

EXHIBITION HALL 5



EXHIBITON HALL ISSUE 5: JANUARY 2010

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COVER BY MOLLY "PORKSHANKS" FRIEDRICH

The Holidays, they are over. I am a fan of celebrating at any time, and when you've got a few of them all together at once! I hope everyone had a happy time and are ready for the busiest year in the history of Steampunk Fandom.

The big news is that there are a ton of new events that've recently come to light, including the first Canadian Steampunk con.

That's right, those of you dwelling in the Northern Realm, a Canadian Steampunk Convention, the Victoria Steam Exposition in Victoria, British Columbia. I'm 99.9% sure I won't be attending, which is sad because I'd love to get a chance to hang with my Canadian family and friends (like Mike Perschon and co.!) and Unwoman will be the Musical GoH! She's awesome and it was hard to not gush too hard when I interviewed her. Add to that Cherie Priest, author of *Boneshaker*, as Writer GoH and you've got quite a lineup. They've also got a Film Festival planned and it's at a great hotel on the Inner Harbor. It's May 22nd & 23rd, which is a week before BayCon, which I've got to attend.

Add to that the Steamposium in St. Louis. I'd love to go to that one, as I'm a huge



fan of the Gateway City, but alas, it's in April, while I'll be in England at EasterCon. April 9-11th will be the time for Southern / Mid-West Steampunks to head over and enjoy the Steamposium. While there's not a lot of info on the site (<http://rose-society.org/>), there seems to be some really fun stuff

planned. I heard a bit about it at WindyCon, but it seems like it's ready to break down. Let's see if they can keep up the big attendance numbers the Steampunk cons have managed.

Most Science Fiction cons around the world are having some sort of Steampunk element. BayCon 2009 had a theme based around the world of Mercedes Lackey and that meant Steamy stuff. CostumeCon 2008 had a huge Steampunk contingent, which was a lot of fun. WindyCon had a Steam theme, as did at least a half-dozen other cons over the last couple of years. This is an interesting point for me because it does sorta address one problem I have with the world of Steampunk.

There is a serious disconnect between Science Fiction and Steampunk fandom. While there have been huge, long and some-

ART AND PHOTOS

Cover by Porkshanks

<http://porkshanks.deviantart.com/>

Page 1- Lilibat

<http://lilbat.deviantart.com/>

Page 2- Diana Arment

Page 4- Aonir

<http://aonir.deviantart.com/>

Page 9-12 - Courtesy William Wright

Page 13- Science Museum, London

Page 14- Doug Erbert

<http://rhamizael.deviantart.com>

what tedious arguments about whether or not Steampunk is a form of science fiction (and I'm hoping to get Jay Lake to write up his theory of Steampunk which will address just that) but there are certainly roots of Steampunk in SF fandom. The cons that have happened (at least the ones that I've been to) all felt like the conventions I've been going to since birth. The costuming has become the center of the con-going experience, but that is straight out of SF conventions. Art Shows, Dealers Rooms and paneling are all parts of just about every science fiction con as well. In fact, the World-Con model of conventions, which brought SF cons into existence of all kinds, certainly has filled in as the basis for Steampunk gatherings. Hell, SF Fandom was the first to move into the world of the Internet in the 1970s and 80s, and without that sort of communication, Steampunk fandom would probably have never coalesced.

Here's the thing: fandoms fracture like icebergs in the North Atlantic, sometimes taking boats down with them. The ties between fandoms can be loose, but when there is a complete or near-complete break, things can become troublesome. There needs to be some cross-over, some attachment. Not a reverence, which is the reason given by some SF fans for not approving of Comics Fandom, but at least an attention. And it works two ways as SF cons and fan should certainly be looking at what us Steampunks are doing to inform their planning.

Take Windycon for example: they had a Masquerade. It was a smallish Masq, but before the actual competitive portion, they had a Fashion Show, in a way, in which folks in their costumes who didn't want to compete but just to show off their costumes, could simply walk across the stage and down the aisle. This is a great idea and it allows more folks to participate. Of course, there's also the matter that none of the Steampunk cons I've heard of have had formal Masquerades, which is also something to think about. Yes, there's the concept that it's a community of costume and competition would make it less congenial, but on the other hand, it would give an outlet for further presentation/

performance. Perhaps simply a non-competitive fashion show might be a good idea for up-coming cons as a way to show off togs and give space for skits and so on. Perhaps Furry cons hold the key to that!

What can SF cons learn from Steampunk conventions? How to increase enthusiasm, for one thing, and we'll find out what else after this heavy calendar is completed!

Just a note to tell you that the first theme issue of Exhibition Hall is coming in March, just in time for Steam-X here in the BArea. The theme: The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen! Deadline for that issue is February 20th

What's in this issue? There's a review of Bryan Talbot's newest piece by James Bacon and a look at Boneshaker from me. There's a look at the City of Saint Kilda. Mike Perschon gives us a long look at Abney Park's new overing, Aether Shanties, and there's a News & Notes look at what's coming up in the world of Steam



REVIEW: BONESHAKER BY CHERI PRIEST

Some novels are statements. Others are questions. Some end with an abrupt exclamation point and some end with a set of ellipses. Rarely does a novel start with an exclamation point and end with a period. It feels like a let-down, like the reader was lied to with the first segment and then let down, often quite hard with the latter. Cheri Priest's *Boneshaker* could be said to fall into that pattern, but that would only recognise the period as the power-player when that exclamation point is much bigger than you'd think.

Boneshaker is the story of Briar Wilkes and her son, Ezekiel. The two of them live in Seattle in a world where the Civil War's been going on for more than two decades. The world Priest creates with her language is remarkable, and she manages to infuse the War, taking place thousands of miles away, into her story.

