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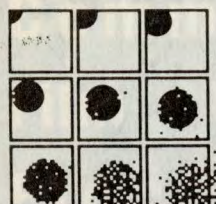
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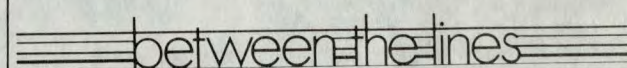


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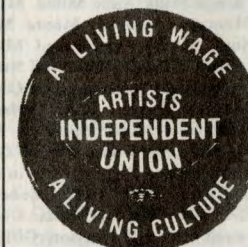
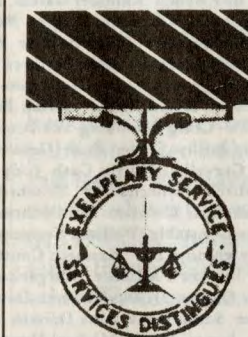
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GUEST EDITORIAL

Our Own History Ten Years That Shook Our Shelves

LISA STEELE

THE SPEECH GOES SOMETHING like this: "In 1976 the first issue of *Centerfold* was printed — a four-page single-fold tabloid, hence the name. (Here I hold up a yellowed newspaper.) By 1978 this easy-to-read-on-the-bus format had given way to a full fledged magazine. And in 1980 *Centerfold* became *FUSE*. (Here I hold up the now out-of-print January 1980 issue.) So, as a former publisher and editor (1978-1982) and a continuing contributor, I would like to join with all the editors, writers, photographers, illustrators, workers — all 636 of you — and all of our readers and subscribers across the country and around the world in saying congratulations *FUSE* for 10 years of excellent achievement in the field of Canadian journalism. May the next decade..."

Here I stop. My speech, planned in the event there were to be any celebrations to mark *FUSE*'s tenth year of publication, while understandably sentimental in tone (it is an anniversary, after all) is highly selective in terms of history.

FUSE can hardly claim *Toronto Sun* status as "the little paper that grew." Growth, in small magazine publishing, is relative. Relatively small, that is, if you're talking about circulation. It is with mixed emotions that I must inform our readers that *FUSE* has not been cited as one of the "cultural industries" likely to be negotiated with our neighbours to the south. We, of course, share this dubious lack of status with most other small publications in Canada.

Nor can *FUSE*, after ten years of publication, point to any changes in legislation resulting from our own investigations; no *FUSE* writer has been called before a parliamentary committee investigating immigration policy, police harassment, broadcasting or cultural policy — all issues that *FUSE*

has covered extensively. Neither can we cite the award-winning stories that have been printed in *FUSE*. (For some background on the award system in publishing, see Isobel Harry's article in this issue.) We have had, in fact, only one brush with mass media notoriety: in 1979 CBC radio aired an interview with then-publisher Clive Robertson when *TIME* magazine was threatening



Chris Reed

Centerfold with a lawsuit if we didn't "cease and desist" from using *their* red border on *our* cover. We did, and they didn't — sue, that is.

What, you might ask, are we celebrating then? Like other organizations of our size — cultural and otherwise — it is endurance. We have lived to tell the tale, so to speak. But for *FUSE*, there are other factors that make our endurance worthy of remark.

A little history. After its short stint as a pictorial tabloid, *Centerfold/FUSE* settled in as an artist's magazine, a place where artists could provide commentary and analysis on their own work as well as the work of other artists. Immediately the magazine also began to "art discourse" — analyze and criti-

que institutional and ideological systems operating within the art world. While none of the above would serve to distinguish *FUSE* from many other Canadian arts periodicals of that time, one statement from an early editorial points to the degree of commitment that the magazine demonstrated for artists' self-determination: "Artist/activist publishing will always form the shortest route between any two cultural points..." (April 1978, unsigned editorial). In other words, artists would be speaking for themselves, defining issues of concern to them, addressing an audience directly. No more waiting around for more 'respectable' art mags to get some critic to authorize — or *unauthorize* — your work and ideas. You could come to *FUSE*. But — here I have a confession — lots of artists didn't. Why? Because, you see, *FUSE* had this little problem. We were going Leftist — socialist, marxist, communist — beauty was in the eye of the beholder in those days. And many of our artists/beholders were nervous. Who can blame them? In the same April 1978 issue, the late Kenneth Coutts-Smith referred to the "bankrupt bourgeois culture...of the museo-critical complex..." Hardly a popular idea at the time when the art object was re-materializing with a vengeance, as was the case in the late '70s. No matter how bankrupt, few wanted to be caught outside. Too much criticism might be a one-way ticket to Obscureville. Uh-oh. But art politics were one thing — real politics another altogether.

In March 1979, *Centerfold* — "an artists' magazine" according to our own outline — hit the newsstands with a 23-page cover story on the trial of *The Body Politic*, the Toronto gay newspaper in court over an obscenity charge. I'd like to say that the rest is history — but it's not, so I'll fill you in. There were those who said it was sui-



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cide, that we were out of our depth. At the time it seemed to be a logical extension of "artist/activist publishing." In the editorial for that issue it is referred to as "an evolution," undertaken because "...we must begin to understand the kinds of social control that can be applied against any outspoken group." (March 1979, editorial, Lisa Steele)

The Body Politic coverage marks the beginning of *FUSE*'s entry into journalism; it also marks the beginning of our hybridization, as we sought to engage those readers from various parts of the progressive community who wouldn't normally have read an art magazine. We did this by including features and reports on a variety of topics while still continuing to serve cultural producers with our coverage of art practice and institutional politics within the cultural system.

We undertook this grafting process for two reasons, as I remember it. First, as artists we saw our own work — and the work of many other artists nationally and internationally — in relation to the issues that it addressed; the content, the intention and the form were inseparable. Yet all too often — if this work was not completely ignored critically — it was referred to as "simplistic," "didactic" and/or "ineffective" within art publications. We felt that it was necessary to create some space for the work of Canadian artists whose work was — or was becoming — overtly political in order to escape the either/or style of art criticism that was prevailing at the time. "But is it art?" wasn't (and still isn't) the most relevant question to ask gay artists, feminist artists, lesbian artists, Black artists, artists of colour, artists working with labour unions, artists working with communities of interest, or artists who are critical and analytical of the art system itself. To us, situating the work of these artists amongst reports and features referring to some of the same issues seemed more to the point.

The second reason for 'going hybrid' is simpler. We felt that many progressive publications whose political content was impeccable were less than thorough when it came to their cultural and art coverage. We found that many leftist, feminist and gay publications seemed not to have heard of contemporary art practice. Instead their writers viewed and reviewed Hollywood film, mainstream books and well-known artists, playwrights and

musicians. The reason for this omission: they said they couldn't cover 'marginal' activities because their readers weren't familiar with them. In order to ease this double-bind for political artists (the call-me-when-you're-famous routine), *FUSE* printed news features on specific topics in an effort to attract readers from a more general political audience. Once attracted, they would be exposed to work by artists and presto! the artists would no longer be marginal.

Has this strategy worked for *FUSE*? Measured in terms of attracting an audience, the answer is yes. Our readership has increased dramatically since 1979. But it has also given rise to a question of focus for the magazine. As early as January 1980, Clive Robertson made reference to this question in an editorial: "For many readers who have observed our continual content changes, we must resemble a helicopter hovering tentatively over a large territory — unable to land."

The readership weren't the only ones asking the question. As an editor at that time, I remember the many hours of discussion with various members of the editorial board(s) about where we were going. I know that every editor and writer since then has also grappled with the same issue. Is *FUSE* any closer to some kind of resolution? The current — and future — editors of the magazine will be setting the parameters for discussions about contents and editorial directions to come. Economics, of course, will continue to play a role; the editorial ambitions of the magazine usually outstrip our ability to pay.

In terms of the past ten years — I am here aided by hindsight as well as last week's re-reading — *FUSE* has demonstrated a number of strengths: a highly developed and extensive debate on how to make effective political art in all forms of cultural production; in-depth analysis and critique of cultural institutions and the art system itself; writers who are primarily cultural practitioners rather than objective outsiders playing at being bemused spectators; and finally, engaged readers who are every bit as critical as we are. If that's not a focus, it'll have to do — at least for this first decade. Thanks to all our readers for your support; we couldn't have done it without you.

Lisa Steele

SUMMER/86

LETTERS

Thank You

THANKS FOR THE MAG YOU SENT with the information on Gary Hannah's "Songs from Underground" in News and Events, May/June '86 issue of *Fuse*. It was good to see it next to the angry Expo letter. We also received your letter, in which you said you might review the tape in a later publication. The sale of the tape has been very successful, as over 300 copies have been sold to date. \$450.00 was raised which is to be donated to Vancouver Rape Relief. Gerry has been transferred; write to: William Head Institute, P.O. Box 4000, Station A, Victoria, B.C., V8W 3X8. There are tapes available by money order, \$3.50 plus \$1.50 for postage; write to: P.O. Box 34332, Station D, Vancouver, B.C., V6J 4P3. Once again thanks for all your support.

—Connie
Vancouver

Over Exposed

KANDACE KERR WANTS TO know why I am performing at Expo. My answer is simple: for the money. It is the same answer she would get from the brick-layers who layed the bricks, the plumbers who did the plumbing or the electricians who did the wiring. This is how we earn our living. We crossed no picket lines. There was no boycott to join. We just took the work.

It is true that there are some who refuse to attend Expo because it is sponsored by the Social Credit government of B.C., and there may even be a few people who refuse to work there. Fair enough. However, I don't feel that way. Oh, I hate the Socreds alright and, as a strategy for economic recovery, I think holding a world's fair is pretty dumb. But the problem is not Expo, the problem is the Socreds. Let me draw an analogy: say that the government built a tunnel to Vancouver Island, as they periodically threaten to do. It is a stupid idea, but once built and paid for, I wouldn't refuse to use the tunnel.

Of course, as Kandace points out, the Socreds are trying to use Expo to get themselves re-elected, but for-

tunately it looks like much of the population of B.C. is making the same distinction I am — if they weren't, you can bet Bill Bennett would be calling an election, not retiring.

Should people boycott Expo? I don't think so. It might have been an interesting political strategy, but it is one that we who oppose the government out here did not take up. Why even the Haida — and who has better reason to thwart the Socreds? — rejected the idea of a boycott and are performing at Expo's folklife festival.

Should people visit Expo? Actually, I recommend it, at least to those who can afford \$20 per day plus eats. As a veteran of several world's fairs, I can say that this one is quite a pleasant party. Admittedly, I have a vested interest: every cent Expo loses will come out of my pocket, and Kandace's, and the pockets of everybody else in this province. Unfortunately, all of us out here have to pay for the Socreds' mistakes. But that's why I am working harder than ever — and so I am sure is Kandace Kerr — to defeat this harsh and embarrassing government.

—Bob Bossin
Vancouver

It's In There

I THINK DON ALEXANDER IS A little short sighted when he says: "It is typical and unfortunate that the book makes no mention of Canadian work." Whether *Cultures in Contention* mentions it or not (it doesn't), there is Canadian cultural work in the book, and perhaps Alexander himself should have mentioned it.

To distinguish between those written about and those writing seems needlessly categorical in a work of this nature. In other words, I think the "cultural workers" (as Alexander calls them) in the articles in *Cultures in Contention* were described in words and pictures by writers and photographers who are just as much cultural workers as their subjects.

Some cultural workers write about cultural work, thereby facilitating the dissemination of cultural information that is otherwise ignored by the mainstream media. To adequately report

(verbally or pictorially) an important cultural event, to investigate a subject and translate its cultural meaning is actually helping to move all cultures forward. Sometimes the writer must look into other cultures in order to better see his or her own culture.

Though it would have been good to see an article about Canadian cultural workers, still the editors selected work by Canadian cultural workers about other cultures for inclusion in the book. The article "Popular Theatre and Popular Struggle in Kenya" was written by Canadian cultural worker



Ross Kidd, who has long worked in the fields of popular theatre and development education.

The article, "Sistren Jamaican Women's Theatre" by Jamaican writer and founder of Sistren, Honor Ford-Smith, was first published in *Fuse*. Having seen Sistren perform in Jamaica, I mentioned the group's coming visit to Toronto to Toronto's Ontario College of Art to Lisa Steele (then cultural worker at *Fuse*). Lisa decided to facilitate the publication of Ford-Smith's article in *Fuse*; I photographed the performances, and Lisa wrote a review. Since then, various parts of the piece have been reprinted by Oxfam, World Literacy of Canada, Theaterwork, and of course, by *Cultures in Contention*.

So there is Canadian cultural work in the book. It happens to look at other than Canadian cultures, but I don't think that diminishes its standing as cultural work. Let's not make the

mistake of thinking that only "Canadian subjects" are allowed in "authentic" Canadian cultural expression.

—Isobel Harry
Cultural worker
Toronto

No Pro-C

I WANT TO RESPOND TO SOMETHING in Emma Kivisild's review of the Vancouver conference *The Heat Is On*, Feb/March 1986, where the themes of women, sex and art were explored. Generally, I thought the review was very useful. Kivisild told me what was covered in the conference, who was there, and who was not. My comment is about who apparently was not there, and especially Kivisild's labelling of those absentees as "pro-censorship."

I think I know what group she was referring to and I suspect I would be in it, but I do not think that pro-censorship accurately describes the range of views that seems to have gone unarticulated at this particular feminist event. I think I can explain what was missing by suggesting a few things I might have tossed on to the table had I been in Vancouver for *The Heat Is On*.

I would have encouraged artists to produce that elusive alternative erotic image, but I would have urged them to remain open to an intense and critical exploration of whether that image re-

produced the dominant sexual ideology and the eroticization of power and powerlessness in a context of male dominance. On the basis of that and much as I appreciated Amber Hollibaugh's refreshing presentation at the *Sex and the State* conference held here last summer, I often feel her butch/femme erotic system is politically bankrupt and I would have liked to say that. I would have challenged the reference to either Hollibaugh or Sue Golding as "radical" or "fringe." Instead I would have redefined the spectrum of sexuality using the terms of male dominance, in which case both Golding and Hollibaugh would have been placed surprisingly close to the middle. And while I understand the hardships of censorship in this country, I don't accept the notion that censorship is the worse thing that can happen to people.

None of this makes me pro-censorship. But if the ideas sound inimical to the majority views of the conference participants, that might explain fairly simply why people who think this way were either not present or did not speak up. This doesn't have to be a problem in and of itself. Sometimes ideas can be advanced and developed better when dissenting views don't divert the discourse. And although I do think there should be a context in which men discuss these things with women, I'm not so sure that ideas like mine would get a safe hearing in an audience of

men. But I think we should be frank about the divisions within the feminist movement on these issues and still try to imagine when the divisions will not generate so much hostility.

It would be a start if the kind of views expressed in this letter were not called pro-censorship. The word presses too many of the wrong buttons, especially among readers of *Fuse*.

—Susan G. Cole
Toronto

Erratum

The photographs that accompanied Sara Diamond's article "Talking Union" in Volume 9, No. 1 & 2, were incorrectly credited to Craig Condy-Berggold. The photographs were taken by Teresa Vandertuin. We apologize for this oversight.

In Volume 9, No. 5, several typographical errors occurred in the letter by Martha Rosler: paragraph 3 line 4 should read "journals that publish anti-Sandinist...", in lines 15-16 "unwillingly" should be corrected to read "unwilling," paragraph 4 lines 1 and 12-13 should read "Sandinista" rather than "Sandinistas." *Fuse* is sorry for any misunderstanding these errors may have caused.

Stopping Women's Art II Ontario Women Artists' Press Conference

RANDI SPIRES & PAT WILSON

"HOW MUCH LABOUR SHOULD an individual or a community have to volunteer before their work is recognized and adequately funded?" asked Pat Wilson, one of many representatives from the cultural community who spoke at a press conference, Friday May 30th, 1986, organized by the Women's Cultural Network to denounce the lack of funding for women's culture both in Ontario and across the nation. The conference was held in response to the closing of the last two women's galleries in the province, Gallery 940 in Toronto, and Womanspirit in London in the spring of this year. These two closings leave only two women's galleries in Canada — Powerhouse in Montreal and Women In Focus in Vancouver.

Jude Johnston and Phyllis Waugh, representatives respectively of the Women's Book Store and the now defunct Gallery 940 raised the central question regarding the funding of women's galleries and women's culture in general: What are the "standards of evaluation" of art, and who sets those standards? In a letter to the Canada Council, the Gallery 940 Collective argued that "...works of art reflect the particular context within which they are produced. Therefore, the standards by which artistic quality is judged must come from within that context. The myth that art can be evaluated by universal, objective criteria serves to obscure the fact that what are called objective standards are only the standards of the dominant cultural group."

These standards often trivialize women's concerns. Marusia Bociurkiw of the Independent Artists Union cited the case of west coast video artist Sara Diamond. Diamond was recently denied a grant because the funding agency deemed her work as being "too femi-

nist" and "not broadly enough based."

Nancy Hushion, visual arts officer from Ontario Arts Council was present at the news conference. She spoke in defense of the Council's policies and definitions of what is "art." She said that neither of the two galleries had applied for core funding. She claimed that qualifications for such funding are fairly flexible and the galleries would have discovered that had they been more assertive in dealing with the council. She stated further that the council (OAC) is set up to fund art not culture and suggested that women should be careful to couch their grant request in artistic terms rather than cultural.

Jude Johnston called N. Hushion on the patronizing tone adopted by the OAC agent during the debate. "You should be asking how you can help us... not how we can learn to work with you," said Jude.

Nancy Hushion's statements angered and frustrated all women present. This included not only representatives from the galleries recently folded, but individual women artists, feminists and lesbians from London to Toronto. It is important to point out that more than 70 women artists were present...all active artists in their chosen fields for years. These are women who know that "culture" and "art" are, in fact, intricately interwoven facets of the subject now before us...the radical justification of women artists and their life work.

Institutions are not eligible for core funding from Ontario Arts Council or Canada Council until they have received and accomplished 3 to 4 projects. It takes at least one year to accomplish a project of any quality. With no core funding, all administrative tasks, including designing of projects, seeking funds, and lobbying the agents who



Michael Bangor

"It is a measure of the radical social base of women's art that it should require changes in the distribution system in a way never needed by Minimal art, Pop art, or even Conceptual art, which all flourished happily within the given commercial structure." from "Woman's Art of the 70's" by Lawrence Alloway

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The Editors, Social Alternatives,
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represent artists at the various funding agencies must be done by volunteer artists.

Neither Gallery 940 nor Womanspirit was able to obtain the core funding needed to hire full-time administrators, though Womanspirit had to its credit 6 years of service to the women's art community of southern Ontario, and Gallery 940, 3 years of mounting excellent and powerful feminist art shows in Toronto. This included *Femme Fest* which was held at Gallery 940, The Pauline MacGibbon Centre and Pages in 1984 and received excellent reviews. The truth is and was that though in receipt of project funds, Gallery 940 was never given any encouragement concerning core funding from the OAC agent. This lack of support is based on the rampant prejudices of the prevailing patriarchal cultural standards. Gallery 940 worked very hard to reach out to "women of colour, lesbians and working class women artists," people invariably excluded from mainstream culture, says Phyllis Waugh, co-founder of the Gallery.

Gallery 940's most recent application was rejected by the Canada Council because the officers felt that the organization's programs were not up to the prevailing standards of "quality."

When Phyllis Waugh advised Edythe Goodridge, head of the Visual Arts Section of the Canada Council that she was

invited to attend the press conference, Ms. Goodridge declined, stating that "It's your issue. I don't see what role we have to play."

For some members of the feminist arts community, the issue at hand is an old one. In the late 70's, *Fireweed*, a feminist quarterly had a grant application to Canada Council rejected for reasons similar to those discussed at this conference. A massive letter writing campaign to the Canada Council effected a reversal of that decision.

To forge a new language, to develop the aesthetic of the female artist is impossible if, in fact, we are forced to reiterate or regurgitate the language and images of the prevailing cultural grouping. We are not men and our concerns and our struggles are quite different from the struggles of male artists. We cannot, like chameleons, adopt the standards of the dominant cultural group. There would be no point then to our work or our lives as creative artists.

The answer lies not in adapting our work to look and sound acceptable (as suggested by the agents such as Hushion), but in continuing to assail them with our visions, our language until buried beneath the wrath of our work...the dominant culture will be forced to change.

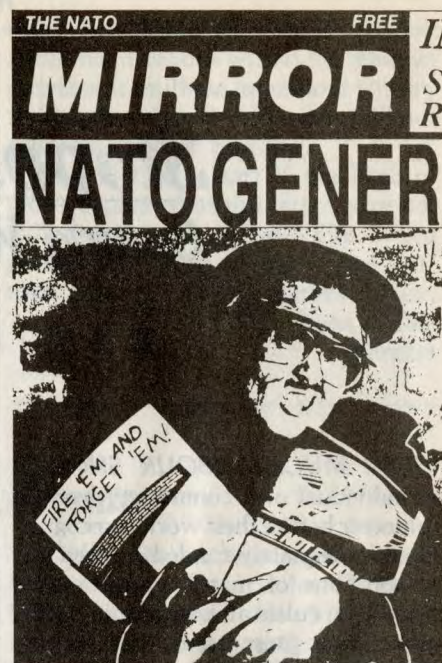
Randy Spires
Pat Wilson

NATO Meeting in Halifax

HALIFAX — The week prior to the recent NATO foreign ministers conference in Halifax, regular listeners to the CBC morning program were treated to a tragi-comic interview with NATO Supreme Command defector, General Daniel O'Rat. The General was accompanied by his attending psychiatrist Dr. Mutatis Mutandis from the famed D.D. Research associates, described as a "tell all Nova Scotia Company which specializes in privatised therapy." The radio interview was a pre-emptive media strike aimed at raising the critical consciousness of members of the public to the NATO meeting.

One hour after the interview NAAGs (the Never Again Affinity Group) and their supporters undertook a mass

leafletting campaign at key points in the Halifax Dartmouth area. The NAAGs broadside was in the form of a mock 'racy' tabloid newspaper proudly bearing the banner the *NATO Mirror*. Its contents focused on the confessions of O'Rat, a chronic MOGS (Milito-genital Confusion Dependency sufferer). Under catchy headlines such as "Defective General Tells All", "Miracle Conversion" and "Wife Left Thirty Years Ago," the short reports detailed the various symptoms of the disease and warning signs for the public to beware of. In a *Mirror* exclusive under the byline "MOGS worse than V.D.," General O'Rat described how his addiction began in "Boot camp" and then "lurched out of control" when he began to regularly consume the 'sexy' weapons



The Nato Mirror, a NAAGS Publication

ads in military magazines. Said the General, "jeez skin flicks always kind'a left me cold...but I just couldn't get enough of those Boeing and Litton ads...the ones that talked about 'going deep' and 'fire it and forget it'."

Peace Groups Rally

HALIFAX — A well organised, if inadequately advertised Protest Rally attracted about a thousand participants from some thirty groups from within the Maritimes and some as far afield as Vancouver. The highlights of the three



Bruce Barber

hour rally included an ironic but extremely poignant open letter to U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, read by Gillian Thomas, a representative from the Voice of Women, and testimony from members of the Labrador

Innu Indian community, the group most likely to be affected by the expanded use of the Goose Bay area for low level fighter training by NATO airforces. The Canadian government has spared little in an all out bid to attract more military activity to the area and now appears to be edging out the major rival, Turkey, for the establishment of a new NATO fighter training base.

The Innu community representatives spoke eloquently about the proposed siting of the base and the impact it would have on their traditional way of life and the long term ecology of the area. Other speakers spoke to issues relating to the increased militarisation of the Maritimes economy and the jobs "at any price" attitude of the Provincial governments.

The rally was followed by a march through the City of Halifax and a spontaneous flag burning ceremony outside the World Trade Centre the conference venue.

Artists Against NATO

HALIFAX — Many Nova Scotian artists also rallied against the intrusion of the NATO crowd into Halifax. While some attempt was made by the Nova Scotia Department of Culture, Recreation and Fitness to paint a benign face on the political/military event by providing the visitors from NATO's sixteen member nations with an interesting survey exhibition of local art talent, many artists withdrew their work or refused to participate. Our hats are off to those artists who refused to have their work used as a cultural interlude to those who were busy turning downtown Halifax into a set for the shooting of *Goldfinger*. My but it's nice to see service men so well briefed before their arrival on the set that they reach for their guns when they hear the noonday cannon firing from the Citadel.

An alternative exhibition to the 'official' one was arranged at short notice at the Anna Leonowens Gallery of the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design, a venue conveniently located between two of the host hotels and the World Trade and Convention Centre, where most of the meetings were held. Billed as Nova Scotian Artists Against the Threat of Militarism, the work of some twenty four artists and groups received

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Window Display by John Gillis, Barrington Street, Halifax

both strong negative and positive responses from viewers. The exhibit was up for the week of the NATO conference and provided excellent material for visiting media teams from Europe who tired of photographing and taping their delegates surrounded by security agents and RCMP officers.

While somewhat uneven as a 'theme' show, most of the work exhibited was extremely clear in intent and appropriate in form — from the Documentary videotapes of the struggles of the Innu and the Debert protest rally presented by Liz MacDougall, to the embroidered and framed sampler of Leslie Sampson bearing a statement by the martyred

German socialist leader Rosa Luxemburg, to the montages of Barbara Louder and Bob Bean — each artist addressed the issues contained in the term militarism, taking this exhibit and the work it contained beyond the single and spontaneous demonstration of protest of the NATO meeting to the larger issues of inequality, sexism, racism, jingoism and exploitation. Many found this exhibition to be empowering. Certainly the rabid responses from some members of the public left little doubt as to the power of some of the work exhibited.

Bruce Barber

Films Worth Discussing

"The time is now...To be free is to be alive. Since we are not free, we are prepared to die."

—Enver Domingo, spokesperson for the African National Congress

TORONTO — A series of films entitled *Films Out of Africa* were presented at the AGO during the Arts Against Apartheid Festival, May 25 - June 1, 1986 in Toronto. The organizers of these presentations and accompanying panels were A Space, the Toronto Arts Group for Human Rights and the Art

Gallery of Ontario (AV Department). The films provided an historical basis from which to analyse motivations of the current revolutionary struggle in South Africa.

The panel discussions were held in tandem with the film series in order to deal directly with issues arising from the films. Three nights of panel discussions under the title *Films Worth Discussing* were organized, two at A Space and one at the Rivoli. The issues discussed included strategies of the ANC, women within the resistance

FUSE

movement, and the response of the artist to repression in South Africa as well as in Canada.

The first panel followed a screening of Peter Davis' *Generations of Resistance*, a documentary which traces the history of African resistance to the principles and techniques of apartheid from 1913 to 1976. Davis' film shows that non-violence was the strategy used by opponents to the Afrikaans regime until the Sharpeville massacre in 1960. It was only then, after nearly fifty years of passive resistance that the African National Congress (ANC) chose to adopt selective violence as a tool in the struggle for liberation.

The panelists, Enver Domingo (ANC), Clem Marshall (Anti-Apartheid Coalition), Margie Bruun-Meyer (Toronto Coalition for the Liberation of South Africa (TCLSA)), and Thelma Dalamba (church activist and sister-in-law to Bishop Desmond Tutu), told us not only about what is happening in South Africa but also about attitudes in Canada toward South Africa.

Enver began by talking about the courage, strength and determination of African youth and that militant action has increased among all groups. Stressing the need for both political and economic liberation, Enver repeated the lesson of the film — that violence is necessary in South Africa to achieve freedom. He assured the audience that the ANC is willing to negotiate with the white government and outlined the conditions:

1. The release of all political prisoners and detainees;
2. The removal of the military and the police from the townships;
3. The dismantling of the tools of apartheid.

While sanctions in the form of disinvestment, boycotts and the withdrawal of diplomatic recognition were the preferred forms of actions for foreigners to take against South Africa, Margie Bruun-Meyer reminded us of the need for sanctions against countries such as Namibia that are directly controlled by South Africa. On a more positive note, Canadians can work to aid countries in that region whose economies are controlled by South Africa.

