

# ARTS

## A tale of two women

Housekeeping  
Marilynne Robinson  
Bantam 1982

review by Gunnar Blodgett

From a family history fraught with tragedy come two sensitive and understanding, yet intrinsically different daughters. The one would cast off the darkness and insanity of her heritage; she would leave the home her grandfather carved out of misery, simply to be gone.

The other, sombre; more philosophic, finds comfort in the dark and pain with which she is familiar. Her life centers about the lake in which her mother and grandfather found their rests; hoping they and all her dead loved ones will somehow be resurrected to the light, yet knowing her hopes to be futile.

Both girls seek a consummation; a final explanation to the incongruities of their family's existence. Lucille, the prodigy, uses other people as anchors and guides. She learns to follow fashion and popular will in the hope that through conformity she may escape the madness of her family, and thus realize truth. Her sister Ruth would trust to her inner joys and fears; riding the rhythm of her psyche to an end unforeseen.

Throughout the conflicts of two girls

learning who and what they are, comes the influence of their Aunt Sylvie. Sylvie has inherited the dark, elusive moods of her father and is now a drifter. Because of these and other idiosyncrasies, Lucille rejects her Aunt as inessential to the "importance" of life: achievement and social status. Ruth, however, recognizes herself in her Aunt and becomes closer to Sylvie as she loses touch with Lucille.

Yet, finally, neither girl realizes their consummation, though they perhaps fulfill their ends. While Lucille loses herself in the endless wheat fields of conformity, Ruth joins Sylvie in her driftings. Unsure even of a distinction between reality and the conjurings of her own imagination, she is driven on by her dissatisfaction and frustration into a limbo of aimless, unmotivated existence. And perhaps this is a reflection of the true uncertainty and futility of knowledge and life.

*Housekeeping* shows the conception of long thought, observation and care Marilynne Robinson writes in a delicious, sensuous style which is a joy to read; nay, to feel. In many ways this novel is of a class with *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, it moves one as effectively and subtly as a major earthquake, yet immobilizes as if in cold, piercing ice.

