



Errol Ramsay, Ralph Small, Jan Dorland, Philippa King and Lois Pody watch as the hapless Keith Batten is hanged, in a rather unrepresentative still from one of the

theatre department's year-end student directing projects, Jack Richardson's Gallows Humour, directed last week by David Markowitz in the Atkinson Studio.

Dylan rides planet waves, leaves out-takes in wake

By DYNAMITE C. STRANGE

After Bob Dylan's recent move to Asylum Records, his old record company, Columbia, released Dylan, an unspectacular but nevertheless underrated collection of out-takes, most of them recorded about the time of the Self Portrait sessions.

As a result, the album is all of a piece, and though comprised almost entirely of non-original material, it puts across the slanted, self-effacing humour with which Dylan approached the project. He wasn't writing much then, and had to rely upon slick studio embellishments to overlie his not quite convincing treatments.

Some of the songs Dylan stand up well, just because they're good songs to begin with. Mr. Bojangles, the traditional Mary Ann and Lily of the West stand out among the rest, which include a talking rendition of the Johnny Cash favourite, Ballad of Ira Hayes, a couple of Elvis crooners, and almost incredibly, Joni Mitchell's Big Yellow Taxi.

There's no profundity here, and precious few lyrical insights to be found, but that wasn't the point anyway. Dylan is an album that wasn't meant to be, and as such is a pleasant little side-step and slightly humorous curiosity which shouldn't be compared with his other work, both past and present.

On the other hand, Planet Waves (Asylum), recorded in just three days last fall, is something of a return for both Dylan and the Band, who accompany him throughout. In spirit and execution, if not in substance, Planet Waves is a look back at the glory days of 1965-66,



Bob Dylan on the concert stage

tempered by a new maturity and accounting of the changes which have taken place in the interim.

There's little evidence here of the biting imagery or sense of the fantastic and forlorn which characterized Blonde on Blonde and Highway 61 Revisited. On Planet Waves, Dylan alternates between the roles of father-family man and hard-bitten, reflective loner. No longer portraying the haranguing outsider, he seems finally to have accepted himself, and more particularly his past.

With the Band contributing its customarily impeccable musicianship, Dylan is able to come up with some of the finest musical moments he's had in years. There are lively upbeat numbers, like On a Night Like This, You Angel You and Tough Mama, to contrast with the morose knife-edge intensity of the more reflective ones, like Dirge and the especially strong Going, Going Gone.

The now-usual tributes to his wife are sensitive and not at all distracting, and Forever Young (in two versions, fast and slow) is something of a prayer. Although most of the songs are extremely personal, Dylan's treatment make them highly stylized and evocative.

While Planet Waves isn't likely to raise many eyebrows or rekindle the passions of audiences searching for answers to the problems of the cosmos, it will remain a significant step in the career of one of the truly outstanding figures in the world of pop entertainment.

Isolation wraps up Canadian literature too neatly

By JUDITH RICHARDSON

Patterns of Isolation by Montreal professor John Moss is yet another literary criticism designed to segment the Canadian literary world into neat little packages of definition. Moss, talking about his interest in Canadian literature, says: "My concern is with a national rather than a nationalist literature... I see the benefits of regionalism, of our ironic self-conceptions, of our feelings so often exiled from the rest of the world."

His intention is not to offer definitive interpretations, and yet, having said this, he does just that. His discussion of English Canadian fiction zeroes in on only one of a number of its dis-

tinguishing characteristics, that of isolation tending to polarize critical thinking in this one area.

Moss covers the "mentality of exile", "irony and the individual consciousness", and "geophysical imagination" (better known as regionalism in literature). It's a wonder that he hasn't included French-Canadian literature in the study, as it would seem a natural for this topic.

There are sometimes brilliant readings from individual novels, brilliantly linked together by brilliant prose, and yet the reader is left cold by such passages as: "Tragic innocence is at the core of all of Bodsworth's novels. The Last of the Curlews, a bird book beside which Jonathan

Livingston Seagull weighs as insubstantially as Kahlil Gibran beside the writings of Saint Paul, traces the uncomprehending demise of a straggling member of a vanishing species."

Patterns of Isolation (McClelland and Stewart) is neither better nor worse than Survival by Margaret Atwood, published by the House of Anansi in 1972, in which she outlines the now famous victim-survival concept of Canadian literature. It is just another English professor expanding his lecture notes into just another literary form.

My advice is to copy the bibliography in the book, read all the books therein, and formulate your own ideas of Canadian literature.

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