When Thelma Dalamba first arrived in Canada sixteen years ago, she encountered a general disinterest concerning the racist policies of the South



African government. Now, she says, "the only thing that gets me to leave my house" is knowing that Canadians have become concerned, they are attending anti-apartheid events and they are pressuring the Canadian government to take action against the oppression in South Africa.

The second panel addressed the topic of women in South Africa and followed Deborah May's film, *You Have Struck A Rock*, which is about the major role women have played in opposing apartheid. The white government of South Africa is highly sophisticated in the methods it uses to maintain control of the black population. In addition to the pass laws and the creation of the so-called homelands, families are often forcibly separated. Women were not included in the original Pass Laws, and were able to defy them until 1962. On one notable occasion, they organized an enormous rally of women in Johannes-

burg. When the authorities closed down most forms of transportation, women took over the trains to ensure their arrival in time for the rally. Another key strategy in their 'defiance campaign' was their opposition to the creation of government beer halls, installed by the regime to stifle the African women's "home brew," an important cottage industry. This often meant fighting against some of their own husbands, who were spending their money in government beer halls instead of returning it to their own people.

The three panelists were Aina Jugoh Taylor, Yola Grant and Glace Lawrence. They represented, in their words, "the spiritual, the political and the historical" aspects of the world. "Women are the poetry of the world in the same sense as the stars are the poetry of heaven. They are clear like lightning, they are harmonious and they are the terrestrial planets that rule the

Stills from *White Laager*, Films discussed: *Generation of Resistance*; *You Have Struck A Rock*; *Woza Albert!*



Courtesy DEC Films



destiny of mankind," quoted Aina from the works of a nineteenth century African poet.

Yola, the main speaker and the primary respondent to questions from the floor, represented Canadians Concerned About South Africa. She tackled one of the most sensitive issues of the evening — the priority of women's liberation in the African liberation movement. According to Yola, in South Africa today, no one is free, no one is in a position of self-determination so the liberation of women must follow the overthrow of the apartheid regime. She compared the revolutions in Mozambique and Angola with the movement in South Africa, praising them for their abolition of both racism and sexism.

The final panel discussion, on the topic of the artist's response to repression, included a large and diverse group of people, all of whom had different perspectives on the question. The film

shown that evening was *Woza Albert!*, documentary of Ngeme's important Market Theatre play. The panelists were Don Mooljee from the ANC, Bachana Mokwena, spokesman for the Amandla Cultural Ensemble (the ANC's cultural group), Norman Otis Richmond from the Black Music Association, Bill Smith, musician and publisher of *CODA*, actor R.H. Thomson, poet Dionne Brand and South African photographer Paul Weinberg, of Afrapix, the multiracial news organization.

Amandla is an exiled group of about thirty South African actors and musicians who perform all over the world and show, as Don Mooljee put it, "the true history of the people." As cultural workers, they contribute to the preservation and creation of a new national identity.

A key point, though, is that African cultural workers have few resources

from which to create their art. This fact was also evident in *Woza Albert!* The plays are performed anywhere, with props but no sets. "It is theatre born of struggle, born of nothing," Mokwena equated the man who stands behind a musical instrument with the one behind a gun: they are both fighting for social development, for freedom and for peace.

As Don Mooljee said, the struggle is one that must be fought on every front, including the cultural. He repeated the call for sanctions that was heard throughout the panel discussions, but specifically mentioned a cultural boycott. Don also made the point that cultural workers serve to preserve and create national identity — in this way they are the foundation of the liberation movement and of the nationality.

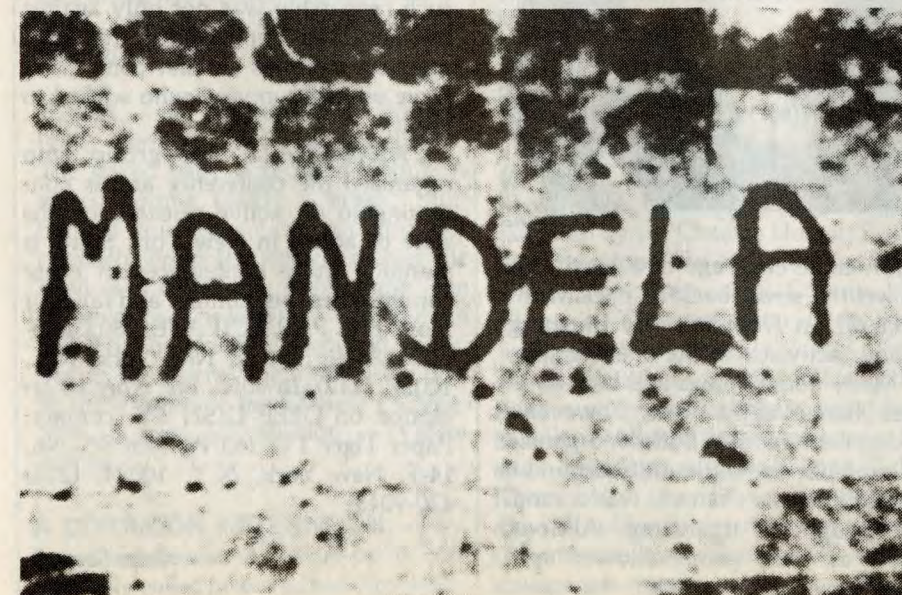
Weinberg, who had presented a slide show of recent photos from the front lines of the struggle in South Africa, spoke of the role of Afrapix as being that of a socially active force, engaging in recording the true events occurring in the country. Paul spoke of being shot at by police while taking photos. Two of the detainees seized by the government since this panel discussion, Gill de Vlieg and Sandy Smit, are Weinberg's comrades in Afrapix.

R.H. Thomson made an eloquent speech, placing the artist very firmly in the camp of the story-tellers. Bill Smith talked about one of the key musical influences of the 1960s, a mixed group from South Africa called Brotherhood of Breath, and how their work had influenced him politically and spiritually. Dionne Brand spoke of her own experiences as a writer and of the "tasks of black writers" to tell the truth of their condition.

Norman Otis Richmond described the long history of the anti-apartheid movement in Toronto, and spoke about the roles played by Marcus Garvey and Jean Daniels. He came to the same conclusion that Africans have reached, that there is no longer room for dialogue or non-violent resistance and that there is no alternative to armed struggle.

Judy Wolfe Glassman
and Marc Glassman

Excerpts of these panel discussions were aired on CJRT on June 28, 1986. Audio recordings of the full discussions are available at the AGO Audio Visual Department and at A Space.



SUMMER/86

FUSE

Cable Access in N.Y. State

BUFFALO—Despite the corporate belt-tightening and ever-increasing conservatism in the cable industry, public access continues to flourish in the United States. The National Federation of Local Cable Programmers annual survey indicates that over 20,000 hours of local public access cable programming are cable-cast every week — from cooking shows and alternative news programs to high school baseball games and experimental arts series.

In celebration of this relative re-

women. They received a number of small grants to buy commercial satellite transponder time, and sent out the series (dubbed *Deep Dish TV*) weekly for 2-1/2 months. An extensive direct-mail campaign to access users and centres ensured that the shows were taped and re-cablecast in local communities, giving a "potential" general public of 31 million cable subscribers and one million homedish owners a taste of the diversity that characterizes the movement. Channel hoppers might chance

were comfortably accommodated in a variety of practical workshops and screenings featuring access activists from Atlanta, New York City, Lockport and Staten Island. Most importantly, the conference consolidated local groups into an on-going coalition which continues to struggle with Buffalo's Common Council around the issue.

When Cablescope, a large telecommunications corporation, was awarded the cable franchise for the Buffalo area over 2-1/2 years ago, they agreed to set aside 23-35 hours per week for public access programming and pay an initial \$300,000 plus \$75,000 annually for setting up and maintaining an access studio. The Common Council was to appoint a representative community group as the studio's operator. Though the Council received two proposals (from Sun Ship Communications and the Langston Hughes Centre, two black community organizations), they let the matter slide. The conference forced the Council's Cable Committee into action however — they held their first meeting in months the next day and set July 22 as their deadline for appointing an operator.

In the conference's closing session, heated exchanges around the issues of censorship and content control dominated the proceedings. Cablescope's Thomas Smigelski expressed his willingness to in effect act as censor, not just on "offensive" material but on programming that wasn't up to "standard." Long-time media activist George Stoney summed up the audience's outrage by pointing out that such censorship was not only against the law, but contravened the basic premise of access — first come, first serve usage by *anyone* who wished to use it.

PARTICIPATE, the group who organized the conference and is continuing to do active research on the state of access in New York State, is planning more conferences in other communities this summer and fall. For more info: PARTICIPATE, 180 Claremont Ave., No. 32, New York, N.Y. 10027, (212)316-9050. For more information on DEEP DISH TV, contact: Paper Tiger TV, 165 W. 91st St., No. 14-F, New York, N.Y. 10024, (212) 420-9045.

John Greyson



Paper Tiger Serves Up Deep Dish TV

naissance, Paper Tiger TV, a New York-based loose-knit collective of media activists who produce their own show on Manhattan Cable, initiated the first national access satellite network in mid-April. After an exhaustive solicitation of programs from neighbourhood producers around the country, Paper Tiger TV edited together 10 one-hour compilation shows addressing various themes, including labour, racism, the farming crisis and media by

upon cable coverage of a local strike down the street back to back with a take-off on *Flashdance* by Pittsburgh labour activists, to cite one example.

Many communities still lack an access channel of their own, however. A recent conference in Buffalo, organized to mobilize the community around its pending access channel, was a model of thoughtful organizing. Although twice as many people showed up as were expected (over 200), the crowds

NEW TAPES

ABSENCE — by Su Rynard. Absence is a fragmented narrative, dislocated from normal perceptions of time. Desire; the viewer seeks explanations/completion/comprehension. Expectation; a young woman searches within a void created by her own self-abnegation. Highly visual and evocative. 1986, 6 min., distribution V/tape.

HOT CHICKS ON TV — by Elizabeth Vander Zaag. The excitement and traumas of two young girls turn into 60 seconds of huffing and puffing with computer animated explosions blithely representing the hectic pace of a woman's middle years. Calmly, a serene white-haired woman emerges from this multi-layered explosion. She chats with her old friend, who is now a bag lady with a cellular phone, about survival and getting older. They repeat the exclamation of their youth: "They're still Hot Chicks on TV." A hauntingly beautiful song "Lost in the Azure" cools this tape off. 1986, 6.5 min., distribution — Video Out.

L'INCIDENT JONES — by Marc Paradis. A short video in three acts tells the story of an encounter. The Place: between Montreal and the Laurentians in the Autumn of 1984. A misty and damp atmosphere of late November. The characters: Stephen Jones, London stylist; Benjamin Baltimore, Parisian poster artist; Simon Robert, young Montrealer and co-director of the video. "Stephen is obsessed by Simon, Benjamin encourages a meeting, Simon goes along with it, Marc sees himself..." 1986, 9 min., distribution — Videographe.

TOUEI — by Luc Bourdon. Webster Lake. Summer 1984. Late afternoon. The naked baby is romping about. A naked couple taking a break. Still, behind the glass, she touches her stomach. From the water, emerges the head of a child. She sighs twice. The dream dims. The lake sets. They remain still. The child looks at them and smiles. Touei: the serene, the joyous, the lake as the trigram of the Chinese I Ching. 1986, 5 min., distribution — Videographe.

A CORRIDOR AFTERNOON — by Luc Councsne. A passer-by is off-handedly called in and talked into walk-

VIDEO



Absence

ing down towards an exit, while being repeatedly invited by voices and images to escape to various pleasures that turn out to be just mirages. Those who, through sheer patience or abnegation, will have crossed the corridor will find at the end, as expected, the credits and acknowledgements. 1986, 9 min., distribution — Videographe.

SHUT THE FUCK UP — by General Idea. The tape uses an excerpt from a Batman episode, with the Joker character and an excerpt from the film *Mondo Cane* to explore the relationship of the mass media to the artist. It points out how media nourishes gossip and spectacle to make artists novel or freakish. Fast paced and very humorous. Commissioned by Talking Back to the Media Festival (Holland). 1985, 14 min., distribution — Art Metropole.

I DIDN'T KNOW IT HAD A NAME/ ESTO NO TIENE NOMBRE — by Current Video. This tape tells the story of one of the earliest cases of sexual harassment in the workplace to be taken up by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Six Spanish-speaking women, workers at a Commodore Plant in Toronto, won a decision against their foreman, who had a long history of sexual harassment. Using this case as an example, the tape provides a detailed outline of the procedures for filing a complaint with the Human Rights Commission as well as a discussion of the difficulties inherent in the process. Also included is a discussion by a group of Spanish-speaking women analyzing

the reasons why it is often difficult for women workers to identify sexual harassment and to take action against it. 1986, 35 min., distribution — V/tape.

ONE MAN'S ILLUSION IS ANOTHER MAN'S TRUTH — by Christa Schadt. One Man's... is a collage of images that creates a feeling of movement and an impression of learning, something like watching a film in geography class. The tape has an open feeling with the viewer going up in the air, under water, out to space — everywhere. The producer has combined out-takes from public domain films and original footage to produce this impressionistic video art tape. 1985, 14 min., distribution — V/tape.

DISTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE:

Videographe, 4550 Garnier, Montreal, Quebec H2J 3S6 (514) 521-2116.
Video Out, 261 Powell St., Vancouver, B.C. V6A 1G3 (604) 688-4336.
V/tape, 489 College St., 5th Floor, Toronto M6G 1A5 (416) 925-1961.
Art Metropole, 217 Richmond St. W., Toronto M5V 1W2 (416) 977-1685.

FESTIVALS

THE SECOND VIDEONALE BONN

— The Second Videonale Bonn will take place from September 13 - 21, 1986. An international jury will award prizes worth a total of 5,000 DM and appoint a video producer to complete a video production with donated production facilities. An illustrated catalogue will be published in German and English. A selection of tapes will go on tour in Germany and abroad. The festival does not charge to enter tapes, and does not pay screening fees to producers. Entry Deadline is July 31, 1986; contact Videonale, c/o Petra Unnutzer, Nasstr. 5, 5300 Bonn 1, West Germany.

15TH FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DU NOUVEAU CINEMA ET DE LA VIDEO

— This year the festival will take place from October 16 - 26, 1986. 3/4" tapes produced after January 1, 1984 that have not previously been shown in Montreal are eligible to enter. The festival's organizational committee will determine the selection of work. Unfortunately there is a \$15 registration fee for each tape entered. Entry deadline is August 15, 1986; contact Festival International du Nouveau Cinema et de la Video de Montreal, 3724 Boulevard St. Laurent, Montreal, Quebec H2X 2V8.

Prepared by Brendan Cotter and Kim Tomczak — special thanks to V/tape.

PRIVAT-IZED CULTURE:

The Rise Of The CANADIAN Awards Industry

by Isobel Harry



This is the first of a series of commissioned investigative articles. Isobel Harry is a photographer and award-winning music journalist, Black music publicist and former Associate Editor of *Canadian Composer*.

Who runs the Canadian (Arts) Awards Industry? What is the selection process? What are the relationships between who gives and who receives awards? Who is not being acknowledged, and why? (Given the magnitude of the topic, awards to TV and film and an update on the politics of the broadcast industries will appear in subsequent issues of FUSE.)

Woven into the Canadian Awards Industry are members of the Canadian cultural establishment and proprietors, or their agents, of the newer cultural industries. It is an entanglement of employers and employees giving each other awards. It is a club of owners, PR people, journalists, producers, more PR people and artists. Its relatively recent beginnings can be traced back to the birth of American corporate culture and the institutionalization of its film industry through awards organizations like the annual Academy Awards. In domestic terms, the Canadian Awards Industry is a somewhat self-conscious celebration of the recent privatization of Canadian-produced culture. In music, the JUNO's began in 1970, the CASBY's in 1980; for theatre the DORA's began in 1981 and the CANADIAN MAGAZINE AWARDS began in 1977.

This development can be viewed from different perspectives. On the one side you have what appears to be a flourishing form of cultural capitalism, owned and operated (for a change) by Canadian residents. The advantages of such an organism, some believe, are that one day this new capital will spill over into the artistic sector — despite the slippery nature of such arguments, as we witnessed very quickly with the welched production investment promises of PAY-TV. The reverse side of 'flourishing' is our negative and reliant relationship with the U.S., and the desire of Canada's *non-industrial* capitalists to sell whatever we have through a comprehensive trade agreement with the U.S. Historically the Canadian business class, the financiers, always have and (given the opportunity) always will, sell the very country from under our feet, because they can continue to make their own profits as brokers in such transactions. What is politically interesting is why our new Canadian cultural industrialists (or more important, their employees) think they can avoid American takeovers (and mass redundancies) when Lady Liberty decides to knock them on the noggin.

The American Awards Industry chooses to reward artists that create profits and not communities precisely because American corporate culture provides the triple service of economic power, national identity, and the rags-to-riches mythology that is central to the suppression of any diversified socialist alternatives. It was no accident when *TIME* recently pointed to the similar patriotically symbolic functions of Frank Sinatra and Bruce Springsteen, even though Bruce and Frankie clearly sit on opposite sides of the political table.

So while the Canadian awards industry is committed to rewarding the precarious process of the privatization of our culture, we have to ask: what is the future role of Black Canadian musicians, community-based magazines, women artists and Canadian-authored plays? Is it our untelevised marginal cultures or our high profile corporate culture that will be the safest bet for the continuance of a 'Canadian cultural identity'? Are there any definable distinctions, aside from scale, between Canadian corporate culture and its older American sibling?

The fascination with 'free enterprise' culture and continental 'free trade' is already an explosive mixture that, at any time, could blow up in our faces. The conclusive questions are etched in the stone of the Canadian Shield. Do we want to be Americans (or Canadians with guaranteed green cards)? Where is the proof that Canada will not become an impoverished American hinterland? What are we prepared to do to maintain our economic and cultural autonomy?

—Clive Robertson

* Without additional 'free trade': "71% of English TV is American; 98% of films are foreign, most American; records and video sales are 84% foreign; 75% of books sold are foreign, compared with 20% in France and Britain." — *Toronto Star*, June 26 1986.

SUMMER/86



Money Honey: From left to right, Knowlton Nash, Shelley Peterson, Peter Caldwell, Barbara Hamilton and Charles Pachter at a celebration of a successful fundraising drive for the Toronto Arts Awards. The awards, which will honour eight Canadians for major contributions to the artistic and cultural life in Toronto, are 'North America's most comprehensive arts awards.'

THE PRESENT AWARD-GIVING system rewards only safe, usually commercial work aimed at a non-questioning audience content to have its thinking done for it. Even a quick perusal of the arts awards foundations reveals fertile cross-pollination of Boards of Directors by the same top-heavy elite, usually moneyed members of an unruffled artistic coterie that wouldn't dream of challenging the status quo now that they're part of it.

The audience, the voters, the jurors are all treated like consumers waiting to be told about this year's "new improved" product that they're "really going to like," so that they won't have to be burdened with making their own choices. It's a million-dollar industry now, one that breweries and cigarette makers are only too willing to sponsor. Soft drink banners float above art installations, proclaiming "Art of a New Generation" — the lines between what is art and what is exploitation blur all too easily when commercial considerations come before fearless, direct considerations of the purpose of art. Ideally, art should have no purpose at all, says the mainstream, it shouldn't "preach," it should be "fun," politics are forbidden in "show business."

Reading lists of awards recipients demonstrates that controversy is not the tool of choice for winning. Art that

questions the status quo is not "fun," work that relates to the realities of life in a real society is "minority," music that isn't tailor-made in this year's style is "unprofessional," if there's belief, anger, or opposition in the piece, it's "strident."

The awards do not represent the real production by the country's large "underground" or community-based art population. It is underground because that's where the marginals are forced to retreat while the mainstream trips along its blithely unaware course, attending glittering ceremonies honouring itself.

As artists inhabit the sub-basements of marginality in their own country, many have learned to cope with their status, but the enforced segregation really begins to pale when the establishment takes over ideas, images, whole articles, entire styles of "ethnic" music, appropriates them into the mainstream, and then wins awards for them! (See the cover of *Fuse* and the cover of *Toronto Life* re: Clichettes.)

There are two talent banks in Canada: one is established, recognized, receives the awards, prospers, and goes on to Canada's mediocre heaven. The other gets no acclaim for its pioneering work. And when mediocrity is constantly reinforced, it doesn't make for potent art.

FUSE

17

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FUSE

SUMMER/86

Who are our marginal artists, and what are they trying to do? Our "alien culture" includes poets forging new oral traditions; minority artists who see our culture from the disenfranchised point of view; performance artists, video artists, actors, producers and directors of small theatres, who work with original Canadian material; writers of "the left," new muralists; and non-traditional new musicians. Marginality is ensured by these artists' concern with social, environmental, or community-oriented programs; the process of art-making is often examined, its functions studied;

Below:
FUSE, December, 1985
TORONTO LIFE, June, 1986



Appropriated and Amended:
The FUSE cover on the Clichés says: "They're Mad — They're Bad, Mock Males Say Go To Hell." *Toronto Life* responds with the non-threatening line: "Girls Just Wanna Make Fun."



new, or younger artists are involved without threatening to topple a hierarchy; there is resistance to oppression, stereotyping, and sterility; there is close contact with the audience, a desire to relate and be accessible to the people at which the art is directed (and comes from); often artists control the products of their intellects themselves, managing and marketing their own work; and above all, there is a sense of history that does not try to negate all that came before in the hope that people will think an artist is receiving messages straight from the big Inspiration in the Sky.

Many are organizers, provocateurs, criticising existing cultural structures in order to bring down complacency in favour of engagement; often the focus is on content rather than trying to be falsely objective with safe, saleable, known entities. Others consciously work at bringing out unknown artists, seeking consideration for the unconsidered.

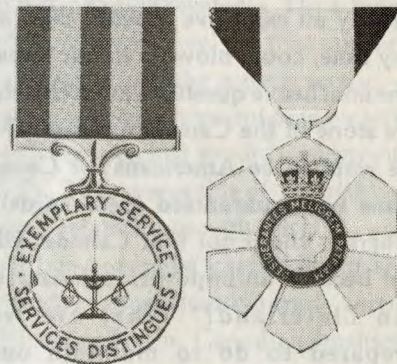
The Canadian arts awards system does not reward these artists. Unfor-

tunately, the awards seem to be more of a socializing process that inducts the winners into the mainstream (where the money and the distribution are), reflecting more those who choose than those who win.

Medals, Plaques & Wallhangings

IF YOU ARE SEEKING AWARD INFORMATION in this province, you will find a newly-created (April '86) Ontario Secretariat of Honours and Awards which is poised to publish a directory of what is available from all government ministries. The present (semi-complete) list has been compiled by Helen Bourke, Executive Co-ordinator, and seems to mirror the provincial government's attitude towards artists: there's not much for them. One or two cash awards under \$500 for writing about the environment and that's it.

The government has also just created the Order of Ontario, which does not yet have its terms of reference nor its medal designed, but will "recognize those men and women who have rendered service of the greatest distinction and of singular excellence in all fields of endeavour benefitting society here in Ontario and elsewhere" (yes, even artists). The Advisory Council is modelled after the jury that selects appointees of the Order of Canada and consists of the Chief Justice of Ontario, the Speaker of the House, and others, chaired by the Lieutenant Governor.



The Order of Canada is the top award in the country, and sometimes rewards artists "whose average age is 50 and who are in mid-career," says Madeleine Proulx of the Chancellery of Canadian Orders and Decorations. The motto is: "They desire a better country" — so keep that in mind if applying. The selection committee is the

headiest in the land: the Chief Justice of Canada, the Under Secretary of State, the President of the Royal Society of Canada, the Chairman of the Canada Council, the President of the Association of Universities and Colleges, the Clerk of the Privy Council and two others who must be Members of the Order.

The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture has no awarding system for culture, but donated \$25,000 to start up the Toronto Arts Awards Foundation this year. To say that this Board of Directors is well-entrenched in Canada's cultural system is like saying the Queen is British. There are 64 (soon to be 65 in total) members on the Board, elected for three-year terms, with one-third retiring every year, except this, the start-up year.

Peter Caldwell, Executive Director of the Toronto Arts Awards Foundation is a 'one-man operation with secretary' in a small office with adjacent board room for those all-important meetings. "The Board represents special constituencies; one-half represents the business community, the other half represents the six areas of concern to the Foundation," states Caldwell. The president is Peter Herrndorf, publisher of *Toronto Life* magazine, and the *sine qua non* of cultural board members, being undoubtedly the standard by which these bodies are judged: if he's on the board, it's a go.

The Awards Foundation prides itself on a "no competition" policy because there is no short list announced, just eight winners who will be fêted in a 90-minute television broadcast, produced by CASBY (Canadian Artists Selected by You) executive producer Dave Marsden, producer Sandra Faire ("The Making of Tears Are Not Enough"), and director Ron Meraska (Juno, Genies, NHL Awards, Easter Seals Telethon), on September 25. Though the Awards profess to be "the public's recognition of cultural figures that demonstrate artistic excellence on behalf of the community at large," only 100 nominations came from the public this year due to "poor advertising and media coverage;" next year, Caldwell says they want to have ballots on the transit system and so on so people can vote. The Awards and Jurors Committee selected the jurors who in turn nominated their candidates, each jury was "totally autonomous" as to how it selects nominees and winners. Each

year "no more than two" people would remain on each jury to "ensure some continuity" from year to year. Caldwell, who sits on all the committees in a non-voting capacity, says that the jurors have been "amazingly open" to suggestions of considering the little-known, though "no competition" seems more likely to mean a few awards given to a few "dragons" this year.

One jury per category (four people plus the head of the jury) votes in six categories, and the heads of all the juries get together to vote for two Lifetime Achievement Awards.

The Annual Awards present \$5,000 and a "commemorative item" to one winner in these areas: *Media Arts* (film, television, radio, video, electronic journalism); *Writing and Editing* (books, periodicals, print journalism); *Performing Arts* (theatre, dance, musical theatre, opera, mime); *Music* (composing, performing, all genres); *Visual Arts* (painting, sculpture, photography, graphics, printmaking, installation); *Architecture and Design* (landscape, interiors, furniture, industrial design).

The Lifetime Achievement Awards are given to two people who "have demonstrated ongoing, sustained, and cumulative contribution in or to one or more artistic disciplines over a period of many years." This "might include ongoing creative excellence, a broad public impact of his/her work over a lifetime; evidence of pioneering or visionary contribution; high stature among his/her peers." The prize is \$5,000, a "commemorative item," and an additional \$5,000 "to provide training opportunities for one or more qualified young artists, to be selected by the Award recipient and the appropriate jury."

The Awards show will consist of mini-documentaries on the life and work of each recipient, as well as entertainment. Tickets are \$125, or \$50 for artists. The artists who can afford to attend will probably be picking up the awards next year.



Engineer Risks Life To Halt Runaway Train

WINS DOW AWARD

When a heating pipe uncoupled in the cab of a speeding Toronto-Vancouver C.N.R. train, 58-year-old engineer Fred Ryan crawled along the narrow, icy running board to the emergency brake at the front of the engine. In spite of scalded hands

and sub-zero temperature, Ryan brought the train to a halt. None of the passengers knew of their narrow escape.

For deeds such as this, more than 140 Canadians have been presented with The Dow Award since its inception in April, 1946.

THE DOW AWARD is a citation presented for acts of outstanding heroism and includes, as a tangible expression of appreciation, a \$100 Canada Savings Bond. The Dow Award Committee, a group of editors of leading Canadian daily newspapers, selects Award winners from recommendations made by a nationally known news organization.



DOW BREWERY • MONTREAL

TIME JUNE 6, 1949

Early Canadian (Non-arts) Award

DOW AWARDS
"For acts of outstanding heroism", 1946.

"The Dow Award Committee, a group of Editors of leading Canadian daily newspapers, selects awards winners from recommendations made by a nationally known news organization."