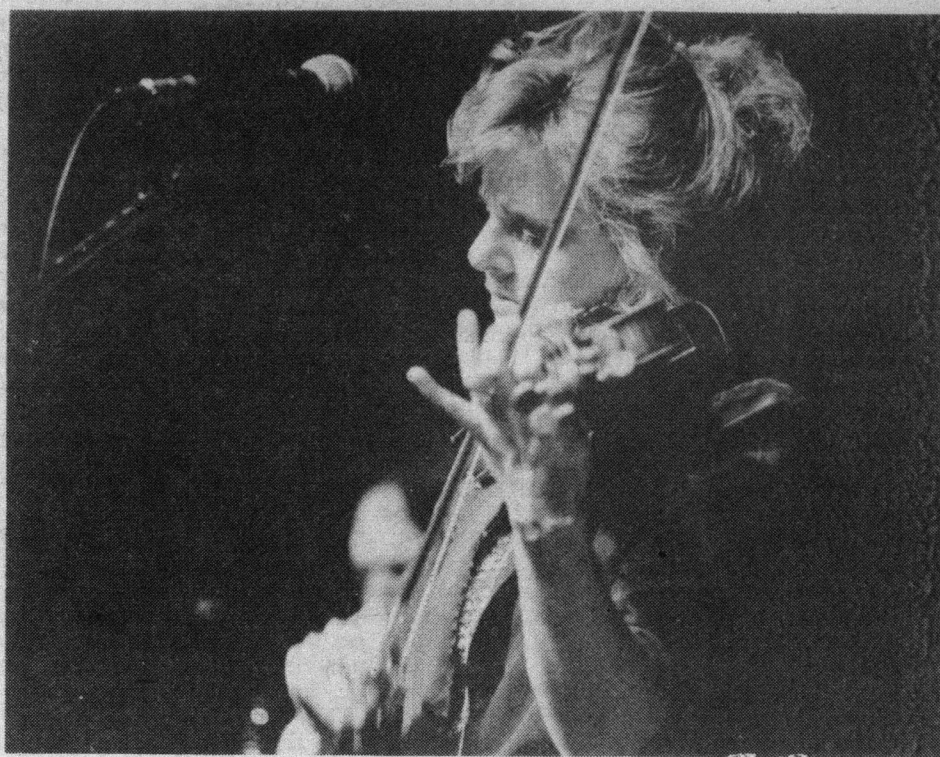


photo Ray Giguere

Shari Ulrich still knows how to fiddle

## Songstress disappoints

Shari Ulrich  
SUB Theatre  
Friday April 2

review by Corinne Bird

Polygram, Canada's biggest recording company, has inherited many artists over the past four years, but Shari Ulrich could be considered a fault.

Ulrich has the stage movements and vocal potential to become another Pat Benatar, but not to make a rock legend, and barely enough to make a rock singer. And her material suffers from too much sameness.

Three songs, however, did stand out: "Romeo" (her current hit), "Oh Daddy" (which touchingly expressed her wish that

her father had lived to see her accomplishments), and a passably reassuring song entitled "Starlight."

Her talents were easily overshadowed by her opening/backup group, the Claire Lawrence Band. Lawrence, the leading light of Chilliwack, turned in a superb performance, though at times the band overpowered him.

One wonders why an exceptional performer like Lawrence is backing up the semi-talented Shari Ulrich. Could this step downwards have been caused by the ignorance and lack of taste of Canadians?

It is a tragedy when someone who is the definition of Canadian talent has to sustain his career with gigs like these.

## Handy guide to suckcess

Live for Success  
John T. Molloy  
Bantam 1982

review by Peter West

Well, fellow studes, this is it — the book you've been waiting for. The book that tells you why you're unemployed, unpopular, unsuccessful, and generally a mess. Every student should read this book — every *Gateway* staffer come to think of it, every prof should read this priceless gem and discover the truth about him, her or itself.

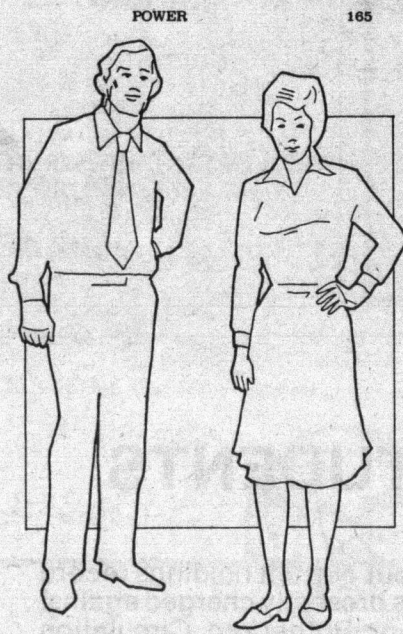
himself so he *knows* it will work. Go to it! Start reading his book and this, too, will help you become a success. Is there any more important goal in loafing (sorry, living)?

Here are some of Mr. Molloy's keys to success in getting that vital job that will save you from welfare and the clutches of your relatives: first, be good-looking. Did you ever hear of a successful politician who wasn't tall, well-groomed and impressive-looking? Take Joe Clark, for instance. Back to High River, preferably.

Second, people from upper class or upper middle class backgrounds have an advantage. They're so much more impressive than Newfies, illiterate jocks, and people from the south side of town. Maybe the Department of Genetics can work on a way of genetically transforming some of these clods' children into suave, smiling sophisticates. Third, people who exercise carry themselves better and present well, as long as their speech and manner are upper class. Fourth, people who smell and taste nice, who exude confidence and act convincing are good job getters.

Even women can use this book to hide some of their innate disadvantages. They should always dress neatly and learn how to control men. And they should never let their messy personal lives get in the way of all-important material success.

So before you go to bed tonight, take off your clothes and have a good look at yourself. Not the most wonderful thing that Nature invented, are you? No wonder people laugh at you in the gym and kick sand in your face when you go to the beach. But you too can use Mr. Molloy's book to create someone new and exciting, drop that awful accent, clean up your act and be a success! Go to it!!!



