

REAKTOR

August 2017

Special Worldcon issue



SURVIVAL GUIDE TO ESTONIAN
SCIENCE FICTION



SF fanzine Reaktor

Reaktor is free web-based fanzine which is fully based on our editors and authors enthusiasm and it has been (and will be) always free to read from to web. There is also no annoying advertisements (which is also intentional) and basically we pay for making it - we cover the server service ourself. No artist, writer, editor or critic has ever received any more payment than the fame and our reader's thanks. However it seems that this has been enough since we've published an issue per month for almost six years now. Notable authors have given us permission to publish their stories such as Norman Spinrad, Charles Stross and Bruce Sterling. We have also received several short stories from Estonian publishers who would like to promote their newly published book or collection of stories.

Our main goals are to publish young writer's short stories, give them some insight and to expand our reader's knowledge of native and international SF literature and events. In addition to literature we are also trying to cover wide variety of topics that are more or less tied to the theme of our fanzine - board games, roleplaying games (pen & paper), live action roleplaying games (LARP), video games, anime, comic-books, movies etc.

If you are interested in contributing to our cause to improve the scenery of Estonian science fiction, fantasy and/or supernatural horror with your short story and/or an article we encourage to write to us (or if you really like what we in which case it would be great to have some feedback). We accept English submissions. We have several people who translate for us beside their daily job or as an hobby. All is good as long as the story hasn't

been published in Estonian. By submitting a story to us, you're granting us the non-exclusive, worldwide rights to republish your story in the Estonian language on this website. All other rights not expressly granted by the author reside exclusively with the author." The author guarantees he is the the real author of the submitted text. Any format will do as long as the text is easily accessible (i.e. not an pdf).

As there's enough storage space in our server we have no official maximum length. Preferred (maximum) length would be around 10 000 words. We have had couple of longer stories but they usually don't get that much attention as many people don't like to read long texts on their computer screen (which is why we also have epub and mobi formats available).



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Estonian Science Fiction Association

Founded on March 25, 1995. Its purposes are the presentation and popularization of SF and the development of Estonian SF. Each summer, the Estonian Science Fiction Association organizes the annual gathering of SF fans, Estcon, where the winners of the Estonian SF award, Stalker, are announced.

Since 1998, the ESFA has once a year given the Stalker award that recognizes good SF literature published in Estonian in the previous calendar year. The award is given in accordance to the statute and the results of a reader vote.

Once a month, highly informal gatherings take place in Tartu and Tallinn and once a year the Estcon happens – a great summer SF event for everyone.

President of the Society: Veiko Belials
Board members: Jüri Kallas, Joel Jans

Membership

As of August 1, 2016, the society has 60 members.

Estonian SF award



Stalker

Stalker is Estonian Science Fiction Association (ESFA) award for the best original and translated speculative fiction (i.e SF, Fantasy and horror).

Stalker was created to acknowledge the best original and translated speculative fiction published in Estonian. First Stalker nominees were announced in 1998. Stalkers for fiction are awarded based on the reader's votes. (The guidelines of voting are described in the Stalker Statute.) This means everyone who's interested in Estonian speculative fiction can vote!

The award is announced annually on Estcon – the annual convention of the local fandom. All the voters and fans and other interested parties are very welcome to witness the event!

Today there are different Stalker categories for short fiction, for novelettes and novellas, anthologies and novels. Couple of times ESFA has presented the special service Stalker to people with outstanding contribution in regards of science fiction.

The name Stalker itself is a reference to the Roadside Picnic by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky(1971) and the film Stalker. Brothers have always had (and still do) a great influence in Estonian fandom.

The Stalker is represented by the framed diploma and a ceramic clay tablet with a palm print on it.



Estcon

Estcon is an annual convention of Estonian fandom of speculative fiction (i.e SF, Fantasy and horror). It's about literature, comic books, LARP, films, animations and having good time during a weekend in July with friends and barbecue.