NATIONAL MAGAZINE AWARDS 1986

	Gold	Silver
<i>Saturday Night</i>	7	6
<i>L'Actualité</i>	2	2
<i>Canadian Business</i>	2	1
<i>Chatelaine</i>	1	2
<i>City Woman</i>	1	2
<i>Equinox</i>	1	1
<i>Harrowsmith</i>	1	1

• In this year's NMA there were 21 gold and 21 silver awards. Of the magazines which won both gold and silver (listed above): 80% of the awards (24 of 30) went to magazines that are represented on the NMA Board of Directors.

• The Foundation Award for Overall Editorial Excellence went to *Toronto Life* whose editor, Marq de Villiers is the current Vice-President of the NMA.

• Of the 92 people who adjudicated the awards only one person (Louise Garfield, Humour) makes her living outside of the mainstream cultural industries.

• Of the 92 people who adjudicated the awards there was no editorial representation from *Parachute*, *Vanguard*, *This Magazine*, *Canadian Forum*, *File*, *Fuse*, *Fireweed*, *Broadside*, *The Body Politic*, *Asianadian*, *Contrast*, *Cinema Canada*, *L'Intervention*, *Canadian Dimensions*, *Horizons*, *Briarpatch*, *C Magazine*, etc....

Magazines

THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL MAGAZINE Awards presentation (held May 15) further illustrates the concentration on the well-known or established, honouring over and over again the same handful of magazines.

These are bilingual awards, set up in 1977 to "recognize and reward excellence among Canadian magazine writers, editors, contributors, photographers, illustrators and art directors. A further aim is to enhance the standards of the Canadian consumer magazine industry." Prizes are Gold (\$1,000), Silver (\$500), and Honourable Mentions (anyone nominated who loses). Fifteen written categories and six visual categories are named for sponsors: the Toronto Dominion Bank Award for Humour, the Consumers' Gas Award for Food Writing, the BGM Awards for Photography, the Molson Awards for Sports Writing.

The Board of Directors includes the usual roster of well-known names and magazines who award themselves prizes. Magazines apply in the different categories, enclosing a fee of \$25 with each entry. Tickets to the show are \$50. Dress: "optional elegance."

This year, *Saturday Night* won the most Gold and Silver Awards. Following were *L'Actualité*, *Canadian Business*, *Chatelaine*, *City Woman*,

Equinox, *Harrowsmith*, *Canadian Forum* (for poetry, not political analysis), *Canadian Living*, *Forum*, *Toronto Life*, *T.O. Magazine*, *Wedding Bells*.

The show started at 6pm with cocktails, followed by dinner in the Sheraton Hotel Grand Ballroom (hint to organizers: don't use Air Canada caterers or whoever it was to prepare the imitation West Indian style menu). The Awards started at 9:30 with a multi-screen slide presentation (à la Ontario Place) accompanied by a kind of taped discofied rock score.

When I sat down at my assigned press table, everyone thrust cleverly designed business cards at me (no, you don't want a *Fuse* press card, my editor had said, stay low profile) as I tried to explain about *Fuse*. No-one had ever heard of *Fuse*, or of any other arts publication, but everyone was cordial anyway, from the chicken calypso right through to the pineapple fluffy stuff at the end.

After sitting through the long list of predictable winners, Lily Munro, the Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Culture, was brought onstage to present the final, big award of the night, the Foundation Award for Overall Editorial Excellence, to *Toronto Life*. This award is described as recognizing "continual overall excellence encompassing the highest standards of visual and verbal content."

Then she announced two Honourable Mentions, the only two honourable mentions allowed to come up on stage to accept that night. One was for *Canadian Business*, and the other for *Impulse*. When publisher of *Impulse* Eldon Garnet took the stage to accept his scroll, he cut a dashing figure in an Italian-looking linen suit. He said that this was the first year *Impulse* had not boycotted the awards. As this was the most "political" statement of the night, he received an audible, concerted gasp from the audience, a gasp that said, "aw, come on, don't spoil it for the rest of us." Until he had come up, everyone had been complacent and happy, sipping their Ontario wines; the photographer George Whiteside had thanked his model's legs when he and Louis Fischau had won the Bomac Batten Award (Gold) for a cover called "Makin It" on *T.O. Magazine*. Women had actually squealed when Robert Fulford, of *Saturday Night*, came up to accept awards.

Judith Doyle, Managing Editor of *Impulse*, whose hair and dress matched in an uncommon shade of chartreuse, had absolutely no idea why the magazine won. "We applied for ten years (three consecutive copies of the magazine, plus \$25) and never even got so much as a mention. We couldn't afford the price of a table, so we boycotted the show. They called us this year because they said we might win something."

Dinah Hoyle, Secretary on the Board of Directors of the National Magazine Awards Foundation, and one of the jury members for the Overall Editorial Excellence Award, said that "it would be selling *Impulse* short" to suggest that it was chosen because it is a small magazine and that the Foundation had decided that small magazines needed a little boosting. She explained that *Impulse* "beat out the big guys fair and square" because of "overall editorial and visual presentation" and because "*Impulse* is unique in offering artists pages to do their own work."

Theatre

IN THEATRE, THE DORA MAVOR Moore Awards are presented for outstanding achievement in Toronto theatre in Drama and Comedy, Revue and Musical, Innovative/Artistic Excellence, Children's Theatre, and New Dance. The president of the Toronto Theatre Alliance, Susan Feldman, admits that its voting system is flawed simply because "more people see the bigger commercial shows than the smaller more experimental shows." For instance, this year the revival production of the American musical *The Desert Song* won the most Doras (seven), including Best Direction, Musical Direction, Actor, Set Design, Lighting Design, and Production in the Revue/Musical category. *Spring Awakening*, a German play by Frank Wedekind, won the second most awards with four for Best Production, Set Design, Costume Design, and Lighting Design, in the Drama/Comedy category. The Outstanding New Play award went to the Canadian play *Jessica*, written by Linda Griffiths, but it won no further awards.

The nominating season for the Doras is from August 1 until July 31. A list of eligible shows is compiled by the Doras Co-ordinator appointed by the

Board of Directors of the Performing Arts Information Services (PAIS) — the umbrella charitable organization of the Toronto Theatre Alliance that produces the Awards show. The list is given to the nominating committees for each of the five categories; each member of each committee is expected to see the shows on the list and vote. Nominees are then chosen in committee meetings, and the nominating list is sent to some 2,700 eligible voters. These voters are "members in good standing of several and various theatre associations and unions," and also "employees in an administrative or production-oriented capacity for a period of at least six consecutive months" by TTA member companies. It is easy to see what Susan Feldman is talking about when all the employees of the St. Lawrence Centre may vote for the plays presented there over the year, and the employees of the O'Keefe Centre for their plays. Talk about bloc-voting!

The Doras are unique in their awards show in that they hire a writer each year to stage a theatre piece into which are woven the actual presentations of the awards. This year, Michael Hollingsworth of VideoCabaret, a consistently federally funded theatre, was hired to write the show, staged June 16 (which was proclaimed "Dora Day" by the City of Toronto) at the St. Lawrence Centre.

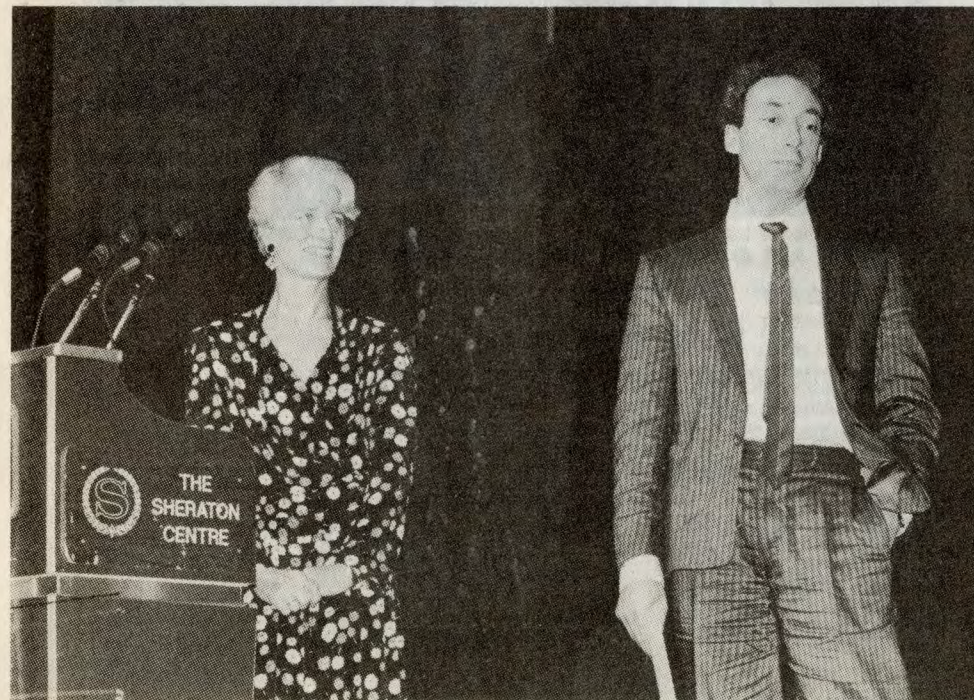
Hollingsworth, playwright, director,



Dora Mavor Moore Award

producer, has been known as one of the "bad boys" of Canadian theatre, ever since the vice-squad closed *Clear Light* in the early 70's. But because of the bad boy's "extensive knowledge of video and television" the Doras thought he might "help lay the groundwork for the televising of the Doras next year." His work was nominated for four awards for the first time last year, though he won nothing.

Hollingsworth would like to see an end to the system that rewards foreign plays over Canadian works. As far as he's concerned, it's all backwards. "*Evita*, *Desert Song*, *Cats*, *Miracle Worker*, they're all traps for the tourist



Lily Munro and Eldon Garnet at the National Magazine Awards.

Isobel Harry



Michael Hollingsworth outside the Cameron.

Isobel Harry

Tina Turner & Bryan Adams
JUNO's 1985



"Borrn in Thunda Bay,
I was borrrn in Thunda
Bay..."

dollars. Sixty percent of the Stratford and Shaw festivals' audiences are American tourists and these are for royalty-free plays! In the nineteenth century, the only plays in Canada were imported from the U.S. and Britain. The situation is the same today, with these imported plays still winning most of the awards." This benefits all Canadian theatre professionals working on these productions, except Canadian playwrights. Because money for culture goes to the "museum theatres," theatres with huge budgets to re-stage foreign "classics" or "hits," there is no money left for Canadian plays.

The theatre scene in Toronto, says Hollingsworth, "is entirely underground because if you do Canadian work, you're excluded. To write Canadian plays is to be 'subversive,' it's to be against the official culture of Canada, which is no longer dominated by the British, but by the Americans." He feels that the Doras do not represent the changes occurring in Canadian theatre, but hopes that in twenty years there will be separate classifications for Canadian and international plays. "Smaller theatres perhaps could be encouraged with their own 'off-Broadway' style awards shows. Otherwise, the Canadian theatre scene could go under. I hope the colonial scene bites it."

Attending the awards show, one could only hope that some of the satirical vignettes about our national reluctance to accept the fact that Canadian theatre is as good, indeed better, than imported productions, struck home and might influence some policy changes for next year. But watching Hollingsworth fulfill his duties as the evening's host in a tuxedo, and reading the next morning's review that said the show took "a lighthearted look at Canadian theatre" reminded us that compromise seems inevitable, and that change must be seen to be almost imperceptible in order not to detract from the entertainment.

Music

THE CANADIAN MUSIC SCENE IS plagued by the same problems of a largely American-based industry as the theatre scene, only infinitely more monolithic and impenetrable, governed by the dictates of radio airplay charts that permit only the most com-

mercial sounds on prime time airwaves, relegating the "not quite as commercial" such as classical, jazz, Black (or "Soul"), heavy metal, to specialized time spots like 9am Sunday or after midnight weekdays.

Media profile plays a large part in the maintenance of any music star's success. In Canada, as elsewhere, there is a dubious circuit of pop shows, afternoon daytime TV appearances where the artist must conform to the mass idea of the 'celebrity' — something which can and has backfired for Canadian pop stars.

Despite the good intentions of the rock music stars involved in the myriad benefits that abound since Live Aid ("the Me Generation discovers Poor Them" as Wilder Penfield III recently noted in the *Toronto Sun*), there is no question that such concerts also act as huge publicity machines for the stars involved. These intentions still produce shows that reflect one style, rock, and one race, white. Only the biggest names are asked to perform at these events, and the excuse that these are the people who pull in the crowds needed to raise sufficient funds for the cause in question makes the artists' ghetto harder to get out of. If each big name had to introduce a new act as part of the show, audiences could become more aware that music is not created in a vacuum by this or that "rock genius" but is a communal process undertaken by many artists who, precisely because of the star-making apparatus, are kept from the limelight. Choices are always made for us: this band's hot, this guy's hot, she's hot; when you're seen performing with Tina Turner (à la Bryan Adams on last year's Junos), in Canada that makes you very hot indeed (he's good enough to play with HER? That's GOOD!)

Mega-stars pat other mega-stars on the back, negotiating next year's hot mega-star collaboration, publicizing their exploits via extremely well-oiled PR exercises, and ensuring their famous futures at the expense of encouraging and involving others. It's uplifting to see dollars raised for rescue, but the process also perpetuates a system that is as much about contemporary art as museum dinosaurs. When Bob Geldorf sings a Peter Tosh/Bob Marley tune at the Amnesty International Conspiracy of Hope rock 'n roll caravan, it is easy to be reminded that reggae (one of the finest examples

of protest music) was ignored for years (still is, in its authentic form) until appropriated by the rock stars. Rock's history is based on the work of early artists who died unknown and broke. It is still climbing on top of less commercial styles and riding them mercilessly, ignoring the original creators, then handing over the proceeds like a kind uncle to the "less fortunate." What about the "less fortunate" artists whose work has been stolen by the mainstream?

Peter Steinmetz, president of the Canadian Academy of Arts and Sciences that puts on the Junos each year, is very busy, guarded in discussing the mechanisms behind winning, yet confident in his position as chief of the powerful self-interest groups that are the Canadian music industry. He desired to "straighten me out" on a few things. "Look," he said, "we are an Academy. We don't profess to be people's choice. We're modelled on the Grammys and Oscars."

Steinmetz described the Junos as "national awards that celebrate excellence in recording," unembarrassed to define excellence as "commercial, successful music," and that "you've got to be among the best, the most popular, in order to qualify." Further, the nominations "must address the level of the Junos in the same sense of broad exposure and commercial success." Then, trying to discern my "angle," he mentioned that "no-one had ever asked such detailed questions about the voting before," adding that he "cuts journalists off" his list when they don't "support the Junos."

The procedures for selecting Juno winners in 26 categories by CARAS are definitely the most complicated of all awards studied. In June, nomination forms are sent to approximately 1,000 CARAS member companies (anyone connected with the music industry — from album graphics firms, to all employees of each record company, radio stations, etc.) asking for suggestions for nominees.

The "top" twelve categories like Female Vocalist, Group, Album of the Year, require top sales to qualify, determined by the sales figures sent into the Junos' auditing firm by each record company.

In the three "Most Promising" categories, and Composer of the Year, nominees are chosen by "experts" in Canadian music (this includes broad-

casting, print media, etc.) who select from the list compiled by CARAS members. The new list is sent to CARAS members who vote again. This is not based on sales (though realistically you would need a certain amount of sales before anyone ever heard your record). Composer of the Year is always a safe, middle-of-the-road choice.

In the ten "Craft" categories, like Recording Engineer of the Year, Best Album Graphics, Best Video, Best Jazz Album, the methods vary. For instance, "well-known" engineers make recommendations for their category. For jazz, "the best" jazz players, "your Rob McConnells, your Moe Koffmans," will be chosen to send in their personal recommendations. Oh well, you non-traditional jazz musicians can forget this one.

Black Music Representation

IN THE NEWEST CRAFT CATEGORIES, implemented for the first time at last year's Junos, Best R&B/Soul Recording, and Best Reggae/Calypso Recording, a panel of experts (that word again) headed by Trevor Shelton of the Black Music Association of Canada, Inc. (BMAC), chose nominees and winners in two rounds of voting. (Liberty Silver won in both categories.) All of these experts are "volunteer representatives of their constituencies" for the purpose of nominating musicians, a constituency being "children's music, or jazz, or country, etc." They work just for the possibility of seeing one of their constituents win. This year the sub-committee for the two new categories is chaired by Daniel Caudeiron, President of BMAC who says he was, "the only one there at the May CARAS meeting who could volunteer to represent the interests of Canadian Black Music."

The story of how these two new craft categories came into being perhaps best illustrates the divisive nature of music politics. In the case of the R&B/Soul, and Reggae/Calypso categories, the idea for their creation came from Norman "Otis" Richmond, president of the first Black music organization in Canada, the Black Music Association (Toronto Chapter), a chapter of the American-headquartered international trade association that pro-

JUNOS: SELF-SERVICE

CARAS (Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences) organizes the annual JUNO awards. Board members serve for two-year terms, a maximum of six consecutive years. The Board self-elects.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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(member of band, Chilliwack)

motes Black music wherever it originates. Since August, 1984, Richmond wrote letters to and had meetings with CARAS suggesting the creation of two Black music categories, a first in Canadian music.

Almost exactly one year after Richmond started lobbying CARAS, he was informed via a press release from that organization that Caudeiron's Black Music Association of Canada Inc. had been chosen by CARAS to "volunteer to represent" the Black music "constituency" for the purpose of selecting nominees for the Junos.

The reason the BMAC was chosen over the BMA(TC), says Steinmetz, is that the BMAC is "Canadian" whereas the BMA(TC) is "American, trying to promote Lionel Richie, Michael Jackson, and Whitney Houston in Canada," a statement Richmond says is "absolutely untrue." Daniel Caudeiron indicated further that the BMA(TC) is "illegal and has no place in the Canadian music framework," despite the fact that the BMA(TC) was the first to lay the groundwork for the new categories, and has promoted panels, workshops, and concerts by and about Canadian Black artists.

Though Caudeiron insists that, as head of the nominating committee for the two categories, he is open to nominations "from anyone in Canada with a Canadian product on the retail market" (send \$20 and 12 records to CARAS by June 30), last year's nominations included no members of the BMA(TC).

Says Richmond: "Our mandate is to promote Canadian Black talent. When the BMA starts chapters in Jamaica, or England, it will promote Jamaican or English talent. Our record of promoting local talent speaks for itself. Our proudest achievement was bringing together Canadian musicians from across the board to protest apartheid together, long before it became fashionable to do so." It might very well have been the BMA(TC)'s unfashionable (at the time) political stand that swung CARAS over to the less vocal BMAC.

Whatever the reasons, the polarization and separation of the two Black music associations seems to be just one example of the direct fallout from the preferential system of Juno nominations. In fact, both associations promote Canadian talent, but the "constituency" is now split, and cannot

possibly adequately represent the interests of all Black musicians in Canada. Very few, if any, artists are aware of how their interests are misrepresented.

This leads to more than mere speculation on how favouritism and self-interest might dominate such a system, and how the system becomes stagnated by its own mythology. The Junos reflect an intricately complex pyramid of businesses that are built on music sales, not excellence.

For Peter Steinmetz, the future of the Junos means "no moves in any direction. The show is more entertaining every year; we want to maintain our excellent production values, and try to achieve ever-increasing and broader star representation."

Tickets to the Junos are the most expensive of all the awards shows, at \$125 for CARAS members, and \$160 for non-members.

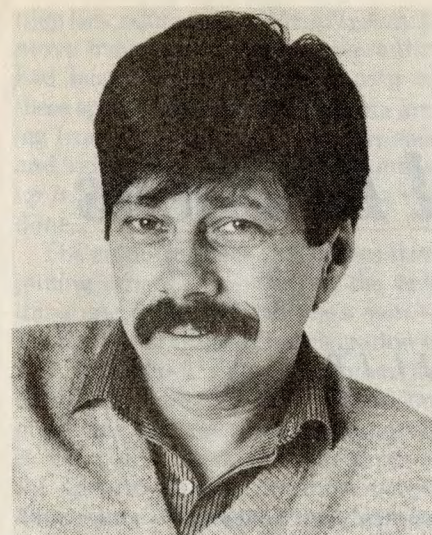
Music: The People's Choice?

MEANWHILE, OVER AT THE Canadian Artists Selected By You (CASBY), the "alternative" music awards, now in their sixth year, producer Dave Marsden says that the CFNY-FM-sponsored awards "spotlight Canadian artists, bring attention to new artists, and find artists who have not yet gained international status." The period during which artists and records are considered is from end-April last year until end-May this year.

Nominees for the CASBY Awards are first suggested by "an unofficial panel that gives me lists of different names in different categories," says Marsden. The lists are compiled, and five names appear in each category, with one blank space left for the people's suggestions. The suggested names are merely "memory joggers" that serve to help the voters with ideas, but voters are encouraged to vote for their own choices.

The CASBY Awards claim to bring more new Canadian music to radio than any other music awards, having introduced Jane Siberry, The Parachute Club, and the Spoons to the medium. Marsden adds that the CASBY's function is to draw attention to new music from the press, radio, and television; he cites the example of the group Chalk Circle that had hardly ever been heard of until the group won

SUMMER/86



Dave Marsden
One Man Show

a CASBY last year. "This year, Chalk Circle has a hit single, no doubt due to the attention drawn to it by the CASBY win." As far as Marsden is concerned, the Junos and the CASBYs both have a "particular place to be," though the Junos reflect the industry while the CASBYs reflect "the people." Marsden insists that the CASBYs mirror the "most popular" music, with record sales, "not even in the picture. Sales are not a true reflection of the current worth of music as an artform."

Though the CASBYs profess to support artists not heard at the national mainstream level, the choices often reflect perhaps a subconscious desire to become mainstream: Dalbello, Images in Vogue, the Spoons, Nylons, Blue Peter, are not names usually associated with daring experimentation.

The CASBYs move this year to the giant Kingswood Music Theatre at Canada's Wonderland on August 15th is possibly ushering in a new era of commercial acceptance for the CASBY, with major sponsorship coming from Heinz Ketchup. One thing is certain though, Marsden couldn't think of one instance in which a CASBY winner was actually chosen through the nominations sent in exclusively by the people; the winners have always come from choosing among the "memory joggers" published as CASBY ballots in newspapers, trade publications and magazines. Which seems to suggest that people will still vote in categories they don't know, or choose names they know over music they've actually heard. In the end, it seems that Marsden's "unofficial panel" is really making the choices for "the people," and

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one is left to wonder how does that make the CASBYs different from the Junos.

This year as ballots were announced in the *Toronto Star* (June 27), two "open vote" categories were initiated — Best Non-Recording Artist, and Best International Album. Both can now presumably be won solely through the "people's choice." These "open vote" awards, like the Juno craft categories, rely on the media profile of the artists and not necessarily the community popularity of any non-mainstream artist.

The long history of the colonization of Canada's cultural resources makes it imperative for us to re-define what is good, or useful, art in this country, how it can be preserved, encouraged, promoted into health. Maximum benefits are a revitalized culture, a more rapid pace of positive change, and an inclusive, rather than an exclusive art community. Good art can no longer represent the interests of the major patrons, but must come from all sectors of society. It must cross all artificially created barriers of race, class, and cultures in order to create a more democratic art. The system of rewarding the same, well-established stars every year does not advance the cause of Canadian culture one iota. All it does is reinforce the system of cultural power-brokers. It divides the art community into those who can afford to produce their work and those who cannot, and pits artist against artist in a stranglehold that incarcerates her/him in a specialized ghetto that is easily kept in check. Artists become saddled with the responsibility of being "consistent" in their work, never crossing one discipline with another, never venturing outside their specialty. That is a sign of "maturity" that just may be rewarded after several years of deadening repetition. Since the establishment differentiates between art and politics, the two are mutually exclusive, so that art that relates to specific issues in specific communities will be relegated to the trash-heap of marginality.

It goes without saying that such a system cannot begin to represent the voice of Canada's disenfranchised artists, when little attempt is made to connect with them, appreciate their (often seminal) contributions to the advancement of cultural work and the perception of that work. These artists

often have their efforts lifted lock, stock, and barrel and re-hashed for the commercial market, with no acknowledgement. The current awards system flagrantly ignores the community art process and favours instead a manipulated and Americanized star-making process. It is not the artists that applaud such a polarization, not even those who reap the little statuettes.

Isobel Harry

Thanks for the inspiration to Lucy Lippard and Clifton Joseph, and assistance from Bert Liffmann, Karla Goldstein, and all those who helped by answering questions.

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Daniel Caudeiron
BMAC



Norman Otis Richmond
BMT (TC)

Massa and the Provincial Kitchens

MARLENE NOURBESE PHILIP

"WE HAVEN'T HAD MUCH PRACTICE living with heat in the provincial kitchens for many years." With these words Ross McGregor (former campaign manager of the Ontario Liberals) summed up his concern with the reforms instituted by the Liberal government since its inauguration in June 1985. Among the areas of reform he identified in his *Toronto Star* article (Dec. 20, 1985), were housing, day-care, the environment, education, agriculture, unemployed youth, and senior citizens. The 'heat' generated by these

reforms had, he argued, already made some groups unhappy — doctors, the foes of separate school funding, and

NOTES FROM THE MARGIN

big business unhappy with pay equity for women employees.

Many, many years ago, I was fortunate enough to witness and experi-

ence truly fundamental — one could even say revolutionary — changes sweep a tiny two-island nation. No more than thirteen years old, those events marked my political consciousness indelibly. History, of course, has a way of catching up with, often overtaking, events; what was then perceived as truly revolutionary was, later on, to reveal itself as a part of the embourgeoisement of the Black and Asian populations taking place throughout the British Empire.

Without hindsight, however, and with expectations unbridled by experience or cynicism, to have lived through those times in Trinidad — the early sixties — was to have lived through an experience that now makes me cheeps and mutter, "he ain't see nothing yet," when I read of McGregor's concerns for the effect of reforms being instituted in Ontario — and it is an honest choice of his to use the word reform, and not change.

Everyone, barring the white upper classes — and possibly a few well-to-do brown people — was happy to see the English go; everyone, Black and Asian alike who comprised the mass of labour and peasantry, was swept up in the maelstrom of change. For them, I am convinced, it was revolutionary, though it did not constitute a revolution. For the first time a Black was going to head a government of Black men and women; universal adult suffrage, for a long time unattainable, was now a given; cultural expressions like the calypso and steel bands, long despised as lower class, were validated; education was now free and available to every child in the country. This latter change was one that struck deeply in the hearts and minds of the people, for having neither property nor money,

they saw education as the only way to move themselves up from where they had been for so long. And over all these specific changes the euphoria arising from the reality of self-government and independence, eloquently summed up in the catch-phrase — "Massa day done."

The empowerment that comes from joining others — often with the only thing one could still call one's own — the body; the collective anticipation of new and better things to come; the belief that life must and would improve and that "all a we" had a part in it, were all as integral to the times as the specific changes; so must people have felt in Nicaragua when Somoza fled, or when Marcos left the Philippines, in Cuba when the long tradition of right wing dictatorship had come to an end.

Of all of these events, one of the most lasting effects on me has been the development of a world-view that, if one were only to struggle hard and long enough, one could and would make meaningful and radical change. Events, both international and domestic, of the last few years have challenged this perception: the right wing governments of Thatcher and Reagan

and, more recently, their pale shadow, Mulroney; the unrelenting attack on the peoples of Latin America and South Africa, to name but two examples; the success of Bill Bennett's government in destroying much of British Columbia's social legislation; the shift to the right in municipal politics in Toronto, particularly visible in the Toronto Board of Education — I need not continue — we can each make our own lists. I hesitate to use a word so closely associated with left values, but what we are, in fact, witnessing is a right wing revolution in political and social life.

