

Winters' extravaganza seen by 600

Cosmic Con shows Canadian reality

Cosmic Convention, Winters College extravaganza, attracted over 600 people on the weekend, and effectively buried the myth that Canadians are not experienced enough in such things as comics, science-fiction and fantasy to put on a major convention that would be attended by Canadians. As well, it became clear that the American lodge-style club of science fiction and other genres, Fandom, is not growing in this country. Instead, it now appears likely that people interested in sci-fi, sword, sorcery and comics are following the British and European patterns of a high interest in the genre, but not the fanaticism that characterizes the American scene.

Compared to the last two events in Toronto, Fan Fair II in 1970 and last October's Secondary Universe 4,

Cosmic Con was by far the best. Winters-McLaughlin was a perfect layout for the diversified activities of the Con. The convention itself was a more open and friendlier affair than the other two. Fan Fair II was restricted by the fact it was the first convention held in Toronto in twenty years, and sources at the Cosmic Convention indicated that OSFIC, the group which organized Fan Fair II, is working hard to make sure that Torcon II, the 1973 world convention, will be a unique experience, both for the Canadian fans, who, it is hoped will attend in vast numbers, and for American guests as well.

One difference in the convention was the Canadian aspect. Although the centre of the comic world is the United States, and all the guests came from the United States, Ken

Ketter had done a Yeoman job of bringing fans from across Ontario, and an English and French delegation from Montreal.

Although Fan Fair II and Secon 4 did publicize a great deal in Canada, most of their publicity was aimed at the United States. Ketter, on the other hand, while not ignoring the American fanzines, blitzed Toronto with publicity, ably aided by the Red and White Society and Winters College Council.

Canada has a chance to build up both science fiction and comic art, was the general opinion of delegates to the convention. Quebec has already started. Pierre Fournier, contributing editor of Le Beaver, a

Montreal magazine, told Excalibur that the much-publicized Petite Histoire du Quebec, is only one example of the growing and struggling Quebec comic industry. "The comics are nationalist, not separatist," Fournier said, "They are also having a lot of trouble financially, and have to be supported by the government." Some of these new comic magazines include "L'hydrocephale illustre", "Made in Kebec", "ARS 2" and "BD". Fournier said the interest in Quebec in comics started in early 1970, and has been building itself up. As well, an interest in science-fiction is developing in the French-Canadian literary magazines.

The English-Canadian science fiction or comic scene is not as bright. People such as Captain George Henderson, York professor Michael Quealy, Ketter, "Le Beaver", Editor Cliff Letovsky, and Toronto artist Derek Carter, all commented that there is a great deal of talent which can be used to build an industry if given a chance. Ketter was attempting to organize interested people in Canadian comics, and it may be that English Canada will follow Quebec and take a gutsy step despite the odds. "I think there is a lot of unrecognized talent in Canada that can be given stimulus and scope," Quealy said, "This convention is a good first step."

Immensément Croisés: group meets the challenge

By EVA WOLF

Immensément croisés, a dramatical poem written by H.A. Bouraoui of York's French Department, presents quite a challenge to the theatre group wanting to stage it. A series of "tableaux" dealing with the human condition, the text deals with many modern themes — love, hate, war, religion, politics — but these are presented in no logical order; the reader is bombarded with a series of abstract images; the rhythm and vocabulary of the text itself attempt to stimulate the reader into creating a meaning for himself out of the paradoxical jumble of mass media messages.

The "Atelier Theatral de York" has met this challenge well in their recent performances. The troupe of actors started by Yvan Augsburger, a French student at York, included Yvan, Diane Bacchiocchi, Peter Dietrich, Christiane Gerson, Ted Whiteside and Marian Pratt. (Marian was substituting for Eleanor Keen, a member of the



The cast of the play have been performing around Toronto.

troupe who fell ill just before the performance, and did a fine job as "le champion" on very short notice — two days.) It was evident that a lot of hard work went into the performance. It seems to have been well worth it.

The costuming was imaginative and functional — plastic capes (for our plastic society?); sex symbols galore; I loved their freaky

headgear in the language lab scene — the sound effects were varied, exciting, and, once again, appropriate (I am thinking of the Morse code tape; the Indian music for "Je gratte ma guitare" starring Peter Dietrich, as a workout freak — this brought in the whole drug cult scene; the religious chanting). The slides were well-chosen, diverting, and at times pointedly funny (the political cartoons dealing mainly with De Gaulle were hilarious). Lights flickered on and off, and the scene changed rapidly. We were constantly urged to "plug ourselves in" to different lines of communication (the inane telephone-answering, page-flipping segment done by Ted; the ABC sequence at the end), to receive conflicting messages (sex was one that came out loud and clear in many different ways; we're frigid, "air-conditionnes") and to feel different rhythms (from rock to Guru to belly dancing). The pace was great.

As for the actors themselves, they deserve a big hand for handling a tough script, with so much energy and enthusiasm. They worked together well. Each character was different (Diane was wonderfully sexy as Eve in the Garden of Eden), but each, whether humorous, threatening, sexy or pathetic, was an integral part of the whole. They all participated in the scenes depicting mass-people production. We are constantly challenged by our senses, being made "aware" in order to ward off their barrage of words and threats. What we have is our personal communications crisis: we are invited to share in a total experience.

The group has also performed at Glendon, University College and Erindale College, and other engagements are planned. They are well worth seeing.

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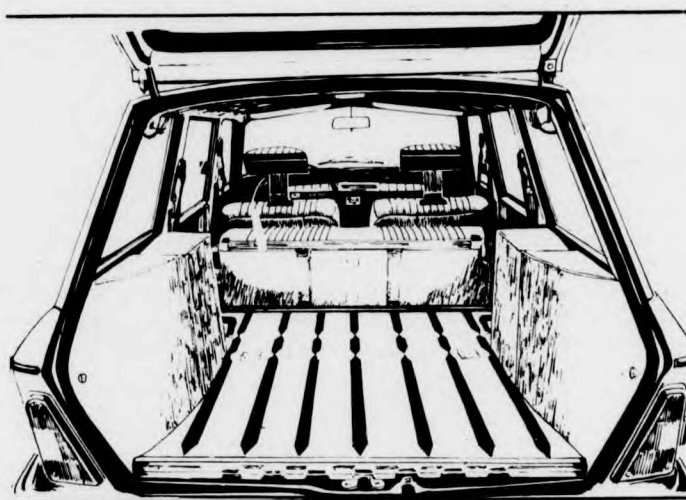
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