

Duke's protean vitality is reminiscent of the big bands

by A. S. Lamb

You claim that big bands are passé. I dare anyone to hold that opinion after listening to a recent release of the Ron Collier Orchestra featuring as solo pianist, the almost legendary Duke Ellington. The Duke doesn't sit back on his former success but progresses

towards new music forms and, unlike many performers, he doesn't hog the show. The Canadian musicians in this recording can only be described as fantastic. The solo flugelhorn of Freddy Stone slides into stratospheric heights and interweaves with Bernie Pilch's flawless alto sax work. Guido Basso, of 'Nightcap' and 'Barris and

Company' fame, adds his flugelhorn to Stone's and produces a powerful but restrained entry for Ron Collier's composition, 'Silent Night, Lonely Night'. But, on the first listening, and now, after numerous playings, I find my favourite cuts are those composed by Norman Symonds. His 'Fair Wind' and 'Nameless Hour' both stand

out from the rest of the tracks as further from the standard corruptions meant to win the mass audience. Their strange chords and lack of a regular rhythm structure forces the listener to actually take the time and listen. 'Nameless Hour' is strongly reminiscent of 'Lux Aeterna' and the 'Gayne Ballet Suite' both heard in the movie '2001'. Its

lack of brass augments the mysterious mood produced by the strings and the Duke's short piano phrasings grab attention for this unusual masterpiece. In fact the whole album 'Duke Ellington in Canada' on the Decca label, is worth the time and money of anyone who thinks music should evolve and happen in Canada, because it does.

Does journalism distort the truth?

by Linda Bohnen

The Distemper of Our Times, by Peter Newman

One day recently a journalist friend and I, both of us in the middle of Peter C. Newman's *The Distemper of Our Times*, were discussing what makes a successful Ottawa correspondent. On top of all the obvious virtues, such as shrewdness and perseverance, the friend suggested the ability to fabricate well. By fabrication he meant the pretence that the reporter was actually present at the event being described and the creation of drama from second-hand information. He estimated (and he is a friend as well as a colleague of Newman) that at least half of *Distemper* is fabrication.

Peter Newman, with a syndicated column in 29 Canadian newspapers, and the Toronto Star's Ottawa editor, is unquestionably a successful correspondent. His ability to fabricate is both his strength and his weakness.

Only the most passionate patriot would deny that much of Canadian politics is dull. The men who have governed us have been gray personages; I suspect even John Diefenbaker's prairie flamboyance failed to stir most urban hearts. And the issues they have dealt with, excepting the recurring Quebec matter and the occasional war, have been unin-

spiring. On top of this, the Pearson era, from 1963 to 1968, which *Distemper* chronicles, was, leaving out Expo, a particularly ignominious period in our history. Faltering minority governments forced elections so frequently that no sooner was one set of campaign posters torn down when another set was pasted up. In 1963 Walter Gordon brought down his infamous budget that would have tried to buy back Canada — and we discovered just how far we had been sold out. Scandal after scandal — Landreville, Rivard, Munsinger, to name only a few — threatened the prestige and credibility of both Government and Opposition. And through it all Lester Bowles Pearson mumbled and stumbled, kept in power more by the universal dread of another Diefenbaker government than by his own competence.

Somehow Newman makes it all interesting, more tragicomic than shameful, and even relevant to today. Passionately involved in the events himself, he is sometimes more dramatist than historian. He never merely reports what was officially said and done; he takes us into the proverbial smoke-filled rooms to show us what really happened.

The 1965 election campaign

was run for the Conservatives by Eddie Goodman and his cohorts, all of whom had been trying to oust Diefenbaker from the leadership. Newman reports that on October 2, in the Chateau Laurier, the group discussed what they would do if, by some miracle, Diefenbaker were to win the election and become Prime Minister. "It was agreed that Goodman would go on national television ('After all, I'll be something of an architect') and apologize to the people of Canada for having played such a monstrous practical joke on them. Then the entire Tory headquarters crew would join hands and leap off the roof of the Chateau Laurier."

In his 1965 budget Walter Gordon had proposed that advertising in foreign-owned newspapers and periodicals no longer be allowed as a tax deduction — with the exception of the only periodicals that counted, the Canadian editions of *Time* and *Reader's Digest*. Their exception naturally caused a furor in the Commons and the country. But, according to Newman, *Time* and the *Digest* had such powerful lobbies in Washington that the U.S. State Department threatened to review Canada's quota of oil exports to the U.S. and warned that the Canada-U.S. auto pact would be

jeopardized unless the two were exempted. They were.

Newspaper stories were never this much fun.

But the anecdotal, dramatic method is also Newman's weakness. Even if only a quarter of *Distemper* were fabrication, it would still cast doubt on Newman's reliability. This is not to suggest that Newman is alone in fabricating. And his educated guesses are, I am told, amazingly good. Nevertheless, I am forced to take the book with a substantial grain of salt.