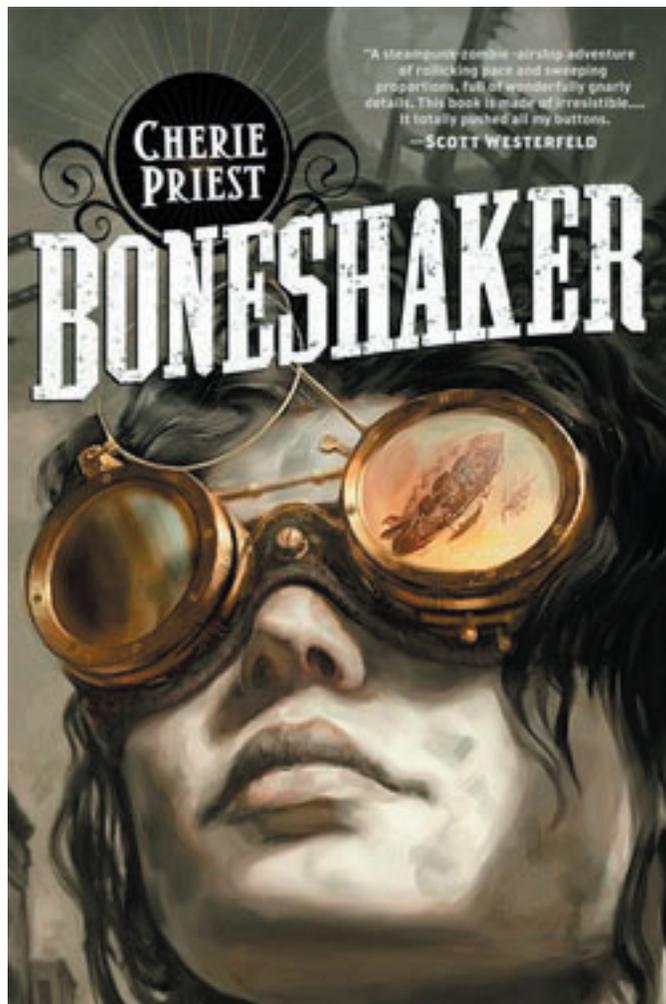
The real story may, in fact, have happened sixteen years before our action begins. Briar's former husband, Leviticus Blue, built a machine for the Russians that could be

used as mining device. He tests it early, leading to a portion of the city collapsing and a mysterious gas called Blight seeping out of the ground. Blight turns humans into a form of zombie that are not necessarily the shambling horde, but more like late period Romero running zombies. Briar's family also included her father, a figure who orchestrated a prison break to save people from the Blight. He is referred by some, and this gives us the lead into the story.

Zeke is curious. He is trying to figure out the truth about his father and his Grandfather and what it means to him. He makes his way into the now walled-up city of Seattle and Briar goes in herself to find her son.

Yes, it's a Steampunk-Horror retelling of any number of Lifetime Original Movies.

That's not entirely fair, of course, but much like those, the ending is almost assured because Mama can never fail. That's one of the biggest problems with the story. At



most points, there was no question that Briar was going to succeed in finding her boy. More on that in a bit.

The opening portion of the book is rusty, fast and engulfing. The moment that Briar comes home and finds Zeke gone sets off the best 100 pages of novel I've read so far this year. It's breathless stuff that drawn the reader in and doesn't let go. This portion of the book was the big exclamation point. It moved me to keep reading, and even when it started to slow, I was moved to keep reading. The initial power of the novel is pretty much spectacular, and when

things slow, you're sorta riding a wave.

The other thing is that after a bit, we're introduced to the Rotters: the zombies created by the Blight. At first, we're shown these monsters and they're pretty freaky. We see that they're monstrous, flesh-eating killing machines, but after the first couple of attacks, the confrontations seem to be less dangerous, more of an inconvenience than a threat. The last moment when they seem like something dangerous is an escape across

REVIEWED BY CHRISTOPHER J GARCIA

the city, but after that, they only seem like a nuanced attack from the Mad Man Dr. Minnericht. He's the villain who controls much of what happens in the walled portions of Seattle, and he's an inventor, but mostly, he's a pain at a distance. Perhaps she went to the well once too often.

Airships, which are an important part of the story as well, also have the same problem. The first time we encounter them, it feels like the kind of magic that you feel the first time the Black Pearl appears in *Pirates of the Caribbean*. The second time, it's still got some of that power, and by the fourth time, it's just ho-hum.

That first rush wears off right around the time we finally meet Dr. Minnericht face-to-face. From that point forward, everything starts to feel too easy. The Rotters are no longer a real threat, they're simply a stumbling block. Zeke gets his end tied up very quickly,

and we're presented with a serious twist at the end that I saw telegraphed from the very start of Briar's adventures. Sadly, when the twist is revealed to Zeke, his reaction is one of the big problems as it moves him no further along despite it being the crux of the story.

I should also make a nod to the design of the book itself. It's gorgeous with a sepia tone fine ink and a gorgeous cover. It's a lovely piece of work.

All in all, there's a lot to like in *Boneshaker*. The good is really good. The bad isn't terrible, but it does dial the entire book down. Much like *Mainspring* from Jay Lake, there seems to be a point in the middle where the entire process hits a wall, and sadly in both cases that phrase is a pun. *Boneshaker* worth reading? Absolutely. Priest's prose is crisp, her setting intelligent and her characters are pretty fully realised, but sadly, it seems like she's not a closer.



REVIEW: GRANDVILLE BY BRYAN TALBOT

Bryan Talbot is the father of Steampunk in comics. Luthar Arkwright, now over thirty years in continuous print and selling as well as ever, is undoubtedly one of the finest comics of the genre and perhaps the finest example of the genre for new fans. Existing fans may be pleased to know a further Luthar Arkwright volume is planned.

His latest offering is also set in a beautifully crafted steampunk world. An alternate history, a Britain defeated by France, steampunk technologies, a channel

bridge and airships are all ingredients in this crime story. The characters are animorphic - animals in human form - not a new concept in comics, Rupert the bear receives a courteous acknowledgement - but one which suits this story very well.

