back on course; all in much less time than it has taken you to read about it. The tourist squawked and tumbled as he went by, landing on her rump and bouncing and skidding a goodly distance thereon; the waiter grounded expertly beside Norrey, gravely handed her a cup containing every drop of coffee he had started out with, and took off again to see to the tourist.... The waiter ... was courteously pointing out one of the half dozen LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP signs to the outraged tourist." [p. 105]

Finally they get out to Saturn to meet the aliens.

"There is a kind of familiarity beyond déjà vu, a recall greater than total. It comes on like scales

falling from your eyes. Say you haven't taken LSD in a long while, but you sincerely believe that you remember what the experience was like. Then you drop [LSD] again, and as it comes on you simply say, 'Ah yes – reality', and smile indulgently at your foolish shadow memories. Or (if you're too young to remember acid), you discover real true love, at the moment when you are making love with your partner and realize that all of your life together is a single, continuous, and ongoing act of lovemaking, in the course of which you happen to occasionally disengage bodies altogether for hours at a time. It is not something to which you *return* – it is something you suddenly find that you have never really left.

"I felt it now as I saw the aliens again." [p. 227]

I found much of the book tiresome, feeling that it belonged to another era, one which is gone and will never return. A visit to a less-than-satisfactory past. On the other hand, this is *sciencefiction* – reasonably science-based speculations on the possibilities of future space technology.

### Advice Column: Salacious Sal's Advice to the Love Lorn

(August 1994)

**Dear Sal,**

I run an sf club in Rehovot, but I don't know how to find enough people to give talks on sf. How can I get the club members to help me?

**Aharon Sheer**

**Dear Aharon,**

You can't be serious! A Jewish State and no one wants to TALK?!!! A fine state of affairs that is. I suggest a contest: 3 minute maximum speeches on any outré subject you can think of. Listeners vote on the most interesting speech. The prize is a year's free subscription to **CyberCozen** and a year's freedom from the depredations of the Snack Dragon.

Always glad to help, **Sal**

## Quote of the Month:

### 6 Heads Are Better than 2

A study of the gregarious house sparrow suggests that individuals in larger groups are swifter at solving new problems than those in smaller groups — findings that add a behavioral dimension to the ecological costs and benefits of group living. Using wild-caught birds that were then acclimatized to experimental aviaries, Liker and Bókonyi investigated whether group size affected the success rate at which birds figured out how to obtain seeds from a familiar feeder when access was blocked with a transparent lid. The larger groups, which contained six birds, were able to dislodge the lids roughly 10 times as quickly as smaller groups of two birds — a pattern that was consistent across all individuals in the groups. Also, birds from urban environments were faster than birds from rural backgrounds. Increased success at problem-solving in larger groups may reflect a wider diversity of experience and skill among the individuals in the group and may constitute an adaptive advantage in complex habitats.

*From a review of Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. 106, 10.1073/pnas.0900042106 (2009), by Andrew M. Sugden, in Science Editors' Choice.*

**Drawing of Silicon-based Life, by Miriam Ben-Loulu  
(December 1991)**



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