Unlike most of conventions Estcon takes place in a beautiful countryside in Estonia – yes – outdoors! Therefore, the main emphasis is not so much on the academic performances and the schedule is not too tight. Mostly it's a nice cultured recreation time. The participant on Estcon can meet the local authors, translators and publishers.

The first Estcon took place in 25th and 26th of July 1998 in Tõrvaaugu (in Järva County). In years, Estcon has “travelled” from Järva County to southern part of Estonia – Saarlõve in Põlva County. Last couple of years it has been in Jõgeva County – in Udu Tourism Farm at Lake Kuremaa.

Estcon starts at Friday evening and lasts until Sunday noon.



Who's Who in Estonian Science Fiction

by Andri Riid and Raul Sulbi

Belials, Veiko (1966–)

A prolific poet, translator from Russian (most notably of the Strugatsky brothers), critic and editor, Belials is also an accomplished writer in all sub-genres of fantastic fiction, capable to emulate any writing style. His first novel «Ashinari kroonikad» (The Chronicles of Ashinar; 1997) was for many years the undisputed (if somewhat schematic) flagship of proper genre fantasy by an Estonian writer and was published mere 4 years after his debut in the horror magazine 'Mardus' (Eidolon) in 1993.

Having published 8–10 stories in 'Mardus', webzine 'Algernon' or elsewhere each year for most of the decade and being criticized for non-profoundness or unoriginality with some regularity, Belials' literary output came to a halt after a number of books collecting his top stories were published. These were his first short story collection «Helesiniste liivade laul» (A Song of Baby Blue Sands; 2003), a collection of sword & sorcery stories «See, mis tuikab su veres» (This What Pulsates in Your Blood; 2005) and a long awaited fix-up novel «Jumalate vandenõu» (Conspiracy of the Gods; 2006), inspired by an early SF story of Indrek Hargla.

Belials' return to writing was carefully aimed and highly successful as his new stories contained in «Kogu maailma valgus» (All the Light in the Whole World; 2013) and the collection itself brought its author 3 Stalker Awards, which is as many as he had been able to collect altogether in his prior career.

Berg, Lew R. (pseudonym) (1968–2005)

Prolific writer of military SF and horror, mostly in novella or short novel form. Berg's first story was published in 1995 in 'Mardus' and he quickly became one of the principal authors of the magazine. Several of his stories were serialized in general newspapers and have also appeared in 'Algernon'. Berg's first publication in a book form was a space opera novel «Tants tulle» (Dance into the Fire; 2000). In addition, he has three story collections and a further novel to his credit.

Berg's prose was often found having little literary merit and his subject matter derivative by contemporary critics but in his most successful stories he has been able to exploit his storytelling talent in the best tradition of adventure fiction and for the joy of readers. In recognition of the latter he has received the Stalker Award for the novella «Vaimudejõe viirastused» (Phantoms of the Ghost River) in 1998. Berg's most famous body of work comprises of stories and short novels in «The X Files» milieu depicting the adventures of a security chief Willard, mercenary by profession, fighting against the supernatural, often in exotic setting. Mention should be made of his collection «Reekviem Galateiale» (Requiem for Galateia; 2004) which comprised of colorful space opera stories set in the author's Space Legion universe.

His career, while on the upswing, was cut short by premature death; Berg's magnum opus, a substantial and grim military SF novel «Must Kaardivägi» (The Black Guard) was published posthumously. «Üle piiri» (Across the Border), a collection of Willard stories, with some input from fellow writers, appeared in 2014. Also posthumous is a long novella «Musta Roosi vennaskond» (Brotherhood of the Black Rose; 2013), a space opera in the Space Legion universe, completed by fellow author Siim Veskimäes.

Hargla, Indrek (pseudonym) (1970–)

The most important Estonian author of fantastic fiction by all standards. Hargla debuted in December 1998, in the second issue of 'Algernon' but his first text of significance was the reworked version of the short novel «Gondvana lapsed» (The Children of Gondvana; 1999) that appeared few months later. Since then, Hargla was virtually unstoppable and equally capable of crafting stories in horror, SF, and fantasy subgenres, most of what have appeared in 'Algernon', 'Mardus' and later on, in 'Täheæg' and 'Looming' (Creation), Estonian leading literary magazine, and in general newspapers.

