

THE MATRIX TODAY

April 2013



THE UNIVERSE
MATRIX TODAY

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GOLD CHANNEL

Greetings all, and welcome to another Genesis.

As Paul is away, I have been asked to step into the breach and say a few words on his behalf. So, as stand-in, understudy, substitute, second-string, backup, vice-flunky, I'll do my level best, but apologies in advance for anything that I get wrong (that could be an awful lot!)

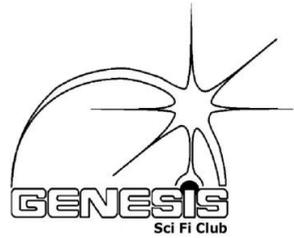
Firstly, a big thank you to the people here at the pub for allowing us to extend our meetings and start at 3:00. Next up thanks must go to Rob for last month's programme and quiz. Also thanks to Paul for organising the theatre trip last month. Remember to see Paul Belsey if you're interested in the up-and-coming Corsham Sci-Fi event (a good day guaranteed), or anything else you see in the events listing later in the magazine.

This month's programme is brought to you by Yours Truly and please note that I've already apologised! It is all derived from my personal DVD collection so you have been warned.

This month Ross has kindly volunteered to give Jeremy a well earned rest from doing the magazine. Cheers mate. Please remember that we are always looking for articles or original features to include in *The Matrix*, believe me anything is welcome.

Still, that's far too much from me, so on with the show.....

Vice Chair-Gerkin.



We have two events of particular significance to highlight this month:



This year's Corsham event is on 27th April 2013 from 10:30am until 4:00pm, at The Lower School Halls, Corsham School, The Tynings, Corsham SN13 9DF.

We have been visiting this for the last few years and it really is a surprisingly full event, with guests, traders and various activities. In fact, the only thing we've ever found wrong is that it's getting a bit too big for the venue.



Meanwhile, *Nine Worlds* is a new convention which might be a tad ambitious in its aims. According to the organisers, it's about 'gaming, film, cosplay, fandom, literature, science, geek culture, meeting people and having a really big party'.

The event was funded via Kickstarter, so a lot of people already have advance tickets, but regular tickets have now gone on sale. The convention takes place from 9-11 August at Heathrow, and you can find out more at nineworlds.co.uk.

Preview

DEFIANCE

Reading through various forums recently, I was surprised to find a link to something I didn't think I'd see again - an actual new Sci-Fi series from SyFy.

Defiance starts on 15th April on SyFy (US) and is set in 2046, 30 years after Arks carrying various alien races come to Earth. No white-haired samurai in evidence, but there are a couple of white-haired aliens who look like they'll be responsible for a good part of the plot, as the series seems to be going for mixing the recent trend for alien invasion and post-apocalyptic series with the intrigue

and politics of *Game of Thrones* or *Spartacus*.

The series follows the human and alien residents of Defiance (formerly St. Louis), and looks like it will be more drama than action, but there is also a tie-in computer game which sensibly avoids links to the show's characters and instead casts the player as a treasure hunter looking for alien tech in the remains of the Arks.

No word yet on when or where it's coming to the UK, but no doubt some Genesis members will see it once it's aired in the US.



JMS AND WACHOWSKIS TO DEVELOP NEW SERIES FOR NETFLIX

Following the success of their American adaptation of *House of Cards*, Netflix have commissioned a new sci-fi series called *Sense8*. They've asked Andy and Lana Wachowski of *Matrix* fame to be involved, as well as *B5*'s J. Michael Straczynski. The interesting part is in how they came to that decision - Netflix is obviously not part of the standard ratings system, but they do have their own sales figures, and the Wachowskis and JMS were the names whose works showed up as popular with their existing customers. Meanwhile, JMS and the Wachowskis have apparently wanted an excuse to work together for some time, so it all seems to be falling into place.

There's very little yet on what the series is actually about, but the press release promises a "gripping global tale of minds linked and souls hunted" with a ten episode run for its first season.