Our protagonist I'd a Scotland Yard police inspector Le Brock, a huge badger, who has a very nice revolver and a wonderful way of thinking.

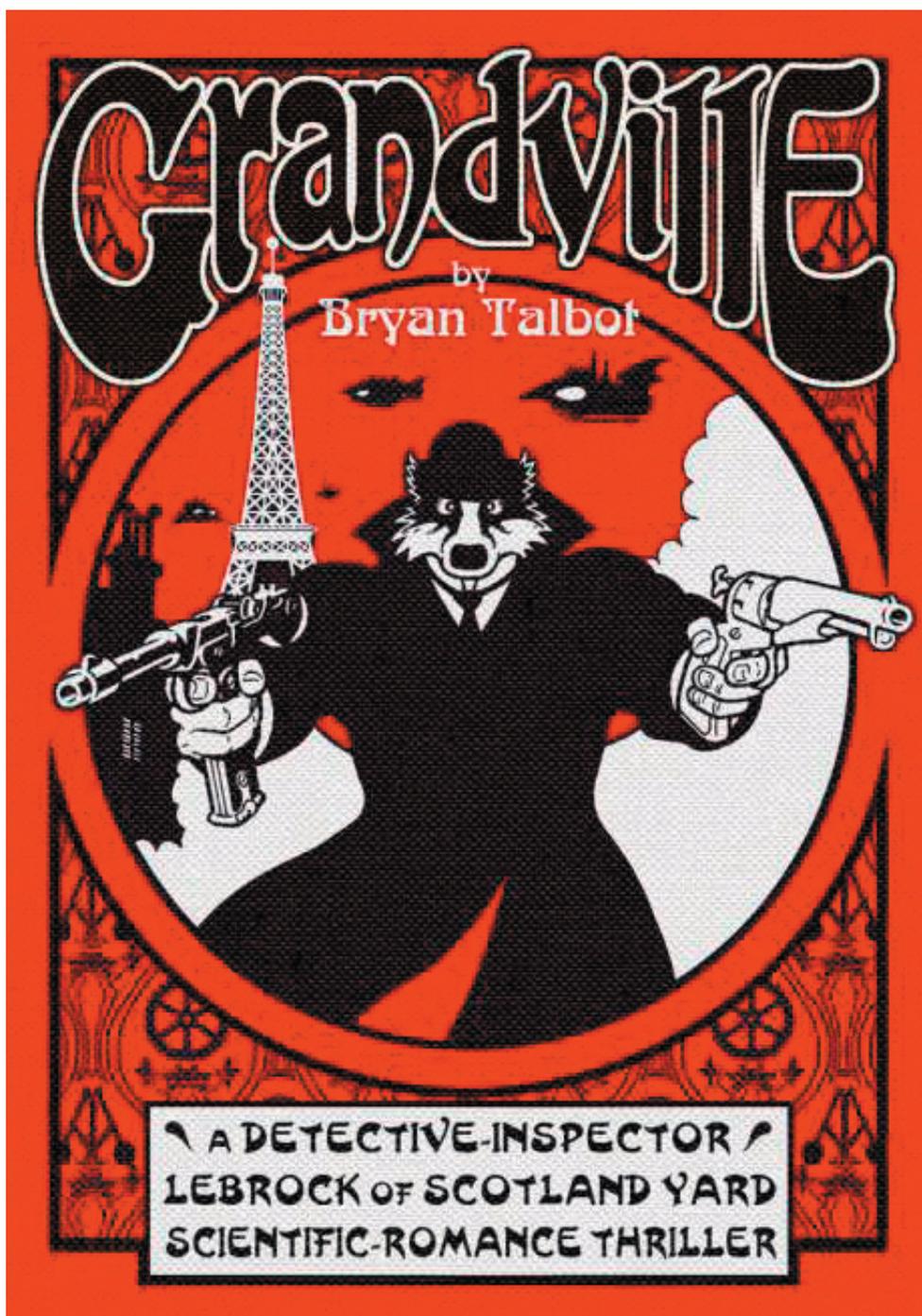
He is on a murder case, which will take him to the heart of the French empire and see him embroiled in political maneuvering and plotting.

The environment that Talbot creates - Britain has just received a form of independence and the political machinations - which seem to use more recent conspiracy theories as a fictional metaphor are brilliant.

This coupled with his elegant artwork, the vivid imaginings of this French steampunk world and the endearing character of Le

Brock all give one a fantastically pleasurable read.

Talbot does the artwork and story so well, one of very few creators who are so gifted. If anything I desired more from this world of animals - some very realistic in the anti-cute violence - and understand that further installments are in the pipeline. Everything about this comic is just nice. Even in presentation the large red hard-bound volume with its classic metropolitan script looks beautiful.



FROM LOST HORIZONS TO NEW ONES: ABNEY PARK'S ÆTHER SHANTIES CONTINUES TO TREAD NEW GROUND WITHOUT GIVING ANY IN THE PROCESS

In a music scene when costume and pageantry seem to be the sole purview of multi-million-dollar lip-syncing solo acts with their armies of professional dancers and personal orchestras, Abney Park remains an anomaly: independent musicians in costume, who take pageantry in performance to a level reminiscent of Bowie in the 70s or Bush (Kate, not George) in the 80s. For my money, they're one of the most entertaining live shows currently on the planet. Both times I've seen them have been fantastic, and given how both those shows featured some of the worst stage lighting I've ever seen, that's saying something. Abney Park doesn't need a light show: they *are* the light show. That said, I'll be making a trip to see them at a proper venue one of these days, or praying to the steampunk gods that they'll tour Canada and play the Starlight Room in Edmonton.