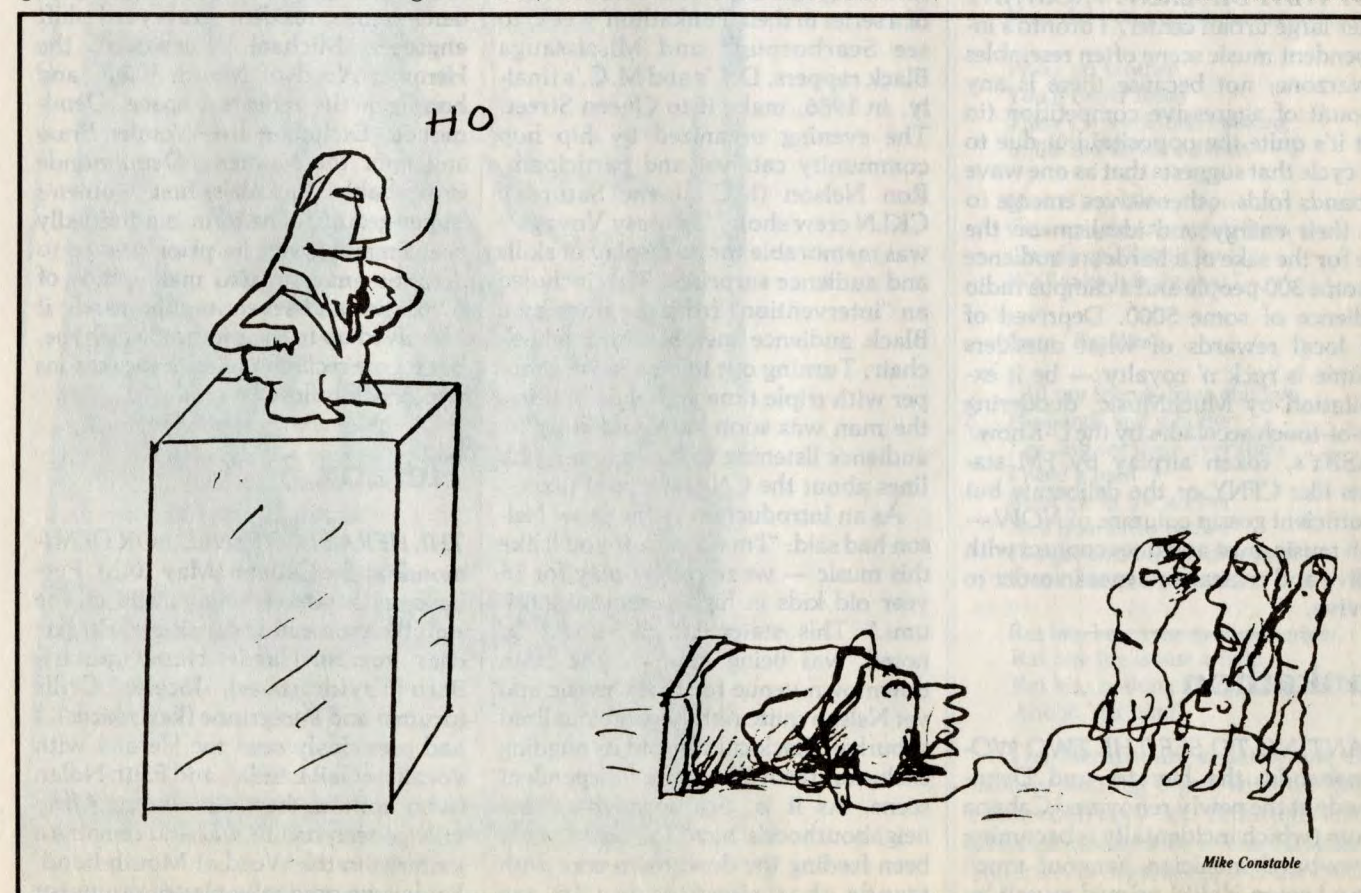
I find, however, some small consolation when I trace the genealogy of political change. On the streets of Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, I witnessed what, at thirteen, appeared to be a sudden phenomenon. It was not. It was, in fact, the culmination of centuries of struggle, beginning with the first native person who resisted the Spaniards; taken up by the first slave who drowned herself rather than go into slavery; next taken up by the slaves who rebelled, and yet again by those Blacks and Asians who, in the face of racism and colonialism, managed to get an education, turned the Westminster rules on

their head and said to the British — "Massa day done"; and next by those individuals who, in 1968, took to the hills of Trinidad to rebel against the very ones who had wrested power from England — the struggle is by no means finished.

Political change for the better seldom proceeds unabated, unchecked, or in one unbroken line — the late seventies and more so the eighties bear grim testimony to the reality that as often as not political change occurs for the worse as for the better. What my early experiences in Trinidad have done is convince me that one can change those odds.

Here in Ontario political life under the Conservative government was one marked by stagnation, hence the concern with what appears to be a plethora of change. Until such time, however, as the Liberal government begins to make fundamental changes to a system that favours capital over people, the Ross McGregors of Ontario need not worry; the 'heat' in the provincial — and federal for that matter — kitchens will never get too hot for 'massa' to bear.

Marlene Nourbese Philip



Stand Aside! This Music Is Women's Work

*New band: Demi-monde; new line-up: Heratix,
and the new funk-dub of Lillian Allen*

Clive Robertson

NOT THAT DIFFERENT FROM ANY other large urban center, Toronto's independent music scene often resembles a warzone; not because there is any amount of aggressive competition (in fact it's quite the opposite) but due to the cycle that suggests that as one wave of bands folds, other waves emerge to lay their energy and idealism on the line for the sake of a hardcore audience of some 300 people and a campus radio audience of some 5000. Deprived of the local rewards of what outsiders assume is rock n' royalty — be it exploitation by MuchMusic, doddering out-of-touch accolades by the U-Know/CASBY's, token airplay by FM stations like CFNY or the deliberate but insufficient gossip columns of *NOW* — such music must and does connect with its live and critical audience in order to survive.

Funkathon

WANTING TO SEE THE TWO WOMENSbands, the Heratix and Demi-monde at the newly renovated Cabana Room (which incidentally is becoming an ex-band musician hangout much like a Legion Hall) I primed myself by

attending an event at the Bamboo, one of a series in their 'Funkathon' week, to see Scarborough and Mississauga Black rappers, D.J.'s and M.C.'s finally, in 1986, make it to Queen Street. The evening organized by hip hop community catalyst and participant, Ron Nelson (MC of the Saturday CKLN crew show, "Fantasy Voyage") was memorable for its display of skills and audience surprises. This included an "intervention" from the floor by a Black audience member in a wheelchair. Turning out to be a master rapper with triple time verbal dexterities, the man was soon surrounded by an audience listening to him spinning his lines about the CN tower and taxis.

As an introduction to the show Nelson had said: "I'm not sure if you'll like this music — we normally play for 16 year old kids in high school auditoriums." This statement, it should be noted, was being made in the main downtown venue for Black music and yet Nelson quite rightly contextualized suburban Black culture and its ongoing exclusion from the white independent scene. As it is, Scarborough's other neighbourhoods have for some years been feeding the downtown core with trends that simultaneously are

developed in Britain or the U.S.. So the place to get an earful of what is going on (forgetting for a moment race, if not gender) is at the Cabana, Lee's or the Cameron. The Bamboo itself is weird in that it has very much a white singles clientele, the programming therefore tends to be mushy (white or Black music) except for notable special events. Even still, the downtown menu is as varied as you could wish for including the overt and less inspiring revivals of C&W, psychedelia, R&B and any manner of 'jazz' fusion.

Situated within all of this you can find an ongoing thread of womensbands, including Fifth Column (who have an excellent album due for release, co-produced by the independent scene's resident graveyard shift engineer, Michael Wojewoda), the Heratix, Word of Mouth Band, and hot from the rehearsal space, Demi-monde. Excluding the Wonder Brass and Four the Moment, Demi-monde is probably Canada's first women's 'super-group'. (The term is admittedly problematic given its prior useage to describe amalgamated male bands of the sixties and seventies who rarely if ever lived up to their journalistic hype, but let me reclaim the term for reasons which will follow.)

Heratix 3

THE HERATIX OPENED FOR DEMI-monde at the Cabana (May 10th). Perhaps in its third (?) re-incarnation, the Heratix line-up now consists of Pat Jeffries (vocals), Harriet Hume (guitar), Barb Taylor (bass), Jocelyn Grills (drums) and Peregrinne (keyboards). I had previously seen the Heratix with vocalists Gail Landau and Faith Nolan (who now has her solo album, *Africville*). Jocelyn Gills was and remains a guitarist in the Word of Mouth Band, Pat Jeffries originally played drums for

MUSIC



THE HERATIX
Top to Bottom:
Jocelyn Grills
Barb Taylor
Harriet Hume
Peregrinne
Pat Jeffries

the Heratix and was the vocalist for C-9 in which Barb Taylor was also the bass player. The Heratix play a form of straight (and gay) ahead rock n' roll with Harriet Hume making use of crude and effective guitar lines to echo the rhythm n' blues roots that by necessity rock n' roll constantly recycles (it's the role of the roll). Though it's not important to place their music, it's descriptively handy to say it's not unlike earlier Liverpool Beat music where trios or quartets would pare down more complicated arrangements of Black music from the Coasters, Ray Charles, et al. A more important placing of the Heratix can be seen in their present acceptance and popularity — an attention that was similarly afforded to the womensband, Mama Quilla II.

from "I'm Angry":

"I'm angry
I want to tell you
You make me angry
All I wanted to do was love you.
Lowest caste in every society
Centuries of silence and slavery
Just part of the property
How did you get this power over me?..."

Wake up brother
You'd better listen
There's a revolution cooking
In the old slaves Kitchen

Give it up. Give it up.
Give up your male privilege.
Give it up. Give it up.
We'll take it from you."

from "Rat Bite":

"All my friends have children
Husbands and a home
I go and see them everytime
I need a loan
Meet me at the art bar
At a quarter to twelve
I've got two bucks for a beer
I look like everyone else

Rat bite keeps me awake at night
Rat bite life is just a fight
Rat bite nothing every turns out right
Ahhhhh, rat bite!"

The Heratix are a danceable community activist band with an impeccable delivery of feminist issues. Though undoubtedly the Heratix are collectively organized, it is the credible stage presence and song writing abili-

Gary Kibbina

ties of Pat Jeffries that gives the band its current ring. Jeffries, who has co-written songs with Faith Nolan ("Fashion") and C-9's Richard Peachy ("Be Like Us") could certainly teach Bruce Cockburn a thing or two about community grounded awareness. While other womensbands in Canada have their fair share of confrontational songs, the Heratix pile it on with an appropriateness as convincing as any James Brown show.

The Heratix are developing musically as a band and so the addition of Jocelyn Grills and Peregrinne allows for more rhythmic and melodic variety. Harriet Hume carries most of the melodic and fill chores which can be gritty or in certain songs underplayed — in fact at times the energy of the songs relies perhaps too heavily on Hume's contribution. Bassist Barb Taylor is rhythmically reliable but perhaps needs more tonal variety. Peregrinne needs a more upfront role in the arrangements both to complement Hume's power and again also to add variety in the songs where unison guitar, bass and keyboard riffs are not required. I make these few observations as a fan and typical listener who, at times, annoyingly wants more than the considerable achievements already demonstrated.

Demi-Monstrable

THE SECOND SET WAS MAYBE THE third public appearance by Demi-monde. The band's line-up includes vocalist Marion Lydbrooke and guitarist Elaine Stef (both formerly with Vancouver's Moral Lepers); Susan Sturman, guitarist/songwriter (formerly with Mama Quilla II); drummer Rita McKeough and bassist Gabriela Vanderbilt (both formerly with Calgary's Mode d'emploi). To say that this band has experience is something of an understatement.

In 1983 Susan Sturman, Fifth Column's Janet Martin, and I organized a womensband series for A Space that brought the Moral Lepers to Toronto. The Lepers including bass-player extraordinaire, Rachel Melas (now with Animal Slaves) and drummer Connie Nowe (with Work Party) created a type of excitement that had reggae drummer Wadi and guitarist Mojah leaning against the wall of the Cameron, appreciatively smiling at this incredible Vancouver women's groove. Meanwhile in Calgary McKeough and



Left to Right: Marian Lydbrooke, Elaine Stef, Rita McKeough, Gabriella Vanderbilt, Susan Sturman

Vanderbilt were working out of Ten Foot Henry's, compiling a rhythmic unit that could throwdown anything that was required. And on top of all this Susan Sturman while not (musically speaking) sitting on her hands in Toronto, at the very least deserved to have a band in which her long-term talents could be effectively engaged.

As expected, Demi-monde's music is multi-tempoed and polyrhythmic retaining all of the drive and subtleties of the Lepers but existing very much as a different combinational entity. Elaine Stef is a superb guitarist making use of a fresh start to develop a variety of styles. (Stef is also currently playing in ex-Plasterscene Replicas guitarist, Chas Salmon's band 'One of A Kind', which you have to take for the non-sexist compliment that it is, considering Salmon's critically acclaimed guitar skills.) Though the process is probably far from complete, Sturman and Stef work together in a way that in the past might have been likened to the Keith Richards/Brian Jones duo in that Stef plays non-western melodies that syncopate with Sturman's refined Black music chops.

If all of this so far sounds overblown it could be because Demi-monde is not just a new womensband but also filling the excitement gap in the independent music scene caused by the departure of

such bands as the Replicas and The Woods Are Full of Cuckoos. At the same time Demi-monde creates an unenviable challenge for vocalist songwriter Marion Lydbrooke who now has the opportunity to push herself beyond her Patti Smith-like poetics that worked with the Lepers (as they have worked for Fifth Column and the Animal Slaves). The point being not (as it could easily be misread) a critical interference with Demi-monde's immediate objectives but a genuine desire for a more articulated directness that I believe the Heratix have already achieved. Having said this, I accept and acknowledge the recent historical function that women's songs have followed — uncovering a suppressed affirmation of herstory, legends and mythologies complete as they are with a binding spiritual component. There is always a need for contemporary issues and direct personal experiences to be translated into song, which I know is the joy and at times the awkward relationship between singers and the loaded expectations of their audiences. The songs that Demi-monde are currently introducing are a mixture of private/obscure songs, songs of herstory which allow public access, and shaking testimonies of contemporary events that echo the demands of our collective political desires. (When I read this I understood that I should

make clear that there is an immense difference of content (verbal or otherwise) between womensbands and male bands fronted by female singers who sing of feminine/feminist desires.)

The set begins with an instrumental followed by an announced song and then into an uncanny cover of "Falling Stone" (a Lepers song), featuring Stef's patent long delay guitar ostinatos. Next came "Feet on the Run" a Latin-inspired dance song, followed by a song "dedicated to The Who" which demonstrated McKeough's ability to come in with an inverted rhythm that many could only do with a guide track in the studio. Next was "Great Women Sleep" with lyrics by Susan Sturman with beautifully fluid interplay between Sturman and Stef. Then a song about Hiroshima and children which I found politically too generic, providing no new information or angle and not clearly enough a connected emotional response to an important but equally cliched historical event. In contrast was "Back On The Street," "written when Bill C-59 came in, making it hard for women in the sex trade. More of the hookers got arrested than the johns." — the clear difference being its contemporary value, its lyrical and musical bite and Lydbrooke's convincing delivery. "Street" was followed by a

music opus whose beginning was chilling, titled "In the Demi-Monde".

The last song (before the encore) was called "30 years", "about a woman who worked for 30 years in a laundry and is dedicated to anyone in some kind of situation where they are trapped." The whole band pulled out their funk stops, in particular Gabriela. The song's feature has the band stop while Lydbrooke delivers the imperative: "Next day, see, on her lunch break, Gladys said to me: That Alice woman, they say, last night she went nuts. Well that got Elsie going. She said Well I'm not surprised. I've only worked here for two years and its driving me mental. I mean let's face it. Working here is fucking awful!" The band resumes, the song ends with the laundry being burnt down. The effect is not only that this song reveals a comprehensive story but that it also creates an essential surprise element which is similar to the overall musical content of the band with its clever key and tempo changes.

All in all the Heratix/Demi-monde bill allowed for that sense of historical change that happens once in a while within Toronto's music communities whereupon you feel lucky to have been an audience member in the right place at the right time.



Lillian Allen & Billy Bryans

Lilli + Billi

LILLIAN ALLEN HAS BEEN CRISS-crossing the country, intensifying her presence as a dub poet, priming new listeners for her first super-charged solo album on the Verse-to-Vinyl label.

As well as poet ("mother, worker, fighter") Allen's association with Caribbean roots music led her to work with Immican (see *Centrefold/Fuse*, November 1979) and the Gayap Rhythm Drummers and Truths & Rights. On her first recording, *De Dub Poets* (with Clifton Joseph and Devon Haughton), Allen had some of that support returned by past Immican-based musicians, with Quammie Williams mixing down the E.P.

For *Revolutionary Tea Party*, Allen went further afield, getting Billy Bryans (The Parachute Club, The Government) to produce the eight songs. The new album's music was developed by Allen, Bryans, guitarist Dave Gray, Quammie Williams, and bassist Terry Lewis. The five were also joined by other Parachute Club alumni: Lorraine Segato, Juli Masi, Laurie Conger and Keir Brownstone, adding keyboard, bass and vocal assistance. (The Club's involvement in this project might help to return them to the more instantaneous, risk-taking, indie *musique "politique"*). This album has other surprise appearances from Elaine Stef (Demi-monde, Moral Lepers) and Sherry Shute (No Frills), to rap toasters Ringo Junior and Screecher Nice and the Toronto All-Girls Subversive Chorus. The combined result is an inclusive, immediate, tingling and *hot* album.

Visual artists and poets have been transferring their ideas to disc since the mid-sixties — transmitted music being one of the few ways to burst out of the art ghettos — and anyway, why shouldn't the parapoetry of pop be genetically strengthened occasionally by the real thing? Recorded music, on the flipside, carries with it one of the toughest subjective biases of any art-form. You can't fool the listener's well-conditioned ears; irrespective of whether an audience can tell the *technical* difference between 24 and 8 track recording (between the sonic clarities that money can buy) they can and do *feel* the difference. And because multi-track recorded music is by its very nature dead, the producers

and the musicians have to nail down the sound with extreme care.

In a mid-recording live fund-raiser, I saw Bryans, Gray, Lewis and Williams back Allen — the chemistry was perfect. Most of that live satisfaction was attributable to guitarist Gray's ability to cut in and out of the vocal lines with exacting precision. The melodic tension and timing has to be precise for spokenworkers to float in and out of the bedtracks. (Think of Scott-Heron, Animal Slaves, LKJ, Cooper Clarke, even Mr. T!) The bed-track quartet on *Tea Party* see to it that there is no slop; your ears inform you that they do it good.

The beauty of this album is the way it makes use of its resources — there is Lillian's poetry — a Trenchtown/Toronto political entity unto itself. De Dub Poets have often insisted that their music should not only come from the Caribbean, but should also reflect the music (and issues) arising in Canada. Billy Bryans fits the bill with his audible respect for what is, after all, a Black music form. As a veteran studio musician and producer, Bryans

helps demonstrate that most of Toronto's best records are currently being produced by drummers. Then there is Quammie's credentials as a roots percussionist and contemporary rhythmic arranger. Also evident in this music is Allen's vocal jamming with some of Vancouver's best indie musicians and her affinity with the work of Canadian womensbands. And lastly, within the seriousness of lyrical content (playable for any number of Federal Task Forces) is Allen's stretched emotions and urgency.

The cuts on the album range from the toast-poppin, automatic transmission funk of "The Subversives" — with its feminist re-write of the Beatle's "Ob-la-dee, Ob-la-da" — to the tranquil title song to assist burnt-out political activists, "Revolutionary Tea Party." A recent review of George Clinton's "R&B Skeleton's in the Closet" concluded with, "smells like the best album of the year." "Tea Party" matches Clinton's groove, but the lyrics are ten times better. What other militant Black woman has gained production access in the rap/reggae/funk

field?

There has never been a commercial release that is the equivalent of *Tea Party* in Canada and it's difficult to imagine that there ever will be. Whatever will be gained for this indie album will be gained by Allen, her supporters and the abilities of campus radio stations to prove that they can deliver an audience which will buy every available cassette and disc copy. If this happens, and it can, Allen will also have helped break open the way for other Canadian artists — even though the financial gamble in most cases will be prohibitive.

Say no more... fork out your ten bucks (for either album or cassette) and I guarantee that you will be playing these supercharged ditties for many months to come. If there is any progress in our cultural world, this album will get its justice desserts.

If you can't wait for your local record store to catch on, send \$10 and \$2 (P&P) to Verse to Vinyl, Box 311, Station E, Toronto, Canada M6H 4E3.

Clive Robertson

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NEWS + EVENTS

FEMINIST ARTISTS NEEDED — The Company of Sirens, a feminist theatre group, invites all women to participate in an informal evening, "Siren Soiree," of performance, poetry, theatre, etc. Our soirées provide a comfortable and encouraging environment and we offer technical assistance for those who require it. Please be aware that there is a five to ten minute time limit for participants. Send proposals before September 1st, 1986 to the following address: Company of Sirens, Station J, Box 44, Toronto, Ontario, M4J 4X8. For further information you can also call 461-6101. We look forward to hearing from you.

NEW SPACE REBORN AS 'NEWS SPACE' FOR SEPTEMBER — A Space invites Toronto artists to make work for the CURRENT EVENTS exhibition this September. This first Fall show in our new Bathurst Street location will feature works dealing with topical issues and events. We encourage participation throughout the local art community and beyond. All works should be submitted no later than Wed. September 3rd to A SPACE. For more information call 364-3227.

NICARAGUAN PHOTO BOOK — For over a year, the photo exhibit *In the Village/Dans le Village* has brought Canadians a sensitive portrayal of Nicaraguan life. Due to the enthusiastic response to the exhibit, a bilingual book of the photos is now available from Steel Rail Publishers. Photographer Jonathan Leaning focused on one coastal village where he lived and worked in a women's gardening collective. In his thirty photographs he captures the major social changes brought about in traditional village society — improved literacy, health and self-sufficiency in food — as well as the tragic effects of the U.S. funded contras on this tiny

country. The book includes a resource list of Canadian relief, development and support groups and projects including Canadian films on Nicaragua. Royalties from the sale of this book will be donated to support development projects in Nicaragua. *In the Village/Dans le Village* is available from Steel Rail Publishing, P.O. Box 4357, Station E, Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 5B3. (\$9.95 paper; 10" x 8" format).

WOMEN'S SEXUAL IMAGERY — Cyndra MacDowell is currently undertaking research into Women's Sexual Imagery (both heterosexual and lesbian) and is particularly interested in imagery made by and for women, in photographic media (both historical and contemporary). She is interested in hearing from anyone who has information on this subject and who would be interested in sharing research information and suggestions. Please write to: WSIP, c/o The Toronto Photographers Workshop, 80 Spadina Ave., Room 310, Toronto, Ontario, M5J 2J3.

NEW DIRECTORY — The Cross-Cultural Communication Centre has recently published the Toronto Immigrant Services Directory, 1986. It is an updated and expanded version of the Directory that was published in 1984. The Directory lists 214 organizations that provide direct services to immigrants in the Metropolitan Toronto area. This Directory is a unique and valuable resource for frontline workers and individuals in the immigrant and various ethnic communities as it pulls together those organizations involved in immigrant aid services and outreach to ethno-cultural groups. Also included in this edition are individual listings of hospitals, other health services and shelters, as well as a group listing of Community Information Centres, Coordinating Bodies and Research Agencies and certain "mainstream" agencies which have programs for immigrants such as public libraries, Boards of Education and government services.

The publisher, The Cross-Cultural Communications Centre, is a community based education and resource centre working on anti-racism and immigrant settlement issues. The Centre houses an extensive print and audio-visual library, provides workshops and publishes material dealing with these issues. Copies of the Directory are \$9.00 and can be obtained by contacting The Cross-Cultural Communication Centre, 965 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario, M6H 1L7 or calling 416-530-4117.

SCULPTURE PROPOSALS — The Music Gallery is inviting submissions and proposals from Canadian artists who would like to participate in an outdoor Sound Sculpture exhibition scheduled for July and August of 1987. The exhibition is planned for Toronto's High Park and will feature the work of 10 artists selected from the submissions received. We plan to offer substantial fees to the selected artists and to precede the exhibition with a symposium on the nature and function of public sculpture in the urban environment. Funding and necessary permissions are currently being sought from the funding agencies and therefore a definite commitment is not as yet possible. However, due to the short time frame within which we are operating, we would like to solicit initial proposals only. The sculpture can be of any material, should be able to withstand the rigours of a two month outdoor exhibition, and should contain only self-contained electronics. Please send your drawings and proposals to: Sound Sculpture Exhibition, c/o Music Gallery, 1087 Queen Street West, Toronto, Ontario, M6J 1H3. The deadline for initial proposals is September 1, 1986.

FUSE encourages submissions for the News & Events page, particularly regarding independent cultural production and regional events. Send to: FUSE, 5th Fl., 489 College St., Toronto, Ont. M6G 1A5

Compiled By Jocelyn Grills

of the mind

by
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kibbins

1986 is shaping up as the Year of Concern For the Status of the Artist. From the point of view of artists, this is nothing new, of course; they've been concerned about it for many long years. Now the government has jumped in with its own hand-wringing version in the form of a Task Force on the Status of the Artist. The task force has all of six weeks to both conduct its hearings and hand in its report (due June 30), fuelling speculations, as the saying goes, about the incipient promotion of the Minister of Communications, Marcel Masse. Two men, both representing unions, were chosen to head the task force: Paul Siren, general secretary emeritus of

What's sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose. Since this article was completed, the crown of Communications has passed from Marcel Masse to Flora MacDonald. This event gave most concerned artists pause — but just long enough to roll their eyes before getting back to producing their work. The Mulroney Administration has evidently decided to keep the Department of Communications on the same track for awhile, leaving the speculations put forth below intact. But who knows — the sudden sympathy for Canadian culture shown by the Tories may not be the Trojan Horse we think it is; the current well-placed rumours regarding a post-budget cut of \$1.8m to the Canada Council may be just rumours; Canadian culture may actually be given the means to displace American culture in this country after all. Maybe. But meanwhile, there's no time like the present...

ACTRA, and Gratien Gelin, former vice president of the Union des Artistes.

But wait a minute. Why, after a series of dark betrayals to the artists community, are the Tories suddenly showing such concern? Let's quickly refresh our memories, lest the comforting feel of the government's compassionate arm around our shoulders makes us forget the very recent past.

"What do these artists want? It's not my job to fight for them at Cabinet level." —Marcel Masse, 1985

We can recall the impressive edifice of election promises made by the Tories regarding the sanctity of government support for the arts. There would be no cutbacks (increases, in fact) and a total and principled re-affirmation of the arms-length principle (no doubt the \$10 Tory word "unimpeachable" was used) at which the nasty Liberals had been systematically chipping away. Then came the post-election reality, and here were more than just a few predictably welched promises. The entire edifice of government support was to be burned down, and the ground sown with salt. Massive cutbacks were instituted without consultation across the board, but particularly punitive were those to the CBC. And all manner of signals were sent out that the hallowed arms-length principle was to be amputated as well. Not only was Masse cutting, but he was arrogantly telling the agencies where the cuts were to be made.

Later, when some funds were returned to a beleaguered Canada Council, Masse had already ordained them for the Performing Arts. Masse also had his own personal discretionary fund called the Cultural Initiative Program worth \$22 million, which wasn't even lapel-length. Patronage was engaged in so ferociously that even the well-troghed

totally of arts administrators, feels obliged to justify Canadian culture with economic not social or political arguments. And lastly in this small sampling, the Tories are planning "The Festival of Canada" to take place in 1988 — probably an election year — in Washington. The costs will be staggering of course, featuring Canada's big cultural institutions. David Silcox (long term archenemy of the arts community, and avowed enemy of the arms-length principle) is preparing a report, but the total sum undoubtedly will be in the tens of millions. (We can only guess, of course; the report itself is not being made available to "the public" for obvious reasons.)