DOCTOR WHO GAME SEQUELS CANCELLED BY BBC

Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock's planned sequels have been cancelled by BBC Worldwide.

Originally planned as a trilogy of releases, executive vice president of digital entertainment and games Robert Nashak revealed that the *Eternity Clock* series has been put on hold.

"Currently we're not working on a sequel, to be honest," Nashak told Digital Spy at the Games Developer Conference.

"We're keeping it as an option moving forward, but we want to see where with *Doctor Who* we can reach the fans best. "On console is interesting, because console fans really love the game, but the expectations are for a lot of the development spent on console," he added. "So we're trying to figure out what is the best route for reaching *Doctor Who* fans with really, really great content."

Nashak made sure not to rule out returning to *The Eternity Clock* with a sequel down the road, but it is not something that the BBC is actively pursuing.

"We love the storyline we developed there, we love the feel of that game, and so we're definitely thinking about it for the future, but there is nothing in the plans right now," he said.



It isn't the first *Doctor Who* game series to be prematurely shelved by the BBC, with the second season of *The Adventure Games* cancelled after its first episode.

Review

Star Wars Episode One: The Phantom Menace

This is actually very fun from start to finish, with memorable lines from Yoda, later butchered by Xander from *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* and revolving around the slide of the old Republic into the hands of...but that would be telling. Despite the clunky dialogue, flat delivery, and occasional refuge in info-dump (and – *Mesa goin' HOOOOOME!* – Jar Jar Binks), this is really two hours well spent being entertained. The pod-racing was genuinely exciting despite it being obvious who'd win, and impressive CGI makes the whole thing look very seamless.

The thing is, however, that in many scenes during the film, all I can think is: this is *Star Wars: The Muppet Menace*, or the *Phantom Muppet* or some other such permutation of that theme. Not that this makes it bad: enough is seen to make it look like Jim Henson's company had some input, although their influence apparently didn't really go beyond the conception and operation of the Yoda puppet in the original trilogy. There are some slightly risible elements – quite apart from the whole Gungan thing (one taken in isolation is much more annoying than the race itself, although the scene where they are effectively playing skittles with the host of droids unleashed against them is a bit ...odd), the Trade Federation muppets are, well, a bit 'Japanese in space'



for my tastes. Their silly accents distract awkwardly from the seriousness of the Federation's role in the film: I know they are supposed to sound vaguely foreign, but having read a lot on RPG.net recently about problematic portrayals in film and other media, I find my awareness of this kind of thing a bit heightened. There's nothing wrong about using accents, but not ones so obviously stereotyped as these ones as 'funny orientals'. The Gungan don't bother me in the slightest, because it turns out Jar-Jar is just a clumsy Gungan; that characteristic is not attributed to his species.

I do think we should have seen Anakin sooner, but I can't really fault how the story is played out. Although I could end up a dusty slave on Tattooine, if I could live in any sci-fi universe, I'd like it to be this one, particularly if I got Amidala's hairdresser. Darth Maul needs to be a bit more integrated in the plot, and his role, and that of his master, needs to be telegraphed a lot more. He just seems to be evil for the sake of there being an evil character around to assist Palpatine; yes, I understand Sith are supposed to be the evil Jedi, but what did they do? I'm fairly sure I concentrated on the film and so far it's only an informed attribute. Even by the time he's fighting the Jedi, we just know him as an antagonist, rather than understanding his motivation.

OK, it's not supposed to be a dreadfully deep and meaningful film, but given the well-written Naboo politics and the interactions with muppets like Watto and Sebulba, we deserve a little bit more from the epic ending. The Force-assisted light-sabre fights at the end, however, give Errol Flynn a run for his money,

particularly when you can explain any impossible feats away by resorting to midi-chlorian counts of *over 9000!* Or at least a significant number that allows for a virgin birth. (Given who Anakin turns out to be, that could be offensive for someone who is a stronger Christian than I am.)