While Abney Park excels at the live show, it can no longer be said that one must see Abney Park to properly experience their music. Unlike earlier albums when the band was transitioning from a Goth industrial sound into their current steampunk incarnation, with Abney Park's latest release *Æther Shanties*, I'm not skipping through songs to get to my favorites. After several listens, I have favorites, but there isn't a throwaway track on this disc. I'll concede there are songs that might be construed as formulaic or derivative in their underlying melodic structure. But what sets Abney Park

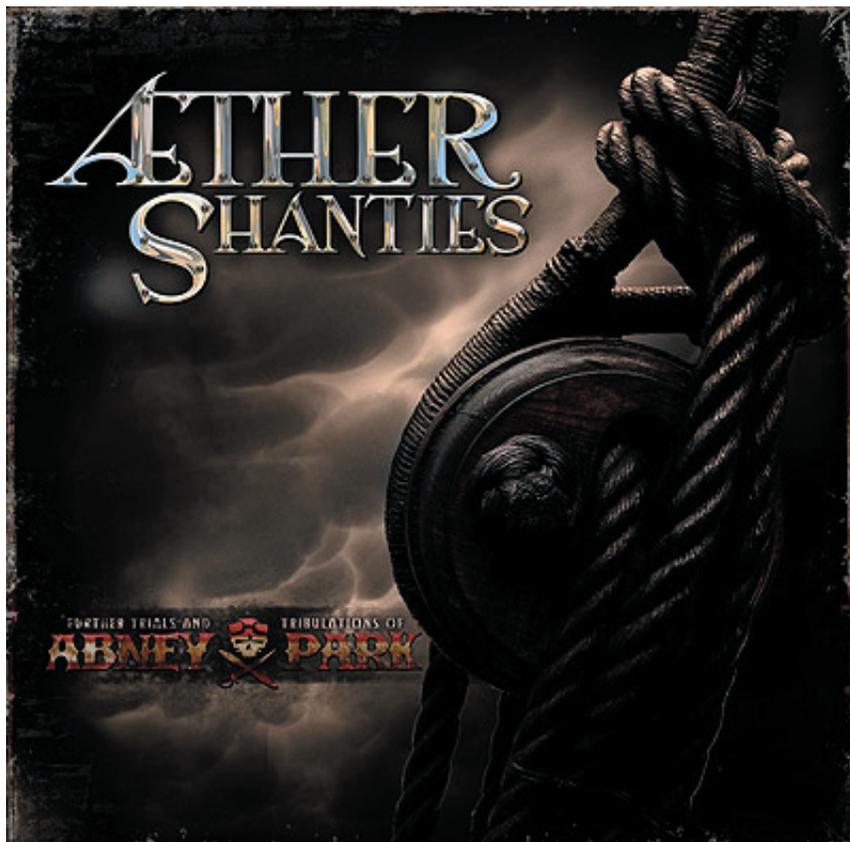
apart from being just another pop group is how they use disparate elements to deliver their hooks. What sets them apart from other steampunk acts are those hooks – at their core, Abney Park is a band who wants you to tap your foot or sing along with their music.

At the risk of drawing a parallel that many steampunks won't relate to, I'd call *Æther Shanties* the Abney Park equivalent of Dixie Chicks' *Home*, which utilized acoustic bluegrass in a way very few mainstream country acts were doing. On *Æther Shanties*,

Abney Park has completely embraced vintage instrumentation without sacrificing pop-accessibility, which would be my complaint for more esoteric steampunk acts.

The disc begins with "Under the Radar," which I would call the sequel to *Lost Horizon's* "Airship Pirates," a musical tale of airship pirates attacking in the dead of night. As stated on the CD

jacket, *Æther Shanties* is "the further trials and tribulations of the Airship Ophelia." One of Abney Park's greatest strengths is the narrative back story to the band's steampunk look, as well as the anachronistic mélange of their music. "Under the Radar" introduces the listener to the ride they're about to take, part two of a sort of extended concept album that is permitted digressions and rabbit trails. As with "Airship Pirates" the song moves in schizoid fluidity from channeling Great Big Sea to invoking comparisons to Rammstein: Nathaniel Johnstone ably riffs on both



mandolin and distorted guitars behind lyrical structure built to encourage live sing-along for even the greenest neophyte.

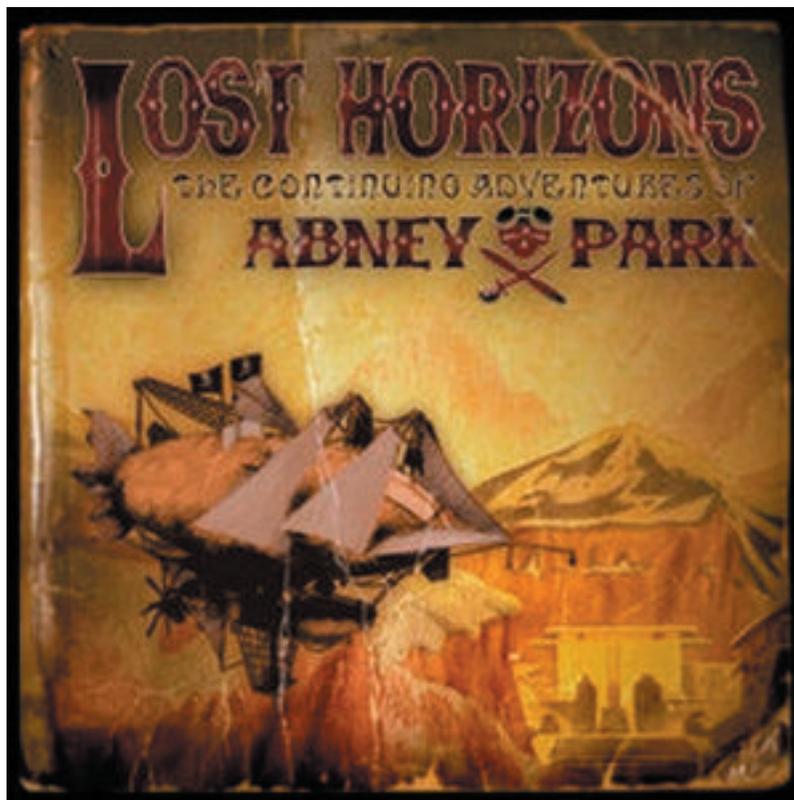
I heard "Building Steam" at Steamcon in Seattle, and it gave me high hopes for the new disc. It builds progressively, from industrial programmed loops, adding a brief accordion line to introduce the melody line before the song explodes into massive multilayered glorious overproduction: string parts, distorted bass, and someone likely bludgeoning a kitchen sink with one of Dr. Grordbort's rayguns. Lyrically, it speaks of following one's own path, but is phrased in a way that makes it decidedly steampunk: "I made my own machine / I hate the same routine." It could be construed as an artistic statement for the CD as well. Cap'n Robert and his crew have made their own machine, rejecting routine pop by inserting a number of vintage musical anachronisms, sounds that don't "belong" in pop music.

