

Vicki Gabereau chats with "the famous, not-so-famous, and should-be-famous."

A book full of interviews

Vicki Gabereau
This Won't Hurt a Bit
Collins Publishers

review by Randal Smathers

"Hey sailor, how about a little variety tonight?" These words were my introduction to Vicki Gabereau, longtime host of CBC radio's program *Variety Tonight*. Her wit and poise on-air made her into one of Canada's, better known radio personalities.

Gabereau now has her first book out, *This Won't Hurt a Bit*, a compilation of the best of her "chats with the famous, not-so-famous, and should-be-famous," with introductions and the like.

The "chats" are great, as is to be expected from a professional interviewer. For instance, British motor-racing giant Stirling Moss on whether he raced for the "attention of adoring fans, mainly female": "Oh good Lord, yes. I mean there is no doubt that motor racing is the greatest sport for the crumpet."

There is lots of Canadiana, including interviews with Pierre Berton, Margaret Atwood, and the son of Morley Callaghan. The interviews range from sports figures to actors, and have more good quotes than an equal number of pages from Bartlett's Quotations.

One of the better parts, for someone who does some interviews himself, is Gabereau's descriptions of the preparation she does for some of her interviews. Unfortunately, she often builds up the preparation, but then

doesn't include any of the actual interview. This is frustrating, sort of like being back in high school and almost getting laid...

Actually, Gabereau is not nearly the writer as she is the talker, which comes through in the rather dreary introduction: "My next job was at a private nursing home as a nurse's aide." She spends most of the first two chapters name dropping: "I nearly fainted at meeting Johnny Wayne and Frank Schuster." I heartily do not recommend these parts to anyone otherwise interested in this book.

There are lots of nice glimpses of some very interesting people in *This Won't Hurt a Bit*. The book ends with an interview with Vancouver talk show host and "oatmeal savage" Jack Webster. When I had finished, it occurred to me that I would rather have finished reading his greatest interviews collection. Give Gabereau's book to a nice dull person for Christmas; they'll love it.

A U2 weekend

by Tracy Rowan

The following chronicle is an account of a music-filled weekend in Vancouver, highlighted of course by the spectacular U2 concert at B.C. Place on Thursday night.

Thursday A.M. Nov. 12

Air Canada flight 223 to Vancouver - crowded plane but the complimentary drinks make up for it. It seems I'm not the only one on this plane on my way to see the BIGGEST BAND IN THE WORLD.

Thursday 2 P.M.

There is definitely a buzz around town: talk in the malls, the record stores and the street is revolving around the biggest event to hit this city since EXPO. There's also been enough press about this thing that one writer was prompted to pen an article entitled "How to survive that U2 oversaturation" for that hip entertainment guide, the *Georgia Strait*.

Thursday 6 P.M.

Excitement is definitely building, along with the congestion of traffic, with only an hour to go before showtime. The Spanish restaurant a block from the stadium, where we're meeting for pre-show dinner and drinks, is packed with ticket holders from Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver and Washington state. Met this one couple from Bellingham, a college town across the border, who bought their tickets from a lawchair ticket vending business on their campus run by two Canadian guys.

7:30 P.M.

Missed the first act, the BoDeans, because I got lost in B.C. Place looking for the right pass gate. Got to the Press Box in just enough

time to grab a beer before Los Lobos started their set.

The stage is absolutely enormous, which unfortunately dwarfs the guys from East L.A.; but the sound is good despite all those nasty rumours about the acoustics in this domed mass of concrete. After finishing with a great version of "La Bamba", Los Lobos leaves the stage, but not before cautioning the claustrophobic crowd on the floor not to hurt themselves.

On my way to check out the souvenir booths I bump into Dwight Yoakam, who was in Edmonton earlier in the week. The merchandisers are doing fast and furious selling despite the \$20 T-shirt price tag. Hats are also going for \$20, programs for \$13, and posters aren't a bad deal at \$7 a crack.

Between the T-shirt booths are tables set up by Amnesty International, complete with information pamphlets and six different petitions concerning prisoners of conscience in the USSR, Libya, China, Vietnam, Kampuchea and Guatemala. I did the noble thing.

9:30 P.M.

As the lights dim, the crowd continues to swarm like ants over the barriers to the floor in what the person next to me calls "the crush of '87". The band takes the uncluttered stage and blasts off with "Where The Streets Have No Name", bringing the 57,000+ crowd to their feet. Throughout the powerful performance, the charismatic Bono urged the crowd to sing for Stephen Biko and Martin Luther King. The most emotional tribute though, was for the victims of the recent Enniskillen bombing by the IRA, during an incredible rendition of "Sunday Bloody Sunday".

The concert ended with the traditional "40", leaving the audience to finish the song. It was truly a magical show that unified the fans in song and spirit, if only for one night.

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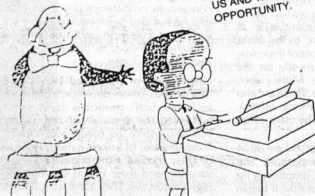


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