I'm going to give this one four Plutos out of five, following our book club rating system, Pluto of course being shorthand for a nebulous thing that is neither one thing nor the other. This film is definitely a Pluto: I'm told it gets better, but while it is an entertaining evening in its own right, it could be a bit sharper-defined in places, with less monotone dialogue and silly aliens, and a bit more depth and breadth to its characterisations and plot.

Louise Stanley



REVOLUTIONS in EDIT.

As most of you will know, I'm a fan of altering *Doctor Who* stories and as such am responsible at least in part of the creation of the Reduced Rassilon Company. Jeremy and I hatched this concept a few years ago, under the project title of Hare Brained Scheme number 638. But our interest in video editing was forged long before that.

The first experience I had of editing was seeing Sally's exceptional *Babylon 5* music videos, which were done before Genesis even had a promo-tape to take to shows, and our first one of those was back in the dark ages of meetings at Heath End back in the nineties!

When it was decided that Genesis needed a promotional video to take to shows (collectors fairs mostly, although this period did include the "Fete Worse than Death"!) Doug, a former member and long serving committee volunteer, took it upon himself to create one. The result was pure visual pain. He'd put every random thing that he could think of into it (and Doug could think randomly very well!) The result of this was that after its first outing, [a local event that Doug wasn't at, funny that] I had to perform an emergency hatchet job on it as there was another event that the club was due to attend the following weekend. The trouble was that I had absolutely no clue as to how to go about it. I've never been the techy type, and my eventual solution involved three phono cables and half a roll of Sellotape connecting a TV and two VCR's. (My mother wasn't happy about me dismantling the TV setup, I can tell you.)

Then the painful process of video to video editing began, anyone who has tried this (you know who you are) can vouch for how awkward this can be. (*It's OK, I'm out of therapy now—Absent Ed*). However, this spawned a strange strain of masochism which immediately infected my soul, and so I decided to get ambitious and do my first music video. Both Jeremy and Ross were starting off their editing at around the same time, so between us we kind of muddled our way through those early attempts, most of which are now lost thank goodness. My earliest surviving example is on the programme today, just for nostalgia's

sake.

I was hooked and finally got computerised which opened the door on so many more options. (Note that I didn't say this made it any easier.) Then in 2003 a long awaited sequel hit the cinema called *The Matrix Reloaded*. Cool, we all thought, and then we saw it. Not cool. Still, when the final part came out, just six months later, it made sense to see the conclusion. Or so we thought. It was a much better film, but spoilt by a ridiculous beginning half hour, due to it needing to key in with *Reloaded's* unnecessary story line.

So a plan was formed (hare brained scheme number 497). If I could splice the essential story elements of *Reloaded*, with the climax of *Revolutions*, then between the two there might be a good film crying to get out. Ten years have passed since then, and in all that time, all I've done is talk about doing it. But did anything actually happen? No. Then, out of the blue, I somehow found myself suggesting to Ross that it would be cool to have it as part of my April programme. The only trouble was that this conversation was during Rob's programme in March! So, as a result, since then I've done little apart from stare at a computer screen in my "spare" time. I think Susan might have noticed (sorry!).

And so tonight the result is on show for you all to see (and ridicule, I trust). I've tried to create the film that I wanted to see when I went to that cinema back in 2003. It's not perfect, as I can only work with the existing footage, but I'm happy with the results. It should have been a war film between man and machine. It now is. Almost four and a half hours of material condensed into just under two hours. I hope you enjoy it.

David Offen-James.