His first book was a collection of stories assembled from 'Algernon' and 'Mardus', «Nad tulevad täna öösel!» (They Will Come Tonight!) that arrived 2 years after his debut. Other books quickly followed, including a collection of well-received stories describing the missions of the elderly Polish exorcist Grpowski «Pan Grpowski üheksa juhtumit» (Nine Cases of Pan Grpowski; 2001), a further collection of three stories «Hathawareti teener» (Servant to Hathawaret; 2002) and a short alternate history novel about Joan of Arc and the lost Viking colony in North America «Maris Stella» (2003).

Hargla's first novel, «Baiita needus» (Baiita's Curse; 2001) was a romantic high fantasy tale, followed by an alternate history (and another love story) set in Reformation Age, «Palveränd Uude Maailma» (Pilgrimage to the New World; 2003). His next novel, however, was a grim medieval fantasy, probably inspired by the mammoth series of George R. R. Martin and mafia tales of Mario Puzo, «Vabaduse kõrgeim määr» (The Highest Degree of Freedom; 2003).

Hargla then went on to write a trilogy of adventures of Koulu and French, Estonian sorcerer and his Burgundian servant (published in 2005, 2007 and 2009), set in a slightly backward alternate Europe with some fantasy and steampunk elements, providing many moments of comic relief. The books were more successful than any of Hargla's previous offerings and brought the author some mainstream recognition.

It was his next series (6 volumes published in 2010–2017, and the series is ongoing) of historical whodunnits set in 15th century Tallinn with apothecary Melchior as the main protagonist that brought him mainstream success and elevated him among the top-earning Estonian writers.

Hargla's stories of fantastic fiction written in the interim have been published in collections «Roos ja lumekristall» (The Rose and the Snow Crystal; 2006) and «Suudlevad vampiirid» (The Kissing Vampires; 2011). In addition he has written the novelizations of the two seasons of folk horror TV series «Süvahavva» he previously scripted (published in 2013 and 2015)) and a best-selling alternate history detective novel «Raudrästiku aeg» (The Age of the Iron Viper; 2016) set in the 11th century Estonia.

Hargla has won 20 Stalker Awards in all possible categories, far more than any other Estonian author and a handful of other literature prizes.

Hellat, Henn-Kaarel (1932–)

The man who coined the word 'ulme' in 1970 – just to replace the awkward 'teaduslik fantastika' (science fiction) – which has become the Estonian umbrella term for all fantastic fiction. He is also the author of the first proper Estonian SF novel «Naiste maailm» (Women's World; 1976–78, in two volumes), a gender dystopia and a couple of SF stories, also from the seventies. In 2015 he was awarded the first honorary membership of Eesti Ulmeühing (Estonian Science Fiction Association).

Kallas, Jüri (1967–)

One of the most famous, knowledgeable and vocal SF fans in Estonia, Kallas has also been an informed critic and is famous for his meticulously researched afterwords introducing important writers to Estonian fandom. He was the second president of the Estonian Science Fiction Association and among the founders of Estonian science fiction award Stalker, Estonian science fiction convention Estcon and ESFA's webzine

'Algernon' in 1998. In his capacity as the editor to the publishing house Elmatar he established a SF imprint 'Tempus fugit' in 1998. Under his tutelage the books by Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, Robert A. Heinlein, H. P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, Robert Silverberg, and Roger Zelazny were published. Kallas has edited two science fiction anthologies, «Olend väljastpoolt meie maailma» (The Thing from – 'Outside'; 1996) and «Stalker 2002» (2003), the first covering the world SF scene between two world wars, and the second concentrating on that year's Stalker award winners and nominees. He has also served as consultant to several other SF book series in different publishing houses and has been compiling the Estonian Science Fiction Bibliography since the 1990s.

