

Wrack 'n Roll by Alex Varty

Not a bad L.P., this; it contains one classic song ["Can't Get Enough"] and quite a bit of listenable, good-humoured rock. Of course I'm referring to BAD COMPANY'S first record, which I finally obtained the other day. BAD COMPANY play unpretentious and straightforward music but are blessed with enough talent to remain a notch or four above the likes of B.T. OVERDRIVE. As this record was recorded in a very short period in a mobile studio the sound isn't all it could be, but the production is adequate and the pleasant character of the album grows on the listener with each listen. BAD COMPANY are "heavy" in the standard use of that adjective, yet it's always obvious that the group had a good time while in the studio; just listen to Rodgers' vocals on "Rock Steady" or Ralph's lead on "Can't Get Enough," for example.

Rodgers is immensely more impressive a singer than I had previously deduced from his work with Free. Ralph's guitarwork is perhaps more conservative than his playing on "MOTT" or "ALL THE YOUNG DUDES", yet his simplicity is a change and his tone is much less metallic and more controlled. Boz Burrell is a supple bassist and uses his jazz background to enliven many of the tracks. Simon Kirkes' percussion is simplicity exemplified, and, while stiff at times, presents a good counterpoint to the fluid bass lines. All in all, I'd rank this as one of the handful of listenable new hard rock albums that have appeared this year. All fans of the genre will be interested in BAD COMPANY, and those who appreciate the single will also enjoy the rest of their repertoire.

After only two trial auditions, Kansas has already impressed me as being on of very few North American bands with something to say. The style of Kansas' first album is close to the sound of Genesis' music. None of the group's singers or lyricists possesses the urbanity or wit of Peter Gabriel but as the band becomes more accustomed to recording, I suspect that they shall expand their talents considerably. I can't find fault with the music: it seems to be complex and innovative enough to satisfy the connoisseur of techno-rock; there is also enough melody and raunch to interest the average listener. I have a feeling that Don Kirshner may have picked up a very good act to inaugurate his Kirshner records; the quality is surprising from the man who brings us "Rock Concert."

Anyway this is good and innovative progressive music: give the album a listen and the band a chance. Carlos Santana's collaboration with Alice Coltrane, ILLUMINATIONS, is a very serene record. Used sparingly as mood music, this sort of LP can produce occasional fits of ecstasy, but too much of it can be soporific. Santana's guitar work is more like John McLaughlin's than ever, but his characteristic sustained notes are still there, augmented by the Gibson L'6's fantastic clarity and staying power. An all-star cast of jazz personalities helps keep up the interest: fine performances are turned in by bassist Dave Holland, sax and flute man Jules Broussard, keyboardist Tom Coster and drummer Jack DeJohnette. The spirit of John Coltrane pervades Santana and Coster's "Angel of Sunlight", very Trane-like solos are taken by Broussard on soprano and by Alice on organ.

All in all, this is a nice album; it breaks no new ground musically, but is most definitely appropriate music at some times.

Note: For those of you who have difficulty comprehending my reviews, I'm doing a radio program on CHSR on Friday evening [6:00 - 6:45] in which I'll be playing the L.P.'s reviewed every week. Check it out.

Centennial of Gustav Holst: Planet Maker is celebrated on CBC Tues. night

Gustav Holst the British composer whose memory is best preserved around the world by his famous orchestral suite, The Planets, is revealed to have made even greater contributions to music, in a CBC Tuesday Night documentary Dec. 3, 8:03 p.m. on CBC Radio.

Gustav Holst: Planet Maker was prepared in honor of the composer's centennial by writer and critic Kenneth Winters and producer Jeffrey Anderson.

For listeners in CBC-FM regions, a stereo presentation is available Thurs., Dec. 5, 8:03 p.m. on Encore.

During a visit to London earlier this year, Anderson interviewed a number of musical luminaries about Holst for the hour-long documentary. These include composer Sir Michael Tippett and conductor Sir Adrian Boult, the composer's daughter and biographer Imogen Holst, who is also a composer, and composer and author Prof. Wilfred Mellers.

Dr. Edmund Rubbra, the eminent symphonist and a former student with Holst, is also heard,

along the music commentators John Warrack and Donald Mitchell.

Included is a recorded tribute to Holst by Ralph Vaughan Williams made for the BBC shortly before Vaughan Williams' death in 1958.

Born Sept. 21, 1874 in Cheltenham, Holst earned himself an everlasting place in British musical history for helping to liberate his country's music from Germanic domination in Victorian England. Not only did he develop his own style and add considerably to Britain's store of orchestral music, part songs, carols, band music and the like, but he revived the music of great English masters from Tudor, Elizabethan and Jacobean times.

As a first-rate teacher, he rekindled a love of music amongst the general public, and through his choirs, reintroduced the works of such early composers as Byrd, Tallis, Weelkes, di Lasso and Palestrina. He died in 1934 at only 59.