(Hare brained scheme number 833, The Trial of a Time Lord in fifty minutes). (*Well volunteered—Still Absent Ed*)

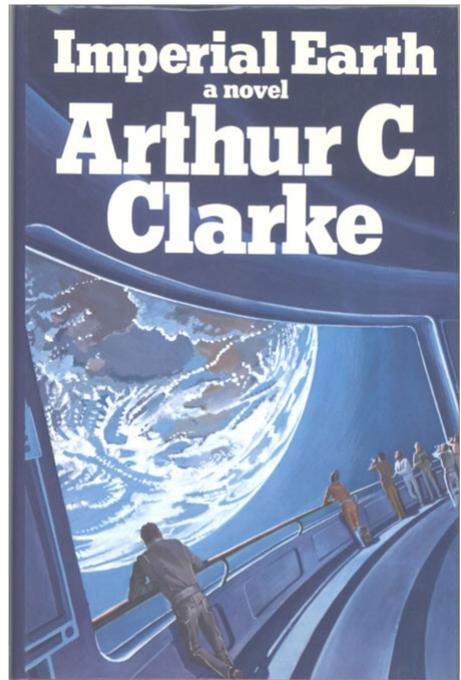
Imperial Earth Arthur C Clarke

What can I say about this book? Let's start with setting. It is brilliantly thought out and scientifically detailed. Mr Clarke provides so much detail on how the world works that you could almost imagine any type of story being set in this universe. It would have been nice if an example could have been provided to assist, but you can't have everything.

The easily interchangeable characters were each provided with a complex back story worthy of the best RPG characters and like most role players the author clearly forgot most of it when trying to act in character. The plot, such as it is, barely seems to notice the actions of the main characters other than to occasionally unlock a new pre-scripted event that helps to explain the scientific principles used in creating the setting.

I might have been a little harsh, so far, in my judgement of the plot or the collection of unconnected sub-plots that strive to do the job. No. I haven't, sorry, forget I said that.

There is clearly a plot somewhere in the back of the author's mind but very little makes it to the page. Every now and then a thread starts with a glorious flourish that grabs your attention and sucks you into reading the detailed explanation of a peripherally connected scientific



theory. Then he forgets about it for a while and either comes back to it for more explanations of tiny details of the setting or, more often, spares a sentence or two in an unrelated paragraph later on to explain why it no longer matters.

In short, while I enjoyed the book it would perhaps have been better if he'd written it as a guidebook or a faux history textbook and given up the pretence that it was a novel.

5.9034700001/10 Pluti (and yes that's a Latin plural. It's a Latin word: they tend to have them.)

Robert Green

AND SO HERE WE ARE IN KUBICE:

RASA

WOJSK. SZPITAL KUBIC

THE HOSPITAL, TO BE EXACT.

NO PAWING,
IVAN
DMITRIYEVICH.

IS NOT GOOD FOR YOU,
YAH?

No...
SORRY..

RASA LOOKED AFTER OUR WARD; I WAS IN THE BED NEXT TO FILIPOV, WHO WAS ETERNALLY GRATEFUL TO HER FOR SAVING HIS LIFE.

AND DON' GET OUT OF
BED SOMUCH, PIECH. YOU DON' WANT TO GET
SICK AGAIN.

WHY NOT?
I'M BORED HERE:
I WANT TO —

OZZERWISE
CHISLENKO WILL
GET YOU, YAH?

GET US?

by Louise Stanley

I HAD FRIENDS IN THE HOSPITAL
ADMINISTRATION:

So...
IS RASA NOT
A BIT...

I WOULD BE WARY
OF CALLING HER
THAT YOURSELF,
CAPTAIN PIECH.

...TOUCHED?

AIBHLINN, A GALTARAI OFFICER,

AND ALIK MOTYLECKI, FROM MY HOME
DISTRICT.

BUT WHAT DID SHE
MEAN ABOUT CHISLENKO
GETTING US ?!

I'D JUST
CONCENTRATE ON
GETTING BETTER.

CHISLENKO IS A GOOD
DOCTOR, MICHAŁ —
YOU'RE JUST IMAG-

YOU SHOULD GO BACK TO
BED.

LISAK'S TAIL,
YOU'RE QUITE
HOT!