And, as if to prove this point, "Until the Day You Die" begins with a sample of a 1920s cabaret music, chorus girls singing one of the most infectious non-lyric hooks over top of Johnstone's guitar and a drum loop. Keyboardist Kristina Erickson, ever the master of choosing great sounds and

textures, utilizes a slightly-out-of-tune honky-tonk piano sound throughout. If that weren't enough, the bridge features a sample from vintage radio show *Dr. Weird*, voiced by Maurice Tarplin (kudos to the band for discovering a sample that *actually* had something to do with music). More so than anywhere else on *Æther Shanties*, the band mixes wildly disparate elements into a cohesive whole that is utterly satisfying, both as a toe-tapping-sing-along-song, as well as innovation of the medium.

Robert Brown revealed on the band's blog that one of the motivations for this song was to answer the question, "If Steampunk art is old parts bolted together to make new things, can that be done with very old recordings?" Robert has been promising a new Christmas album someday. I'm partial to Christmas albums with a vintage feel to them, so hearing Abney Park experimenting with vintage elements excites the festive spirit in me.¹

"My Life" continues the journey into new musical spaces, utilizing a number of traditional instrumentations here, which to my untrained ear could be Armenian, or Turkish, or perhaps East Indian, before returning to the 1920s cabaret feel on "Wanderlust," which features a wonderful



trombone line and one of the best vocal showcases for Robert to show off the power in his voice, often hidden in his restrained whispers. It also reveals the diminutive powerhouse of newcomer Jody Ellen, replacing former dancer-singer Finn Von Claret on what I now hesitate to call female *backing* vocals. There is very little about Jody Ellen's vocal chops that can be relegated to something in the background. While Robert sustains the line, "And fly," with gusto, Jody Ellen deftly jumps the nuances of a harmony line that seems peppered with middle-eastern quarter-tones. I could be imagining things, but

(Footnote)

¹ This might just be due to my own studies in "alcoholology" with rum and eggnog as I write this.

from the live show, everything the group lost in show with Finn Von Claret's dancing is made up for in sonic quality by Ellen's voice.

One need only consider how her vocals rescue "Throw Them Overboard" from risking redundancy. While the song is catchy enough on its own, it is standard Abney Park concert fare. Ellen's layered vocals, both in staccato "doops" and drawn out "ahhhs" elevate the song from standard to standout.

The "Derelict" is a straight up pirate ditty, and sounds like one imagines a pirate ditty should. It's perfectly danceable and concert-ready with it's "Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum" refrain. As with many songs on *Æther Shanties*, it could easily be played unplugged with minimal modification, to accommodate Abney Park's practice of holding an acoustic sing-along at convention appearances.

On a literally acoustic note, while it's difficult to know in this day and age if something is real or digital, I'd bet good money that Kristina Erickson is playing a *real* piano on "Victoria," a beautiful ballad. While I'm rather convinced the looped drums underneath the piano line were unnecessary, they detract only slightly from the warmth of hearing a real piano played by Erickson; while she's also at the back of the stage, her keys are often the backbone of Abney Park's songs. "Victoria" showcases her ability, and rightly so, given that she has been a part of AP since nearly the very beginning. IT also features a beautifully haunting violin line from Nathaniel Johnstone.

"Aether Shanty" continues the trend of traditional and vintage instrumentation on the album, followed by a brief vocal break. Bassist Stu Hamm once said rock music wasn't about the notes you played, it was about the notes you *didn't* play. Hamm was talking about dynamic – and this song has it. Following this little prologue, bass and guitar blast in, driving by pulse and distortion, just in case fans were worried AP was getting soft. It has the feel of a traditional Irish or East Coast Canadian drinking song, if it were played by Trent Reznor. Abney Park might have the added distinction of being the first folk-metal band outside Scandinavia. It's

another pirate tune, although it's somewhat ambiguous if it's about sky or sea pirates. Air or water, the metaphor is a useful one for a rock band, as it permits bad-assery without needing to take oneself too seriously.

Still, Abney Park proves they can be serious when necessary: "The Clockyard" is a musical time-warp back to 80s new-wave rock, but is lyrically a sequel to "Change Cage." Robert has stated he's sometimes uncomfortable singing "Change Cage" from a lyrical perspective, because it's told from the perspective of a guard of an oppressive regime. Here, the perspective is someone inside a cage, and is stuck in a cycle without change, until an epiphany catalyzes him to leave the Clockyard, to lead others to go "outside the Gate."

