

# Introduction

by [Ben Forkner](#)

## Newsletter

Irritating delays can sometimes yield rich benefits. I was all set to write a lengthy, and somewhat sour history of academic research, university politics, and lost time, when two contributions to the *Newsletter* appeared on the same day last week. The history can thus be saved (and perhaps sweetened) for a later date, and we (I especially) can meditate on the strange blessings of waiting one more day.

The first contribution was sent by Kevin Jackson, who offers us his introduction to his selection of poetry by Burgess, *Revolutionary Sonnets & Other Poems*, to be published by Carcanet Press later in the year. As to be expected, Jackson's introduction is a fine blending of wit and expertise, and it can only be hoped that he will soon turn his attention to a longer study of the entire Burgess canon. The second contribution is a review by Douglas Milton of the biography of Burgess written by Roger Lewis (to be published by Faber in two weeks). There will be much more to say about the Lewis book, which seems to have been conceived more in the barking (but toothless) mad-dog style of a modern Grub Street pamphlet than as a serious work of biographical scholarship. I can certainly attest to the fact that Mr Lewis did not visit the collection of the Anthony Burgess Center, surely a betrayal of all the principles that Lewis's self-proclaimed mentor, Richard Ellmann, exemplified in every one of his superb biographies.

The other contributions to this issue of the *Newsletter* have been in my hands for some time now, but are no less valuable for the long wait. Liana Burgess, generous as ever, and a goldmine of knowledge concerning the work of her husband, has given us three pieces to publish. The first is the written version of her recollections (delivered at the International Symposium, "The Avatars of *A Clockwork Orange*", held at the University of Angers in December 2001) on first reading *A Clockwork Orange* (and *Inside Mr Enderby*). The second is her introduction (also delivered at the Symposium) to the recording of Burgess's acceptance speech at Sardi's for the New York Critics' award to Kubrick for the film version of *A Clockwork Orange*. Liana Burgess had discovered the recording a few months before the Symposium. Everyone present at the Symposium will agree, I am sure, that the voice of Burgess improvising at will, and delighting the demanding audience in New York, was one of the highlights of the entire Symposium. Thanks to modern technology, and once again, to the generosity of Liana Burgess, all our readers can now read and [hear the same speech](#), which has been transferred online to our site.

Another highlight of the Symposium was the concert "A Clockwork Hour" prepared by Maureen Turquet, and performed by Maureen on the piano, and Thomas Dubos on the bassoon, in the beautiful private theater of Bouvet-Ladubay in Saumur. I asked Maureen to write a short account of her choice of music, which appears here under the same title as her concert. Some enterprising recording company should leap at the opportunity, and beg Maureen and Thomas to record the music exactly as it was played on the night of December 8, 2001. The full program of the concert will be added to our site at a later date.

Three other important contributions grace the present issue. Two are original papers on Burgess sent by major literary scholars. Zack Bowen, specialist of Joyce and music, offers a personal reassessment of Burgess's *Blooms of Dublin*. I am sure Professor Bowen will not mind if I correct his lively review on two points: 1) *Rejoyce* and *Here Comes Everyone* are the same book on Joyce, the first the American edition, and the second, the British, 2) Liana Burgess confirms that Burgess's publisher compiled the glossary for *A Clockwork Orange*, not Burgess himself. re a John Fletcher, a pioneer in Beckett studies, has given us a thoughtful discussion of the role of

autobiography and biography in Burgess. This is a fully revised version of the annual Burgess lecture delivered at the University of Angers by Professor Fletcher on November 13, 2001. Finally, Valerie Neveu, whom our readers should now recognize as the mindspring behind this site, lists the various items in the boxes of Burgess material donated to the Center by David Thompson of the BBC. His gift is by far the richest since the original donation of Burgess's personal library that Liana Burgess sent us to set up the Center at the beginning.

The poem by Martin Phipps, "Homage to Antonio Borghese" concludes our *Newsletter*. Burgess would have been the first to praise a celebration in verse (see his own poetic homage to Vladimir Nabokov). Mr Phipps, who sent us his poem out of the blue, having discovered our site by chance, will I hope be an inspiration to the rest of our readers, waiting perhaps just for a nudge by fate to send us their own letters, comments, and poems. All unsolicited contributions are welcome.

## **For Liana Burgess**

Some of our readers may not have heard that Andrew Burgess Wilson died suddenly in his home this summer. I am sure they will join me and all the other members of the Center in sending our heartfelt condolences to Liana Burgess. There is little that one can do or say to help in the wake of such a tragic loss, but our thoughts are with you, Liana, as always.

