



THE MUSICKER'S GAZETTE



No. 4

WALKING BOXES PRODUCTIONS

DONOVAN'S BRAIN

Written in 1943 by German-born Curt Siodmak (who also wrote *The Wolf Man*, *Son of Dracula*, and others) *Donovan's Brain* was presented on the radio program *SUSPENSE* in 1944 with Orson Welles giving a brilliant performance as Dr. Patrick Cory. Walking Boxes will pay homage to that great 1944 production by giving the audience the opportunity of being right in the studio as the drama (with all its sound effects) is being created. Production notes and musings about the story's intrigue are on Page 2...

HOMETOWN BOY MAKES GOOD

Prescott native David Geister may live in Minneapolis now, but he still has strong connections to his hometown. He's starring in *Donovan's Brain*, but his involvement with the show is just one of his many endeavors. Read the Gazette's interview with him on Page 3...

FLYHARD JENKINS

Flyhard Jenkins is back, still flying hard against the spin. His upcoming shows offer the Celtic savors of *Triall Ro-Crua* and the Gypsy flavors of *Srazhalys*. For more about these musical guests, please turn to Page 4...

WALKING BOXES SENDS THANKS

Many people deserve thanks for the evenings' productions: Steve Roth for promotional work and support; Dave Polanski for technical support; Christine Nordin for technical assistance; Bruce Swanson (owner of the Inn) for his support and goodwill; the sponsors featured in this gazette who are willing to support local artists; and last (but certainly not least) all the performers contributing to the productions.

Visit Walking Boxes Productions online at www.walkingboxes.com to find out more about upcoming shows, music lessons, and other endeavors of Walking Boxes' artists.

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THE CAST OF DONOVAN'S BRAIN

(**Mr. Nordin and Mr. Geister switch roles for the performance on Saturday the 16th)

Jeffrey Nordin as Dr. Patrick Cory
David Geister as Dr. Shratt and Dr. Zanger
Christine Nordin as Janice and the Reporter
John Knauss as David
Paul Cameron as the Brain
J Roth as the Man in the Black Hat

WHO IS THE VILLIAN? by Jeffrey Nordin

Radio plays evoke a sense of nostalgia. The times that created them are remote in many ways; by the 21st Century, the effect Orson Welles's broadcast of War Of The Worlds and the panic it caused seem impossible to repeat. Was the world ever so gullible? There is something akin to scary stories around a campfire in dramas like War Of The Worlds and Donovan's Brain. The mind's eye sees the story unfold. The moment passes so quickly that the rules of continuity and foreshadowing can be bent. The experience is personal, internal and can be profound.

In tonight's performance you will meet Dr. Patrick Cory and come to question his sanity. Is Dr. Cory insane from the beginning? If so, obsession is at the root of his madness. Dr. Cory's obsession with science blinds him. He builds trust with a monkey and then kills and mutilates it for - what he sees as - the sake of scientific advancement.

William H. Donovan's arrival, and the chance for Dr. Cory to continue his experiments on a human, erases the line between man and monkey. What was done to the monkey is done to Donovan. What is done to Donovan is done to Dr. Cory. The line between Donovan and Dr. Cory ceases to be.

Donovan or Dr. Cory - who is the villain? In the 1953 movie version of this story, so much is changed from the 1944 radio plot, that the answer is not open for interpretation. Who is the villain? Our presentation - true to the 1944 script - allows you the opportunity to contemplate this intriguing question among others.

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ABOUT THE THEREMIN

The theremin was invented in 1919 by Lev Sergeivitch Termen. Termen was in the midst of researching proximity sensors; his research was sponsored by the Russian government. When he demonstrated his invention to Vladimir Lenin, Lenin is said to have been so impressed that he began taking lessons upon it. Lenin sent Termen on a trip around the world to demonstrate this latest Soviet technology and the invention of electronic music. In the late 1920s, Termen emigrated to the US, but was later kidnapped by Soviet agents and forced to return to the USSR. He was put to work in a labor camp and designed the first 'bug'(covert listening device.)

The theremin can be heard in many old sci-fi productions for film and radio. Playing the theremin requires no physical contact with the 'instrument' to produce music. Pitch and volume are controlled by theremin players simply by moving their hands through the air. The theremin used in Walking Boxes' production of Donovan's Brain is a simpler version of Terman's original, which had two antennae.

