

# The arts

## The battle of sight versus sound - in quad.

Music which is an in-ly pleasing combination of sounds, and very soothing to hear - that is what a full house at Convocation Hall was treated to Wednesday evening. The Chamber String Quartet is considered to be among the top chamber music groups in the world, and even to the uninitiated, it is not hard to tell

For those unfamiliar with chamber music, it is played with violins, a viola and a cello. The combination and talent of the musicians produces a sound which is so harmonious and unified, it is often difficult to tell exactly where the sound is coming from.

The evening consisted of several works: The Quartet in C major, Opus 33, No. 3, "Bird", by Joseph Haydn; the Quartet in A major, Opus 95, "Serioso", by Ludwig van Beethoven; and during the intermission, the Quartet in A Major, Opus 41: No. 1, by Robert Schumann. The piece was light and airy, and with a precision and clarity which was to continue throughout the concert, while the Quartet by Beethoven was a more powerful work.

An evening of chamber music can hardly be considered exciting, although it is interesting to watch the concentration on the faces of the musicians. The music seems to vibrate when one's eyes are closed.

At the close of the concert the Quartet received a three-minute ovation, during which they came back for four curtain calls, then played an encore. It was the Scherzo to The String Quartet by Ravel. Perhaps the most enjoyable piece of the evening to listen to, and watch, the one movement concluded the concert as a showcase for the musicians' ability. The piece was a beautiful end to the evening.

While the Guarneri String Quartet plays in perfect harmony on stage, they are not

necessarily the tightly knit group one usually expects musicians to be. They stayed in two different hotels while in Edmonton.

Sitting in Convocation Hall listening and imagining the royal courts where this music was first played, it is not hard to understand why its popularity remains 250 years after it was written.

Brent Kostyniuk

### The Guess Who:

## As seen in retrospect

Thursday, November 13. The sudden arrival of some serious winter weather had caused a traffic jam on Capilano Freeway. A lone student waited patiently in a car for traffic to resume flowing, his radio offering the only sound other than the steady drone of his well-oiled car. The anonymous voice on the air droned on, until a familiar sequence of syllables was uttered by the entity known as the disc-jockey. "Burton Cummings," said the voice, "announced today that the Guess Who, a popular Canadian rock band, have broken up." That was all. Another song.

In a dimly-lit corner of the Rutherford coffee room, a group of students dismissed in a solemn tones the demise of a group whose long career provided many moments of pleasure and identity for thousands of Canadian pop-rock lovers. They felt that the contribution of the Guess Who made to rock, and the avenues of success opened up for other Canadian bands by the Guess Who's experimentation, necessitated an eulogy, so here is a biographical requiem of the group.

After the initial success of



Robert Mitchum and Jane Greer form an uneasy alliance in "Out of the Past", a thriller with more turns in it than a country road. It concludes E.F.S.'s Film Noir Series on Dec 3 at 8 PM, Tory Lecture Theatre. Single admission tickets will be available at the door.

*Shakin' All Over* the Guess Who returned to bars and clubs until Jack Richardson, an advertising promoter, persuaded the band to contribute material for a special Canadian rock album being released by Coca-Cola. The public and the band both liked the album, and the Guess Who, along with Richardson, formed Nimbus 9 productions, the mysterious term that appeared on all Guess Who albums from *Wheatfield Soul* on. A hit single, *These Eyes* propelled the group to fame in early 1969, and they never looked back.

At this time, the Guess Who consisted of Burton Cummings, Rand Bachman, Jim Kale, and Garry Peterson. It was this quartet that was also responsible for the group's next two albums, *Canned Wheat* and *American Woman*. From the two albums, a total of five single hits were released, the most popular being *American Woman* which reached number three in the entire world in 1970.

After *American Woman*, Randy Bachman left the band and he was replaced by both Kurt Winter and Greg Leskiw. With this lineup, the band recorded *Share the Land*, the

album many critics consider their best.

Single after single, album after album, the Guess Who continued to dominate the Canadian rock scene in the opening years of this decade. With the departure of Randy Bachman, Cummings changed the musical approach of the band to a slightly more boogie-type rock, as is apparent on *So Long Banatyne*.

Six more albums were to appear after this, the last and most recent being *Power in the Music* with the lineup of Cummings, Petersen, Bill Wallace, and Domenic Trioano. This was the fateful quartet, who on November 13, 1975, snuffed it.

We can all remember favourite Guess Who songs: *These Eyes*, *No Time*, *Share the Land*... the list goes on. The group had a total of 26 hit singles and 13 albums. And while the group has been and always will be criticized for their commerciality, the impact they had on high-school students at the turn of the decade (you and me), cannot be denied.

We must continue to share the land. Life goes on.

