

A cultural identity for anglophones ----- humour

by Bryan Fantie

It has not ceased to amaze me that often when I tell someone that I was born and raised in Montreal they feel compelled to remark, "Gee, you don't sound French." I thought that after the Parti Québécois were elected in 1976 most Canadians became aware of the existence of members of that previously almost unknown minority group - English-speaking Quebecers.

Anglophones (or, if more in tune with the Saxon portion of the Anglo-Saxon heritage, Saxophones) are making a move

(other than out of Quebec) to finally attain full official status as a recognizable ethnic presence. What cultural identity can a people have without a book of humour inspired by their character, plight, or eccentricities?

Well, the book has finally arrived and a noble effort it is indeed. Josh Freed (author of "Moonwebs" on which the film "Ticket to Heaven" was based) and Jon Kalina (former host of CBC-TV's "Critical Path") have compiled the contributions of over a dozen others along with

an ample assortment of Aislin cartoons to produce **The Anglo Guide to Survival in Quebec**.

In this book you get a crash-course in Le Instant French as well as a chapter dedicated to Quebec's special flavour of profanity. Hey, if you crave adventure follow the "Wilderness Guide to East End Montreal".

Most importantly, **The Anglo Guide to Survival in Quebec** is funny and can be enjoyed even if you have never been west of Saint John. It is also very sad as it chronicles the decline of what was once Canada's largest city.

Fittingly on page 101 there is a list of "institutions" which have disappeared from La Belle Ville. For example, two bus tickets once made it possible to take the

bus to "Nowhere". Passengers, often "young couples who had no car to smooch in", were taken "on an all-night excursion around town, destination unknown".

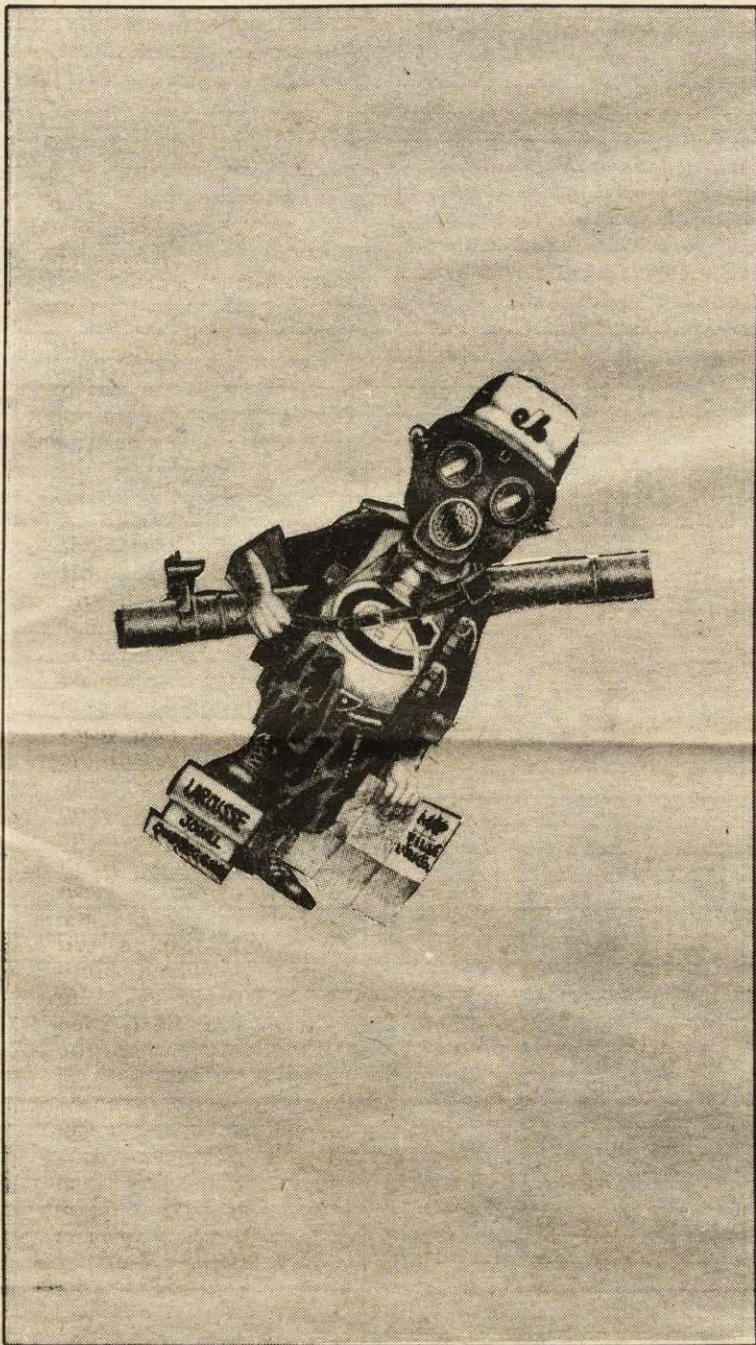
On the next page, printed within the outline of two tombstones, are the names of over forty English-language schools which have been closed.