Kivirähk, Andrus (1970–)

Possibly the most popular Estonian author of this century, Kivirähk is mainly a playwright, dramatist, children's writer, and feuilletonist. Although active for more than two decades, Kivirähk has written only three proper novels for adult readers, two of which are of genre interest. Definitely not genre science fiction, but rather a literary fantasy, Kivirähk's first best-selling novel «Rehepapp ehk November» (The Old Barny or November; 2000) is about the Estonians' folklore, fairy tales, stereotypes, self-image and painful historical experience treated in a comical and ironic manner. Broadly speaking, the same can be said of his second work of genre interest, the novel «Mees, kes teadis ussisõnu» (The Man Who Spoke Snakish; 2007), which won the Estonian SF award Stalker as the year's best domestic novel and also the main French SF award Grand Prix de l'Imaginaire in 2014 as the year's best translated novel.

Kivistik, Mario (1955–)

An important publisher, editor, translator and occasional author under several pseudonyms (Abel Cain, Reni Moro). From the end of the 1980s he edited the youth magazine 'Pioneer' (changed its name to 'Põhjanaan' (Polaris) in 1990), where he started publishing many classic SF stories (by H. G. Wells, Ray Bradbury, Clifford D. Simak, Robert E. Howard, H. P. Lovecraft, Henry Kuttner, Ursula K. Le Guin, Larry Niven and oth-

ers). He is also responsible for publishing a stream of genre SF stories by Urmas Alas, possibly the first genre SF author to emerge in the 1980s. The magazine folded in 1994/1995 but its role in creating an interest in young readers toward SF, fantasy, and horror literature and maintaining this interest by a steady stream of stories in practically every issue is huge and unique.

As the founder, publisher and editor of the horror oriented magazine 'Mardus' (1991–1998) and subsequent anthology series under the same name (1999–2004), he had a pivotal role in supporting many aspiring authors of the time, most notably Veiko Belials, Marek Simpson, Veikko Vangonen, and Lew R. Berg. Starting from 2001, published books by Lew R. Berg, Karen Orlau, Siim Veskimées, Indrek Hargla and Veiko Belials. He also initiated the Tallinn SF fans monthly gatherings under the name of the 'Mardus Circle'.

Retired from publishing and editing in 2004 but has continued as the translator of books by Dan Simmons and George R. R. Martin. One of his most important translating and editing works is the original Estonian choice of Ray Bradbury's best stories «Kaleidoskoop» (Kaleidoscope; 2000), which won him a Stalker Award. Kivistik has also edited an anthology of SF «Hirmu vöönd» (Zone of Terror; 1993) and one of horror stories «Õised külalised» (The Night Visitors; 1997). Received a lifetime achievement Stalker in 2015.

Kunnas, Leo (1967–)

A retired militant, publicist and writer whose sole venture into pure SF – the Gort Ashryn trilogy of military SF in interplanetary space (2008–2010) – stirred up some furor. All parts of the trilogy won individual Stalkers.

His newest work is a massive double novel «Sõda 2023. Taavet» (The War of 2023: David) and «Sõda 2023. Koljat» (The War of 2023: Goliath) published in one volume in the style of Ace Doubles. That work speculates on a possible war with Russia and offers two different future

scenarios.

Laurik, Mairi (1979–)

An author of what can be predominantly classified as YA SF and a prolific one at that who has published three novels and a handful of short stories to date. Her debut novel «Süsteem» (The System; 2016), which is set a thousand years in the future in the aftermath of an apocalyptic cataclysm, deals with the coming-of-age problems of its heroine. «Mina olen surm» (I Am Death; 2016), winner of the young adult novel competition of Tänapäev Publishing House features a young lad with precognitive powers in a small town of Estonia. «Novembriöö kirjad» (Letters from the November Night; 2017), which depicts a nanotechnology-based society in an even more rural local setting, placed second at the same competition.

