

A new Hammer House of Horror, but this time from Halsnæs

DAVID ALBERT

Hanging out with the sibling writing duo Søren and Lotte Hammer Jacobensen

SOME sibling pairings are more successful than others. There's the Brothers Grimm of course, and director Christopher Nolan and his brother Jonathan, who co-wrote the recent Batman films. And then there's Jerry and David Zucker, who peaked with 'Airplane' and 'Naked Gun', before parting company to watch their respective careers nosedive.

The Siblings Hammer

BUT RARELY do you hear about a brother and sister writing team, even though mixed gender authorship is definitely on the increase, like Søren and Lotte Hammer Jacobensen from Frederiksværk in the northern Zealand region of Halsnæs, who recently released their fourth crime novel, and also their first book in English: 'The Hanging'. They share an illustrious middle name that for several decades was a guarantee of chilling cinematic horror. So it is fitting to discover that they share a fondness for the dark side and making their audience leap out of their chairs in excitement.

The Hammers grew up in a rather modest flat in the affluent Copenhagen suburb of Charlottenlund during the late 1950s and 60s. Theirs was a

simple and ordinary childhood of family evenings, no television, and lots of reading.

"We were different to any other family I have ever known," recalled Lotte. "Our father liked Danish literature and would read aloud to us every night. He loved reading. He read for a whole evening. Our mother would listen too. And as Søren got older, he would wait until our father had finished with his reading and only then go out with his friends."

Separate at birth

AFTER school, Lotte and Søren left home to pursue separate educations as a nurse and teacher respectively. Lotte then worked abroad, and for many years letters were their main means of communication.

"I lived abroad for many years and Søren wrote me letters," said Lotte. "I loved those letters because first of all he is an excellent writer, but most of all they were very funny. His letters had a really subtle type of humour. I think it's one of the things we have in common."

Genetically they could not be more different. "From our appearance we are different and also in the way we choose to live," said Lotte. "We are not actually siblings you see. We were adopted. So we do not have any genes in common. But of course we have had the same upbringing."

"I have very simple interests: football and reading," added



Open the door, if you dare, of Hammer House of Horror

Søren. "I am not interested in art at all. No, no, that's Lotte."

Tales of the unexpected

NOW ON their fourth novel, their writing has matured to become smoother than a 12-year-old whiskey, and the twists and turns in their plotting are as shocking as going through a trawler's net of fishes and discovering a headless corpse!

"I must say the books are getting better and better. We are learning all the time. We can feel it ourselves," said Lotte. Søren attributes the popularity of their books to their commitment to fulfill the readers' expectations. "You make an agreement with the readers. They know when they buy your book that there are some things they can expect. This agreement becomes a framework for the writer."

One element expected by the readers is subtlety, and the pair oblige with plenty of

hidden content. In their first novel in 2010, 'Svinehund' ('The Hanging'), allusions are regularly made to evil goddesses of Greek mythology. In 'Altung har sin pris' all the victims have the same first name as each of Jack the Rippers victims, while 'Ensomme hjerters klub' is influenced by the Beatles album 'Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band'. Each of its 13 chapters includes lyrics from one of the 13 songs from the album.

"People ask us why we do that and Søren answers because we want to appear a little more intellectual than we really are," said Lotte with a mischievous smile.

Inspired by their environment

LOTTE moved to Frederiksværk 18 years ago, and Søren moved in with his sister some years later to work at the local school. The post-industrial town once known for its mighty

steel industry seems to have stimulated their creativity. Only two days after moving in, Søren approached Lotte and suggested that they write a book together.

"I heard a lot of things about Halsnæs," revealed Lotte. "When I moved here I loved it from day one. I like this working community. We have been surprised at how some of the writers we have met are so sure of themselves, but no-one behaves like that here. No-one asks us questions, which really mean 'the worse you are doing the better I am.' No-one cares about our writing. Of course, they know we do it. For us, Halsnæs is like a comfort zone. And we really appreciate the people not being snobs."

With four books in as many years, there is no stopping the Hammers, although they had already completed three of them by the time the first was published.

"We have fun doing it which is the main thing," said Lotte. "Søren is a firework of ideas. I do not know how he does it, but they come up all the time, so I doubt we will ever run out of ideas"

"In some ways your best book is your next book and that's the way it should be," added Søren.

A longer version of this article originally appeared in Danish within the Halsnæs Avis. To find out more, contact David Albert at daawi@halsnaes.dk.

Who is ... Thomas Skov?



ANDREAS JAKOBSEN

He's a TV clown from western Jutland who went through labour last week

But he's a dude!

He may be, but he's a man who wanted to solve the most ancient question known to humanity: if giving birth hurts more than getting kicked in the nuts.