Then came the Free Trade fiasco on which the Tories had staked much (too much) political currency. Even before the Tories began to seriously botch the process through a combination of their own policy confusions, energetic but failed lobbying efforts in Washington, and stiff, articulate domestic opposition, the public had already shown deep suspicions. By late May, after the shakes and shingles setback, political commentators were already publishing predictions of major policy reversals and various face-saving manoeuvres by the Tories.

The National Gallery and Emily Carr: An Exchange

"We are having an exhibition of West Coast Indian Art in the (National) Gallery this autumn. Will you lend us fifty canvases? We pay all expenses of transportation. Come over for the show. I can get you a pass on the railway."

"Fifty of my pictures! Me go East!" I frowned at Mr. Brown, dazed. Mr. Brown laughed — a Canadian artist who did not even know that Canada had a National Gallery!

"Artists this side of the Rockies don't keep up with art movements do they? Where did you study?"

"London, Paris, but I am not an artist any more."

—Emily Carr (1871-1945)
from *Growing Pains: An Autobiography*, 1946 Irwin Publishing Inc.



Irwin Publishing Inc.

Liberals winced. Meanwhile, in his first year in office, and in the midst of the cutbacks, the operating budget of his own bureaucracy rose \$24 million, excluding the increase in his chauffeur-driven limousine service and his use of government jets. And what was even more ominous, the Tories were busy clearing a political space for 'privatization' schemes to hatch — which, even if they came to little, would make drastically reduced cultural budgets seem like a victory in comparison. The Department of External Affairs sponsored a conference in Washington to find corporate support for Canadian Arts groups in the U.S. The Nielson Report recommended an emphasis, not on production, but on marketing and promotions and recommended in turn that the Canada Council adopt that focus. Peter Roberts in his maiden speech as Director of the Canada Council (Tim Porteous having been purged earlier by Masse) made everyone in the arts community shudder when he went on record as favouring free trade. Later when in an interview Roberts was fishing for a replacement for the word "grant," what should gurgle up from the depths of his medulla oblongata but "investment." Even the Canadian Conference of the Arts, a government funded lobby group comprised almost

One reason why the Canadian public has not warmed to the Free Trade issue is their strong conviction regarding the need to protect Canada's cultural and social (and, to a lesser degree, economic) life from American infiltration. And the Tories, having pursued an embarrassingly sycophantic relationship with the U.S. and its bleary-eyed President, has had little effect in changing the way the polls read.

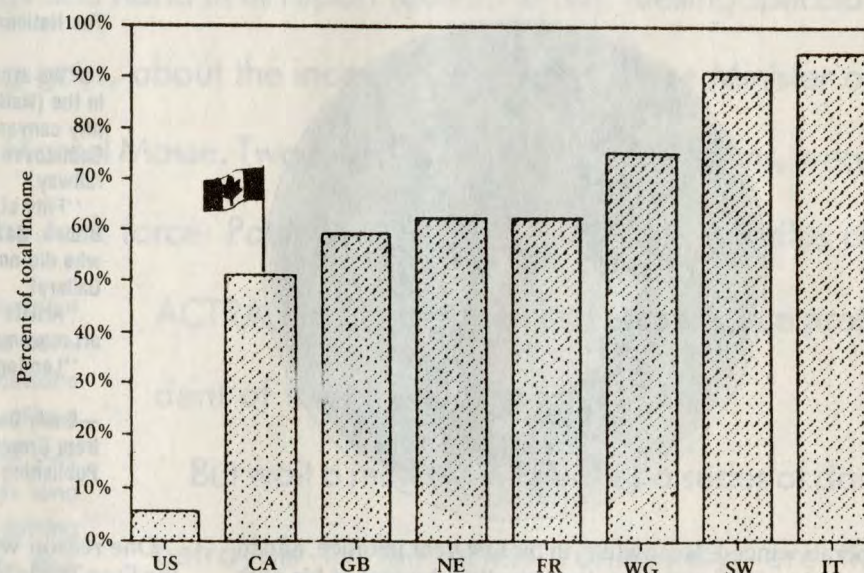
What to do? Why, give the impression of being the unflinching champions of national independence, regardless of its baselessness in fact. The Tories, assuming Canadians are statistical phenomena without social memory, began to wax eloquent about "cultural sovereignty." (See 'Cultural Sovereignty, Negotiating the Non-negotiable' by Susan Crean, *This Magazine*, April, 1986.) But alas, it's too late. Canadians get particularly annoyed when political opportunism eclipses important issues of national life; and they get pissed off when lies are told in order to sneak face-saving policies through the back door.

But there's no point making *ad hominem* attacks against politicians, or, on the other hand, wondering if this particular about-face regarding the plight of artists is 'sincere' or not. Such speculations have little place in the political

manoeuvrings of Capitalist Democracies, which are predicated not on sentiments, but strategies. The strategy of the Tories is, I think, obvious: buy off the cultural community and look like strong nationalists in order to gain credibility with the public for the Free Trade initiative. After all, throwing some attention and perhaps even a bit of money at the arts is cheap when compared to the billions used to pacify the corporate sector.

Making the Tories look like strong nationalists is one of the more awesome public relations challenges of the 20th century. But that's their problem. The task of the cultural community, after recognizing the logic behind the latest Tory reversal of rhetoric, is to formulate our own principles and strategies to protect and encourage a democratic and independent Canadian culture. Nor is this a short-term issue. The success of capitalist democracies in forestalling structural change has almost invariably been the result of diverting political confrontation into demands for short-term material gain. The desperate economic plight of Canadian visual artists, along with their relatively weak political position would seem to make them easy targets for a short-term material-gain buy-off.

Percentage of government support for theatres: a comparison of 8 Western nations using one selected institution per company. Source: David Cwi and Michael Quine, "Public and Private Arts Support in North America and Europe: Income Data for 32 Cultural Institutions," Department of Arts Policy and Management, City University (London), 1985.



But this time there's much more at stake than the economic status of existing artists. Firstly there's the Free Trade talks, whose threat to the independence of Canada I've never seen overestimated. And secondly, there are all those artists whose very identity is so marginal that they don't even register in discussions of 'economic status.' Constructing an independent Canadian culture requires linking these two issues together, and framing them as social and cultural — not simply short-term economic issues.

How, then, are we to receive and respond to the Task Force on the Status of the Artist, and its lure of short-term material again? There are already splits existing within the cultural community which the DOC may well be exacerbating, and perhaps new ones which are being opened up.

1. DOC/The Canada Council/Artists. There have long been rifts between the DOC and the Canada Council about

as covert as Contra funding, much of which has turned on the arms-length principle dispute. While the DOC has developed or is developing relatively progressive legislation regarding copyright laws and an author's right to collect royalties, there is wide-spread and very well-founded suspicions about their respect for arms-length. At the same time, there is unhappiness on the part of artists toward the Canada Council with respect to both arms-length as well as its logical extension: artists' self-determination. (For example — and here's a figure that oughta rattle the windows — 85% of all funding dispersed by the Canada Council is *discretionary*, that is, *not* processed by a 'jury of peers'.) Artist-run centres are the first step in moving the arms-length into the larger principle of self-determination. But given the climate, it is the Canada Council, not the DOC, who will be our ally here. And we need allies.

Take for example the issue of job programs which have recently become so important in paying people to work in artist-run organizations. These programs are based on discretionary funding, not arms-length funding, and it is presently out of the hands of both the Canada Council and artists. If the DOC has little or no respect for arms-length,

then it sure won't for self-determination — making it strategically important to work through artists unions in conjunction with the Canada Council. The DOC's muscle-flexing, even though it might seem to be accompanied by an unimpeachable smile, should not be allowed to divert artists critical support for the Canada Council.

2. Artists and other workers. Who'd ever have thought that artists' wish to be seen as workers rather than mystical cave dwellers and glassy-eyed soothsayers would all of a sudden be accepted by the DOC? Well, it's happening. Culture is BUSINESS, as Marcel Masse is saying through DOC ads — \$16 billion worth of business. And how are businesses structured? Well, you got your management over here, and you got your workers over there — not exactly the non-hierarchical model of self-determination we had in mind when conceptualizing the artists as a worker. And

wouldn't it be convenient if the "dull compulsion of economic relations" (Marx) were to prevail with this new status of the 'artist as worker', compelling them to legitimize their practice economically.

And we walked right into it. But it's a paradoxical situation, to be sure; it sounds like the work of a psychiatrist whose task is to integrate an 'abnormal' patient back into a society whose repressive nature was responsible for making the patient 'abnormal' in the first place. This new (and predictable) manoeuvre on the part of a Tory DOC to push the 'culture-as-business' number is a rather clever variation on the 'divide and conquer' theme, one which will at least have the advantage of forcing artists to tighten their analysis of the 'artist-as-worker'.

To perceive the artist as a worker has, I think, 3 functions. It replaces all those alienating myths of the artist with a perception of their real, historical context; it carries forth what was perhaps the central motivation of the historical avant-garde since the dawn of an isolationist modernism: to reintegrate artists and cultural activity back into social life; and, in a very localized sense, to move beyond the arms-length principle to a more progressive principle of self-

FLORA
MACDONALD

A founder of the Committee for an Independent Canada; personal friend of CBC president Pierre Juneau.



MARCEL
MASSE

Owner of a 20,000 book library; once refused to attend a dinner for Quebec's Lieutenant-Governor because he represented the monarchy.



determination. It is this last point which is most crucial here. The arms-length principle, as important as it is to maintain at the moment, is only a half-measure and has its own contradictions. Besides taking an essentially defensive posture in protecting the artist from the State, it also acts on the modernist assumption that culture should be free from politicization. Now to restate the obvious, all art is political, and artists have pushed their relative autonomy within the arms-length framework as far as possible. Yet the arms-length principle only manages to keep the State at bay while not taking the extra step of granting full political and cultural autonomy to artists. The concept of self-determination defines that extra step, and in responding to contemporary cultural and political currents, has assumed the form of a union of artists through which to attain the right to negotiate *with government* for full economic and political rights. It is this concept of a non-hierarchical self-determined and self-managed social activity which is shared with workers —

not a worker/management hierarchy.

3. Between artists and unions. Should some short-term material gain materialize for artists, there is a danger that it will disperse many artists' organizations whose mobilization was quickened by the cutbacks of '84. Artists, after all, do all this dogged organizing — as with everything else — for little or no money. It eats into their production time, which is their primary task. It therefore becomes very tempting for artists to drop their political work at the first opportunity to produce their artwork. Nor would the government mourn the organizations' passing, particularly when the next round of cutbacks are politically expedient.

Short-term material gain might give the illusion that the act of *lobbying* defines the limits of the artists' political involvement in affecting cultural policy. Lobbying has produced undeniable results, to be sure, but it necessarily adopts the existing political framework, a framework which leaves artists vulnerable to the whims of partisan rule. Negotiating through a union (or unions) of artists calls for a *new* framework, one which doesn't reduce artists to waiting

anxiously and helplessly for a new federal budget before deciding whether they can continue to produce their work, and whether to reform or disband their lobby groups. The right to negotiate with government would begin to place artists substantially within the political process and on their own terms, not calling out to it from afar. The demand for long-term political and cultural as well as economic gain — primarily through the recognition of *artists' bargaining rights* — is a demand which should not be allowed to be bought off with temporary increases in funding.

4. Between Artistic Disciplines This is of particular concern to those falling in the catch-all category called the 'visual arts', as they have always been less visible in terms of lobbying power, and because Masse, proud owner of a 20,000 volume library, has a habit of thinking that the arts are constituted of the 'high' arts only — you know, Stratford, Opera,

Ballet, Symphonies, and so on. Seeing culture in terms of ticket sales accompanied by other economic 'spin-offs', Masse's vision is that of the nuclear family driving up from Omaha to see the Winnipeg Ballet. They stay in hotels, buy gasoline, food, plastic Mounties — and tickets. This is all very nice, but as a legitimization of a nation's culture this sacred meeting of tourist and art is a consummation devoutly to be trashed. When some disciplines are favoured as national marketing devices, it only serves to further ghettoize those which, often by their very nature, don't draw big audiences.

There may be another inter-discipline problem on the horizon. Evidently the DOC is looking very closely at legislation proposals put forth by the Union des Artistes (hence the choice of the Task Force Commissioners?) with respect to bargaining rights. It should be remembered, however, that while it is reasonable for performing artists to negotiate with the cultural organizations which employ them, the same can-

tariffs. The government liked that, of course, and wasted no time trotting out all the standard benedictions about the need for a free trade agreement.

Artists whose central focus is public funding support have to see the interconnectedness of these issues and even participate in debates affecting book stores, for it will ultimately affect us. What kind of tariffs or protectionist measures would we advocate — even if we had attained a guaranteed annual income?

While the details aren't clear, at least the general principles should be. What we don't need are policies which simply make it more difficult to have access to cultural materials no matter what their national origin. Canadians, particularly those in Ontario, have had plenty enough of the conservative mindset which would rather restrict than encourage culture. Tariffs against cultural products are useful only when their final goal is to *promote production*. This



The IAU appears before the Federal Task Force on the Status of the Artist, Toronto, May 1986.

not be said for the visual arts. (What would we do, negotiate with A Space and Mercer Union for a living wage?) Should the DOC go ahead with such legislation, they would have to include the right to negotiate *with the government*, not just cultural organizations, for it to have any meaning for the visual arts.

5. Between 'public' and 'private'. Let's skip this opportunity to trash the depraved neo-conservative vision of a free enterprise cultural marketplace one more time except to say that it doesn't work, and should not be expected to work.

On the other hand, the Tories may be trying to separate those involved in the legitimate retail of cultural materials from those who produce it — two groups which usually have little association with each other. The reference here is to the government's isolated act of bravado in "retaliating" to the U.S. shakes and shingles tariff with our own which, amongst other things, revived a 10% tariff on U.S. books and periodicals. This brought objections from the Canadian Book Publishers Council and the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association representing retail interests, for not only would it bite into profits, but it was a precedent for placing the 'cultural industries' on the bargaining table. This made for interesting headlines: part of the cultural sector already on record as opposing Free Trade talks was now criticizing

applies particularly in circumstances where artists are unable to 'economically compete' — when they should never have been expected to economically compete in the first place. We note here that the Tories never got around to diverting the income from their book and periodical tariff back into Canadian production.

It was widely assumed that the hapless Tories had exhausted their limited resources of political smarts just getting into office, and were now reduced to playing catch-up in the popularity poll game. This observation, fairly accurate over all, shouldn't convince cultural producers that the Tories somehow just buckled under to cultural sector lobbying — which is the explanation given by DOC civil servants when asked about the recent change of heart. If their concern for Canadian sovereignty and the well-being of Canada's cultural producers is 'sincere', and if their own stake in this issue is more substantial than the acquisition of short-term political gain, let them prove it by instituting and legislating long-term political gain for Canada's artists in the form of bargaining rights without restrictions, increased representation, and affirmative action. (See "The Social and Economic Status of the Artist in English Canada" prepared by the Independent Artists Union in this issue of *Fuse*.)

Gary Kibbins

SUMMER/86

The following brief was prepared collectively by the Strategy Committee of the Independent Artists Union, with recommendations and approval from the membership. Because it was prepared as a brief, it assumes, for better or worse, the language of a brief, and so it is unlikely that it will be read solely for the pleasure that can be had from its writing style. Nonetheless, it represents a significant departure from past discourses regarding the artist/state relationship, and has been acknowledged on many levels by the state. For these reasons alone it deserves wider availability. Yet it is the only existing comprehensive strategy option for cultural funding for the visual arts which also addresses issues of cultural democracy. Not only is the economic deprivation of artists at stake here, but the rights of those 'cultural producers' not presently recognized as 'artists.' Finally, there

is a proposition in this brief that does not always sit well with some Western artists whose political temperaments range between 'anarchist' and 'libertarian.' The I.A.U. considers the state to be a legitimate and important object of political struggle. If there are contradictions and dangers resulting from this strategy — as there are inevitably — they should be recognized and worked through. The program of the I.A.U. has developed out of a uniquely Canadian historical circumstance, one which weighs social-democratic traditions against a mythology of 'pure' capitalism controlled by the U.S. The I.A.U., therefore, frames its concerns regarding the self-determination of Canadian artists against the hopes for the self-determination of the Canadian nation as a whole.

The Social and Economic

Status
of
the
Artist
in
English
Canada

The
Independent
Artists
Union



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INTRODUCTION: AN INCOME FOR ARTISTS

The main issue regarding the 'status of the artist' is that of an artist's income. This issue affects all others, including that of artistic freedom. Artists are hardly free to create if they don't have the means to do so.

It was recently revealed that the income of Canadian artists was only marginally above that of pensioners. This notorious statistic, however, has a yet darker side to it, a side best illustrated through an example provided by an I.A.U. member who, at the age of 48, and after over 25 years of continuous art production and exhibition, has accumulated a lofty sum of \$43 per month in her Canada Pension Plan. This grim fact is only a small indication of the inequities suffered by artists — inequities rarely officially recognized in Canada's history. The reason for this misunderstanding of the artist's economic reality is quite simple. Artists have not been perceived in their true role: that of working people.

It should be noted that, contrary to the 'starving artist' mythology, artists do not extract their creative energy from poverty-line living conditions. The artists of today are treated in a manner similar to the way in which teachers and nurses were treated a century ago, that is, due to a kind of moral status attached to the job, it is assumed that the 'spiritual' rewards are enough. Yet artists — as if it really needs to be said — have as great a need for such necessities as dental care, adequate housing, and social programs as other working people.

The question of an income for artists has often been raised by conferences and commission hearings, though rarely by artists' organizations. While there is recognition of the problem, no one has suggested where this income might come from — except for vague suggestions about market incentives or increased arts grants.

If artistic income is a serious issue, then serious proposals should be put forward. The IAU was formed on the basis of an answer to this question. It is the Union's position that an artist's income should come from the public through the agencies of government, as do the incomes of teachers, transport workers, doctors, many scientists, electric power workers, nurses, social ser-

vice workers, librarians, art gallery curators, etc. This position is based upon four important points:

- 1) If cultural production and access to that production is a social right for all people, then government, as a democratic institution, should ensure that culture is adequately funded to fulfill that right.
- 2) That government is already the major source of cultural funding and already has in place the means and mechanisms to administer a guaranteed annual income for artists.
- 3) With the exception of artists, all people within the arts industry: administrators, curators, directors, editors, installers, technicians, security and support staff, etc. receive regular income, primarily from government (either directly or indirectly). Many are represented by unions.
- 4) The IAU supports a universal guaranteed income at an adequate living wage level for all Canadians. A universal Guaranteed Annual Income was suggested by the Senate Committee on Poverty (1970), five years before the contemporary recession hit Canada.

ART IS WORK

Of the many questions that arise from discussions of a Guaranteed Annual Income for artists is the concept of art production as work. Many questions arise which reflect public misconceptions regarding the reality of artists' work: "Who would qualify? Couldn't anyone just proclaim themselves an artist and receive a salary for doing nothing but pursuing their hobbies?" Or: "If artists get paid to do whatever they want, wouldn't that be unfair to other people who have to work?" Such questions imply that the production of art requires no training, skills, nor any specialized knowledge. It implies that there are no standards and that there is no real labour involved. Any artist working at two jobs and living near the poverty line would laugh at the thought that cultural production is a form of privileged leisure.

Because the cultural marketplace has never been, either practically or philosophically, an adequate means of support for the arts in Canada (or anywhere else in the Western world), the government has had to develop various

programs to assist Canadian artists. To administer this support government agencies have developed an administrative infrastructure (arts councils) which utilize a 'peer' jury system for evaluating performance and productivity. Implicit in this mechanism is a principle of artistic management: that artists manage themselves through their own community standards and needs. This is similar to other occupational sectors (university teachers, doctors, researchers and others whose work cannot be linked to the needs of the 'marketplace') who also operate on the basis of some form of self-management.

It should be pointed out that this fear of a living wage for artists has two sides to it. Some artists fear that a Guaranteed Annual Income would bring with it even more restrictions on their work than exist presently, and that the managerial structure which might be put in place may well cancel out the economic gains of an annual income.

THE QUESTION OF QUALITY

The justification of 'private' support for artists, that is, support from a cultural marketplace (even though this source of support constantly proves to be hopelessly inadequate) as well as an equally inadequate commitment on the part of government is often framed as an argument about 'quality'. That is, "if all artists were paid a respectable salary, then we'd just get a pile of mediocre art."

Quality, of course, is a relative term — relative, that is, to the community to which it is being applied. Thus, in much the same sense as one country will have an entirely different concept of quality than another, so differently constituted communities within the same country will construct different concepts of 'quality'. Women's artwork has successfully challenged the standards of international modernism in recent years, and a sensitive cultural climate has only to clear a space for other community identities, such as Native art, Black art, gay and lesbian art, etc., to do the same.

The Independent Artists Union believes that, in order for us to avoid the chauvinisms imbedded in the current concept of 'quality', support should be based on a concept of 'competence'. Standards based on 'quality' only serve

to divide artists and isolate communities, and have no place in determining which artist deserves support and which artist doesn't. No one would suggest that only the work of top engineers or teachers should be supported, even if such an elite list could be agreed upon. As much as these occupations would suffer in the quality of overall service were such measures ever implemented, so the arts in Canada presently suffer by denying the majority of artists the right to a decent living.

Although a guaranteed annual income for artists, based on the IAU proposal (outlined later in this paper) would not provide a full answer, it is a basic and important step in addressing this point. Consider the following:

- 1) A guaranteed annual income would begin to address the inequities of the current granting and marketing systems, where regional, Native, Black, other peoples of colour and women artists, in particular, receive little, if any, support.
- 2) Various communities, both geo-

covered. This would be of particular benefit to communities who, at present, have few resources and to whom cultural production is seldom available or feasible.

3) The production of culture as a service (community theatre and murals, video, cultural workshop, etc.) could expand enormously.

4) Artists would not have to migrate to the major centres to secure what little income is available, but would be able to work in the regions and communities of their choice. This, in

Trade Unions For Artists

A. T. VIVASH
President, Local 71, Artists' Union, Toronto.

ARTISTS, even commercial artists, constitute no exception to the professional's insistence on individualism, nor to his generally hazy conception of the meaning of this latter term. According to an article published in the English magazine, *The Artist* for October, 1936: "the commercial artist seemingly prefers to allow a fine profession to go to the dogs rather than organize his resources. Let us see what such organization would mean. We state emphatically that proper organization would mean doubling the commercial artist's income. He would be looked up to as is the lawyer, the architect, or the doctor. . . . Co-ordination of forces is vital. Let it be done now, for until this is accomplished the commercial artist is like a weathercock — at the mercy of unfriendly winds, of which there are many. Commercial art has come to be an important factor in the commercial world. It can be much more important. But only if artists organize and work together as one man."



toronto has grown to more than 250, with applications still coming in; while in Hamilton artists are about 75% organized. Membership in the union is not limited to employed artists nor to commercial artists. We feel that we have something to offer to every artist who has to depend on his art for his daily bread. Nor are the aims and objectives of our union confined to obtaining better rates of pay for its members, whether free-lance or employed. Finally, it should be emphasized that the union was not designed to be a force to tie up industry through the use of the strike. To us the strike is the last resource.

We want rather an organization which can keep the machinery of industry running smoothly, so that we can improve our work and at the same time educate the public to a proper appreciation of art. Among the tasks confronting the union, an immediate one is the endeavour to establish a minimum price schedule and service charge for all forms of art work. We do not suggest that such

"Trade Unions for Artists" was published in *New Frontier*, May, 1937. The excerpt reproduced below concluded the article.

"Inevitably we have run into a number of artists who are unwilling to join a 'trade-union.' Surprisingly enough, many of these men and women claim to be 'moderns,' and talk freely of social improvement and 'class consciousness.' But at the suggestion that they join a union they put forward fantastic excuses. Such artists fail to realize that the Artists' Union is nothing more than the name implies — a group of artists united for their common welfare. We have no governing body but ourselves;

our executive has no right to act without the consent of the majority of the other members. Once initiated the artist has full right to the floor, and thus those who object because we are not correcting their pet 'wrongs' can immediately start us off on the right road by joining up. Sympathy will not lighten our task in any practical manner. We need the co-operation of every artist, we need his opinion and his fellowship in our organization."

DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE ARTS

A major question in terms of a comprehensive arts policy is the accessibility of the arts to the vast majority of Canadians who, at present, perceive the arts as having little to do with their lives.

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graphic (towns, rural areas, Native communities, Black and other racial communities in large cities) and communities of interest (church groups, trade unions, womens groups, etc.) as well as small businesses and corporations could become involved in cultural projects by providing material or production funding only, as the artist's living costs would be

turn, would be of benefit to such regions and communities.

THE EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP

The IAU believes that government is already the true employer of the artist.

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A.C.A.R.O. picket outside Hart House, 1975. After four years of fruitless negotiating over the matter of fees to artists and the refusal of Hart House to commit itself publicly to a professional policy with regard to exhibition of artists' work.



Artists talk about technology, ANNPAC conference, Halifax, June, 1984.

regarding grants:

1. An artist is not permitted to retain secondary employment while on a grant.
2. Since grants are 'awarded', there is no contractual agreement between the artist and the arts council. It is an 'implied contract'.
3. Since grants are 'awarded', a grant includes no social security benefits — that is: no UIC, CP, Workers Compensation, Health Care, etc.
4. For the majority of artists, grants although few and far between are the major source of artistic income. In this sense, artists are dependent on grants for their occupational income.

SECONDARY INCOME

Since the average artist's income is between \$4-5,000 per annum, most artists must seek secondary employment to supplement their artistic income, and through this subsidize their art work.

In the majority of cases (with the exception of teaching) artists find secondary employment in the casual labor market which most often pays minimum level wages. Such employment includes, for example: sales and clerical work, restaurant work, commercial art work (drafting, layout, etc.), art gallery work (secretarial, installation, etc.), taxi driving, etc.

These points should be noted regarding secondary employment:

1. Because secondary employment is seldom related to the artist's primary occupation, and because an artist must give up any secondary employment while on a grant, no career stability as such can be established in the secondary employment area to provide either security or ongoing benefits.
2. Because the artist must constantly seek and hold secondary employment the artist is unable to sustain and develop their primary occupation. The artist is therefore caught between a primary and secondary occupation, neither of which can be properly pursued.
3. An artist who pays UIC through their secondary employment and then receives an arts grant cannot claim UIC benefit when that grant

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CULTURAL POLITICS

terminates, as their benefit period established from their tenure of secondary employment has also terminated. In addition, contributions to Canada Pension, health and dental plans and other social benefits from secondary employment are interrupted or cease to exist once an artist receives a grant. In this sense, grants work against the artist's right to collect social benefits.

4. Artists, by being forced to take secondary employment, take jobs from others in the labour market.

5. Given the wage levels of secondary employment, as well as the impossible demands made on an individual artist's energy and time, artists cannot produce art work while so employed.

6. Secondary employment is the means by which artists subsidize Canadian cultural production and distribution. Taking an income of \$24,000 as reasonable, and comparing it to the average art-related income of \$4-\$5,000, means that the 10,000 visual artists listed by Canada Census subsidize Canadian culture to the tune of \$200 million per year.

WOMEN ARTISTS, ARTISTS OF COLOUR, NATIVE ARTISTS, REGIONAL ARTISTS, DIFFERENTLY-ABLED ARTISTS

The Canadian Government's chronic disregard of a very long list of disadvantaged artists requires immediate redress. And it is significant that while these individuals and communities have traditionally been thought of as existing on the fringe of the art community, they in fact make up the majority of the population.

First of all, with the recent exception of women, individuals from these groups rarely enroll in art school, and are not encouraged to conceive of their cultural work as 'art'. Yet even should they get past this point, they even more rarely see any government support, unless it is through the hopelessly patronizing 'multiculturalism' category. The fact that presently 75% of art students are women while at the same time women constitute only 15% of those represented in galleries points out that

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discrimination is a structural reality in the Canadian cultural community. While Canadian law prohibits discrimination, artists, particularly those already socially disadvantaged, nonetheless experience it on at least two levels, while never seeing this problem adequately acknowledged, much less addressed.

