

Introduction

By [Ben Forkner](#)

Three essays

For an undertaking still in its infancy, chronologically speaking at least, it is gratifying to announce that this first Newsletter comes into the world fully grown, with a fairly independent will of its own. I had hoped, not unreasonably I think, to have plenty of news to report, but I cannot claim that I had any idea that three original essays would arrive almost at the same time. Thus *The Anthony Burgess Newsletter* becomes a sort of Anthony Burgess Journal, not by design or deliberation, but by the grace of an artist whose immense gifts continue to inspire new considerations wherever one looks. Liana Burgess, now writing a full-scale memoir of her life with Burgess, has agreed to send us regular notes from her work-in-progress. Her essay on **The Malayan Trilogy**

is part of a longer meditation on her translation of the **Trilogy**

into Italian. Paul Phillips, who is quickly becoming recognized as the main authority on all aspects of Burgess's music, provides a very useful account of the musical career, including a list of some of the major performances given recently. This essay is a version of the Burgess entry Phillips has been asked to write for the next edition of the Grove. Andrew Biswell's discussion of Burgess as a television critic in England during the 1960s points to a relatively unexamined feature of Burgess as a critic and journalist. Biswell first presented his discussion in a public lecture at the Burgess Center last April 5. There is still, by the way, a mass of journalistic matter waiting to be collected and reprinted in book form.

BBC Documentary

As far as news itself is concerned, just to prove that the Newsletter has not lost all notion of its original conception, the major news is the Anthony Burgess documentary that David Thompson and Kevin Jackson of the BBC have just completed. This is a wonderful two-hour documentary spanning the life and career of Burgess, organized into thirty themes, or variations, on the artist : as novelist, of course, but also as critic, biographer, composer, teacher, linguist, linguist, journalist, and film writer : the whole symphonic parade of multifarious talents. Much of the documentary consists of original interviews, with Gore Vidal, A.S. Byatt, William Boyd, Jean-Jacques Annaud, Paul Phillips, Liana Burgess, and others. The interview with Liana Burgess was held at the Center in Angers which is featured in the second hour of the documentary. The BBC team stayed several days in Angers last February, filming not only the Center's premises in the University library, and our special collection, but also a long sequence at the home of Maureen Turquet, our local music correspondent, and a gifted pianist, who gave a private concert of Burgess piano music in honor of Liana. A fuller account of the documentary will be given in our next Newsletter. As of this writing, the exact dates of its first showing have

not yet been announced. It should be out in Great Britain before the end of the year, and in the United States shortly after Christmas. I will of course print the dates for our readers as soon as I receive them.

Other News

The Anthony Burgess Center has decided to organize an international conference on Burgess in March, 2001. We welcome suggestions from all our correspondents and readers. Preparations will begin in the Fall of 1999. By the way, I do want to thank all of you, correspondents and readers, especially those who have sent messages of support during the past few months. Unfortunately I have not been able to answer the hundreds of emails I have received. We hope soon to create a sort of open forum on our Website, thus allowing anyone to send messages and questions and answers directly to the screen. In the meantime, please accept my apologies for not answering each of you individually. And keep the cockle-warming messages flowing our way. Finally, I am very pleased to announce that there is a movement underway to organize an Anthony Burgess Society to be presided over by Liana Burgess. The Society will work closely with the Center, but will be an independent entity authorized to take subscriptions, gather funds, solicit sponsors, and organize celebrations of all aspects of the Burgess oeuvre. More details will be announced on this site in a few weeks. Obviously, all our correspondents and readers are warmly invited to join.

Ben Forkner, Director
Anthony Burgess Center