B. Man with one hand on hip—power stance.  
Woman with one hand on hip—non-power stance.

The marvellous Mr. Molloy has conducted a large number of surveys which have made him privy to some interesting secrets of success. An initial chapter on success and failure tells us some of them:

*The most universal characteristic of failures is their lack of energy. Of the twenty-seven people we put in the failure category, twenty-four displayed markedly low energy levels....Successful people jog, play bridge, play touch football, attend art classes, read books on success, and so on, even after a ten- to twelve-hour day. Failures, however, tend to engage in passive, nonphysical activity. They sit and watch football games on television.*

Are you, gentle reader, a member of this dreadful inactive majority, spending your time idly over coffee for half your working day, playing "Traveller", foolishly spending your leisure time gazing at dumb football games and guzzling beer? Join the active minority — start jogging — get into gymnastics — get active — be sane! In no time you'll be a jogging, gymnasticating, interesting, and successful person!

Mr. Molloy has done all this research

## Tribute

To all whose comments filled this page  
To readers, gleeful, bored, enraged  
To artists, panned, ignored, or praised  
To all these folks a toast is raised  
Deep thanks, godspeed, farewell

Your ex-Arts Editor

## DIRECT DRIVE

by James L. Stevens

Roman Gods  
FLESHTONES  
I.R.S./A & M (SP70018)

This album signifies Fleshtones emergence from their New York underground status. Except for one cut ("Shadow-Line"), these rockers capture the later sixties/early seventies sound in an eighties world. And this is the biggest drawback and major weakness of the album. Most of the material, although penned as original songs, comes off sounding like some tune you have heard before. The album contains a lot of borrowed guitar riffs and chord progressions, but at least they have been borrowed from the best. Steppenwolf, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, The Animals and many others are brought to mind as the record plays on.

Now for the exception. "Shadow-Line" is a class of its own on this album. It is very original from the punchy percussion to the lean but effectual guitar work. This cut is definitely not from the same crude musical mold the rest of *Roman Gods* is from. "Shadow-Line" shows that the band is capable of writing material that is really original with a sound and feel they can call their own — but can they produce?

I Didn't See It Coming  
THE PROFESSIONALS  
Virgin Records (V2220)

Ex-Sex Pistols Paul Cook and Steve Jones are the main musical force and founding members of The Professionals. But do not expect any similarities between this band and the late great (?) Sex Pistols. *I Didn't See It Coming* is generally devoid of any of the energy, potency, and rebellion that helped create the infamy of the Sex Pistols.

All that The Professionals manage to serve up on this album is some mediocre, middle-of-the-road rock. There is nothing

on the album that really justifies its existence. It is truly a lifeless disc of vinyl. The music comes nowhere close to the drive and appeal that was featured by the Cook/Jones collaborations for *The Great Rock and Roll Swindle*. Summary: a BIG disappointment!

English Settlement  
XTC  
Virgin Records/Polygram (VDX2233)

XTC, on *English Settlement*, has created a more classic and conservative art pop than was found on *Black Sea* and *Drums and Wires*. This double album set has an atmosphere that is dreamier than their previous releases. The result is that the music seems to have lost some of the razor-sharp edge it once possessed. The interesting discords and transitions are not in as much evidence. Many of the cuts are over five minutes long and have repetitive choruses. XTC relies on shifting rhythms and texture changes to provide variety in the separate songs. This is not to say that the album is bad though — it is merely meant as a warning not to expect the exact same musical style as they have had.

In fact, *English Settlement* is a very good album and I enjoyed most of the material on it. There is a lot of first-rate percussion and some prime acoustic guitar playing. The aforementioned texture ranges from street sounds to bird calls, each located on a suitable track.

Of particularly outstanding merit are the tunes "Senses Working Overtime", "Down In The Cockpit", "It's Nearly Africa", and "Snowman". These songs possess some of the flair and excitement of their earlier work yet do not break from the general tone of the album as a whole. If one can accept a change in a band's musical direction, then old fans of XTC will like this release, since it is as strong as anything they have released to date.