Another chronic problem is the plight of the art student upon graduation. Most art students have little choice but to immediately seek secondary employment on the lowest level. In addition, many are faced with student loans in the thousands of dollars. Yet to succeed, a student has to not only set up a studio space and produce their work, but to pursue a wide range of contacts in order to secure exhibitions, performances, screenings, etc. The drop-out rate under these extreme conditions is enormous. Clearly, the art-educational system has done little to prepare and assist students.

A GUARANTEED ANNUAL INCOME FOR ARTISTS: THE CENTRAL DEMAND

In brief, culture should be recognized as a major social resource, equal in status to education, health care, etc. This would entail a system of full public funding, with contributions in various forms from other sectors of society, and would include an income to all artists commensurate with other people working in society, adequate facilities across the country, proper distribution, dissemination, education, etc.

When the current direction of Canadian society is taken into consideration (technological change, chronically high unemployment, and discussions regarding a shorter work week, the qualitative use of leisure time, to name a few) the development of a rational and comprehensive cultural policy that recognizes the growing social importance of cultural production appears more and more to be a necessity.

Another consideration in this regard is the central role the cultural sector will play in future job creation programs. As many commentators on the future of work have pointed out, culture will become one of the major areas of employment in the future as it is, by nature, labour intensive. In fact, a

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guaranteed annual income for artists could be seen as a job creation program in itself, and a fairly cheap one at that. Not only would it employ the artists themselves, but it would open up the job market in those areas where artists take secondary employment.

TRANSITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The basic position of the Independent Artists Union is that representative artist unions negotiate a set of qualifications for, and the terms of, a Guaranteed Annual Income for artists. Any such negotiations would be predicated on the notion of cultural autonomy and artists self-determination. In light of this position, the IAU proposes the following transitional recommendations prior to the institution of a guaranteed annual income for artists:

1. Collective Bargaining Rights

That artists' unions have the right under law to negotiate collective agreements and binding contracts on behalf of their members with all agencies, institutions, and individuals who purchase, commission, grant, award, rent or otherwise contract artists products or services.

2. Canada Pension Plan

That a special program be set up with the appropriate government agency to administer a Canada Pension Plan for all recognized artists. This program, in recognition of the present poverty-line economic status of the artist, would base contributions on a fair income level and make full contributions on behalf of artists as balanced against their reported incomes. Further, in recognition that there are many artists who are approaching retirement age and who have little security after many years of contribution to Canadian cultural life, such a program be retroactive for such a period as needed to guarantee economic security for their senior years.

3. Unemployment Insurance

That 'Professional Visual Artist' be recognized as a legitimate job classification under Employment and Immigration regulations. That U.I.C. benefits be attached to the living subsidy portion of individual arts grants

received from both federal and provincial arts councils as per standard regulations concerning contributions and benefits.

4. Workers Compensation, Health and Dental Care, Daycare Services

That a program similar to the one outlined in recommendation No. 2 above be established to administer a basic health and dental program, and make workers compensation and daycare services accessible to all artists. (Note: Eligibility for these programs would be established by the Eligibility Board model outlined in the appendix.)

5. Material or Production Funding

That material or production funding continue to be administered under the present jury system by arts agencies, but that the selection of juries be done in conjunction with the representative artists unions.

6. Affirmative Action Principles

That grants be made available to Native, Black, people of colour, women, younger and older artists, graduating arts students, 'physically challenged' artists and regional artists until such time as a guaranteed annual income is negotiated. That women make up 50% of all granting bodies and receive 50% of all grants and benefits. That monies be made available to adequately fund women's galleries, festivals and special projects. That representative weight be given to disadvantaged and minority persons regarding all facets of cultural funding.

7. Health and Safety

That a commission be established, with a minimum of one-half of its members from representative artist unions, to recommend health and safety standards and guidelines for artists' materials manufacturers and artists' facilities and production outlets, as well as special grants for the installation of equipment.

8. Board Positions

That it be a condition of all public funding to arts institutions, arts funding agencies, and other governmental funding bodies that a significant number of board positions be made available to artists and representative artist unions.

9. Dual Status

That artists be granted dual status; that is, for the purposes of taxation, that artists be considered self-employed and be allowed to deduct expenses pertinent to their work as artists.

10. Housing and Production Facilities

That greater funding be made available for artists' housing and facilities (government-owned buildings made available at nominal rent to artists' organizations, co-op housing and production facilities for artists.)

APPENDIX

NEGOTIATIONS (Recommendation 1)

Negotiations for a guaranteed annual income (aside from qualifications; see below) would include:

1. The dollar level of a guaranteed annual income.
2. The number of artists who would receive the G.A.I.
3. The length of period before a review of qualifications would be undertaken, i.e. the term of the contract.
4. The determination of a sliding scale which would balance the G.A.I. against income from other sources (teaching, sales, fees, etc.)
5. Contract details such as social benefits, etc.

A common question regarding the G.A.I. is the source of the monies to supply such an income. The following does not pretend to provide an answer, as there is no simple ready-made source. In part the question begs an answer. As with all social services, value is determined by social benefit, not available cash. However the following points provide a context.

1. Canada has the second lowest per capita government spending on cultural institutions in the western industrialized world (even though sources in the U.S. often complain of "Canadian subsidization").
2. The Province of Ontario recently awarded doctors, who average \$80,000 annually, a 3% increase. The cost to the province will be \$63 million annually. In short, what Ontario has given doctors in one year as an increase is roughly equal to what it would cost to pay all artists in the province a full income. At the same time, the value of tax write-offs to the corporate sector is currently \$19-20 billion dollars, indicating that the problem has less to do with the availability of funds than priorities with respect to its distribution.
3. In France, 5% of all art sales goes to an artist association. This covers pen-

sions, health care, and emergency funding. In a similar vein, filmmakers have argued that a 5% addition to every movie ticket in Canada would support a full film industry.

4. Both Holland and Ireland presently have guaranteed annual income for artists programs.

ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE LIVING WAGE (Recommendation 2)

It will be necessary to put in place a Qualifications Board to adjudicate issues of eligibility as well as grievances and appeals.

The Qualifications Board would be required to approve the eligibility of Artist Union members for the living wage and social benefits according to the guidelines provided above.

An Appeals Board should be set up to hear and adjudicate grievances and appeals received from either representative Artist Union members or the executive of the employing body. The Appeals Board shall consist of one representative Artist Union member, one representative of the employing body, and one third party who would have affiliations with neither. All shall be mutually agreed upon by both the representative Artists Unions and the employing body.

wise markets or promotes their art.

3. Has won national or international prizes for their art, or has had their work written about in recognized journals, books, etc.

4. Has received grants from recognized sources (Arts Agencies, other government departments, universities, etc.)

5. Earns a living in whole or part from their art or obtains contracts to produce or publish work etc.

6. Teaches art at recognized institutions.

7. Member of recognized professional organization(s).

8. Can demonstrate time spent and sustained output.



Albert Cloutier addressing the Kingston Conference (Federation of Canadian Artists) June, 1941

The Qualifications Board would consist of 10 individuals, 5 of whom are chosen by the representative Artists Unions, and 5 of whom are chosen by the employer/funding body. Each group of 5 would be subject to approval by the other body in order to ensure that all are agreeable to both parties. Affirmative action principles would be applied in the selection process, ensuring that 50% of its make-up would be women, and ensuring that full representative consideration be given to Native, Black, peoples of colour and regional concerns.

A starting point for the negotiation would be the UNESCO definition of an artist, and the set of recommendations made by the Sub-Committee on Taxation of Visual and Performing Artists and Writers. (Standing Committee, Communications and Culture in its 1984 Report.)

A list based on these two sources is as follows:

1. Holds a diploma or equivalent in Fine Arts or related field. This would cover the initial eligibility of students.
2. Holds exhibitions, forms or other-

9. Is recognized by their peers.

It would be proposed that:

1. Qualifications are reviewed at each term of contract which should be every 2 or 5 years.

2. All students would be immediately eligible upon graduation. When the term of contract comes due, such students would then qualify under regular qualifications. Those who are self-taught should receive special consideration.

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STRATEGIES FOR SURVIVAL

STATE OF THE ARTS / THE ART OF ALTERNATIVES
AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ARTISTS

Report by Chris Creighton-Kelly

How are the artists perceived in their particular culture? What are the regional and cross-cultural factors that influence the making and the perception of art? Do women artists have equal and viable access to the support mechanisms of art making? What social limitations are placed on artistic expression? Is art production work? How do artists organize? How is art production supported in various countries? What implications does the nature of this support have for organization?

Trenchant questions indeed. Can a roomful of three hundred Canadian artists address these issues — even with the help of speakers from other countries — at one conference? Can these questions be answered completely in any context?

Strategies for Survival: State of the Arts/The Art of Alternatives was an international conference for artists held in Vancouver from June 9th to 11th. The Commodore Ballroom, home of many a good night's rocking to punk, reggae, pop or country, became the serious venue for presentations, discussions and performances by visual artists and administrators. The previous enquiries taken from the conference pre-publicity formed a kind of official agenda for the participants and framed the formal discussion. But by the third day it was evident that other, perhaps more epistemological, questions were not being answered.

The conference was arranged by the Vancouver Artists League (VAL) as part of Vancouver's centennial events. It dovetailed with the annual general meeting of the Association of National Non-Profit Artists' Centres (ANNPAC). The organizers hoped to provide an opportunity for artists to talk about what kind of alternative systems could be developed to ensure that artists and art in Canada not only survive but also flourish. They also hoped to "draw guidelines for a responsive and culturally relevant system of support for Canadian artists...as well as present appropriate and workable models of organization for artists." No one has ever suggested that artists don't know how to set themselves a challenge!

Nevertheless this challenge has become increasingly more essential in a time of right-wing ascendancy in most Western capitalist countries. Margaret Harrison, a British artist/educator, described this change from post-war societies with complex infrastructures of public funding to the new reality of cutbacks and privatization. With it comes a concomitant ideological shift. She talked about the down-playing of culture as expression, cohesion or ultimately transformation.

In the new reality, culture is seen in economist terms — as employment, as creating spin-off industries, as enhancing tourism. This, of course, is accompanied by an increasing chorus of suggestions on how the private sector must do more. But as Tatsuo Yamamoto, an artist from Japan, pointed out, the corporate example of his own country is not a good model to imitate. Harrison concluded by saying that both Japanese and U.S. artists, framed by increasingly less arts funding, have found their ability to function creatively impaired. Not to mention their ability to form alternative cultural organizations or their ability to organize, period.

Yet this remained one of the central concerns of the conference. Clive Robertson structured his presentation on a working paper by the Independent Artists Union (I.A.U.) based in Toronto. The major premise of the paper is that art production is clearly work and artists deserve a living wage. In addition, attention (i.e. money) must be paid to minority Canadian artists (women, artists of colour, rural artists, etc.) in order to redress the structural ine-

continued on page 53.

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ENTERTAINMENT NOTES

A 'whining session'

In Vancouver's dilapidated Commodore Ballroom last week, 300 artists from 11 countries gathered for a conference on economic survival strategies for the arts. Vancouver media artist Paul Wong had a different description: an "international whining session." The Vancouver Artists' League, which hosted the conference, invited arts policy analyst Keith Kelly, of the federal department of communications, who outlined a report assessing the taxation levels currently imposed on artists in relation to other professions. While, several blocks away at the Hotel, some of those who hold the meeting—at an international telephone conference for communications minister he would have liked to have seen Minister Marcel Masse in attendance. Masse had been invited, artists say, "for the money."

Artists paint bleak picture but cheer guaranteed income

BY STEPHEN GODFREY
The Globe and Mail

VANCOUVER

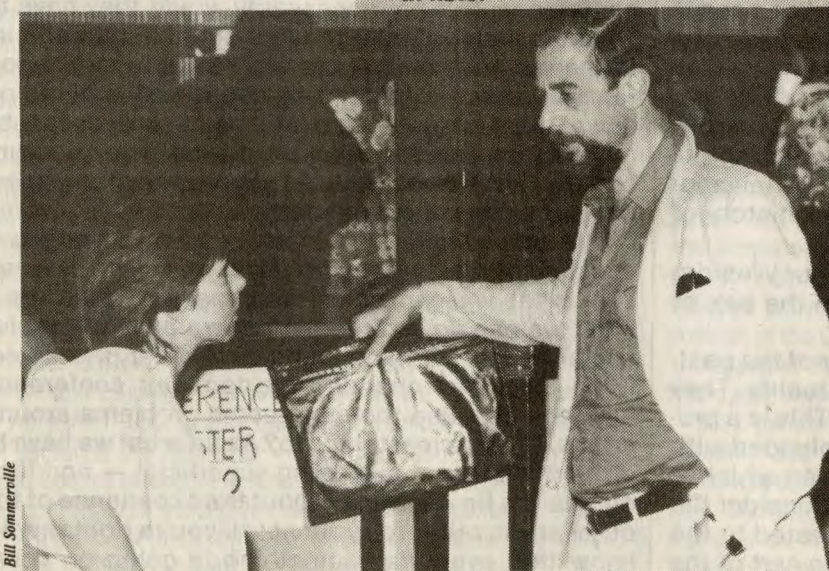
A CONFERENCE of Canadian and international artists this week supported the idea of a guaranteed annual income to finance individual artists.

from other countries, mainly because almost all the foreign speakers painted consistently bleak pictures of the future in their home countries.

Patterns that emerged from the participants included a strong distrust of corporations as a reliable means of art support; a frustration by many artists with the necessity of belonging to an artists organization in order to get government support; and the importance of government grants and bursaries because of the negligible income artists make from selling their work.

The foreign speakers outlined some problems of survival unique to their culture and some that appeared universal.

In Japan, Yamamoto, "chaos and good money that no one in Japan." Yamamoto said.



Wilma DeJong — Netherlands
Thomas Deecke — W. Germany



AN INTERVIEW WITH JOSÉ VENTURA

Chris: When and why did you come to Canada?

José: I left El Salvador in 1980 because the political situation at that time was difficult for everybody in the country. I sympathized with the National Front. I tried to do something in my own capacity to give to the National Front in order to change the society. But then the oppression became difficult and I had to leave. The Canadian embassy in Mexico and I made an appointment to talk and they tried to resolve my problem. Finally after six months the papers came through, and they gave me a visa to come here to Canada for political asylum, on February 17, 1983. I know that I cannot go back to El Salvador. It was so difficult, I was really afraid of my fate.

Chris: At the conference you tried to do a comparison between Nicaragua and El Salvador — between the artist in a pre-revolutionary society and a post-revolutionary society. Can you talk about the difference in these two situations, because they both exist in Central America.

José: That is really a difficult issue to say in a very few words and to try to understand because it is a very complex situation. Why I make a comparison between Nicaragua and El Salvador is because as Salvadoreans we could see how it will be after the revolution. El Salvador is in the process of democratic revolution. And the artists — committed to the people, who are struggling for social change — the first thing we are conscious about is our own history. We know our own place as artists to be with the people, as we are facing the same problems as the people. This is the reason that some of the artists became very radical and joined the National Front. And in the revolution, we can see the social change. We can gain our freedom to be able to express and develop our artistic capacity. I can see in a Nicaraguan, the future El Salvadorean. The artist in Nicaragua is supported by the government. Also they receive materials from the Minister of Culture. It's open to the artist; they are programming to develop culture. The government is promoting the national culture in its own expansion. In El Salvador the national culture comes through the history of the people.

Chris: What is the role of an artist in our Western society which is neither comparable to the pre- or post-revolutionary situation?

José: The artist here is like a reminder of the past, in order to face reality — the art world reality. They are all reminders of the European past. This is a problem with artists here, they have to be blended with historical culture, to reflect some of the art which is relevant to this time. In order for me to consider the art to be authentic we have to be connected to the reality we are facing now. Oppression is part of the artist reflecting these moments.

Chris: How do you feel about North American artists addressing the issues in Central America, representing a reality that they don't know?



Bill Sommerille

José Ventura is an El Salvadorean currently living in Vancouver.

José: That reflects the hard reality that these people are living down there. That reality is so powerful that it moves people's feelings. For an artist they must do something to help the people who are suffering.

Chris: But can't the El Salvadorean people speak for themselves?

José: We try, we try, we try. But the people that have a commitment to social change, they are doing landscapes and painting women because they are afraid to be killed. And the thing is you know, always they feel they are being oppressed.

Chris: What can Canadian artists learn from El Salvadorean artists?

José: The first thing they learn is that in El Salvador there is a war going on. That's very important for artists to know — what artists are facing in other parts of the world. The other thing is questioning themselves, what they have, what they must do here. I think the artists are the more sensitive people, they can understand, they understood what I said at the conference. But not necessarily would they have to be down there in order to understand. First hand information that comes from me, I think is very important, because I would not lie about what's going on down there. Artists here are being oppressed by multi-national companies — maybe in a different country, a different way, but we are very oppressed, not just artists, but everybody.

The other thing is — in art — always there is a question of what we can do. What we can do as a person, what we can do as a carpenter, whatever.... What we can do as an artist for example, will be for social change in this country. We must give something for social change here too. Our conference happens because there are some problems around artists. That's a real thing, no? As an artist we have to give criticism, not just being superficial — and face our reality. Be confident about the experience of the other artist, reinforce your spirit, you're right there. I know that every day something is going on down there. I cannot separate the political work and the art. There is a moment in the political which is very close in art. We have to be more political in order to be more understanding of our society.

"The 80s seems to be a seige resurgence — a panic measure to a degree aimless through disillusionment. The questions raised in the 70s cannot be ignored in this cynical manner by sprinkling a crust of paint over everything and calling it style. You can't bury these ideas and there are signs that this is being realised by more people who coined and invented almost simultaneously the words 'post modern', 'post political' and 'post feminist'. It seems to me that in Britain particularly, a shifting series of marginalised coalitions and practices particularly in the women's movement, through the ethnic groups, through small producers of culture (especially in the visual arts workshops and the music industry) contain the seeds of a powerful force which will emerge in the 90s to pick up some of the lost impetus in a creative way — lost at the end of the 70s."

—Margaret Harrison

quities of the funding system.

In the context of a general decline in the status of the artist in Western society, a demand for a living wage seems truly radical. Not surprisingly it sent the conference delegates scurrying about in various political responses. There were those who saw this as just one more Toronto-centric organization which could not possibly articulate the concerns of artists working in the hinterland. Others agreed with the proposals but saw them as hopelessly long-term and perhaps utopian. Another faction considers any talk of collective organizing and unions to be anathema to the individualist, anarchist, romantic view of the artist working alone in her or his studio. A minority will continue to talk. And yet another group clearly thinks that true artists should demand nothing... or that in these times perhaps only corporate funding can save the day for artists. Conference organizer Marion Barling received "quite a few requests" for a panel on funding alternatives.

Once again artists were offered a confusing smorgasbord of programs and policies from governmental institutions and corporations. Stuart Backerman led off with a glib, rambling talk on artists and economic development... the arts are good for business so therefore business can be persuaded to help artists... maybe. At one point, the conference delegates were insulted by his statement that the City of Vancouver doesn't give funds directly to artists because of problems with accountability — artists don't have boards of directors. The City of Vancouver recently gave over \$200,000 to help bail out the Vancouver Symphony who were a million dollars in debt — so much for accountability. Artists were quick to point out his lack of understanding of their situation.

Linda Johnson (D.O.C.), Mary Elizabeth Bayer (UNESCO), Ann-Marie Hogue (Canada Council) gave credible descriptions of their respective programs, but still one sensed that funding opportunities are drying up. At one point Bayer smiled and said "but we don't have any money." Also absent from this discussion were the D.O.C. grants that result from the right call to the right person at the right time — no application necessary. The Canada Council staunchly defends its peer jury system, yet 50% or more of its grants are given without jury consultation. There was no mention of this at the time. One can only speculate on the future of UNESCO, given the withdrawals of the U.S. and England.

This was followed by a presentation by W.R. Strachen of Chevron Canada Ltd. on his corporation's fund for culture. The corporate agenda in relation to artists speaks for itself. The stated goals of Chevron patronage of the arts are to promote a corporate

image, better customer relations, employee morale and development, a better relationship with government and a better living environment for all. Strachan suggested that artists sit down with corporate grantors to discuss their work, that the door was always open. But if an artist's work is about feminism or racism or sexuality or censorship or...? These questions were not asked or answered.

Keith Kelly's paper on the status of the artist, however belatedly it arrived from D.O.C., at least raised some of the economic concerns of visual artists. A small sense of how things might be better was presented by Donald DeGrow from the Manitoba Arts Council. He talked about the need for artist input at every level of decision-making from juries to policy to the actual make-up of the Board. He described a program which supported innovative projects, another which provided access to minority artists, another which was a kind of mentor program for women artists. It's not merely coincidental that Canada's only N.D.P. government is in Manitoba.

But whatever our situation is, as artists in the Western capitalist countries, it is not, as Lisa Steele pointed out when talking about the need to protest, like living in El Salvador. In El Salvador protesting means death. Jose Ventura (see box) in a disjunct yet moving presentation made it clear what it means to take risks as an artist in a dangerous political situation. He spoke, as did Jerzy Onuch of Poland, of the strong influence of religion and cultural tradition on the everyday working ideas and images of the artist. In both cases one senses, for better or for worse, a cultural practice which is rooted in some sense of history and geographic place. This is fast becoming nostalgia in the Western corporate image-making system where all pictures and sounds are up for grabs — dehistoricized, deculturized, decontextualized. Carol Williams, one of the conference resource people, summed up the position of the Canadian artist as being "economically censored...trapped in the end result of a capitalist system which defends free speech when the only thing spoken about is money."

Both performances — one by a Palestinian artist, Mona Hatoumi, and one by Oraf — dealt in oblique ways with this worldwide control of money and capital. Mona juxtaposed barbed wire, clanging recorded sound, and signs with countries of the world on the them, with the Expo 86 logo. Clearly she wanted us to think of the World's Fair in terms of a fair world (or unfair, as the case may be).

Is it possible for artists in Western countries to truly understand the situation of their colleagues in the second and third world? Are we really colleagues? Is an international conference with ten of its 13 speakers from the capitalist bloc really "international?" What

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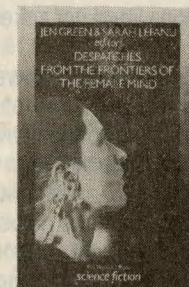
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links, if any, can be made? Barling explained that this is always a problem when bringing people from poorer countries — there simply isn't the money anywhere. She continued by saying that although the conference organizers would have preferred to invite people from Africa or Asia, nevertheless it is always valuable for artists to get together. "In a sense it's like travelling and seeing with new eyes," she said. And get together they did at two wonderful open ended cabarets at the Western Front featuring local, national and international artists in impromptu and formal performances. They ranged from popular music to dance/movement to video to camp to spoken work to jazz. It seemed, if only for a short while, that our differences as artists were not so profound as the need to have fun.

It was these differences that finally surfaced on the last day at the conference. There had been no formal provision for small group dialogue — no seminars, no workshops, no space away from the intimidating stage and microphones. This was a bit surprising given the strong and important feminist input into the conference. It fell to Liz Gilbert's last presentation in which she tried, in an unfocused way, to articulate the concerns of the unheard voice at the conference — younger artists, artists who had no connection to the institutions, artists who have no hope of receiving funding. She did not clearly state the problem, but suggested that much of the debate came from established artists and centres and that other concerns were not being addressed. This was followed by audience discussion which ranged from attacking Canada Council bureaucrats ("housekeepers making more than people in the front room") to communication ("artists simply need to talk to each other more often") to the perceived generation gap ("I'm forty and you're twenty but except for the odd grant or two in fifteen years, we're at the same economic level"). Not an auspicious ending.

From Carol William's perspective she welcomed the opportunity to open these discussions and wondered why most of these artists didn't come — the advance price was only \$12 for three days. She answered her own question by suggesting that some artists are more interested in production than politics.

Like all good conferences, *Strategies for Survival* raised more issues than it solved. The real work of a successful conference does not usually occur at the event itself or even at the dinners and parties. The real work begins when the information overload is assimilated, when people return to their home group of artists, when the ideas and the organizing are translated into the specific needs of a cultural community. It was one of these communities that Gilles Artaud spoke of so eloquently when he reinforced the need for collective organizing and action. But in the next moment he also spoke of the need for the artist to remain an anarchist. This remains the central dilemma for Western artists, trained as we are to express our individuality, yet recognizing our serious and massive responsibilities to the human beings of the rest of the world. *Strategies for Survival* could not hope to resolve this contradiction despite the ambitious nature of the questions it posed. Ultimately though, it did make clear the urgency with which we must address it. Time is not on our side; but neither has it run out on us.

Chris Creighton-Kelly is a Vancouver-based video artist and cultural critic. He has written extensively on television and its role in forming cultural consciousness. He has worked with diverse community groups such as Cultural Workers Against The Budget and the Vancouver Folk Music Festival.

Papers and tapes from *Strategies For Survival* are available from: Vancouver Artists League, Box 3980, Vancouver, British Columbia, (604) 684-1413.

VISUAL ARTS

'stalling art

by SARA
DIAMOND

A REVIEW OF LUMINOUS SITES

LUMINOUS SITES RANKS AS ONE of Vancouver's most visible and far-reaching video events. Drawing on video and installation artists from across Canada, the curators placed the series squarely within the current debates surrounding the future of video. The sites included works by English-speaking artists from Eastern Canada, New York and Vancouver: Tomiyo Sasaki; Barbara Steinman; Paul Wong; Cornelia Wyngaarden; Ian Carr-Harris; Max Dean; David Tomas; Randy and Berenici; Kate Craig and Vera Frenkel.

Varied treatments of the medium emerged. Some artists continued to foreground video, both as medium and as tool for social and aesthetic commentary (Cornelia Wyngaarden, Randy and Berenici, Tomiyo Sasaki). Others drew upon the formal nature of the medium, deploying it as an element in a larger sculptural scheme (Barbara Steinman, David Tomas, Kate Craig, Vera Frenkel). Yet others commented on its inherent qualities and history, as medium for surveillance or for mass entertainment (Max Dean, Paul Wong (whose performance I did not see), Ian Carr-Harris). Some artists combined these elements.