Gary McGowan  
Gordon Turtle

## Don't liszten to the fanfare

Billed as an erotic, exotic, electrifying rock fantasy, "Lisztomania" is Ken Russell's personal interpretation of the lives of musical composers Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner. "Lisztomania" represents the latest in a list of musico-biographical works into which the English movie director has channelled his long-standing obsession with famous musicians and their world.

The ten films Russell has attempted along these lines include "Music Lovers", a biography of Tchaikovsky, "Mahler", and (as we all know) a production of The Who's rock-opera "Tommy".

Russell has chosen to portray his principal victim Liszt (Roger Daltrey) as a modern rock star, mobbed by hysterical female groupies who fight for a piece of their idol's clothing or for the thrill of merely touching him.

During the initial fifteen minutes this fantasy is rather amusing, as Liszt performs before the crowd of screaming, swooning fans, slipping from fragments of a composition submitted to him by the young Richard Wagner into his own popular composition entitled "Chopsticks."

But the movie might as well have ended with that performance, for Russell's fantasy only becomes progressively more excessive, strained, and senseless from that point on. Wagner turns into a vampire and sucks Liszt's blood in order to gain his musical inspiration. The vampire-plagiarist then becomes an anti-christ figure whose music acts like a drug upon German youth, bringing them into line with his Nazi goals.

Believe it or not, Russell's Wagner is also the evil creator of a Frankenstein-like Hitler whom he sends out to massacre the Jews.

A few dashes of outrageous satire fail miserably to lend any validity or depth to Russell's fantasy. In fact, they only confirm the suspicion that very little thought was put into the movie. The Church is clumsily desecrated whilst parodies of old cinema personalities (Frankenstein, Charlie Chaplin) betray the director's failure to curb his self-indulgence.

Attempts at humour are equally pitiful. Angered at the Pope's refusal to grant his mistress a divorce Liszt decides to take vengeance on the Church by becoming a Franzisian. Get the pun? When his mistress asks him what his favourite sins are, the musician replies "the sixth and the ninth". Her response: "So let's do 69". Is anybody out there laughing?

Signs of Ken Russell's strong visual talent do appear from time to time throughout the movie, but the phalli with which the screen is perpetually cluttered tend to detract from any positive aspects in the film.

Erotic? Exotic? Electrifying? These adjectives certainly do not describe the film I saw, for it was no more than an insult to the intelligence of the public, a sign that what was once talent has degenerated through the pitfall of excess into vulgarity.

Bob Simpson

## Lurking in the shadow of Louis Riel

Woodcock, George *Gabriel Dumont* Hurstig Publishers cover \$8.95 251 pp.

It is indeed refreshing to read a book of Canadian history, written by a Canadian author, not well-known for a book of Canadian history... simply, well-written.

George Woodcock has written a biography of the Metis leader Gabriel Dumont and the dramatic events of the Canadian Northwest of 1869 and thrust them into relief: Dumont, the marksman, and dramatic warrior in constant conflict over the course of the rebellion with Louis Riel, literary figure half-mad with apocalyptic visions - both men pitted against the devastating cynics of Ottawa headed by Sir John A. Macdonald himself.

It's a cliché to say that an author makes historic



Gabriel Dumont at Fort Assiniboine, May 1885.

characters flesh and blood, but that's exactly what Woodcock has done. His Dumont is no longer the obscured figure at the side of Riel - his development is traced from boyhood, and the quickly learned skills of the plains, right up until exile and his attempts at political manoeuvring to salvage his people's pride.

The major events and characters are cast in the frame

of the 1885 rebellion: "its (Canada's) first war fought without assistance from British troops - a little war and a shameful war, but indisputably our own."

The role which Dumont plays in the Rebellion is analyzed very well. Avenues of possibility or probability are explored; the questions "Well, what if...?" asked and some well-thought answers given. This is a part of history which many modern historians have tended to neglect and it reflects, perhaps, the education Woodcock received in England. It does, in fact, tend to make the work much more interesting than most modern history and also immensely readable.

This biography is different than most Woodcock has authored before in that it relies on a great deal of general and indirect evidence. That is to say, Dumont's own character is

inferred, to a large extent, from general characteristics of the Metis people of that time and area.

As a result, Woodcock emphasizes the social and political tendencies of the plains Metis throughout his work and the reader receives a very well-formed picture of this people. Like many of the others in this work, the picture is poignant and moving, and Woodcock's insight is deep and clear.

George Woodcock is respected as a man of Canadian letters because of his proficiency with the written word and his understanding of man's nature. In *Gabriel Dumont* he employs both and paints a vivid picture of one of the enigmatic characters of Canadian history and as Margaret Lawrence has said, "enables us to repossess a crucial part of our past."

Kevin Gillese