

Canadian post-modernist rag top of genre

Rampike: Violence Issue
64 pp. \$2 (Canada)

ELLIOTT S. LEFKO

Karl E. Jirgens, York literary professor and poet is the editor of an exciting post-modernist Canadian magazine entitled *Rampike*. Long and skinny in shape, *Rampike*, which translates as the bleached skeleton of a dead tree, especially one killed by fire, offers a different theme for the three issues printed each year. Recently they came out with a violence issue that features poems, short stories, and graphics by 20 international artists and writers.

Jirgens has gone out of his way to choose the widest possible range of contributors. Included are German artist Joseph Beuys, Quebecois rock poet Lucien Francoeur, members of the acclaimed local sound poetry team The Four Horsemen, and the

Caribbean show varied, entertaining despite shortcomings

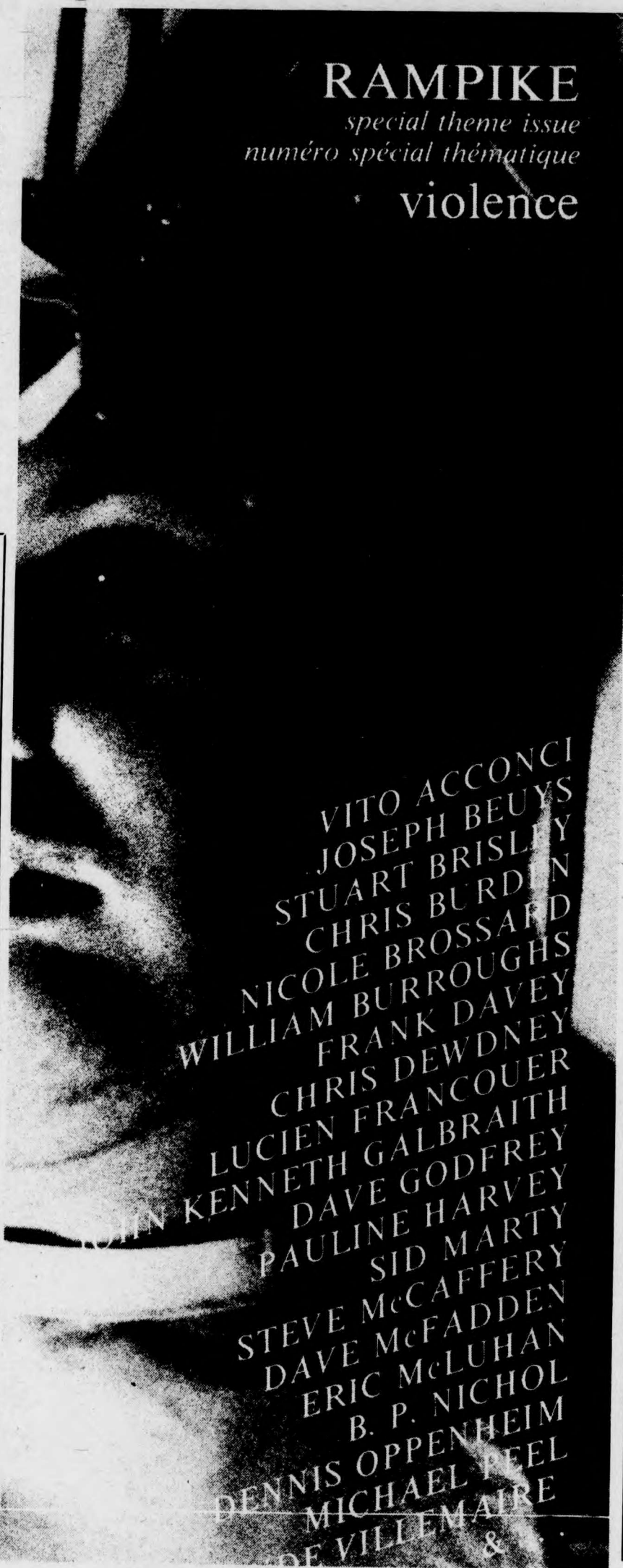
VERONICA E. ROBINSON

The Caribbean Cultural Show, which was held in Burton Auditorium on March 31, was varied and entertaining.

Through dance, music, poetry and skits, the show highlighted the diversity and uniqueness of Caribbean culture. There were too many individual pieces to enumerate, however, the dancing, poetry, and the narrative descriptions and renditions of calypso were commendable. Most of these items were unfortunately placed in the first half of the show, while the second half consisted almost entirely of solo singing and band music. Three bands bombarded the audience with selections of funk, reggae and steel band music. Perhaps the arrangement could have been different and the bands utilized differently.

Some of us would have liked to have seen more folk lore, eg., Jamaican labrish, Annany stories and Digging Songs. Lack of these items may be attributed to factors of probable weaker cultural links among Canadian West Indians, short preparation time for auditions and academic pressures.

Despite these shortcomings, the show provided laughter through its satirical productions of skits, reflections on the past of the Caribbean peoples, through the Slave Woman's song for freedom, and pride and appreciation for Caribbean peoples, especially the 'black woman' through poetry and song. Above all, it posited continued determination in the quest of the Caribbean peoples for a cultural identity, and it served as a means of exposure. It is an improvement on last year's performance. The organizers should be commended.



Avant-garde *Rampike* comes in unusual package.

infamous American grand daddy of post-modernism William S. Burroughs.

Graphically, *Rampike* is very eye-catching. Jirgens uses different sizes of type to fit each piece. As well, each story is accompanied by imaginative photos or collages. Running through the magazine are a mysterious series of fingerprints with different inscriptions underneath such as "loop," "double loop," "plain arch," and "accidental."

Jirgens has chosen to reproduce many of the works in their original language. Therefore there's Thomas Peifer writing in German, and a number of Quebecois poets writing in French. The decision is to be commended for its braveness, but it does leave the non-bilingual reader in a quandary.

While violence is not generally a funny subject, a few of the contributors, to their credit, have chosen to inject their work with some laughs. Local poet David McFadden offers "The Taming Of The Shark" (after Susan Musgrave). The delightful poem tells us of Mr. McFadden's unusual pet (I have to give it exercises, little weights to lift"). Chris Dewdney, who'll be teaching at York next year, gives us "Knowledge Of Neuro-Physiology As Defense Against Attack." In it he tells us how to fend off an attacker by asking him a question that will cause a deterioration of his vigilance

in his left visual field, that and a concurrent forceful right hook.

On the darker side, sound poet b.p. nichol contributes "Hour 16 3:35 p.m. to 4:35 p.m.," a stirring poem against violence ("What am I to do with the ineffectiveness of the poem that it reaches only the converted, only those to whom such messages get thru that it is not a gun or a means to peace but only that least of things words"). Mr Jirgens own "Highway 69 Is Disappearing" is a sparkling, well-written short story about travelling down a highway to see his father once more before the old man dies.

Pictorially, Marilyn Westlake's comic strip "Nary-A-Tiff" is an intellectual romp, original and very funny. The magazine's final moment is David Hylinsky's "Portrait Of A Women Savagely Bitten By A Passing Automobile," a photo which is guaranteed to evoke the response, "Yecch."

Overall, *Rampike* can be described as a stunning piece of work both literally and visually. It stands at the top of its genre of magazines which includes Britain's *ZG*, and Canada's *Impulse* and *Endpaper*. *Rampike* is a record of some of the best minds in the arts today. It deserves to be bought by libraries and universities for further studying of its contents by a wide audience. Now if I can just figure out about the dead trees and fingerprints.

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