

arts



Successful conference

Informality, variety, and exposure were the three things which were most notable about the Short Story Conference held by the University of Alberta's English department January 27-31.

Informality was one of the conference's objectives and it was, to a large extent, achieved. Audience participation was encouraged with question or discussion periods after each reading or event. Writers were also on hand at lunch and during the readings. The extent to which these audience privileges were used seemed to depend on the writer, reading or event. Those writers who were

more or less unknown to the audience generally got away with a round of polite appreciative applause, or at most one or two questions. Better known writers did not get off so easy. Questions ranged from the obvious but unanswerable "How did you do that?" to the undoubtedly earth shattering query as to whether Alice Munro visualized her stories in color or in black and white.

But the questions were not the only things that were varied. The events included readings, films, panel discussions, even theater, and as was revealed by Rudy Wiebe on Friday afternoon a deliberate attempt was made

to get a variety of short story writers. Writers ranged from the well established and well known to those still studying the craft. There were those who make their living by writing, and those to whom writing is a side line. There was Ray Smith who performed rather than read his stories for the audience, Ken Mitchell, a raconteur, and those who simply read.

Although a limited amount of what a short story was and how it is different from other literary forms was brought out during the panel discussions, but the most important learning experience of the conference was exposure. Those who attended the conference on at least a semi-regular basis were allowed to see the variety of writing now going on in Canada and the people who are doing it.

It was a chance for the reader to sit back and listen as the various writers presented their wares, and it was a chance to choose. If a writer or story seemed fascinating they could be pursued by talking to the writer or by further reading of his works.

In those respects the Short Story Conference was a success. It was informal, well-attended and supplied both variety and exposure for those who braved the so-called seats of Humanities Lecture 1. If this sounds interesting, and you missed it, the tapes should be available from the A.V. Center.

Wishbone's medicine show

"They'll do anything to hook a few fans," explains Playboy magazine about Dr. Hook, and the Medicine Show. "They spend most of their time blowing the minds of groupies, cops, and stagehands."

Dr. Hook's raunchy rock 'n roll septet will be coming to Edmonton today (Tuesday the 4th) for a concert performance as part of a tour group that includes Wishbone Ash as the headliners, and a British rock group called Camel as the warm-up band.

How good will the show be? It's got to be real good. Since Dr. Hook got their picture on the cover of Rolling Stone, they've been working hard with most of their energies spent on the road, with a few breaks for studio work. They're a polished impromptu collection of hard living, hard-loving, truck-driver oriented musicians with a flair for country rock and a determination to live forever with the image they've built for themselves. Many of their songs and lyrics are written by Shel Silverstein who is renowned for his contributions in both areas.

As far as Wishbone Ash is concerned, they are now preparing to release their sixth album, following up a double album set of live performances. They are one of the most popular groups out of England today and their success is not of the usual commercial type. Wishbone Ash gained popularity through a unique twin lead guitar approach to live performances, one that has remained their forte even with the departure of former band member Ted Turner.

Formed in the winter of 1969, Wishbone Ash personnel for tonight's concert are Andy Powell and Laurie Wisefield on lead guitars, with Steven Upton and Martin Turner on bass and drums.

Camel is the third feature group on this tour. They have been together since 1972, and have released two albums to date. Their music runs the gamut between English funk and the blues, and if they're received as well in Canada as they are in Europe, we'll be hearing a lot more about them in the future.

Gospel according to Gabriel

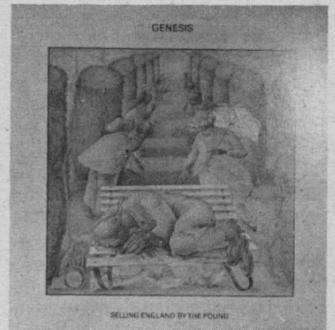
Genesis - *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*

After selling England by the pound on the last Genesis album, Peter Gabriel has switched his setting to the good old U.S.A., vis à vis New York City. Peter Gabriel is the lyricist, vocalist, and flautist with Genesis, a British rock group whose dazzling talents are slowly becoming appreciated in North America. *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* is the group's seventh album, and their first double one. All the group's more recent albums have been concept albums, dealing with one specific theme, and this album is no exception. Although one can not be entirely sure of it, I think that the theme of this album deals with the spiritual reformation of its protagonist, Rael, who is an impoverished Puerto Rican living in the slums of New York. Gabriel and the others paint a ghastly and depressing picture of New York, and the album has an aura of degradation throughout.

Lyrics have always been an important aspect of Genesis' music, but the singing of the lyrics is even more important. Peter Gabriel is an astounding vocalist, whose charismatic voice constantly holds the listener's attention. He has a good range, and excellent depth; but even more important, he has versatility and inventiveness in his

handling of the lyrics. He emphasizes the right words, and downplays the right lines. His lyrics are full of puns and little riddles, well-delivered and sufficiently dealt with. For really finding out the unique qualities of Peter Gabriel, I recommend the group's live album, where Gabriel performs one of the groups more famous songs, "Get 'em Out by Friday" so well, I can't believe it. That song is a gloomy prophecy on the capitalist system destroying the social structure of England.

But, back to the album in hand. Tony Banks, the keyboard artist for Genesis, is one of the most under-rated musicians



around. He never overdoes the electronic stuff, but when he does use the occasional synthesizer, he uses it well, in a subtle manner that Richie Wakeman would do well to examine. But, usually, it is the piano playing of Banks that really sets him apart in the rock field.

The rest of the group, Mike Rutherford on bass, Steve Hackett on guitars, and Phil Collins on drums, more or less back up Gabriel and Banks. They are all excellent musicians though, and their abilities are apparent on all albums.

The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway is a bit more rockier than previous albums, and the group has experimented quite a bit on production techniques previously untouched. The group has an excellent producer, John Burns, who works with them, and makes this album a delight to listen to, with crisp, clear, and virtuous production.

A fine album, recommended to all who enjoy good rock. Peter Gabriel's lyrics provoke thought and controversy, as he proves himself the best lyricist to emerge on the rock scene for a long time.

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