Loper, Mann (1985–)

One of the most promising authors to debut in recent years and author of two novels. «Algas enne lõppu» (The Beginning before the End; 2015) is a competent science fiction adventure for young adults, taking place hundreds of years after a nuclear catastrophe. «Kellest luuakse laule» (Who the Songs Are Made About; 2016), is a seemingly standard fantasy tale involving magic, dragons, female warriors, evil villains etc with a subtle feel of Far East setting.

Loper debuted with a novella «Meister ja õpipoiss» (Master and Apprentice; 2014) set in the world of her fantasy novel, which won the Grand Prix in ESFA short story competition in 2014 and finished second in Stalker ballot. Furthermore, a handful of short stories have been published in a number of anthologies and in 'Reaktor'.

Meres, Triinu (1980–)

A poet and writer whose SF debut «Joosta oma varju eest» (To Run away from One's Shadow) won grand prix in ESFA short story competition in 2011. Meres' next major works were a postapocalyptic SF novella «Kuningate tagasitulek» (Return of the Kings; 2012) and a high fantasy novelle with some feminist overtones «Sulavesi ja vereside» (Spring Waters and Blood Ties; 2012). She has been published in 'Täheae', 'Algernon', 'Reaktor', and in a number of anthologies.

Metsavana, J. J. (pseudonym) (1982–)

A fandom activist and writer of horror and SF who debuted in 'Reaktor', which he co-founded in 2011 and has edited since. Metsavana's writing often combines any of the following: flamboyant or tongue-in-cheek tone, gory violence, overcomplicated gadgets.

Metsavana has found most success in collaborations with Maniakkide Tänav (stories and novels set in Ippolit and Euromant universes) and Veiko Belials (so-called atomic punk stories) and has received 6 Stalkers for co-authorship. His individual works that have mostly appeared in 'Reaktor' are numerous but less accomplished. He has also co-edited three volumes of anthologies comprised of stories previously published in 'Reaktor'.

Nikkarev, Arvi (1949–)

A lifetime SF fan, translator, publisher and editor who founded his own publishing house Skarabeus in 1996 and has maintained a steady schedule – one volume of SF per year, mostly story collections and anthologies – since. The author list includes Norman Spinrad, Harlan Ellison, Robert Silverberg, Brian W. Aldiss, Gene Wolfe, and a variety of Anglo-American, Finnish, German, Italian, and Russian contemporary SF writers. Much of Skarabeus' output, for which the publishing house has received a number of Stalker Awards, can be described as new wave SF.

Roogna, Martin (1950–?)

An active and somewhat notorious SF fan of Soviet era (is reported to cause an attack of paranoia in Philip K. Dick, who upon receiving his letter perceived it as an evil communist scheme and contacted FBI) and occasional translator who, in the seventies, had an avid correspondence with several SF writers (Brian W. Aldiss, Poul Anderson, Ray Bradbury, A. Bertram Chandler, Harry Harrison, Robert A. Heinlein etc) and assembled a collection of autographs (which, along with the correspondence and other documents is stored at Estonian Literary Museum). His name is immortalized in the title of «Castle Roogna», a book by Piers Anthony.

Sander, Kristjan (1977–)

Writer and critic of SF and editor of 'Algernon' (since 2002) who debuted in 'Põhjanaan' with a short story «Ajaleht» (Newspaper) at the tender age of 14 and all but disappeared. Sander re-emerged in the very first issue of 'Algernon' in 1998 with a bunch of short stories showing much promise to some observers. Sander has been praised as a master of style (often in the vein of Russian SF writers) and criticized for unoriginality (perhaps unfairly so as quite many of his works can be considered pastiches) and lack of direction.

Sander has published infrequently in 'Mardus', 'Algernon' and 'Täheae', and majority of these works have been also published in book form in collections «13 talvist hetke» (13 Winter Moments; 2008) and «Õhturannal» (An Evening on the Beach; 2012). A short novel «Valguse nimel» (In the Name of Light; 2003) was also published as a standalone book.