The CD ends with the atmospheric and epic "Too Far to Turn Back," which has a lyrical extension from "The Clockyard": "the further we go the less protection." Sure, Abney Park tells us – you can go outside the Pale, but there's danger in them thar hills. Hell, it might even be the Airship Pirates from "Under the Radar," but it's unlikely. We're told that a "beast ... takes notice" of our flight, and near the end of the song, the lyric "It's Too Far to Turn Back" is subverted from a spur to goad the weary traveler, truncated into to "Turn Back," repeated plaintively over and over until the song ends. It's a chilling way to end this CD that has such a high fun-factor, but it's a wonderful gothic departure, back into Abney Park's roots, and like every other departure, musical or lyrical on *Æther Shanties*, it shouldn't work, but does nonetheless. And besides, being told back to "Turn back" at the end of this disc isn't a bad thing. After you hit track eleven, the best place to turn, is back: to track one, and listen again.

CELEBRATING ST KILDA

In the lead up to Aussiecon 4 (68th World SF Convention in Melbourne, Australia, on September 2-6, 2010), it is meet to regale intending visitors with some of the features of the venerable Antipodean metropolis whose history has steampunk antecedents, the city having grown from a village since its foundation by disgruntled Sydney bathers early in the nineteenth century. Following is a celebration of the part of Melbourne in which the writer lives.

o-o-o-o

The physical history of St Kilda Beach began three thousand years ago when it was formed by the receding waters of what is now called Port Philip Bay. The roots of its cultural history lie in England where, in 1783, the Prince Regent held court at Brighton on the Sussex coast. Sea bathing became fashionable, especially when the Royal Pavilion with its fantasy dome was erected on Brighton Pier.

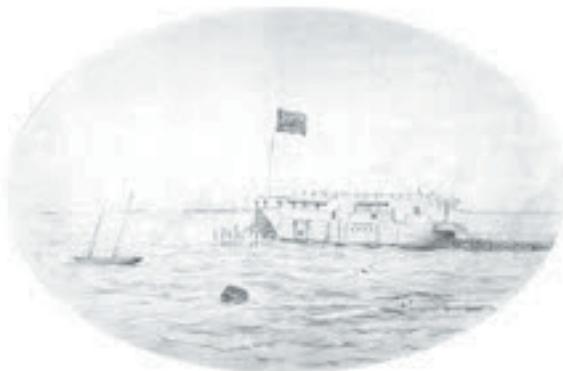
Such liberal ideas were too much for the colony of New South Wales where, in 1823, daylight bathing was banned. A large proportion of Sydney's disaffected population voted with their feet.

Melbourne was settled by disgruntled Sydney bathers in 1835. By 1840, tents, cottages and bathing boxes littered the St Kilda foreshore for the 'bathing season'.



Above is a water colour painting of St Kilda beach by Greeves (circa 1845). It is part of the La Trobe Collection in the State Library.

St Kilda is an inner Melbourne bay-side suburb in the City of Port Philip, about 6 km. south-east of the GPO. It was named after the cargo schooner 'Lady of St. Kilda' which, when the municipality was founded in 1841-42, was anchored near the foreshore. In 1854, Captain Kenney beached his 'Bathing Ship' south of St Kilda Pier. It wasn't long before he was instructed to "take immediate steps so as to effectually screen the bathers from the view of the public".



Above is a water colour of Kenney's Bathing Ship by Eliezer Levi Montefiore (1869).

It also is part of the La Trobe Collection.

1867 saw publication in London and Melbourne of the Manual of Swimming by Charles Steedman, and by 1873 as many as 26,000 baths were reputed to have been taken at the St Kilda Ladies Baths. The Esplanade Hotel opened in 1878 and, no doubt due its liberating influence, it wasn't long before there were complaints about unnecessary nudity at the Men's Baths opposite.

The cable tram was extended to St Kilda in 1884. With the consequent large increase in beach patronage more formal swimming arrangements were called for. The Melbourne Swimming Club was formed in 1894.

In 1901, the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York landed at St Kilda on their way to open the first parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia at Melbourne's Exhibition Building. In 1904, Tom Bakker began employment at the St Kilda Baths. He was to work there for 51 years.



A Foreshore Committee was formed in 1905 to oversee the beautification of the beach and its environs according to a design by Carlo Catani. Its work is commemorated by the extensive Catani Gardens that occupy the lowlands between Beaconsfield Parade and St Kilda Beach West. St Kilda Proprietary Baths were opened in 1906 as part of the Catani Plan.

In 1907 Australian swimmer Annette Kellerman was arrested in Boston for the design of her costume, and in 1908 Frank Beaurepaire put Australia further on the map by winning Silver and Bronze at the London Olympic Games. The St Kilda Royal Life Saving Club was formed in 1909 with Lilian Beaurepaire as club champion.

In 1910, Frank Beaurepaire won 51 successive races including every British title from the 100 yards to the one mile marathon swim.

1912 saw removal of Kenney's Bathing Ship Baths and the opening of Luna Park. The 'Open Sea Bathers' League' mounted a

challenge against the ban on Sunday bathing.

In 1914, St Kilda Council unsuccessfully imposed 'divided sex areas' on the beach to control mixed bathing. 1000 bathers protested on the beach over restrictions on Sunday bathing.

In the 1920s there were complaints about 'night basking' and lewd behaviour on St Kilda beach. Community outrage reached its peak in 1925 when St Kilda Proprietary Baths were burned down.

There followed a concerted campaign for new baths and better changing rooms until, in 1929, new bathing pavilions were opened at Elwood, St Kilda and West St Kilda.

In 1930, a young man was taken by a shark from Middle Brighton Pier before hundreds of horrified spectators. There were those that saw it as a judgement on the unrighteous.



The St Kilda City Hot Sea Baths, opened in 1931, included a shark proof fence for sea bathing.

This photograph (circa 1944) is in the Port Philip City Collection.



At right is a rare surviving photograph of nude bathing in the men's section of the St Kilda Baths complex (circa 1945). Constable 9536 wrote the following to the Criminal Investigation Branch:



“On a number of occasions during the past years I have had occasion to visit the men's section of the St Kilda City Baths and have there personally seen men and boys of all ages who were swimming, standing, generally disporting themselves and exposing their naked persons within the view of other persons.

