

Entertainment

Revealing Glorious Mysteries



(Melinda Arseneault Photo)

by Andrew Sneddon

On Wednesday, February 23, Ed Kavanagh read portions of his new novel, *The Fifth Glorious Mystery*, to a small audience in the East Gallery. Kavanagh, who currently teaches English at Memorial University in Newfoundland, graduated from the University of New Brunswick's Master's program in Creative Writing last year; *The Fifth Glorious Mystery* was his Master's thesis. Kavanagh was an accomplished writer before arriving in Fredericton, having published essays, plays, and children's stories. He is still preparing his new novel for publication.

As the posters indicated, *The Fifth Glorious Mystery* (I don't know what the mystery is) is a coming-of-age take, set in Newfoundland. Kavanagh read four passages from the book, to introduce the various characters and give the audience a hint of the different moods involved. He described the book as being mostly hard-edged realism, broken up by reflective passages. Since the point of view is that of a person remembering his childhood, the interpretive passages fit in with the remembered details easily. For instance, the first section was a memory of a Christmas gift received on Nipper's (the narrator's) seventh Christmas. The gift is a Chinese puzzle, with no English instructions. Although success is obviously next

to impossible to achieve, the boy keeps being drawn to the gift, entranced. The description of the puzzle and its box seamlessly eases into memory and slight, analysis of the magical mystery of this gift — it, and its smells, are China to the young Newfoundland, a hint of exotic life far from Kilbride, the boy's homeplace.

The second and third sections read by Kavanagh were about Nipper's junior high school. Interestingly, they also contain glimpses of a life outside of Newfoundland; as the boy gets older, however, the mystery changes from gleaming gold to tarnished waste. The remembrances of this section are tinged by fear — memories of Edgar Allan Poe, of intimidating tough-guy teachers, of movies about the holocaust and the world wars. Contrasted with those uneasy memories are images of Nipper singing, both in choir and in class, and of developing a love of learning in spite of these awful teachers.

The final section was the one I found the most enjoyable. Here was a story: Nipper is old enough to participate in community dances. His community, Kilbride, is close enough to other small communities, such as Pity Harbour, that the residents of the various places mingle at community events. Nipper tells a story about the meetings of rival gangs at these dances, and their odd code of ethics. If a dance took place in Kilbride, for example, the Kilbride gang members would gang up on the Pity Harbour (or other community) gang members and beat them up. This was accepted because some Kilbride gang members would go to the next Pity Harbour dance and be beaten in the same way. Justice works out over time. Nipper remembers one time when the Kilbride gang leader was beaten up in Pity Harbour and thrown off a dock. Since the guy couldn't swim, he was badly shaken. So, at the next Kilbride dance, the Kilbriders get together and beat the living shit out of the Pity Harbour boys — the worst beating Nipper can remember. Later, when Nipper is driving home with a couple of the Kilbride gang members, they see two Pity Harbour boys limping home. The Kilbriders stop and offer a drive; the Pity Harbourites, scared to death, agree. One of Nipper's friends asks why they're walking, and are told that the boys' car wouldn't start. Nipper's friend replies, "Geez, it really wasn't your night, was it?", having just beaten these guys to a pulp. When Kavanagh read this, the obvious and surprising irony brought howls of laughter from the audience, and Kavanagh stepped back from the podium, laughing himself: in all of his time working on this book, he hadn't seen the humour there. It was good not on which to finish for this up-and-coming Canadian author.

A FunDrive With Eric's Trip



Marc Landry photo

by Bruce Denis

Out of the depths of the chilling Canadian music cellar come Eric's Trip. The band that will become the next U2. They will tower above the industry, touring the world and selling Rick White's sweat in small bottles for \$39.95 USD...I don't think so.

Eric's Trip is the anti-hero. Anyone who saw them last week at the Farmer's Market would agree. However, I couldn't help but feel privileged to see them perform only two blocks from my apartment here in Fredericton.

Kudos to CHSR for nabbing everyone's favorite band for their annual fund raising concert. A crowd of 300 strong moshed the early evening away, warming up with local noise from Mona and Karen Foster.

After setting up their own equipment and accompanied by their own lighting (two 60 watt lightbulbs) Eric's Trip made the usually hostile Farmer's Market stage their home for the hour and a quarter set. They opened with a new song and ripped into a string of number one hits from their relatively new album *Love Tara*.

Highlights included a frenzied *Frame*, *Anytime You Want*, *Stove* (...and you didn't think they'd play it live!) and *In My Room* which has become their 'hit', so to speak, after becoming a Much Music darling video on the Wedge.

Lowlights included a short delay after Chris Thompson's guitar decided it had had enough of being mistreated and took the night off. However Mr. White teased the crowd with the opening riff to *Garage* before Chris assumed Julie's extra hollow-body.

Someone must have sacrificed to the 7" single gods that day because the band played *Belong* from their awesome 1992 debut single of the same name. I missed Julie's harmonies though.