Kenneth Winters, one of Canada's leading musical journalists, was music critic with the Winnipeg

Free Press and Toronto Telegram and is now executive secretary of the Ontario Federation of Symphony Orchestras and executive director of the Association of Canadian Orchestras. He is also English-language editor of the Encyclopedia of Music in Canada, sponsored jointly by the Floyd S. Chalmers Foundation and the Canada Council and scheduled to come out in 1976.

Winters' long-time friend Jeffrey Anderson succeeded him as music critic on the Free Press while stationed with the CBC in Winnipeg.

Following their documentary, the CBC Winnipeg Singers, under the baton of William Baerg, offer some of Holst's finest choral music, Hymn to Dionysus and Hecuba's Lament. Mezzo-soprano Phyllis Mailing is heard as Hecuba. The performance was produced by Harold Redekopp.

The CBC-FM series, Gustav Holst: Planet Maker, hosted by Kenneth Winters, continues Sundays, 10:03 a.m. until Dec. 29.

two

book

reviews

By KENNETH SCOTT

Crackpot.
Adele Wiseman
McClelland and Stewart
1974 \$10.00, 300 pages.

Sawbones Memorial.

Sinclair Ross
McClelland and Stewart,
1974, \$7.95, 140 pages.

Two important contributors to the twentieth century Canadian novel reappeared after long silences this fall. Both are to be welcomed in this dry season for both have brought us good new books, well worth the waiting.

Sinclair Ross published *As For Me and My House* in 1941. It was met with little applause and in fact went quickly into a sort of obscurity until it was rescued by the lifeboat S.S. Can. Lit. when it appeared in a paperback edition in 1957. Since then, Ross has retired, a somewhat bitter expatriate now living and writing in Malaga, and become in some circles, a cult figure, a prophet, in fact, of the "new" culture which has emerged in his native land.

Since 1941, he has published three novels, *The Well* (1958), *Whir of Gold* (1970), and his latest book *Sawbones Memorial* (1974). This added to his collection of short stories, *The Lamp at Noon* (1968) completes his artistic canon.

Geoffrey James (*Time*, Nov. 11, 1974) has written that: "*Sawbones Memorial* will not diminish Ross's reputation -- but it is unlikely to do much to enhance it, either." This review entitled "Too Many Voices" is not generous enough. In fact, it may be as great a classic as his first book has become.

The novel is entirely one of dialogue, broken up by the

occasional passage of interior monologue. Ross sits apart from the characters and characterizations and watches them weave their own tales of loneliness, frustration, isolation and emptiness at being so small in a country so large, so overwhelming, so dispassionate and so cold. It is a place which seems to hold no place for the dispossessed, the farmers, and most of all women. It is a great book, not because the themes are new which they are not, but because it is a bare book, as bare as the prairies and as clean as the winds which chill it. *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, any little Canadian town with all the masks and Canadian pretences removed: this is *Sawbones Memorial*.

Words, words, words, are what surround this Canadian Hamlet, one Doc Hunter, the books protagonist. He is seventy-five years tired, a country doctor in a small Saskatchewan town called Upward not unlike *Horizon* in *As For Me and My House*. This time is just after World War II, and the place in specific is Doc's retirement party which is coincidentally being held at the opening of the town's new hospital.

One of the interesting characters is Doc's replacement a young off-stage Ukrainian whom Doc, if not the town, had befriended encouraged, inspired and returned to his own place, Upward. The town is one of those places which Robt. Cockburn and Robt. Gibbs refer to in their anthology of Maritime poetry as a place "compared with the rest of the Dominion, ours is a small-scale region, and the memories and human intimacies of village and family, of valley and county seem to be always in our consciousness." It is in fact the heart of this country, a place where we put our roots. "We live here because we choose to."

The going-away party is the coming back of pettiness, pre-

judices, hypocritical attitudes and malicious and destructive gossip. It is any family reunion which at its broadest imaginative limits is expanded to the small community of Upward (pop. 500) and at its least is diminished to the microcosm of McLuhan's global village populated with a few characters, all with Canadian accents.

Doc is the most interesting character and he comes across as a human and humane old and wise man, decent if a few light years from saintly. He has had a sad life, often lived in vain, an empty career and his only hope has to be hidden from his friends and us (until the dramatic ending).

The books carries itself well except in some patches where the dialogue becomes wearisome. The trials and tribulations of these existences of not so quiet desperation often read like soap opera scenarios. The lapses of tears and biers sometimes is too close to "How to survive a Marriage." The verisimilitude of small towns, small people small ideals and no hopes make this one of the most interesting books produced in this country since Mitchell's *Who Has Seen the Wind*.

Adele Wiseman has also not been sitting still these past few years. In 1956 her book *The Sacrifice* won the Governor General's Award. Her book did not appear in paperback until 1968 and within three years it became unavailable and her importance as one of our best creative artists was restricted to a small coterie who patiently waited for more from her. This fall we were not disappointed.

One of the great errors of fate is that the book was actually ready for publication in 1969 but Wiseman had great difficulty in finding a publisher. This is criminal in the light of so much of the nonsense which obviously won out at the editors' tables.

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