Below the solemn markers there appears a list of "Diehards" like Wilensky's and the Orange Julep which have managed to survive. Toe Blake's Tavern is listed here too. Unhappily, since the publication of the book, it now belongs on page 101 with Rockhead's Paradise and Elmer's Dairy.

The Anglo Guide to Survival in

Quebec is clever, well-written, and occasionally touching. It is clear that those who wrote it love their city dearly. And, although they do not love everything that has happened to her, they were able to produce a piece of satire which is emotionally-charged without being bitter.

In a "Special Refugee Section," for those who have moved away, we learn that there is a Montreal-style bagel bakery now in Toronto. Unfortunately, the authors seem to think that everyone who leaves Quebec moves west. Perhaps, until recently, they all did... it sure would explain why many Haligonians have never heard of English-speaking Quebecers like me.



Shattering the dream

Jerky Visions of the Dream
by Howard Devoto

Review by Moritz Gaede

Howard Devoto, former vocalist for Magazine, one of the three most important post-punk bands, is perhaps the most fascinating personality to emerge out of the British music scene of the late 70's.

Magazine was a band that made songs which, if they hit you at all, cut deep and shook you up by the force of the clarity of their vision. Howard Devoto's sarcastic truths tore through layers of protection in as few words as possible, stripping the listener of everything except the cynical sense of humour with which the shattering blows had been delivered.

The music, unique and powerful, though always enjoyable, was a suitably driving vehicle for Devoto's passionate insights.

Magazine's breakup in 1981 left many people anxiously expecting a solo project by Devoto. A few months ago, after

the release of **Jerky Versions of the Dream**, the *Village Voice* called him "the most important man in the world."

Having finally gotten my hands on an important copy of **Jerky Versions**, I am not disappointed. On this album, which may not grab you on your first listen, the music is totally subservient to Howard Devoto's lyrics.

After listening to the album several times in a row, I had to admit that, though the music is not striking in itself, it serves its purpose wonderfully by raising the intensity of what is being said to an incredibly effective level and making the album a kind of musical novel.

As the album title reveals, the songs are about "The Dream"; about how we see things reflected in our minds and how reality shatters the illusion. "Waiting for a Train" brings out both the disappointment and the thrill of this self-delusion.

"Seeing is Believing ... is making do" sarcastically sums up attempted changes that never take place because decisive action is lacking. "Way Out of Shape" and "Out of Shape With Me" pair-up, climaxing in a powerful admittance of alcoholism, which is also a statement of his love and thirst for life.

Howard Devoto is fascinated with things; he is in love with the things he finds. This passionate fascination and love is the solution he offers, even if it is fascination with something you cannot have.

Since this album is one of those objects of fascination that you can have—if you can find it in the import section of local record stores—I would definitely recommend you to get it and spend an evening with it, preferably with a drink in hand.

For an in-depth review of **Jerky Visions of the Dream**, tune in to CKDU's **Hot Off the Presses**, Monday, January 30 at 8 p.m.

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