

Fletcher voices position

by Leonard Hild

The closing chords of the Amen chorus, from Handel's Messiah, will mark the end of a chapter in Prof. Peter Fletcher's life. One of Prof. Fletcher's last acts as chairperson of Dalhousie's Dept. of Music will be to conduct the Messiah which will take place on Dec. 10th. After this he will be leaving Halifax for Leicester, England. Many of Fletcher's views and opinions remain a mystery to us because his position on music in the Arts Centre has never been fully represented in the press. I had an opportunity to talk with Fletcher; here are some of his views as he related them to me.

The reason for his leaving is entirely because of a disagreement over the use of the Arts Centre.

"Clearly, the spectrum of the arts presented should be as wide as possible. Growth in the arts is not achieved by presenting only what is familiar: certain tastes need to be acquired, like the first glass of beer or the first escargots. An essential function of the arts is to provide new experiences; experiences that



Dal Photo/Gagnon
Peter Fletcher, former Head of the Music Department, will be leaving for Britain shortly.

lead to a greater awareness of ourselves and our environment. Art is essentially a means of communi-

cation: that is what distinguishes it from entertainment."

Fletcher feels that the presentation of foot-stomping programs is not invalid in itself but, in general, it lies outside the preview of an Arts Centre. He says, "If I were to open a health foods shop, I would not need to be selling Coke and potato chips, just because a lot of people want them. An Arts Centre that becomes an Entertainment Centre will doubtless appeal to a wider section of the community, but it will cease to be valid in its original function. An Arts Centre has a duty to present the best of what has gone before us as well as to challenge with what is happening now. It must therefore be selective in both the music and the actual performance that it sponsors. To perform in a major Arts Centre should be a privilege and not a right."

"An Arts Centre also has a duty to attempt to increase the range of its audiences. There is no evidence that using the Arts Centre for pure entertainment has increased the range of audiences for the arts, nor that it has contributed to the

understanding of them. The building has lost much of its magic, not just because of physical alterations that have destroyed the original architectural concept of light and space, but because it has taken on the guise of a department store, causing shoppers to have to wade through a plethora of trivia in order to find the items of intrinsic merit. The immediate sense of beauty that the Arts Centre should stimulate has gone. In the long term, this is a disservice to Halifax and it detracts from the atmosphere in which students should be acquiring their discernment and skill in the arts."

"I abhor the idea that the public should be told what it should like. Yet that is precisely what the gauche publicity from the Arts Centre achieves. Publicity that encourages the worship of stardom does nothing to encourage audiences to have confidence in their own, individual responses. It only encourages the notion that there is some mystique about music: secure understanding that taste and response has already been defined by a discerning elite."

"If audiences for the Arts can be attracted only by images of clowns and chorus girls, I suggest that they are best not attracted at all. The classical arts should be present in terms of what they stand for and in a way that helps to relate their ethos to the somewhat opposing cultural environment of today."

Peter Fletcher realizes that not every one will agree with his views. However, he is quite perturbed at the "prevalence of uninformed suggestion and innuendo that surrounds this subject." Fletcher hopes that "Dalhousie will find a way of accommodating the various interests within its Arts Centre, guided by the sort of expertise that will provide a valid function for the arts."

continued from page 1
pour des papiers de position; ou bien, travailler en voyageant partout dans la région, a fin d'aider les Unions Etudiants. Un comité pour surveiller la location de cette personne a été crée. On veut l'avoir par le 30 janvier, 1977.

Trois milles dollars on été consacré au bilinguisme, y compris les dépens de traduction. On veut que toute la correspondance de la fédération soit présentée dans le deux langues officielles du Canada (par exemple, les ordres du jour, les proces-verbaux des réunions et les papiers de position). En plus de ça, services de traduction seront disponibles à toutes les conférences de l'AFS / FEA dans l'avenir. Délég-

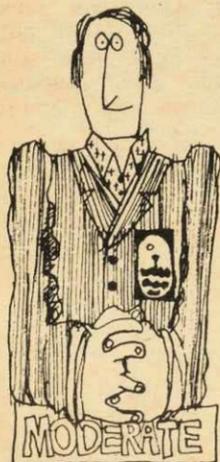
gues veulent que les étudiants francophones du région se réuniront avec leurs confrères anglophones en face des problèmes communs de la chômage, des frais de l'enseignement, et du logement.

Représentants de l'Université de Moncton on dit aux autres délégués qu'ils ne pouvaient pas s'engager aux frais per capita, bien qu'ils ne

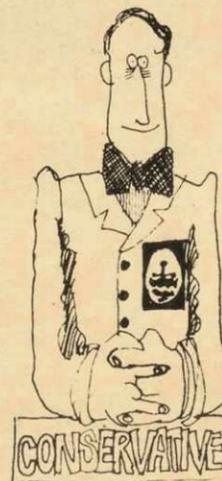
Gilles Beaulieu, secrétaire-général de la Fédération des étudiants Universitaire de Moncton (FEUM) croyait que l'organisation n'avait pas le soutien au-fond du corps étudiants, et donc construisait un mouvement étudiant d'en haut à en-bas. Beaulieu croyait aussi que les problèmes culturels étaient aussi importants que les

problèmes économiques aux étudiants francophones. "Nous ne ferons pas la faute historique de croire que nous sommes tous des alliés, du même sang. Nous coopérerons, mais nous ne ferons pas semblant d'être le même". Après la décision d'avoir une personne de personnel, qui a commis le FEA / AFS aux frais d'au moins \$1.00 chacun, Beaulieu et le trésorier de l'U de M, Jean-Paul Ouellette, sont sortis de la réunion.

On a aussi décidé à obtenir des fonds "d'urgence" pour la fédération, a fin qu'elle soit prêt a fonctionner le printemps. On veut \$10,000 le 15 décembre, pour être certain qu'on aura assez de fonds pour commence le janvier.



**Applications
are open for
Gazette Editor**



**apply to
room 334
Dal SUB**

Do you like to be surrounded by all kinds of people?

**Term of office
begins**

7 January 1977



**ends
30 April, 1977**