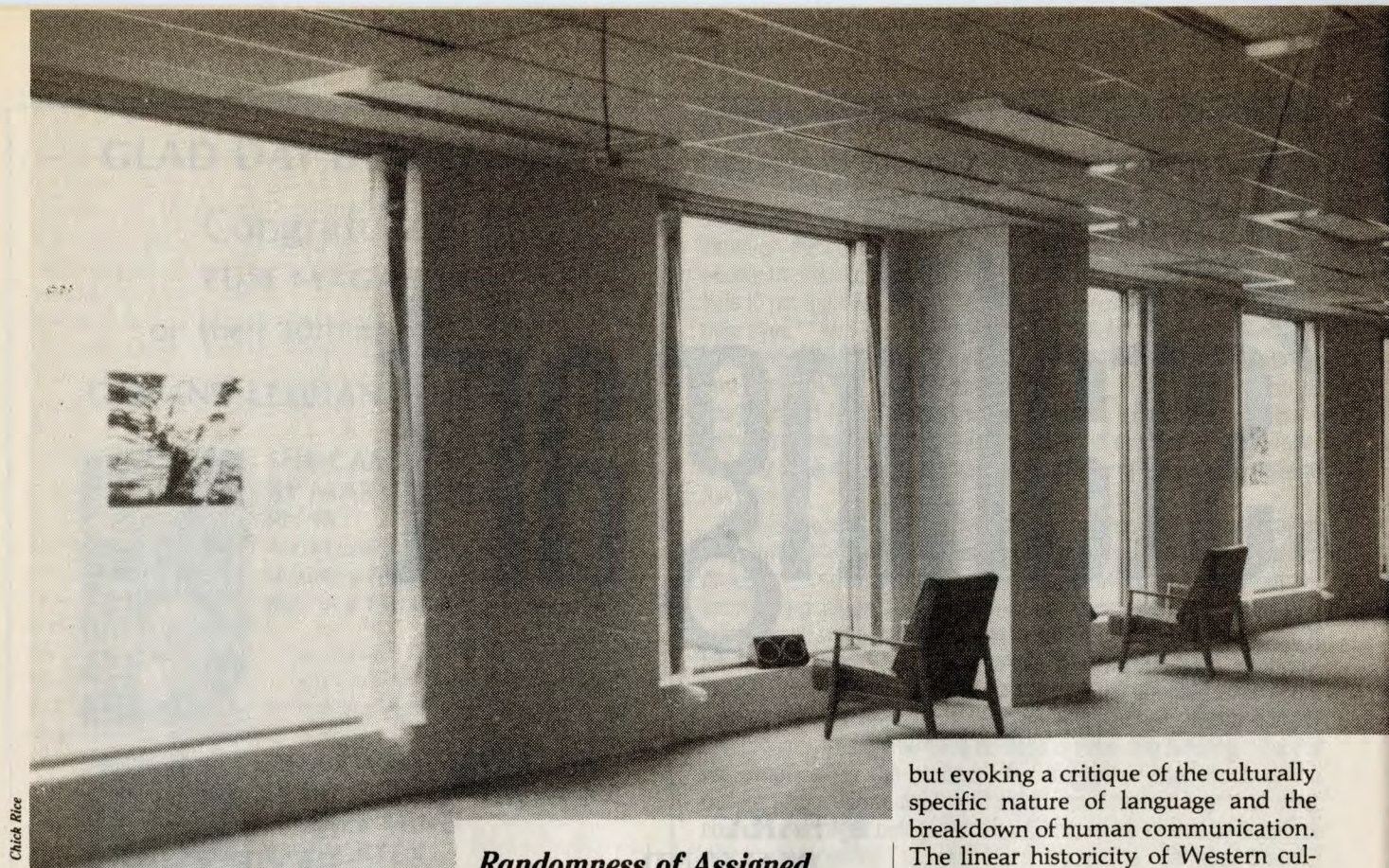
The series was timely, for video art is pulled by two, contradictory magnets, both threatening to erase its past. On the whole, the medium is becoming

more technologically intensive, less accessible and more visually flexible. At the same time, video is increasingly acknowledged as a legitimate post-modern medium by critics and galleries. Installation, as Martha Rosler pointed out at Video '84, is particularly attractive to the curator, critic and formalist because it highlights the sculptural and medium qualities of video, fits appropriately within the gallery-space and tends to downplay social commentary. There is also an existing discourse within visual art and multidisciplinary work that it can adopt: a discourse centred on formal issues of representation, the nature of specific media and concerns about the role of the artist.

On the other hand, video art faces an increased popularization, an incorporation into rock video and television technique. This process is barely realized in English Canada in comparison with the United States and Britain, but the carrot is still held out. And certainly the Quebec phenomena of Michel Lemieux and his accompanying high tech artist-associates suggests this process at work. Within these stresses there remains a strong community-based and parallel gallery interest in video art with a healthy, continuing tradition of in-

dependent screenings. Some artists who work with more popular forms and with installation, continue to engage with social issues within a continually developing aesthetic. Video installation that required audience interaction with the installation context and medium is still perceived as viable by some artists. Installation work is not inherently reactionary. It can provide a context that intensifies meaning stated within tapes and can be constructed in any environment. The value of the community context for viewing is that it allows direct interaction between audience and artwork. The presence of artists at screenings and the allowance for discussion time has facilitated critical response.

Luminous sites displayed the different directions of video installation in the 1980s with the related, inherent tensions. It is not then surprising that a central issue was that of the nature of representation: the relationships between artist and object; object and viewer; critic and viewer; critic and artist and so on. Works such as Ian Carr-Harris' *On TV*, Vera Frenkel's *Lost Art: A Cargo Cult Romance*, David Tomas' *Through*



Chick Rice

the *Eye of the Cyclops*, centred on these issues. All of these artists approached this fraught terrain with intelligence, but limited their audience by choosing the high ground.

For example, Carr-Harris' work is concerned with the reinterpretation of Manet's *Dejeuner Sur L'Herbe* and *Olympia*. His images: a slide projected field and a constructed wrinkled tablecloth/bedsheet, represents the context of the paintings, but absents the naked women from them. The viewer is forced to construct the absent models and recall their confrontative look. The spoken text explores the gaze of the women in the pieces. In *Dejeuner*, she is "an intelligent subject, and we are addressed neither as authority, nor allowed to assume anonymity. We are, in fact, addressed by her as present, equal and inconsequential."

The works challenge the easily colonizing male gaze (and Manet's contemporaries' [assumed to be male] understanding of prostitutes and other working class women). The artist demands that we watch television with a similar responsibility in constructing our relationship with the image. The work draws on recent art historical commentary on 19th century sexual representation and on critical theories of ideology. The problem is that reading the work requires a familiarity with the images.

Randomness of Assigned Cultural Meaning

Frenkel's installation is a humorous critique of the Canadian art system and the randomness of assigned cultural meaning. She constructs a mysterious panel discussion at Banff, surrounds it with images and objects from a cargo cult society. With video and text, she provides a layered and amusing narrative about the search for a winged prison toilet, an unimportant creation that assumes an amplified meaning as critics eulogize it and artists search for it.

Tomas presents a three dimensional photo montage. He superimposes a series of texts on representation and on the Western, male quest for culture/civilization, including Homer, Fox Talbot (19th century photographer), and Vertov (Soviet filmmaker). The artist constructs a false historical moment, one that brings together these culture-bearers from distinct historical epochs, to comment on the destruction of the critical eye within existing codes of representation. (Odysseus pierces Talbot's eye while Vertov looks on through the video camera of mass culture). This results in a visually strong but idiosyncratic installation.

Randy and Berenici's *Rune*, streamed together concrete constructions of language based on ciphers or codes, on their own meaningless to the viewer,

but evoking a critique of the culturally specific nature of language and the breakdown of human communication. The linear historicity of Western culture was represented by an archeological dig; bleak, decaying construction site and the towing of "history" out to sea by the artists in an entertaining performance/ritual. This contrasted with versions of history and language imbedded in other cultures, equally limited and culturally bound.

A parawalker is torturously strung with threads. Carrying a giant head-dress sewn to his body, he advances towards a temple. This suggests a painful and repetitive relationship with historical memory. In a Chinese board-game, the future is told by cards and a bird alighting on the board. History is a random but repeated gesture. The message is not optimistic: human communication is fraught, patterned and incomprehensible. This work attacked issues of representation through a broader existentialist discourse on the crisis of human society.

Sasaki and Craig chose lyrical, visually stirring approaches to video installation. In both pieces, video is incidental, a tool to develop a pleasurable environmental landscape. Tomiyo Sasaki's *Spawning Sockeyes* reiterated this artist's concern with the delicate ecology of natural cycles. It was a sculptural work, with video loops of sparkling salmon on monitors scattered on a cascade of rocks. Kate Craig's *Clay Cove, Newfoundland*. Park Place, Vancouver contrasted the sounds and shapes of the Newfoundland seacoast

with the landscape and skyline of Vancouver.

The above works were skillfully executed cultural puzzles, glimpses of natural beauty rendered warm within a usually cold medium or celebrations of the power of technology. While they



Installation by Kate Craig

were amusing, entertaining, visually beautiful or witty, they functioned for a very traditional gallery audience. This was a point of frustration. Luminous Sites was heavily publicized and attracted a larger than usual crowd. Many of the works either eschewed their viewers or simply pleased them.

Several of the artists were effective in combining a critique of social reality with exciting video language. As *A Wife Has A Cow*, by Cornelia Wyn-

gaarden, is based on entertaining stories told by a woman rancher (Keely Moll) from Rock Creek. The work addresses issues of gender identity in its choice of an androgynous and highly competent heroine. The installation counterposes the male world of the rodeo, where cowboys attempt to ride angry wild cows with the serenity of Moll's symbiotic lifestyle and humour. The audience is surrounded by bales of hay and six monitors, in fact corralled by the work. The effect is a gentle fun-poking at media stereotyping and the Western mythos.

Barbara Steinman's powerful *Cenotaphe* is about the impact of fascism. Based on Hannah Arendt's quote, "The radicalism of measures to make people disappear...as if they had never existed is frequently not apparent at first glance." It is a tomb to the disappeared; a solid, silent monument with blue video flame. It is a remembrance of those murdered by the military in South and Central America, the victims of fascism in Germany and Native people in North America. It is a sensitive and simple work, effective in a period when monuments to dead astronauts grace American streets and Canadians leap eagerly to the right.

Also of interest was Max Dean's *Prototype*. This was the only interactive installation, one which sought a street audience. Placed in the storefront Or Gallery, Dean's surveillance construction was activated by hand pressure from the viewer. As the surveillance camera swung around, the face of the viewer captured on the black and white monitor became increasingly distorted. It was an apt statement on the capacity of self-induced monitoring, particularly the state censorship variety, to create a distorted and controlled image.

Despite its limitations, Luminous Sites provided an important opening for video art and installation in Vancouver. By centering on work about art-making and beauty it provided a new legitimacy for video, one that needed a more subversive balance. It is to be hoped that future projects of this scale will use community as well as gallery environments and include more issue-oriented and documentary artists in redefining video installation. Nonetheless, the efforts of the curators, Karen Henry and Diana Augaitus, in realizing this scale of work, in a variety of gallery spaces, deserves respect.

Sara Diamond

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Ahdri is a Jamaican-Canadian poet and theatre director/creator whose work has inspired me to explore the reasons why she does what she does. I had a number of questions in mind when I settled my tape recorder in a couple of pillows on the sofa between us — how does she describe her mandate as a political artist, what are her guiding principles as a director/creator of popular theatre and what are her theories on how to do anti-racist cultural work?

Ahdri came to Canada in 1973 when she was 15 and has quickly created a reputation as an intelligent and pro-

gressive artist. I first introduced myself to her on the steps of the U.S. Consulate after watching her perform some poems at an anti-intervention-in-Nicaragua event (Spring '85). Ahdri performs her poetry as a person in a poster of militant resistance — electrified with calm, directed rage.

In the year I've known her she has accomplished the following: the publication of an anthology of her poetry, *Speshal Rikwes*, by Sister Vision Press*, for which she has done readings across Canada; the direction of *Up on Eglinton*, by Fikrete Mariam, which she produced at an A Space

funded opening at the Palmerston Library Theatre, a 3-night run at the Theater Centre, and several high-school and conference performances; the direction of *Jasmine Tea*, by Afua Marcus, and of *Nutshells*, by Diana Braithwaite. She is the founder/director of Dance Kulcha Muvmant, on the A Space board, and a member of Lavender Shorts, a group of lesbians in theatre.

Even in the morning light as she talks on her sofa on St. Clair Avenue above a used tool shop, I can see Ahdri's awareness of the space around her and of the sound which her presence makes in space:

When I first started in theatre, which for me was entering the stage space — not necessarily even on it, but behind it and so on, I started working as a poet, a performance poet. Then I decided I needed training, theatre training, to fit the confines, the theatre standards here in Canada, to really know what's going on behind, and even in front. So I took some theatre training, did some stage managing and I toured all over — to Detroit, Montreal, the Caribbean. And onstage, I was doing my performance poetry. That onstage view — and even as a stage manager I was getting that onstage view — prompted me to work as a director. Even throughout all of this, dance was the first formal training I had in anything; but I only really danced in theatre productions, because of what my focus is — it's movement rather than dance. It's changing places, action, different spaces. I feel more like a director than a poet.

She is currently working on a children's play:

It's actually called *Tcho Tcho Loza (Freedom Train)*, but I call it 'Apartheid Child.' I am working with a collective of artists directed by Amah Harris. We brought 1 or 2 or 3 particular pieces and we're stringing them together. Alec does storytelling and he's tying them together. It works very nicely. And, of course, Amah is directing.

Ahdri was a student of Amah Harris, former director of Black Theatre Canada, and counts her as one of the most important influences on her creative thinking.

Amah can see a concept like you wouldn't believe. That is partially where I get my vision and conception from. Because Amah can see concept right off... how you get from A to B, from B to C, C to D and how the end connects with the beginning... without a script. Amah does popular theatre. She has a company called Theatre in the Rough using popular theatre techniques. She loves improvisation. This is one thing I learned from Amah — you work with what you get, not having any framework, and you see what can come out of whatever pieces you have.

The fact that Ahdri does not prepare her workshops in advance really stunned me — I who walk around with a folder of notes for formulae to cover any eventuality.

I've come to trust no preparation.

I even trust no rehearsal. Usually as a theatre person you rehearse

and rehearse until you perfect it;

but poetry has taught me that im-

provisation and spontaneity is

truth. And I've come to appreciate

that. I've learned to work with my

own moods. I have to know my

limits, my boundaries, my

capacities, how deep I can go, how

high I can go, or how low.

Ahdri carries this spontaneity approach through into play-building. Last winter, Lavender Shorts decided to do a piece on the interrelation between racism and homophobia and Ahdri lead it.

The workshop, as far as the exercises, was to find out what's there; and then, in giving people a choice, I found out what they wanted, or what they are capable of. When I say 'pick an age,' and you pick 17, it means there are things you think you could give and that could come out of you (from that age perspective). You're 17 and you decide the intensities and then I work with that because that is what you give me. Rather than if I myself said, 'You're 35 and you're this and this and this.'

Through Ahdri's workshop we produced a play called *(In)visible Minority* which Carol Thames, another member of Lavender Shorts, eventually scripted. It is about a Black teacher in a WASP private girls school. A rich mother, who has always wanted to get rid of the teacher because of her colour, overhears that she is a lesbian and uses that information to get her fired. Furthermore, the mother does not try to get the teacher's white colleague fired, even though she heard of that woman's lesbianism at the same time.

People might have liked a different

theme for *(In)visible Minority*. In-

itially people would have preferred a

less class-oriented sort of piece, but

that was, for me, ironic, because I

didn't say 'this and this and this is

that.' That is what people have

created, and that method is how we

learned about each other; we

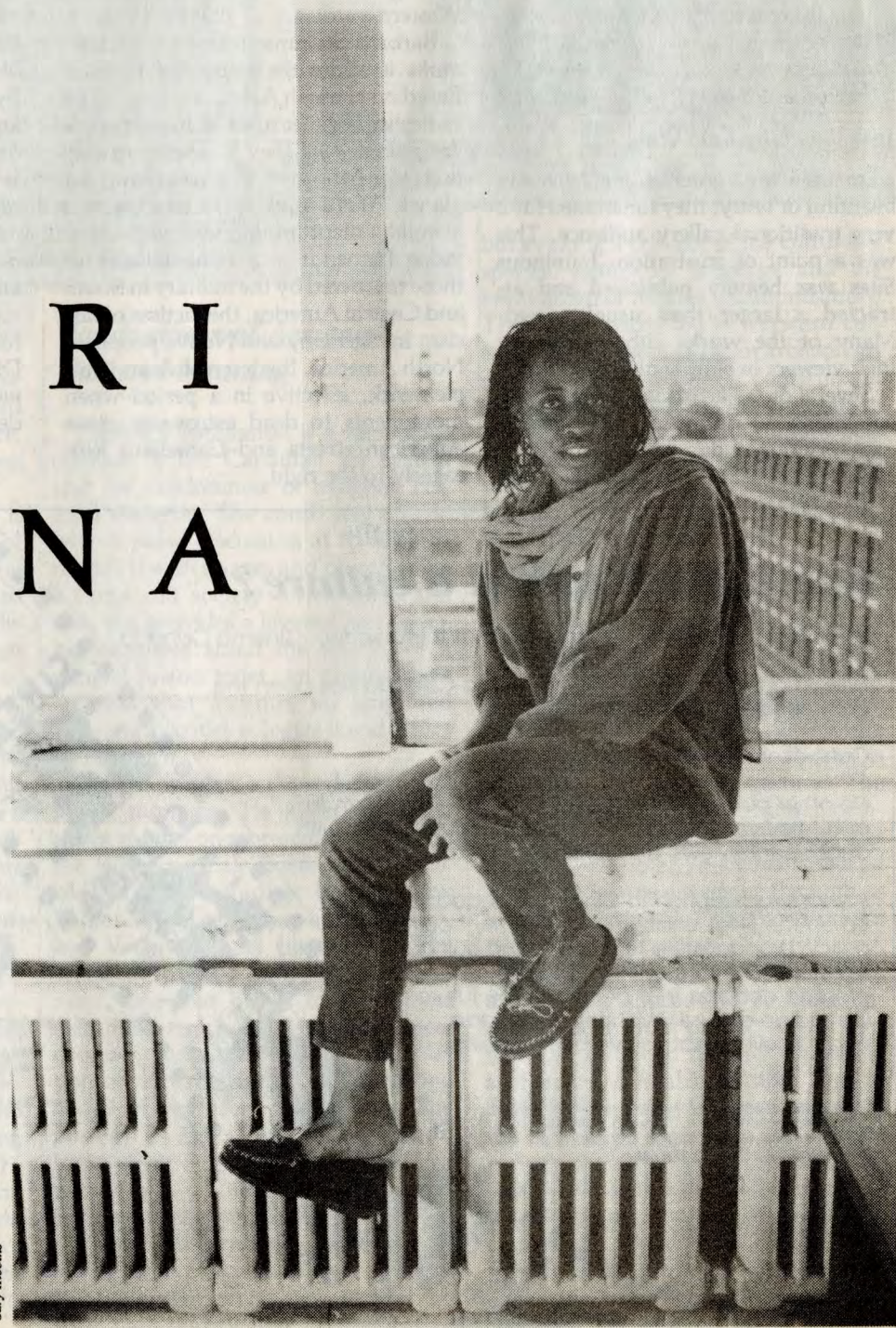
learned a lot. It validated the whole

process.

The process was, and is, a difficult one. Our collective was unbalanced in numbers with 5 of the 8 members white. Once I'd realized that we weren't giving representation to a certain issue, I would normally have written a script around it, or helped someone write one; but of course, not being a woman of colour I couldn't do that, so I watched Ahdri's solution to

AHDRI ZHINA

by
Gay
Bell



Gary Kibbina

getting a mixed collective to produce a piece about racism. Her advice was:

Recognize that it's the fact of taking what you have, using what you have that really makes it work, rather than trying to mould it differently. You try to mould something that is brittle and it cracks and breaks. One has to recognize the malleability of people's minds, of people's expectations and of people's intentions, and try to fit them together, because person A expects different end results from person B. How they get to that, how they work in between the point they're at and getting to somewhere else; how you fit them together and let them jive, so to speak, is, I think, where the skill comes in. And you have to know the people then. You have to have looked and seen what's there, and know the skill which you can use. You have to have looked in their eyes, seen all the little intricacies that happen or don't happen with eyes.

And indeed, one of the exercises which we did was to look into a partner's eyes and go through the changes dictated by the leader, Ahdri.

You're flirting with your partner. She's responding. She's pulling back. You feel hurt. If you look away when you're supposed to be looking me straight in the eye, then there's something that you're keeping from me. No matter how simple it is. There's something that you're shielding and if you don't open up wide or if you open half way, that's indicative of some reservation. You can tell a lot by changes. When I give to you, how do you change? When I take away from you, how do you change? Is it consistent? Is it still you? Is that indicative of how you function?

We did body-sculpture exercises where we took positions indicative of a person's stance in relation to colour — then we intensified them and then lightened the intensity, as if on a scale of 1 to 10.

That's why at one point I talk about degrees, degrees of anger — more or less, and maybe *more* again — because you can't really judge until you can see the reverse, how it works backwards too.

All through this process, which is very scary even for a white woman — acting the oppressor, male or female white person, a racist — let alone how scary it must be for a black actor in those circumstances. Ahdri was almost quiet during the improvs, functioning as a kind of current that all our feelings were going through:

I didn't know what I wanted that night because I didn't know what people wanted. It was a collective. They needed something from everybody.

Which leads to Ahdri's recently-formulated theory of 'comfort.' When I interviewed her she had just returned from a tour to Montreal and Halifax with the band Demi-Monde where she did an introductory solo set and then a second set

of poems with the band.

When I do my poetry, I feel like an educator. But when I was in Halifax, for the first time I felt like an entertainer. I had given them the messages in the first set and then I said, 'All right, let's get loose.' After I've disseminated information and consciousness starts to change, I make them comfortable with that change, which is really, for me, what entertainment is. In the past I totally rejected the word entertainer for myself, but I felt like an entertainer then, and that was a big eye opener. But we need to be comforted. Every time we take a step, we need to be comforted. The more we reinforce change, the more we change and grow.

I was surprised at that thought because a white member of Lavender Shorts had noted that, as white women, we shouldn't look to be rewarded for not being racist. When I said so, Ahdri smiled:

As white women you need to devise ways to make yourselves comfortable with changes in attitudes; and as Black people we need comforting situations to get us along.

Which point moved our conversation on to ask what Ahdri describes as her "main mandate." The three plays she has directed in the last year, *Up on Eglinton*, *Jasmine Tea*, and *Nutshells*, as well as *(In)visible Minority*, were written by Black women who are learning the craft of playwrighting.

I gravitate towards that which is me — Black women. As soon as I came back from Jamaica, Afua and Diana had just won awards (1984 Black Theatre Canada Playwright Awards) for their plays. I knew they were there and needed something.

As Black women, we need to remind ourselves how we're feeling, what we're doing, how we fit in. We don't see our perspectives. We don't see our reflections. Kids will

get lost in strange environments. Black kids don't see their faces on TV. It means, to them, that there's something negative, by just the fact of that absence. That's how racism is instituted and perpetuated. I knew, at about age 25, that I had to start laying foundations for the young people. I knew that because of not getting enough from the generation before me. It was my turn. And that's why I'm putting Black women's work out there.

Ahdri admires a Jamaican women's theatre group called Sistren (reviewed in *Fuse*, Vol. 5, No. 8 & 9, 1981).

They're dynamic. It's their rough, 'unpolishedness.' It's their reality, their uniqueness, which is good. Their gut — they bare their guts on stage.

They have been in existence for about 8 years now. They do 2 to 3 pieces per year. They go to Europe. They tour all over Jamaica and the Caribbean. They do this 'likkle' piece in the community. They work. They work. And with all that experience that they have wrapped up, they're still 'unpolished.' And that's why they're so real and effective.

Another case of being 'unpolished' is, for me, Louise Bennett. Miss Lou is probably 70 by now and has been on the stage at least 80% of her life. She made Jamaican pantomime what it is today. And for me Miss Lou is still unpolished in her presentation. Everything for me that I can see is totally improvised, no matter how many times she has said a piece. Every time I hear her or see her or feel her do it, or sit within her company, she is what she is, 'unpolished' and real. And she just carries that with her everywhere. I mean forty years of unpolished! That's deliberate! And that's what keeps her so close to the people. They call her Aunt Lou. Everybody recognizes Miss Lou in Jamaica. That 'unpolishedness,' that realness, that emotion that always shines through, that's what keeps it effective, communicative, reaching. That is how we have to make ourselves constantly available. If we're going to be communicative then what we are doing has to be constantly available. Take it out of the realm of people's comprehension, and you've defeated your whole purpose.

Don't do 'Art for Art's Sake,' please. Because I'm not 'Art.' Do art for me, a person who can understand and communicate. Don't do art for yourself either.

ASPACE In conjunction with UPFRONT THEATRE presents:

UP ON EGLINTON

EGLINTON W. MARLEE

An initial production of a new play written by **FIKRETE MARIAM** and directed by **AHDRI ZHINA**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 7:30 p.m.
at PALMERSTON LIBRARY,
560 Palmerston 531-2486

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\$2 (members)

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"Polish is illusion. I used to believe in the illusion of theatre, but I learned that you have to break that illusion in order to deal with reality. When you let people know that you've done something, it lets them know that they can do something too. You're not up there, big and mighty, saying 'This is what I've done'."

Art is for communicating and recreating experiences so maybe we can remember them and go on with new experiences.

As an interviewer I could describe what qualities of the *Up on Eglinton* production really stuck in my mind and enabled me to remember it with such clarity. And one of those qualities is the effect of wholeness, integration, created partly by the fact that none of the 7 actors ever left the stage. They either play trees, a juke box, a TV set giving the news, a phone receiver, a door jamb, a partygoer in the background of a scene, or they play their character in the foreground. Another integrating effect is that while the actors are moving the three boxes they use for stage furniture, they are changing their costumes between scenes right before our eyes on stage, the soundtrack from Jimmy Cliff's *The Harder They Come* is intense. Then it fades and the actors in freeze positions, their right arms raised, say "5, 6, 7, 8 gwaan," bring down their arms, and begin the next scene. Indeed I could spend pages describing the qualities of this play about a Jamaican youth who has arrived in Canada to join his mother who has been here for a few years. He can't fit into the school where the kids laugh at him and the teachers don't try to listen to what he's saying because of his different accent. He can't fit into his mother's home with her husband and 'their' kids. So he goes up on Eglinton, partying, and gets framed for a murder he did not commit. But I think, more important than my description of this play and it's production, is Ahdri's observations on her creation.

During the rehearsals, several actors commented to me on how the play resembled their lives and how unusual that was for them. Ahdri said:

The surroundings that the actors live in, that informs me. Nobody gave me any money and said, 'Here, design a set.' I knew we'd use three boxes when we got into the Black Theatre Canada's rehearsal space because they had 3 boxes, and the whole concept came to me, the versatility. The absence of resources is what makes a good bum, you know. It has a lot to do with the theatre I've seen. I go to the theatre and I say to myself, 'So, that's a pretty little stage, nice set. So they walk

around here. So I have bedroom furniture too. I see that every day. That happens in my house too. So what's the difference? What are you trying to tell me?' But when an actor lifts up a box or a takes a piece of cloth and makes it into a flag, what are you saying? That we have the versatility within our society to use things for different purposes, to have different meanings.

When you cannot eat and you're not fasting; yet you're surviving and you're functioning well, that is really working with our resources. Or when you wear really old patchy clothes that are comfortable and look 'good,' that's using your resources.

It's common in the Caribbean to put actors with different 'calibres,' of different strengths and weaknesses, on stage together and let them work with what they have. If the actors were all really experienced, 'broadway calibre,' having done a lot of shows, even really knowing the stage, how would it have been different? It wouldn't have. It would've looked more 'polished,' maybe glitzy. And, for me, the roughness it had was the polish it needed. I didn't want it any more polished, because our lives are not more polished than that.

In standard pieces, you get actors saying to directors, 'What is my motivation?' I don't think you can give people motivation. I think you can give them guidelines and ask them to follow through and make the best of those guidelines with their own motivation. You don't provide motivation in *life* — hanging candy over a child's face and saying, 'Here's your motivation.' No, the child has to want that and work towards it. That's how we build a good society. All we've been having is candy and money and 'Come work and you get this.' I don't want to. I want a society that's people-positive where our function is determined by our motivation, where the technician's work isn't any more important than the street cleaner's. Don't tell me that we need to invent this and this so we can do it this way. Tell me how we can work with what we have.

Poet Lillian Allen, who introduced Ahdri to the anti-intervention organizer for the Nicaraguan event (Spring '85), turned me on to the concept of radical integrationism, a tradition of Black politics in the U.S. It means, as I understand it, working for political integration with whites and people of colour, not in terms of assimilation but in terms of radical change. When I mentioned the concept to Ahdri she brought out the analogy of two magnets — they attract each other from only one direction and you have to play with them a bit to find the 'positive' spot.