Seems like an easy question.

Maybe if you are a girl, but as long as no-one has tried both things, the mystery remains unsolved.

What did this guy do?

He volunteered for a four-hour long d experiment broadcast live on DR3 in which he and side-kick Emil Thorup got a pain simulator attached to their bodies.

Is that a real thing?

It's an electronic device that sends electric shocks through the muscles and makes them compress in one-minute intervals. The pain apparently feels like you're having labour contractions.

Says who?

Those were the words of the Dutch pain enthusiast and mad scientist Kim van Wijk, who conducted the experiment. But then again, he was also a man. He probably had no idea what he was doing and just wanted to torture some Danish idiots.

How did the birth go?

Male-birth definitely looks painful. Severe electric bolts made Thomas Skov wrench his body like a Guantanamo prisoner. He later explained that it felt like he was being ripped open. "It felt like someone jammed his hand up through my belly and ripped out all my organs," he said afterwards. It will be up for the female readers to decide if that's a fitting description.

So which hurts the most?

Instantly, he acknowledged that giving birth was by far the most painful thing he had ever done, and that even the strongest kick in the pants could in no way compare to what his mother must have gone through when he was born.

Is he famous for anything other than that?

He's been a controversial DR personality ever since he crashed the TV2 show 'Vild med dans' ('Strictly come dancing') and placed himself behind the judges with a sign saying what roughly translates to "Woo hoo Lisa

Moving, momentous and memorable



No, not the scene from 'Bugsy Malone' when he dances with the mop

LOVISA DRÖFN

My Moving Moment 2

DANSEHALLERNE
FEBRUARY 2

SCREENMOVES regularly organises events featuring discussions, dance and films, and at 'My Moving Moment 2' all three were combined as it invited some of the dance scene's most distinguished names to select the moments from dance films that have moved them the most, display them and then discuss them with the rest of the panel and audience afterwards.

The event started with the screening of a short French animated dance film, 'Coquino'

by Jeff le Bass. Honestly, I didn't know animated short dance films were a genre, but it was wonderful and challenged my perception of the concept of dancing. It was definitely an interesting start to the proceedings.

We were then treated to more interesting and unique pieces of dance film history, each from a different genre of dance movies. There was, perhaps inevitably, a clip from 'West Side Story' selected by the actress and dancer Therese Glahn who talked about the revelation of seeing this sort of wild and intuitive dance when she was young and studying classical ballet.

The choreographer Tina Tarpgaard then brought a piece that somewhat worked to

broaden the concept of dance: a clip from the Hungarian movie 'Werkmeister Harmonies' by Béla Tarr, which features almost no music and no professional dancers. Rather the focus is on the movement and the tension it can create, or release.

Next Jacob Stage, a physical performer and choreographer with the Mute Comp Physical Theatre, brought the audience back to modern times by distributing iPads for the audience to share and view two different contemporary music videos. Stage talked about how wonderful it is to see more varieties of dance in music videos, as opposed to "bikini-clad babes shaking their asses", as he put it, because "sometimes it's more engaging to watch people dancing who are into it, even though they have no professional training".

All in all, the event was a success. The varied and intriguing videos of dance and the discussions that followed were interesting and entertaining, with enthusiastic participation from both the panel members and the audience. ScreenMoves regularly organises events featuring discussions, dance and films, and if you can understand Danish, even just a little, I can only recommend you check it out.



Sky-high interest in legacy

ALINA SHRON

Sky Arts snatches up UK broadcast rights to Danish drama series 'Arvingerne'

THE BBC'S monopoly on Danish quality television is over. Last week, the UK satellite channel Sky Arts saw off the challenge of BBC4 to acquire the rights to show the Danish TV drama series 'Arvingerne' ('The Legacy').

Long before the debut of the ten-part family drama on Danish TV, there was interest in the rights, and at the TV and entertainment market MIPCOM in France last October, it was sold to buyers in 12 different countries.

Nordic Noir, a sub-label of UK distributor Arrow Films, secured the UK rights, and the

Guardian predicted a deal with the Beeb for "BBC4's 9pm Saturday night slot - the home of Scandinavian dramas including 'Wallander', 'The Killing', 'The Bridge' and 'Borgen'".

But since then, the drama has gained a staggering 68 percent Sunday evening audience share on DR1 and won two prestigious French FIPA awards for best TV series and screenplay. And now it has been confirmed that Sky Arts has acquired the rights.

'Arvingerne' represents a new direction for DR, as it moves away from noir.

"We have to do something different from 'The Killing' or 'Borgen'; we need to go down new paths," Piv Bernth, the head of drama at DR, told 'The Independent'.

'Arvingerne' is expected to screen in the autumn.