Sulbi, Raul (1977–)

A prominent SF fan, critic, editor and anthologist, also the first president of the Estonian Science Fiction Association (1995–1998), in which capacity he was among the small group of fans who established the annual Estonian science fiction award Stalker and the Estonian science fiction convention Estcon back in 1998. He was also one of the founders of the

webzine 'Algernon' and one of its editors from 1998 to 2005.

Sulbi has edited a number of anthologies, including a decade-spanning «Eesti ulme antoloogia» (Anthology of Estonian Science Fiction, 2002), a collection of best stories from the 2004 ESFA short story competition, «Terra Fantastica» (2004), three anthologies of horror stories «Sünged varjud 1&2» (Dark Shadows 1&2, 2001 and 2004) and «Hirmu ja õuduse jutud I» (Tales of Terror and Horror 1, 2015) and, most importantly, 17 volumes of 'Täheaeg' (The Sidereal Time, 2002–), a cross between anthology series and SF magazine. After the demise of 'Mardus', 'Täheaeg' currently serves as the primary print venue for shorter forms of fiction by novice as well as by established Estonian SF authors.

Sulbi has also edited several single author collections: mention should be made of the multi-volume project «The Selected Works of Robert Silverberg» (2016–) and the original choice of Poul Anderson's best stories «Taevarahvas» (The Sky People; 2008), edited in collaboration with Andri Riid, which won the Stalker Award. Raul Sulbi is also the editor of the imprint of Fantaasia Publishing House titled 'Orpheuse Raamatukogu' (The Orpheus Library, 2011–), which currently comprises of 29 volumes of classic and contemporary SF story collections and shorter novels.

Tarlap, Tiit (1954–2017)

One of the most important Estonian SF writers of the last 30 years. Tarlap's debut story was «Tänav akna taga» (The Street beyond the Window; 1988) in the magazine 'Noorus'. For the next fifteen years he mainly published his short fiction and longer works as serials in magazines and local newspapers.

His notoriety in fandom began in 1998 when his novelette «Vihkamise suund» (Direction of Hatred; 1997) won the first Estonian science fiction award Stalker. Although not very well known to the SF audience before that, in retrospect, Tarlap can easily be viewed as the most significant Estonian SF writer of the 1990s. Mention should be made of a rather grim military SF novel «Kurjuse tund» (An Hour of Wrath; 1994), two

stories in a contemporary setting that combine horror, fantasy and science fiction – short novel «Vampiirilõks» (The Vampire Trap; 1994) and novelette «Haldjatants» (The Fairy Dance; 1996) - and an adventurous space opera novella «Kaduviku paladiinid» (Paladins of the Past; 1997). 2001 saw the publication of his long-awaited first collection «Viiking, kes armastas haisid» (The Viking Who Loved Sharks) that brought his important early work to wider audience. Second similar collection followed in 2005.

From then on Tarlap wrote only novels, seven of which were published before his untimely death: «Meie, kromanjoonlased» (We, the Cro-Magnons; 2009), «Tuleriitade öö» (Night of the Bonfires; 2010), «Roheliste lippude reservaat» (Reservation of the Green Flags; 2012), «Lõhestusjoon» (Divisive Line; 2012, which won him his second Stalker award), «Aegade julm laul» (Cruel Song of the Ages; 2013), «Äraneetute pärijad» (Heirs to the Damned; 2015), and «Rajake tähetolmus» (Pathway in the Stardust; 2016). A collection of his best stories «The Fairy Dance» was published in 2014.

Tarlap's fiction was old-fashioned and reminiscent of the 1950s adventure SF written by Edmond Hamilton, Harry Harrison, and young Robert Silverberg. His retro space operas often brought the classic cloak-and-dagger tropes and motifs to the galactic scenery, but had also important points to make and stances to express. Tarlap was a life-long opponent to the Establishment in the broadest possible sense, disapproving both political, financial, and institutional elite. His characters refused the societal control over their lives and behavior, and often turned violent against the collective body that preached about the so called common good. They disavowed technological civilization based on unending consumerism and looting of natural resources.