The Black magnet is supposed to be in the Black community 'where it belongs,' and the white magnet is supposed to be

separate. Pull those magnets together and you get this (anti-path), or let them go together another way and eventually you will find somewhere they relate and they intertwine and they integrate. That is basically how we are cut off from each other through racism, sexism, homophobia. And when we try to pull them together it becomes confrontive — it has to be. The States has a tradition from the Civil Rights movement. Canada is getting it mildly, very mildly, because we've had other confrontive

"When I give to you, how do you change? When I take from you, how do you change? Is it consistent? Is it still you? Is that indicative of how you function?"

movements before — for example, the women's movement. But in the States, the Civil Rights movement was before the women's movement. And a lot of people contend that the women's movement learned a lot from the Civil Rights movement. We are now learning and that is why it's such a stirring thing in the women's community, because we, and I say 'we' including myself and Black people and white people, are learning from the women's movement, from our involvement, how to deal with our race divisions. I have to be a part of it. I have no choice. I choose to do women's work. As an artist I'm working as a woman and I'm working as a Black woman. No matter where I go, I say that right off the bat. Because I want them to know where I'm coming from. There was a time when I felt the poem 'Black Ooman' was very confrontive. And it is. But I need it to be. I want it to be. It has to be. And I used to leave it to the end, but not any more. I bring it close to the top of any presentation I'm doing so you know where I'm coming from and if you can listen to that and sit, after that then we can talk. If you can talk to me after you hear that and you feel we can talk, we found somewhere, a ground to speak from. We're ready to integrate.

Gay Bell is a Toronto playwright and performance artist who has been politically active in the lesbian community for the past ten years.

*Sister Vision, Black Women & Women of Colour Press, P.O. Box 217, Station E, Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E2



Stephanie Martin

Black ooman rebellin
Black ooman ah stawt tellin
ah tellin tings
whe mek yuh kwivvah
ah chat deepah dan silent rivvah

awfta all dem miles
wih foot dem ah bun
wih spirits ah bwile
wih language ah tun
fram rank to vile

naw rant naw cuss
cause wih nuh really
want nuh fuss
but wih bile bag ah buss
suh jus

back awff

from Black Ooman, in *Speshal Rikwes*

ARTS AGAINST APARTHEID FESTIVAL

BY
MARLENE
NOURBESE
PHILIP

'We want to thank the people of Toronto and of Canada for their concern and compassion. The very fact that this Festival is being held shows that many people care about what is happening here. And that is important for those who are involved in struggle in South Africa. I want the people of Toronto to know that what they do will make a difference, if they do it effectively.'

BISHOP DESMOND TUTU
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA
TORONTO STAR, MAY 18, 1986

LAST FALL I CONFRONTED YET again what often appears to be the futility of what I spend most of my time doing — writing (primarily poetry). Futility, when I try to comprehend the incomprehensible; the brutal vicious regime of South Africa that masquerades as democracy; futility, when I acknowledge that poetry's claim (prose for that matter as well) is not for its efficacy in ending such regimes; its only claim — at times an uneasy one — is that it persists in clinging to some attempt to discern an often indiscernible truth; its only validity, its stubborn persistence when everything militates against its existence.

Words at times fall silent before the existence of a reality such as South Africa's; they "strain,/crack and sometimes break, under the burden,/Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,/decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,/will not stay still."* At other times words and their writer become fearful at being unable to express the inexpressible, or of expressing it and so trivializing it into yet another product to be consumed by a society hungry for images — "With shabby equipment always deteriorating/In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,/Undisciplined squads of emotion."*

*T.S. Eliot, *The Four Quartets*

Artists have continually defied this fear in their various media, and with varying success have produced the novel, poem, play, piece of music, painting or dance which is undeniably art, but which is also political. Brecht, Orwell, Bob Marley, Ntozake Shange, Audre Lorde, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Dionne Brand, De Dub Poets, Krishantha Sri Bhaggiyadatta, Leroy Sibbles, Katherine Dunham, Isadora Duncan, and Sue Coe are all linked by political commitment which is present in their work, either as a persistent motif, or as a framework for their particular medium. In the hands of the less competent artist, such commitment degenerates into polemic, rhetoric, cant and propaganda; the marriage of art and politics in this direct way is a continually risky business.

There is, however, another way in which art may be involved in the political sphere. The futility I spoke of in the opening paragraphs rapidly dissipated when, in October 1985, I organized a small benefit (held at the Trojan Horse) in aid of Azania (South

Africa). Poets, writers, musicians and visual artists and dancers contributed their time and work to this event. The three hundred dollars raised (after expenses) was given to the ANC.

The Toronto Arts Against Apartheid Festival was, on a much larger scale, just such an example of artists involving themselves in political struggle beyond a particular work. Some artists would create work specifically for the occasion, on the subject of racism or South Africa — The Clichettes at the opening gala; others would offer already existing works, as did Liberty Silver and W.O. Mitchell, which bore no direct relevance to these issues, but drew relevance from the context in which they were performed.

The history of the Toronto Arts Against Apartheid Festival Foundation (TAAAFF) is a short one and fraught with many problems; it is a history that is linked with the United Way and the policies of its President, Gordon Cressy.

The Black Development Committee (BDC), one of the several ethnic com-

mittees formed to advise the United Way on the disbursement of United Way funds to Black organizations, proposed the idea of the anti-apartheid festival (brain-child of Ayanna Black) to the United Way. The latter was enthusiastic and open in its support for the idea, and proposed that it be a joint venture between itself and the BDC.

That great supporter of human and civil rights for Blacks in South Africa and Toronto, the *Toronto Sun*, publicly excoriated the United Way for its involvement in this type of international, political event. If we accept what Harry Belafonte said at the last event of the festival — the Afro-Heat concert, members of the business and corporate community were at best lukewarm to the proposal, at worst some actively tried to hinder the organization of the festival.

The culmination of this negative response was that the United Way, its funding sources appearing to be at risk, withdrew its public support and the fledgling organization TAAAFF was born. Behind the scenes the United Way continued its support of TAAAFF by providing support staff, expertise and liaising with other groups on behalf of the latter.

The original aim was a two-day festival; this was to increase to eight days and with a target figure of one million dollars. If credibility be bestowed by name, then TAAAFF possessed an over-abundance of credibility — from Oscar Peterson and Bruce Cock-

burn to David McCamus, President of Xerox Canada. What it lacked, however, was any representation from those groups involved in the daily grind of grass roots work against apartheid. Such an omission bespoke a certain political naivete within TAAAFF and was to lead to the most glaring controversy surrounding the festival — the involvement of corporate sponsors.

Only subsidiaries like Xerox Canada, and Coca Cola who had no power to make decisions affecting business within South Africa would be welcome as sponsors; corporations like Bata which could and did make decisions about branch plants in South Africa were anathema, so too were corporations who, although appearing otherwise, were South African owned by virtue of the source of their investment capital — such were TAAAFF's criteria.

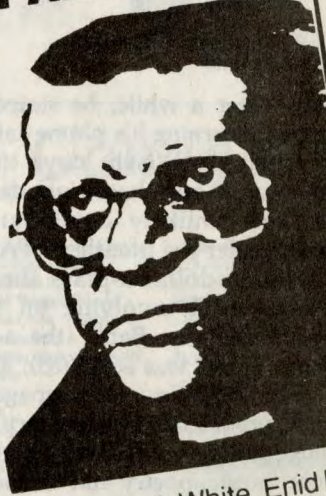
Given the picayune size of the corporate donations — five thousand dollars from Coca Cola and the salaries of two workers on the dinner committee from Xerox, surely it would have been wiser to have avoided the corporate taint that marred the festival.

Certain groups publicly opposed any corporate involvement — limited as it was — and offered 'critical support' to the festival: supporting the endeavour in general, but soliciting signatures at various events of the

RALLY AGAINST APARTHEID
march with
Bishop Desmond Tutu

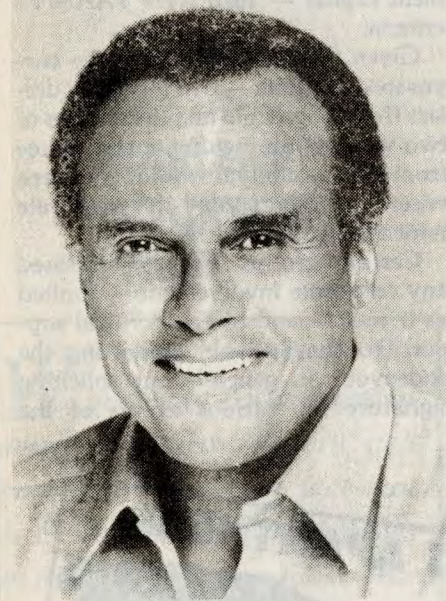
10 a.m. Assemble at Simcoe & Queen (1 block west of University)
10:30 a.m. March to South African Consulate (King and Bay)

12 noon — Rally QUEEN'S PARK
Speakers include: Bishop Desmond Tutu, Lennox Farrell, Art Solomon, Bob White, Enid Lee



festival for a petition protesting the involvement of Coca Cola, Xerox and Holiday Inns.**

More ironic incidents related to this issue reveal how deep and wide corporate tentacles stretch: at Poets Against Apartheid, held at the Bamboo, some brands of beer on sale belonged to breweries like Carling O'Keefe which hold major investments in South Africa. The failure of Harry Belafonte to deliver a 'big name' act like Bruce Springsteen was the result of corporate sponsorship of many such performers. Belafonte's remarks in a *Toronto Star* interview shortly before the festival indicate that although many artists he approached were supportive of the idea, none was prepared to bite the corporate hand that fed



Harry Belafonte

them. After a while, he stated, they stopped returning his phone calls.

Toronto had 'eight days to show that it cared' and those eight days saw the most unlikely combination of events under the mantle of TAAAFF: a hundred-dollar-a-plate dinner; a criminal trial involving an alleged assault on Glen Babb (the accused, Lennox Farrell was acquitted); a church service; an address to a synagogue; a special provincial parliamentary sitting; a huge grass-roots rally; educationals, dance, music, poetry and drama.

The distance of TAAAFF from the more active anti-apartheid work was

**The Holiday Inn provided accommodation for some of the performers.

reflected in the fact that the march and rally against apartheid was organised by the Anti-apartheid Coalition of Toronto, not by TAAAFF itself; none of the funds collected at that event will be among the proceeds of the festival.

Was the festival a success? In its original aim to raise a million dollars it has failed. TAAAFF had intended that funds raised were to be equally allocated to the Bishop Desmond Tutu Southern African Refugee/Scholarship fund; aid projects in Southern Africa administered by Canadian charities; and local development projects and agencies administered by the United Way. The general lack of donations and sponsorship by foundations and individuals has meant that breaking even, for TAAAFF, might be an achievement.

In the more general sense of raising consciousness and placing the issue of apartheid before the public for an extended period of time, TAAAFF has undoubtedly helped advance the struggle here in the West to secure the imposition of sanctions against South Africa. One noticeable effect was the increased calls for sanctions by both opposition parties in the Federal parliament.

It also helped to link the struggle in South Africa with the work against racism here in Toronto and in Canada. The two are indisputably connected. Organizers of certain events, for instance, did not see the need to involve Black artists; it was incumbent on certain members of TAAAFF to insist upon and ensure their involvement. The failure of TAAAFF to raise more money than it has, (at writing the final figures are not yet available), to secure more donations, both of a public and private nature is integrally related to the financial resources of Blacks in this city and their positions within institutions — corporate and otherwise.

While acknowledging the overall achievements of the festival, we ought not, however, to disregard the fact that Bishop Tutu was *allowed* by the South African government to address us. As a 'man of God' he is far more acceptable to the West than a Nelson Mandela would be, and the broad-based welcome extended the former would certainly not have been as evident if the latter had come to this festival.

It is a disturbing observation that when confronted with mass move-

ments and struggles against oppressive rule, the West finds the religious leader much more palatable and acceptable than the secular one — Gandhi, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Bishop Muzorewa, and now Bishop Desmond Tutu and the Reverend Boesak. Could it be that governments hope that the very religion used in the service of colonialism — cultural and otherwise — will somehow mitigate the frenzy and justified anger of those who have often waited beyond the bounds of patience for what is theirs?

Those engaged in the struggle for a free South Africa must use every opportunity handed them to advance that struggle, but we must not forget that the South African people would — if the polls are correct — far rather have had Nelson Mandela represent them and their struggle here in Toronto. Bishop Tutu must be thanked for his efforts and the personal risks he has taken to bring the plight of his people to the world, but we, along with the people of South Africa, have been thrown a sop.

Earlier I talked of two ways the artist

may involve herself in political struggle: the more direct route of creating the political work, and the less direct but possibly equally effective route — and one probably less fraught with artistic risk — of offering one's art in the service of the work to be done.

I have chosen to trace these traditions back to an African aesthetic which views art, not as separate from

the community, but sees the artist as integral to the community and her work as vital to the continuance of the community. When European artists first came in contact with 'primitive' works of African artists, they responded to the form and style, absorbing, fusing (often losing) them with Western traditions to produce the works of those artists we are now so familiar with — Picasso, Brancusi, Braque. They attempted to produce a result without being aware or possibly even caring what the larger meaning of these pieces were — offerings to a spirit, an ancestor, a god. The work of art, within the African tradition, could have no aesthetic meaning standing over from the meaning which was at once transcendental and communal.



Zinzi Mandela at Jabulani Stadium, Soweto, Feb/85 reading her father's statement rejecting the government's offer of his conditional release.

"Art, then, to the African has a function which is of the greatest significance to the community. It grows out of the history and the values of the community...Black art, then, is still a community art, still a functional art, still infused with emotion, still deeply committed, still geared to the perpetuation of a people."

—Eugenia Collier, "The African Presence in Afro-American Literary Criticism"; *Obsidian, Black Literature in Review* (Wayne State University) Vol. VI, No. 4

The TAAAFF festival had its roots in this heritage and therein lay the celebratory nature of many events.

It may seem incongruous that celebration should play a part in any event related to the struggle for liberation in South Africa, but celebration as in 'honouring with ceremonies and festivities' all the men, women and children who have, over the years, fought the South African regime; celebration as in 'making publicly known', and 'extolling' their struggle and our part in helping them to bring an end to such a regime; such celebration belonged in these events.

Futility, frustration and impotence — these may all come with the territory of being a writer — possibly exacerbated in the West by certain traditions which, contrary to the African aesthetic, assign to art a validity in and of itself. The festival offered an opportunity to bridge that gap which often exists between the artist and her matrix of social responsibility.

Marlene Nourbese Philip

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New products are always coming into Canada. Be sure to read labels.

Sweeping Power Leaves "Dirty" Sex in a Vacuum

WHILE BRITISH COLUMBIA artists were reacting to the introduction of video classification and censorship legislation, John Crosby announced his intended revisions to the Criminal Code of Canada. As media attention and public concern shifted to the national arena, B.C. Attorney-General Brian Smith's censorship legislation quietly passed on June 16, with only one dissenting NDP vote. Smith's perfect timing could only have occurred with assistance from the Federal Conservatives.

Without question, the new Criminal Code Amendments must be challenged. That lactation, menstruation, vaginal, oral and anal intercourse, and "other sexual activities" are "pornographic" and cannot be represented by artistic and other means is a tremendous defeat for feminism, gay and lesbian rights, artistic exploration and human liberation.

And on another front — and despite the flurry of resistance to “Bill C” — the introduction of “Bill 30,” the new B.C. Motion Picture Act, did not pass without strong protest from the artistic, gay and lesbian, publishing, legal, video and film communities. Small commercial video outlets and feminist groups and artists also voiced their concerns.

As feared, B.C.'s new legislation is modelled on the discredited Ontario law. *All* video will require prior screening, classification and censorship. Bill 30 will give sweeping powers to the Director of Classification and to the provincial cabinet to define sexuality as represented in images — suggestive or explicit — and to change the exact criteria for what is to be classified (restricted) and censored, without public consultation.

The legislation will cost the province's taxpayers \$558,990 in 1986-7

alone, not including the expense to artists and distributors. While there are provisions for educational programming about pornography, these are a very vague response to demands from the feminist and artistic communities for educational resources. There is no provision for sex education.

There is a punitive quality to the legislation: it includes stiff fines and potential prison sentences for distributors or artists who resist the submission of their work. The act empowers "authorized individuals" or the police to

seize videotapes, to inspect on site, to demand access to equipment and, eventually, to destroy tapes.

There are no real exemptions for artists' centres that coincide with the reality of screening and the use of video in Canada. Video artists have been careful to preserve a wide public access to their work, not to limit it to a narrow, membership-only, adult-only, paying club as the new law demands. Even the decision of what is an educational or artistic context is left up to the discretion of the Director of Classification.

Like the federal legislation, the B.C. law uses sexual explicitness as the basis of restriction, restating yet again the culture's values that sex is "dirty." The pro-censorship feminist lobby, that has centred on issues of degradation and violence is not reflected in this stance, but the concerns of the organized Right and Sacred women's caucus sure are.

In response to the tabling of the Bill, the Coalition for the Right to View held a press conference. The following

statements reflect some of the diverse resistance to the law:

"My concern with regard to the recently introduced legislation is that sexually explicit material will be censored.

Two years ago I was a "minor" and I had been sexually active as a "minor" for several years. I tried to find a language for my sexual feelings and desires. What I was taught from the many films, videos and television shows I watched in the mainstream media was that women remained silent.

Access to positive sexually explicit material is difficult to find in this society. The Motion Picture Act will make it virtually impossible. Images of people having sex and talking about their sexual experiences need to be distributed in the secondary schools and other institutions, not censored. There is a need for sex education in this province and young people must be encouraged to talk about their erotic needs, not made to feel inhibited by them.

It is my right to discern what is or is not abusive imagery and to view and talk about the critical and positive material that is available to me through artist-run and community centres."

Meaghan Baxter, writer/actor

"...We strongly object to this government's plan to introduce a video censorship board in British Columbia. History has shown us that governments have done an abysmal job in their attempts to legislate society's mores. As an example the Ontario government has in recent years proven their ineptitude in dealing with the issue of censorship on several occasions. Nothing our current leadership in B.C. has done in the past helps to convince us that they have any better understanding of the issue.

We urge all British Columbians to

S U M M E R / 8 6

lend their voice to your coalition in protest to the proposed legislation."

*National Association of Broadcast
Employees and Technicians*

"One must be suspect of a government that on the one hand advocates restricting public communications in the name of protecting female dignity and on the other hand denies to women the social services and educational opportunities without which dignity cannot be attained."

Karlene Faith, Ph.D
Simon Fraser University

"As writers and publishers we're deeply concerned about the prospect of video censorship in British Columbia. Artists' work is often misunderstood; the thought of vague and punitive laws as a primary arbiter of what may and

may not be seen is frightening.

We feel strongly that censorship itself is more dangerous than the material the legislation is presumably aimed at. Its pernicious effect is felt not only when something is banned, but in the practice of self-censorship imposed by exhibitors who fear the wrath of the Board. Rather than censorship, we support public education and assistance for those raising the issues in a constructive way.'

Kootenay School of Writing

"The problem of violence against women is real, serious and probably encouraged by the degrading and sexist portrayal of women in most of our media. We believe, however, that the "solution" of censorship is more dangerous to us than advantageous and creates the illusion that enough is being

done. The history of censorship has shown that what gets censored is sexuality (particularly homosexuality) and unpopular political ideas.

We believe that it would be far more advantageous to us as women if the government:

1) supported artists' efforts to portray sexuality (both homosexuality and heterosexuality) in a non-exploitative manner.

2) supported sex education programs that teach responsible, consensual, caring sexuality, in all its forms.

3) provided jobs and daycare so that we have the option of staying with partners out of real choice and not out of economic necessity,

4) provided concrete support and opportunities for the women and children who are victims of violence. We need more transition houses, rape crisis centres, child abuse teams, job training, daycares...

5) penalized those who are violent and provided treatment programs for them to change,

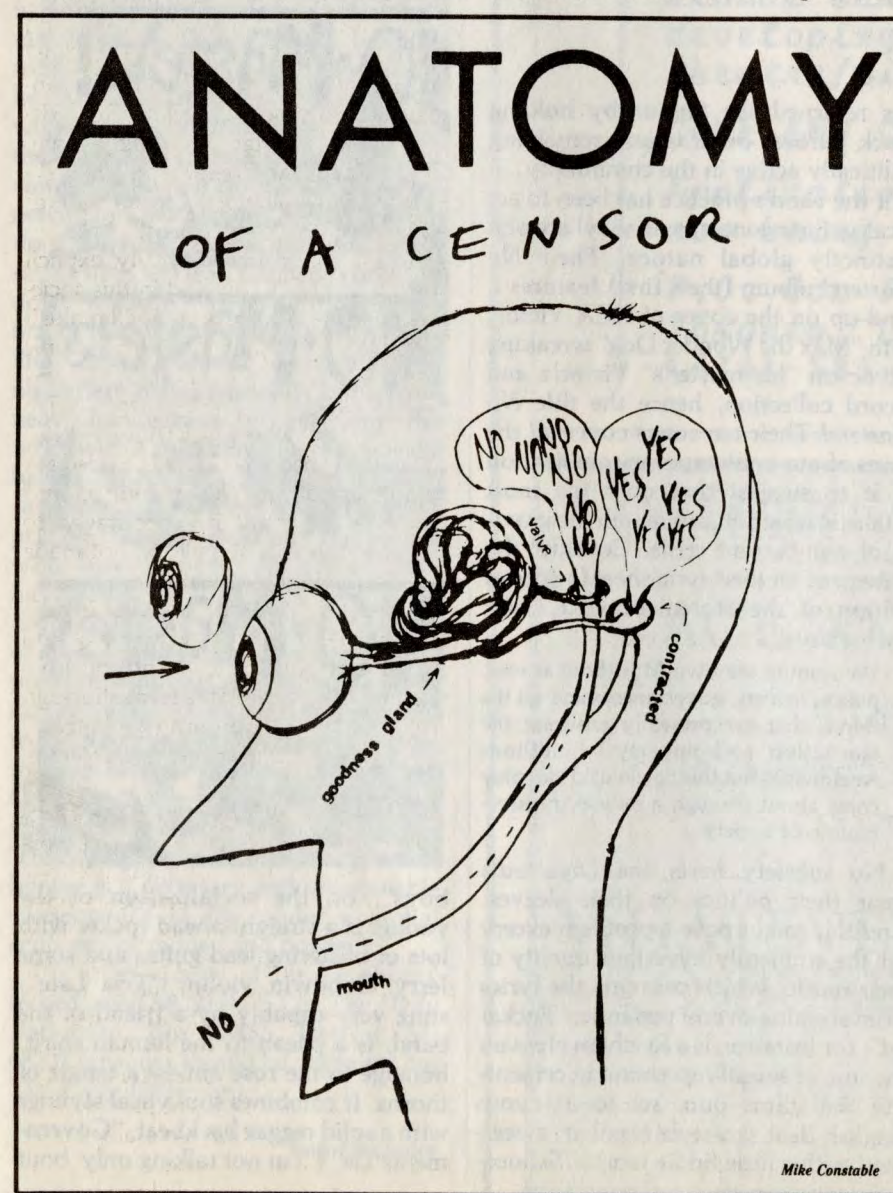
6) supported the efforts of women and men to end the inequities and exploitation that creates much human misery and contributes to violence against women...

Exploitative pornography will end when men no longer see women as objects to be exploited and degraded. Exploitative pornography will stop when men refuse to buy it. Exploitative pornography will be over when women are truly equal in a culture that teaches its children to treat all human beings with respect."

Vancouver Lesbian Connection

These are but a few of the many statements opposing censorship in British Columbia. We are entering a stage of active resistance to the legislation. We need to know and the Attorney-General of B.C. needs to know, that artists and communities across Canada will not submit their work to be censored and will not support the extension of censorship throughout Canada. If you are or your organization is willing to add your voice please send a statement to:

The Coalition for the Right to View,
P.O. Box 69376, Station K,
Vancouver, B.C. V5K 4W6
We will ensure that your statement
reaches the Attorney-General.



SUMMER '86

FUSE

LAYABOUTS

Profile of a Community Band

by Don Alexander

THIS IS A FUN ALBUM TO REVIEW. Unlike some political bands whose politics are better than their music, the music of the Layabouts is as good as their politics. There is nothing particularly original about the Layabouts' music or about the concepts they explicate in their lyrics: they borrow freely from other sources, but they do so with considerable flair. Their apparent facility in switching from genre to genre derives from the diverse ethnic backgrounds of their members, the core of the group consisting of three Brits, two native Detroiters, one Black Detroit of Panamanian parentage, and a member from the Dominican Republic.

The Layabouts are truly a community band, having lived and worked in Detroit's Cass Corridor since the band's inception. The Corridor (near Detroit's Wayne State University) was a hive of counter-cultural activity in the late 60's and retains a string of neighborhood bars and political and cultural networks which have nourished the band and provided its base of support. Band members are loosely affiliated with *The Fifth Estate* (America's oldest "underground") newspaper, and at least one of the band members publishes his own concoction called *The Daily Barbarian*. The group has achieved considerable local success, attracting youthful fans from Detroit's faraway suburbs, and

has returned the favour by holding block parties, benefits and remaining politically active in the community.

If the band's practice has been to act locally, their concerns on vinyl are of a distinctly global nature. Their *No Masters!* album (their first) features a send-up on the cover of RCA Victor, with "Max the Wonder Dog" wreaking havoc on "his master's" Victorla and record collection, hence the title *No Masters!* Their ten songs cover all the bases of our contemporary civilization as if to suggest that only the most totalistic rejection can match the gravity of our current crisis. Consider the statement on their lyric sheet (a special edition of the aforementioned *Daily Barbarian*):

We want to see a world without armies, police, leaders, governments and all the things that are presently ensuring the starvation and poverty of millions worldwide. But this new world can only come about through a radical transformation of society...

No subtlety here; the Layabouts wear their politics on their sleeves. And this might pose a problem except for the eminently infectious quality of their music, which prevents the lyrics from seeming overly pedantic. "Fuckalot", for instance, is a Reichian gloss on the role of sexual repression in cementing the status quo, set to a joyous English Beat ska-style number, sweetened with a little fiddle work. "School-



boys", on the socialization of the young, is a straight-ahead rocker with lots of blistering lead guitar and some Jerry Goodwin violin. "Too Late", sung very capably by a friend of the band, is a paean to the human spirit, homage to the rose amidst a tangle of thorns. It combines soul vocal stylings with a solid reggae backbeat. "Governments Lie" ("I'm not talking only 'bout

some of 'em, I mean every single one of 'em") is a high speed funk attack with lots of vibrant bass (it's good to hear *real* — as opposed to synthesized — instruments). "Millennia Man", the last song on the first side, would satisfy the most hard-core Pink Floyd fan. Like Floyd, it presents a bleak vision of our highly technical civilization and its developmental hubris:

Whenever there's a call for reason
A need to criticize the master plan
The great builders scream 'It's treason'
To interfere with Millennia Man

Despite their iconoclastic anti-civilization message (a perspective they share with *The Fifth Estate* and the late Fredy Perlman, a well-respected anti-tech writer and publisher), the Layabouts bring an entirely accessible pop sensibility to their music.

The second side starts out with "Johannesburg", a hymn to the freedom movement in South Africa, building from a single voice to a choir employing African harmonies. The song ends with a coda of drumming, featuring the Layabouts entire rhythm section of congas, timbales, drums and assorted percussion instruments. "Police Reaction" is an up-tempo punkoid number, rather like the Dead Kennedys brought down to earth. "I'm Tired", ska, is a bratty response to the tedium of daily life. "Seven Minutes" deals with the nightmare of nuclear war, but avoids heavy-handedness by matching the lyrics with a disarmingly sweet musical ballad. "B Movie", the last song, is a raving calypso number about Reagan's private fantasy world and the people who buy into it. All in all, the Layabouts' *No Masters!* is a well-produced effort, thanks to the talents of many volunteers. The record was produced without any corporate assistance, and its profits are being returned to the community in the form of monies to feed hungry residents of the Cass Corridor. At the same time, the 'bouts dissociate themselves from mainstream "charity" efforts, claiming that "world hunger is a necessary and unavoidable consequence of life under a global economy of money and power."

To order a copy of the Layabouts' record, send \$8.50 (U.S.) to *The Daily Barbarian*, Box 02455, Detroit, MI 48202 (cheques should be made out to: *The Daily Barbarian*).

Don Alexander



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