The Broken Girl fell through the porthole to dementia during the wild *Blinded* that finished the set. They returned to play one more tune, a Bad Religion cover, but a courageous (or drunk) kid from the crowd took over the vocals from Rick so it was more of an instrumental. Lucky the kid could sing!

Mona and Karen Foster were equally polished on this night. Steve Duggan led the former through a set of mostly new songs, capping it with David Link off their self-recorded demo. Fredericton underground icon Chad MacQuarrie took his trio to new places with a full hour of new and old music that took a toll on the eardrums.

Africa Night '94: Exploring the Faces of Africa

By Jethelo E. Cabilete

The music was playing upbeat, African rhythms, the atmosphere was electric the crowd was huge and the presence of two video screens guaranteed that everyone had an excellent view of the night's proceedings. Thus did Africa Nite '94 open for this writer. The line-up for this event stretched all the way to the front door of the building, and the stream of people didn't end until 8:00 p.m. Entering the cafeteria that night was like entering an entirely different world; one composed of music, exotica and sights. The dinner queue began early, people receiving very generous proportions from an array of delicious African cuisine. Emabhotsiji (beans stew), African mune (jollof rice), Nsawew (ginger fruit punch), koko ya lebaka (baked chicken and bituli (beetroot salad) were just some of the dishes on the menu that tempted everyone's palate, in some cases more than once, as people helped themselves to seconds and thirds.

After the dinner, the event commenced with introductions by M.C.'s Jessie Sagawa and Keli Tamaklo. These two deserve congratulations for a job well done; they were enthusiastic and well versed in the event's procedures. The playing of the Canadian anthem, O Canada, and the African anthem, Nkosi Sikeleli Afrika, reflected national pride, both Canadian and African, in everyone. The African Students Union President, David

Hobona, then gave a brief address that echoed the night's theme of the Faces of Africa, repeating the central issue of the evening as being the rich cultural diversity, history, geography and achievements of the various peoples living in Africa. Next, the M.C.'s introduced Elifuraha Mitalo, who read a speech prepared by Dr. E.C. Nyarkoh. Unfortunately, Dr. Nyarkoh could not be present in body, due to unfortunate circumstances, but he was present in spirit. A spirit that came through in his moving speech read by Elifuraha Mitalo. Mr. Mitalo began with the misconceptions and myths that many people thought of in the past, and continues to this day, of the various cultures and areas of Africa. He proves many of those myths as false through the facts regarding the history of the various people living on the continent and the richness of tradition and heritage present in African lives. Africa is not just tropical rainforests, but also vast savannas, arid deserts, mineral rich ground, a source of tremendous hydro-electric power, techno-industrial cities and exotic native villages. The high point of Dr. Nyarkoh's speech was the multiculturalism and pluralism of Canada that enables different cultures, including African, to share its heritage with the rest of the world. It was a well thought out and appropriate speech, and well-delivered by Mr. Elifuraha Mitalo.

Then the entertainment began, and started with a

bang! Present during the entire evening and especially in the fashion parade, was the variety of the African clothes that were worn by many people. Ugandan busiti, agbada from Ghana, haussa of the Niger people, tied-dye kaba and many others shown beautifully; the rich embroidery and colourful earth tones creating a kaleidoscope spectacle. The clothing were functional and/or formal, with a mixture of traditional and modern touches. Traditional dances were also performed throughout the entertainment portion. The uMmiso, a well executed Swaziland performance, began the night's entertainment. This dance was great, barring the low level of the sound system. The Ingadla, another Swaziland dance performed only by women, was a lively and energetic number. The performers certainly gave their all for this number. The Eastern Dance from East Africa, and Southern African Skatchana Ensemble were fun and upbeat performances, with much ululating and drum beat dancing. Scattered in between the dances, were traditional African events, such as a story telling by Ato Eguakan about Anansi the spider and the Child Naming Ceremony (the Adowa and Bewaa). The story of Anansi reflects the method that the African people used long before the advent of formal, contemporary education systems. Word of mouth was a way of handing down traditions and heritage from one generation to the next.

Most stories also contained morals; in this one, the moral is that with wits and perseverance, nothing is impossible. The Child Naming Ceremony is an integral part of African religion. It introduces the child to the role that he or she is to play in the society that they were born in. Prayers, the exchange of gifts, the naming and ceremonial dancing are performed to insure the child's acceptance in the world. Both events were well done and were interesting insights into the African culture. Two poems by David Hobona also came into play. *Woman*, recited by Deanna Allen, concerned women's struggle for equality, fairness and a place in society. The other poem, recited by David Hobona himself, was entitled *Faces of Africa* and described the culture, diversity, geography and people of the African continent. Both poems were well received by the audience.

The final showing was a vote of thanks from many of the performers and the organizers of Africa Nite '94. The thanks were said in the African language or dialect that the speaker came from, so we were treated to the thanks from Uganda, Swaziland, Ghana, Niger and a host of other countries. It was a very enjoyable evening, and the rest of the night was spent in dance and music until the wee hours of the morning. So as the sun descends over the lush jungles and breathtaking deserts, we bid good-bye to Africa until the next year brings us another fun-filled night of revelry. Ciao!