Tänav, Maniakkide (pseudonym) (1976–)

Writer of naturalist horror, apocalyptic SF and cyberpunk, generally in domestic background (often in Jõgeva, a small town in rural area of Estonia) who debuted in local newspaper 'Vooremaa' in 1996 and gained

some notoriety with a short humorous splatter story «Doonorelundid» (The Donor Organs; 1998), which appeared in the first issue of 'Algernon'. Tānav continued publishing in 'Algernon' and 'Mardus' on a regular basis. His most accomplished story of the period was «Nekromandi kombel» (Like a Necromancer; 2002), a tale of a rotten zombie trying to make his way out of the situation. Tānav published his first novel, a decidedly amateurish mixture of fantasy and horror, «Mu aknad on puust ja seinad paistavad läbi» (My Windows Are Made of Wood and Walls Are Transparent) the next year. Then he took a five-year break.

Tānav returned with a bunch of short stories in 'Algernon' and 'Täheaeg', quickly becoming a permanent author of the latter, and a novel «Surmakarva» (In the Color of Death; 2009), another horror fantasy, based on his experience of role-playing. A collection assembled of his best stories, «Euromant» (Euromancer), was published in 2011.

The next year saw the first installment in the ongoing Ippolit future history series depicting apocalyptic earth after its collision with an asteroid; a future society in which Estonians play an absurdly important role. The book «Saladuslik Tsaar» (Mysterious Czar) contains stories by three authors (Tānav, J. J. Metsavana and Jaagup Mahkra) and won a Stalker Award. The second part of the series, «Duumioru lood» (Tales of Doom Valley; 2015), is in fact a shared world anthology, however, Tānav is a sole or co-author of all but one of its stories; two further sequels - of which the first won another Stalker - are novels co-authored with J. J. Metsavana.

In 2013, Tānav published a novel «Õnne ja õnnetuse valitseja» (Ruler of Happiness and Misery), a sequel to his 2009 novel. Perhaps his most celebrated novel is «Mehitamata inimesed» (The Unmanned People, 2014) that depicts a cyberpunk nuclear catastrophe-induced post-apocalyptic version Estonia. This book also won a Stalker Award. In addition, he has won four Stalker Awards for his short stories.

A person of notable organizational talent (co-founder and editor of 'Reaktor' and of several anthologies) and a writer with a considerable cult following, including a circle of less accomplished fellow writers,

Tänav has yet to find appreciation in literary circles.

Veskimees, Siim (pseudonym) (1962–)

One of the most prolific Estonian SF writers of the last 15 years (author of 14 books, mostly novels), Veskimees specializes in fast-paced if somewhat clumsy space opera and military SF with strong libertarian leanings. One of his first stories to attract attention was a space adventure «Kõiksuse hääl» (Voice of the Universe) that appeared in 'Algernon' in late 1999, followed by perhaps his best single piece of fiction, «Naeratus aastate tagant» (The Smile Across the Years) in the next year. This smart short story features the characters of Astrid Lindgren - Pippi Longstocking, his friends Tommy and Annika and father Efraim – and takes place two decades after the events of the original book series.

His most famous book is probably the fix-up novel «Kuu ordu» (The Order of Luna; 2003), a grim view of near-future Earth being polluted and politically Balkanized, coupled with a much better organized Heinleinian utopian society located on the Moon – The Order of Luna. The latter explores and uses nuclear energy which is deplored on Earth. The early development of the Order is described in detail in a two-volume prequel «Ennesõjaaegne kullakarva» (Before the War, the Golden Age; 2011), and «Lahkulöömislahingud» (Battles of Separation; 2012). Another interesting work of Veskimees is «Kõver mets» (The Crooked Forest; 2002), a stephenkingesque short novel in Estonian folk horror/action genre that depicts a society of evil elves and other little people dwelling in underground caves. Also significant is his massive and complicated SF novel about parallel worlds «Pilvelinnuste ajastu langus» (Fall of the Era of Cloud Fortresses; 2004). Of his later novels, the most intriguing is probably «Haldjaradade ahvatlus» (The Temptation of Elf-paths; 2014), set in the Cloud Fortresses' world.