“Many of the sights have been definitely obscene and disgusting, with some of the men particularly the older ones as well as many youths lying on their backs on the floor, with their legs wide open, completely exposed to the view of all.”



The sign says ‘This Is The Show’, the first letter of each word enlarged so much that anyone ten or more yards away reads it simply as TITS. The show on the first floor was more subtle, but not much.

It's the George Hotel on the corner of Grey Street and Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, any

night, and Art Luden's ladies are getting their gear off. Art, a Sydney showman, brought his girls to Melbourne in 1971 to give the old town some much-needed culture. There'd been strippers in Fitzroy Street before - most notably at the Ritz, a lesbian hangout on the corner of Princes Street and Fitzroy Street, but they wore g-strings.

‘The George’, however, has a prouder history than that tawdry exterior indicated. Originally called The Terminus, it was renamed ‘The George’ in 1868. Early in the decade, Mr Frederick Wimpole had taken over the licence and, over two generations until 1905, father and son (both named Frederick) managed the place so well that it became a serious rival to the magnificent Windsor Hotel opposite Parliament House as the premier resort of the colony.

The George was a haven for hedonists in the reign of Queen Victoria, but in 1870 the Temperance movement directly challenged it by taking over the Assembly Hall, around the corner in Grey Street, renaming it the St Kilda Coffee Palace. Nowadays the Coffee Palace is a backpacker hostel.

During and for a quarter of a century after WWII, St Kilda became a preferred R & R destination for American military personnel serving in the Asia-Pacific region. The George became the place for whoring and scoring. In the 1980s, when the Yanks no longer came to visit, the hotel degenerated into a drug den. That achieved what generations of police action had failed to do. In 1987 The George was de-licensed and earmarked for development. Nowadays it is given over to movie theatres, bars, restaurants and luxury strata residences with views of Albert Park Lake where the Australian Formula 1 Grand Prix is held in March each year.

St Kilda Australian Rules Football Club dates back to its formation in 1873, but there is mention of ‘a scratch team from St Kilda’ as far back as 1859.

Nowadays, St Kilda's principal attractions are Fitzroy Street and the east end of Acland Street. The former is full of trendy restaurants and the latter is famous for its sumptuous cake shops.



ing left at the Windsor Hotel at the edge
 ne central business district where, if you
 't seduced by the ambience of the Crick-
 s Bar, dropping in for a single malt whis-
 in the tea room is de rigeur. If you stay
 he tram, it goes along historic Nicholson
 et past the magnificent Royal Exhibition
 ding in the Carlton Gardens. .

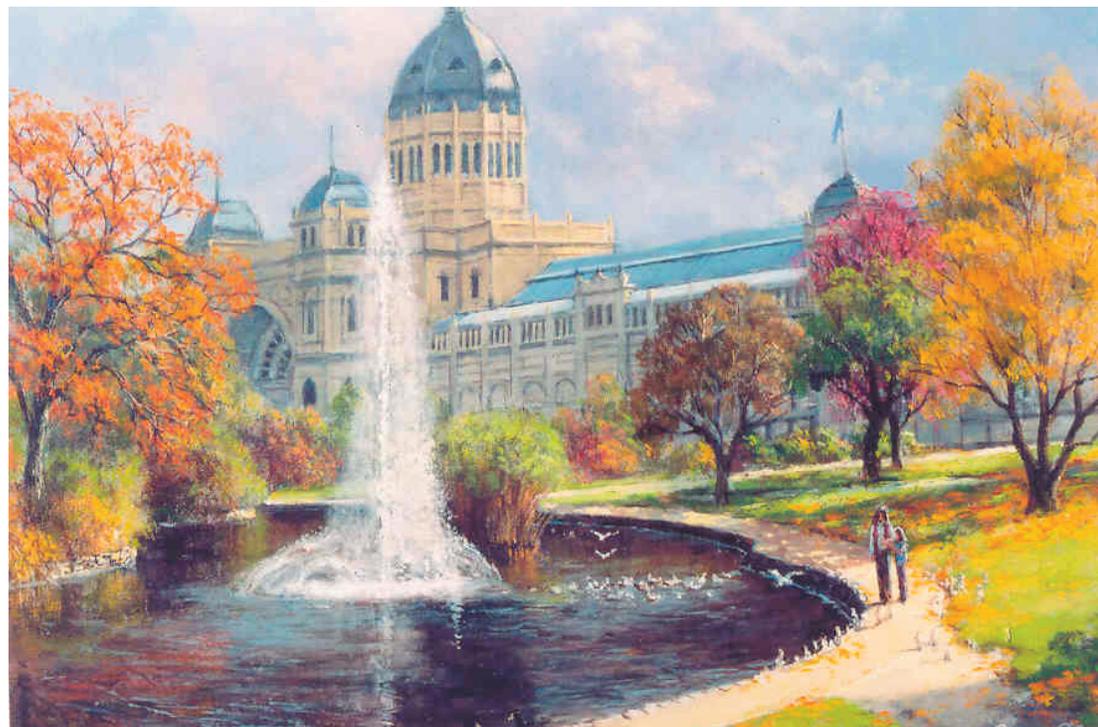
The Royal Exhibition Building in
 bourne's Carlton Gardens is one of the
 d's oldest remaining exhibition pavilions.
 as constructed entirely of wood for the
 bourne International Exhibition in 1880
 later hosted the opening of the first Par-
 ent of Australia in 1901.

TRAM ROUTE 96

Visitors to Aussiecon 4 in September 2010 can take a fifteen minute trip to St Kilda on tram route 96. The tram stop is across the road from the convention centre.

Wikipedia says that the trip itself has been classified as one of the world's top ten tram rides, with views of Albert Park (site of Melbourne's Formula 1 Grand Prix in March each year), the George Hotel, Fitzroy Street, Catani Gardens, St Kilda Esplanade and the east end of Acland Street.