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INTERVIEW WITH DAVID GEISTER

David Geister is one of the stars in "Donovan's Brain". David is currently finishing up a series of historical paintings that will be used to help tell the story of Fort Ridgely and the 1862 Dakota War. The Musicker's Gazette snuck an interview in with him between his brushstrokes.

Musicker's Gazette (MG): What is your connection to the locale of your upcoming shows (Prescott, Wisconsin)?

Dave Geister(DG): Well, I live in Minneapolis with my wife Pat and my two step-daughters, Eva and Allie, but I was raised in Prescott. I graduated from Prescott Senior High School in 1982 and many of my good friends live here. Most of my siblings and extended family also live in Prescott.

MG: Did you begin your artistic endeavors in Prescott?

DG: The people of Prescott have always been very supportive of my artistic efforts and some of my earliest drawings and paintings were done for people I knew while growing up here. Two years ago I placed one of my historical paintings, "The Death of Captain Converse", on more-or-less permanent loan to the Welcome and Heritage Center. The oil painting is a scene from Prescott's Civil War history, and I had painted it with the feeling that it should someday be displayed there for future generations to see.

MG: How is it, that in addition to being a painter, you are also a performer in "Donovan's Brain"?

DG: To be honest, I have never really seen

myself as an actor. I consider myself a "living history interpreter". Lately, I have portrayed the artist George Catlin, and even Philander Prescott, the town's namesake. So I come to "acting" more or less through the back door.

Jeff Nordin (also a performer in "Donovan's Brain") and I are two thirds of "Professor Wyllies Magnificent Moving Panorama", a mid-19th century entertainment involving costumes, dialogue, music and a sixty-foot long "moving picture" that I painted specifically for the show. I should point out that five of the six performers in Donovan's Brain, including myself, are interpreters at Historic Fort Snelling.

MG: What is it that attracted you and your group to present "Donovan's Brain"?

DG: Well, I can only speak for myself. When I was asked if I would be interested in joining the cast to do a recreation of a 1940's style radio broadcast, I was intrigued. When I was told it would be "Donovan's Brain", I jumped at the chance. It's a classic! I am too young to have heard those early radio shows, but when I was a kid, more than anything else, I looked forward to late Saturday night in front of the TV. "Horror Incorporated" and "Creature Feature" had all those great, black and white scary movies. I loved 'em then, and still do now.

MG: Any final thoughts?

DG: It's all about storytelling. Whether I'm painting a picture, portraying an historic character, or performing in this "off-the-air" broadcast, it's all about telling a good story ... or at least telling an over-the-top, cheesy story with as much gusto as possible! It's too much fun.

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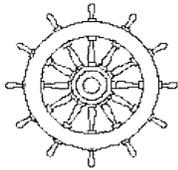
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THE INSTRUMENTS OF SRAZHALYS

The triangular-shaped instrument played by the members of Srazhalys is called a balalaika (literally means: 'plaything'.) The round-shaped instrument is called a domra. The predecessors to both of these instruments are believed to have been brought to Russia by the Mongols in the 12th or 13th Century. They were popular village instruments in Russia for centuries, especially used by skomorokhi. The skomorokhi were wandering minstrels of sorts who were prone to criticize the Tsar, the Church and Russian society. This led to the instruments being banned at different times. Even when not banned they were generally scorned by the Russian upper class as instruments of the peasant class until the late 1800's when a nobleman named Vassily Andreyev brought the instruments to popularity with concert-goers and the Court. The instruments can now be heard in classical orchestras as well as in folk ensembles.

The domra and balalaika used by Srazhalys are stamped Leningrad (now called St. Petersburg.) The instruments made a heroic trip from Russia to the U.S. by ship in 2002.



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A VERY HARD JOURNEY (by Terry 'Turlough' Kennedy-Lares)

Triall Ro-Crua is about music, culture, tradition, friendship, spirituality and good fun. They bring modern notions in a creative manner into traditional Celtic music, and then return the favor by applying traditional sounds to standard rock, blues and country tunes. They believe that friendship is a big part of playing together, and it shows with their on-stage banter, and the ease with which they pick up on each other's improvisations. The fact that they are so laid back on stage is an indication of how comfortable they are with each other.

"Playing Traditional music together is a very spiritual experience for us. First, there is the transcendence of the whole act of creation. Every time we play a song it is new. It is being recreated. When you sing one of these songs it is like telling an old story to a new person. When we are in the midst of this process it takes us out of ourselves, and we are not the same. We also find it amazing how pertinent these songs and tunes, that were written many years ago, are to who we are today. They tell us a lot about who we are as people."

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