Veskimees is also the mastermind behind the SF imprint 'Sündmuste horisont' (Event Horizon), that has published about 50 books since 2008, several of which he has translated himself (novels by Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, John Scalzi). He has also served as the third presi-

dent of the Estonian Science Fiction Association ESFA. His fiction has won him three Stalker awards.

Weinberg, Heinrich (pseudonym) (1978–)

Weinberg belongs to the newest wave of the Estonian SF authors; having debuted in 2013 he quickly became one of the most prolific SF writers, publishing a steady row of long novelettes and novellas in 'Reaktor' and 'Täheae'. His novella «Vihma seitse nime» (The Seven Names of Rain; 2014) came third on the Stalker ballot. His other novella «Millest sa järeldad, et sinu karjamaal elab sipelgalövi?» (How Do You Detect That There's an Antlion in Your Rangeland?; 2014) came second in the ESFA short story competition and won the 2015 Stalker award as the year's best domestic novella. Weinberg's fiction can be described as a classic space and planetary SF with a strong ecological background. He has also penned stories about time travel, first contact and the exploring and terraforming our solar system.

2016 saw the publication of his debut collection «Pimesi hüpates» (Jumping off Blindly), a hefty tome that collects the aforementioned novellas and other longer works set in the same future history. His first novel «Eneseväärikusel pole sellega mingit pistmist» (Dignity's Got Nothing to Do with It), expanded from an earlier short story, appeared in 2017.

You can find the full list of Estonian SF writers, publishers and otherwise important persons at ulme.ee





From left: Heinrich Weinberg, J.J. Metsavana, Veiko Belials



Indrek Hargla



Science fiction events

Estonian Science Fiction Day

On the 8th of September, 1970 Henn-Kaarel Hellat used a new Estonian word ‘ulme’ instead of ‘science fiction’ in a public article in the newspaper “Sirp” (The Sickles in English) for the first time. In 1971 a contest of new Estonian terms was held by the same newspaper. Among other things the good replacement for too long science fiction was sought. Two new terms prevailed: ‘ulme’ and ‘ruja’.

The first of the two short words remained in use and is an umbrella term in Estonian today to designate speculative fiction with its three main sub-genres: science fiction (short version SF is also used sometimes in Estonian), fantasy and horror. ‘Ruja’ was a favorite of musician Jaan Rannap and nowadays it refers to a legendary Estonian band.

In Estonian, the word ‘ulme’ probably opposes to the word ‘olme’. The latter meaning present circumstances, conditions while the word ‘ulme’ has a sub-text link with terms vision and dream.

The genre, of course existed before September 1970 but it got a new, short and sharp, unique name.

In September 2015, Estonian fandom celebrated the 45th anniversary of the term 'ulme'. The Estonian Science Fiction Day (literally – Day of Ulme) was celebrated in Estonian Writer's Union House (in the Black Ceiling Hall). The godfather of 'ulme', Henn-Kaarel Hellat was present, Jaak Tomberg (PhD in literature) held a lecture "Science Fiction and Representative Energy".

The Estonian Science Fiction Association had a chance to turn over Stalker awards which in different reasons had not yet found their way to nominees. One of the more prominent Stalkers was to Mario Kivistik for his outstanding contributions. Both Mr. Hellat and Mr. Kivistik offered their palm prints to generate a 3D models for the future Stalker award clay tablets.

Monthly meetings

More than 15 years Estonian fandom has held regular monthly meetings in the Beer Ministry in Tartu (former pub Labyrinth) and in Vintage Lounges in Tallinn (former pub Lost Continent).



See you...

*In Tartu on every second Friday of the month in Beer Ministry
(Vanemuise 21a)*

*In Tallinn on every third Friday of the month in Vintage Lounges
(Narva mt. 19)*

Estcon will be held on 13.-15. juuli 2018.

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