In the other direction, the number 96 tram trundles through Melbourne's City Mall,



During the 20th century smaller sections and wings suffered demolition and fire. The main building survived. It was restored in the 1990s and in 2004 became the first building (and first non-aboriginal site) in Australia to be awarded UNESCO World Heritage status, eclipsing Sydney's famous Opera House in that respect. It's well worth a visit.

St. Kilda's one of the many cities in Australia that this editor has always wanted to visit, despite the fact that I've rooted against the St. Kilda Saints more than once in recent Aussie Rules Football competitions. Oddly, The Saints are called St. Kilda, but haven't played in St.

Kilda for more than 40 years.

One of the remarkable things about St. Kilda is that it was the home of two of the more underrated modern artists of the last century: Joy Hester and Albert Tucker. It was also home of several members of The Birthday Party, which would contain a certain Nick Cave slightly later in their life.

NEWS FROM THE STEAMPUNK WORLD

Well, as always, there's a lot going on. The early part of the year features several Steampunk events, and one that I'm hoping one of our gentlereaders will report on is the Edwardian World's Faire and Edwardian Ball at the Regency Ballroom in San Francisco on January 22nd and 23rd. You'll get Jill Tracy, Edwardian Burlesque, DJs, dancing, fun and more. Sadly, I won't be attending, but I'm sure at least one of our readers (and likely at least one of our editors!) will be in attendance. Info at <http://www.edwardianball.com/>.



There's also DarkCon with the interesting tagline 'The Age of Vampires, Werewolves, and Steam Power. The Darker, Grittier Side of the Victorian Era'. It smacks of interest to us, no? January 14th - 17th in Phoenix. They've got some good programming laid out and they've even got a guest who is in the Pirates of the Caribbean movies, Martin Klebba. There's a big emphasis on gaming it seems. I've never been to a Darkcon, but it sounds like a good time. You can find out more at <http://www.darkcon.org/Darkcon/>.

But wait, there's more! Eugene, Oregon, will host Faerieworlds Winter Celebration which will feature Steampunk's unofficial Greatest Band in the World, Abney Park as well as Beats Antique, who are really cool and if you haven't heard them, you

can find out more at their website, <http://beatsantique.com/>. They're Oakland-based and they're a lot of fun. Faerieworlds happens January 29th - 31st.

Steamcon, one of the most successful events of 2009, has announced their 2010 dates. It's the weekend before Thanksgiving, November 19th to the 21st. I'm certainly going to be there and I hope they'll let me be a speaker again. I've even got a new talk that I'm hoping to have perfected before then: The Steampunk Cocktail Hour: 20 drinks for the Steampunk Drinker.

The Steampunk Expo which was supposed to happen in April in Philly has been cancelled. They're looking at a Fall date instead, and I'm thinking that's probably a good time for it considering that there are only two other cons on the docket right now for the Fall in the US (SteamCon and Teslacon) and the Spring is jam-packed!

February 2nd features the release of a book that I'm very interested in: Steamed. It's a Steampunk Romance, which is a microgenre I enjoy.

Book View Cafe (<http://www.bookviewcafe.com>) has a new offering that should be of interest to any Steampunk. The Shadow Conspiracy is a e-collection of alternate history tales with

the famous 1816 gathering of poets at Lake Geneva as the point of divergence. It's edited by Phyllis Irene Radford and Laura Anne Gilman, with authors including Sarah Zettel, Steven Piziks, Brenda Clough, and Maya Kaathryn Bohnhoff. It's a great group. It's 9.99 and available for just about every form of digital reading. We'll have a review next issue.

Speaking of Alternate History, one of the real important projects in the actual history of alternate history was Stroke of Fate, a radio show on NBC that ran from October to December, 1953. Its 13 episodes each took a look at an event in history and then what would have happened if a single event had gone a different way. Some of the subjects are what you expect, but some are very in-

teresting, like Russia never selling Alaska to the US and what would have happened if the battle of Quebec went the other way. You can purchase an MP3 of every episode at <http://www.otrcat.com/stroke-fate-p-1873.html>. It's well worth it.

Beneath Gray Skies, The first book from Huge Ashton, is a narrative largely seen through the eyes of David Slater, a conscript in the Army of the Confederacy in the 1920s, *Beneath Gray Skies* takes in the political landscape of Richmond, VA, Washington DC, London and Berlin, describing a world that might easily have been, had the American Civil War never been fought. Members of the rising new Nazi party in Germany, Confederates, and the British and American intelligence services engage in intrigue, treachery and romance, as the giant Bismarck, the largest Zeppelin dirigible yet constructed prepares to cross the Atlantic on her maiden voyage, carrying a mysterious gift intended to forge an alliance between Nazi Germany and the Confederacy. *Beneath Gray Skies*'s cast of characters mixes historical and fictional personages in a cast ranging from a Southern

slave who ends up working for British Intelligence, through the brilliant and vehemently anti-Nazi (real-life) Zeppelin captain Hugo Eckener, and rogue British agent ³Bloody Brian² Finch-Malloy, to the autocratic third-generation President of the CSA, Jefferson Davis III.

More details of the book are to be found on <http://www.beneathgrayskies.com>.

The book may be purchased online through Lulu (www.lulu.com) as well as Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc. eBook (PDF and iPhone/Stanza ePub) versions are also available through Lulu at \$3.

Hugh Ashton is a British journalist and writer based in Kamakura, Japan. *Beneath Gray Skies* is his first published novel.

While not really Steampunk, certainly falling in with the techniques and feel of the movement is *The Falcon* (<http://www.thefalcon.tv/>) a wonderful short film featuring the bits and pieces of mechanization in a sort of dance. It's a lot of fun and at times absolutely hyp-mo-tizing! It very much has the fell of DIY with the stop-motion animation.