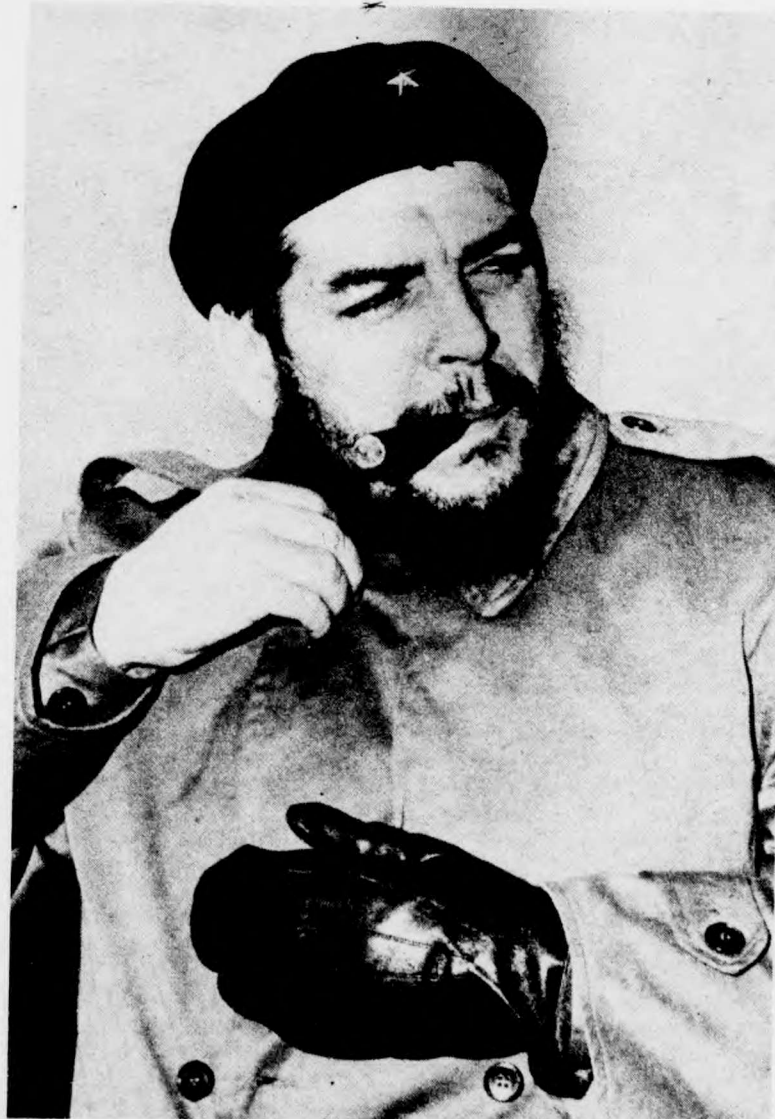
Unfortunately, my skepticism is encouraged by Newman's tendency to cast people into types, and then to interpret all their deeds and misdeeds as resulting from their personality types. The major characters in particular suffer from this. Thus Diefenbaker is always the renegade out of power, a renegade who is also a loser. He comes over as Macbeth in descent, with Mrs. Diefenbaker his Lady. Pearson, it seems, never did anything but bumble. He's a sort of combination of Snow White's Dopey and Bambi's Thumper. Both men are too much like papier mache puppets to believe in. And after a while, you begin to feel sorry for them for the humiliations they suffer at Newman's pen. For example:

"The leader's entourage had picked up a canary from a supporter in Richmond Hill, Ontario, and Diefenbaker spent hours trying to coax the bird to whistle, as if its song were some omen of good fortune. The bird never did sing, but on the morning of November 6, between Saskatoon and Prince Albert, the steward was imitating a canary whistle, and Diefenbaker, who thought it was the real thing, got very excited. No one ever told him the truth."

Newman is better on the secondary characters, particularly Gordon and Dalton Camp. He's brilliant on Robert Winters, ever the chairman of the board: "We can win the war on poverty by making the poor richer."

One of the troubles of writing such instant history is that assessment is difficult. Thus Newman never penetrates the masque of Pierre Elliot Trudeau to find out what the man really stands for or what the Trudeau phenomenon really means. But no matter. Newman has already begun work on a book about this, the Trudeau era. If it is going to be as comprehensive as *Distemper*, then none of us need bother reading the papers now. We will find out what it is all about, what really transpired, when it's all over.

Che Guevara



Mario frattis play

leaders of both parties will follow meekly the beck and call of capitalist war-makers in Washington. This seething frustration has led to hardening of political philosophies among many of the New Left members and other genres of revolutionaries taking inspiration from Che, who said: "revolutions are fought with bullets, not with peaceful protests."

As always when some man reaches mythical heights the film companies and other purveyors of the cultural scene descend like vultures to pick over the bones for all their worth. Already 20th Century Fox studios are filming 'Che' with Omar Sharif playing him and Jack Palance as Castro (incidentally, the budget for the film is far greater than was Castro's for the entire Cuban revolution).

Although studio officials were

at first wary that "a picture based on Che's life could turn into a favorable propaganda for Communists and Communism," they realized that they could strain for 'objectivity' in view of the great market possibilities of such a film. Director Richard Fleischer, whose previous credits include 'Doctor Doolittle', summed up his interpretation of the central character in the film: "Che was a handsome, sexy guy. That's the secret of his appeal. He had animal magnetism. He was beautiful."

There is even talk of a Broadway musical based upon the life of Che (starring Robert Goulet, I suppose).

Toronto has had a taste of the Che bug with Toronto Workshop Productions presentation of 'Che Guevara' by Italian playwright

Mario Fratti. The play concerns the last months of Che in Bolivia and is based, more or less, upon his diaries. While the production is good, and the play is interesting to see, it suffers from trying to create a man out of a myth. In the diary we get glimpses of Che, the gallant dedicated revolutionary, but we never really see very much of the man. The spirit of Che, the quest for justice that guided him from early age to his miserable death, the rage that must have burned within him is missing. The actor's rhetoric cannot get this across. But young radicals throughout the world, from Tom Hayden to Tariq Ali, can. After observing the radical movement in the US for Esquire, Steven Roberts concluded that "the children of Gandhi had become the children of Che." Che Guevara's monuments has yet to be built.