

ENTERTAINMENT



Poet Dorothy Livesay: The vitality of an artist

Dorothy Livesay struggles to express full life in words

NIGEL TURNER

"What do you do poet?"
"I bring wonder to the word."

--Dorothy Livesay
Untitled

One of Canada's foremost poets, Dorothy Livesay, graced Stong College's Sylvester's room, Monday afternoon, with poems from her life's story.

Livesay, poet, journalist and teacher, read selections from her new book *The Phases of Love*. The poems documented her life, in a sort of lyrical autobiography, and ranged over the whole spectrum of her activities. She began with poems from her adolescence, many previously unpublished, and moved through to more recent writings.

During her studies at the University of Toronto she contributed poems and articles to the school paper, *The Varsity*. Journalism at that time was one of the few areas of exposure for female writers. As a woman she found it difficult to gain recognition. This struggle found expression in later poems such as *The Three Emily's* --Emily Bronte, Emily Carr, and Emily Dickenson-- a tribute in envious admiration to these successful women. At the time she wrote this poem, Livesay was married, had children and had little money. Much of her time was spent in the house, for ladies seldom walked outside alone. "So I had to write when I could, often on the laundry tub," says Livesay. The poem first views the Emily's as women who walk alone unaccompanied and then turns around revealing the truth, that she, Dorothy is "the one unaccompanied". On a related theme, one of her best known works, having been put to music twice, choreographed, and used as the title of one of her books, is the "Unquiet bed"

*...The women I am
is not what you see
move over love
make room for me.*

Before her marriage, at the time of her graduation, during the depression in Canada, she found the teaching job for which she had

planned, unavailable. She returned to school and took social work. Her poems of this period describe the life of the poor as they wander from town to town in search of work and a place to live. One such poem is "Wilderness Stone".

*... rain for my roof
wind for my walls . . .*

During the 1930s she belonged to Arts for Peace, which she is glad to note has begun again. She believes that it is possible to "change things in the long run," and that "the poet must speak out now." But she has been criticized in the past for such involvement. "They say I am a true lyric poet," says Livesay, "and that political statements should not be my field." But she writes on topics which produce an emotional response whether love or politics, which ever brings her to the page. She doesn't sit down and say "I will

write this kind of poem today."

All her poems are the "same journalism writing," from her days on the *Star*, "reduced to a few very precise lines." When she writes a poem, she will put it away for a week or so and come back, reducing the number of nouns and verbs until the poem is finished. She seldom uses a rhyming scheme because it "dictates the meaning," and she prefers to be in control of that.

One of her most well liked poems is "Green Rain" from her *Image* phase, which she wrote while walking over a bridge in Rosedale, during May, which is appropriate for this time of year.

*I remember long veils of green rain
featured like the shawl of my
grandmother
Green from the half-green of spring
trees
waning in the valley...*

Falco company falls flat under weight of ideas

W. HURST

Q: What is the name of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima?

A: Little Boy

Trivial Pursuit

Little Boy is also the title of a trivial, vapid dance by New York choreographer Louis Falco, whose company is at the Ryerson Theatre until Saturday.

In all his works, Falco uses dazzling, fast turns, kicks to the head and prolonged poses in arabesque. However, because these moves can be found in all his works, they don't mean anything and they can't bear the weight of an imposed idea. In *Little Boy*, the kicks seem stuck in, not created to fit the political statement. A strip-down to shorts and T-shirt is completely irrelevant. The piece never coheres its comment on that nuclear holocaust.

Little Boy also uses props but the use is as obligatory as the movement. A camp cot, rifle and projected slides are never integrated into the body of the dance. The choreographer announces "Here's a prop" and uses it in a facile way. A man rolls across the floor with the rifle as a toy and ends up with it thrust through his legs, aiming from his crotch.

Black and Blue opened the three-piece programme. To a boxing ring idea, Falco supplies his dancers with gloves and silk trunks but no innovative movements. A slide into a Falco arabesque seems incongruous when the dancer has boxing gloves lumped on the ends of her arms. There is some surprisingly quiet work between two men but the male-

female partnering is standard Falco fare.

However, *Black and Blue* includes some gestural movements, which have a much stronger impact than the dance movement. A stylized blow to the head or collapse of a body transmits the brutality of the boxing motif. Unfortunately, the message is not new and his version of "Life as Pugilism" is, finally, weak.

The last piece, *Escargot*, is the oldest (1978) and uses pure movement, no props or political statements. In Giorgio Armani costumes, the kicks and spins, which were obligatory elsewhere, are done for the sheer joy of movement. All three works are really just a collection of under-developed ideas stuck together. However, in *Escargot*, the ideas blend with one another. The dancers prove they are, after all, fast and risk-taking technicians. Legs split in the air and seem to suspend for a moment. A pose is struck and held with a remarkable stillness. Less than a split-second later, the dancer is flying off into another phrase.

The dancers are good but have a strange quality that is especially noticeable in *Escargot*. Here and there, the complicated choreography breaks into simple walks. These steps should be easy, lush, as if the men and women are breathing along with the rhythms. These walks should be a buoyant reprieve from the clipped acceleration in the rest of the piece. However, these dancers never luxuriate in the walks. They move like show dancers told to walk. There is a world of difference between performers and movers.

...ENTS...

Hollywood film premieres at York

This Monday, March 21st at 7 p.m., York University will host the Canadian premiere of the new motion picture, *Exposed*.

Starring Nastassia Kinski and Rudolph Nureyev, this thriller is playing exclusively at York weeks before it opens elsewhere.

Writer/director/producer James Toback, will be on hand to answer questions after the film. *Exposed* will be screened in Curtis Lecture Hall "L".

Cabaret for unknown York talent

Variety '83, a night of music, singing and more, will be held in Mac Hall, McLaughlin College next Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Co-ordinated by Rob Gray and Lou Eisen, the performers are singers, dancers and other talented individuals who are not performing arts majors at York. Instead, you may find your favourite computer programmer tripping the light fantastic or an aspiring humanities major doing stand-up comedy. The admission is \$3.00 in advance or \$4.00 at the door. *Variety '83* is licensed by the L.L.B.O.

Classical Guitar Concert at Glendon

Classical guitarists Robert Hamilton and Richard Bradley will be in concert Sunday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. at Theatre Glendon. The duo will be performing music by Brahms, Vivaldi and Granados. Tickets may be reserved by calling 487-6211.

Student recitals continue this week with performances tonight, Tuesday and Wednesday. Tonight at 7:00 in Sylvester's (Stong College), Dawn Eaton, piano, performs music by Brahms, Berg, Stravinsky and others. Tuesday night at 7:00 in Sylvester's, Glenn Williams can be heard. Guitarist Williams will be playing an assortment of classical, traditional, and contemporary music.

Wednesday, March 23, at 1:00 p.m., Amy Ho, piano, will be playing works by Mozart, Chopin, Poulenc and others. Also performing will be John Palmer, guitar. Winters College Senior Common Room.

NEXT WEEK

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