

# A hard look at the Canadian 60's

by Geoff Martin

Every now and then I run into a genuine Canadian 'folk-artist' who lived through the 1960's and I cannot resist asking, "What ever happened to the 'sixties'; to the generation?"

"Well, it may be a myth that everybody's life was changed during the sixties, since most people involved were on the periphery."

So says Myrna Kostash, an emerging progressive-feminist writer who is, by her own admission, "obsessed with the sixties".

"If you look at the peace movement, human rights, environmental and other struggles," she continues, "many people involved were also deeply committed to social change in the sixties."

Originally writing short articles for magazines and various papers, Ms. Kostash published her first book in 1977 and has recently entered the genre of fiction.

"They always used to say that non-fiction was not creative...yet I feel the same sort of feeling in writing both fiction and non-fiction."

This past Sunday evening, Kostash gave a reading of one of her most recent short stories at the Red Herring Book Co-op on Barrington Street.

**Right Back Where I Started From** is a story about her own experiences in California and on a farm, as derived from a "bunch of notes scribbled down at the time".

Her second and latest book, **Long Way From Home**, is a history of the sixties in Canada, starting from the student movement as it developed in the late fifties right on through to the War Measures Act of 1970.

"It was an attempt at a Canadian history of the period. People read American books as though it all happened there."

She admits that so far she has been surprised at the unwillingness of people to think about history so recent, saying that "I hoped the book would provoke discussion and be the first of many books on the subject." She implied that people are not yet ready to talk about the events of their own recent past.

"One thing I learned in doing the research was that the sixties in Canada coexisted with periods in the fifties and seventies so that the book is really about the trends which the decade of 1960-1970 epitomized."

She also expressed concern that people might not learn from history so as not to make the same mistakes. "It can be discouraging because sometimes it looks like we are starting all over again with the present peace movement."

Yet, Kostash believes that people have learned from recent history, stressing that "Both sides are smarter."

Myrna Kostash could be described as one who thrives while living outside of mainstream society. "There are several communities in Edmonton I can hang out with - feminists, writers, Ukrainians."

Her first book, **All of Baba's Children**, is a history of the Ukrainian-Canadians of her parents' generation, which she stresses "could only have been written by someone in my generation who is not directly involved."

Also, she has recently finished a play about two people who meet again in 1982 after their commune broke up in 1967, forcing them to

reassess the ways in which they have both changed in the last fifteen years.

On the subject of critical response to her work, she wonders why the remnants of the New Left have not taken more notice of **Long Way**. "I expected that all of the people who went through the New Left in Canada would have something to say about the book...yet only the anarchists and women's movement did."

She has been travelling lately too; expanding her horizons. "I was in Greece last winter and was surprised by the environment... My experience with megaprojects, Ukrainians and the sixties meant nothing to them. They spent the sixties in jail, when they had a junta in 1967, and they are completely freaked out about drugs, like Turkey in *Midnight Express*."

And as is usual, the subject of activism in the 1980's came up in detail, especially with respect to the peace movement.

"What is the cultural counterpart for the present peace movement?" she asks, "Is there a lifestyle, a music, a sense of belonging?"

But on the subject of the diverse groups and people involved, "coalition politics is interesting, like in the women's movement for example. How do you deal with non-feminist groups which only deal with feminism in their rhetoric?"

Kostash was concerned over the strength of the current peace movement. She said it is difficult to tell whether people will settle for a compromise to merely put their minds at ease, or whether people will insist that real solutions to today's world tensions be found.

# Three great bands from Halifax

by Darla Muzzerall

Three bands in succession on a weekend night at the Kinsmen Rink...it's Friday - it's time to rock and roll!

First up is **Homicide**, a Dartmouth-based heavy metal foursome. Songs go from early Hendrix to more recent bands such as Motorhead, AC-DC and UFO. The rhythm section has got it together (Glen Langille on drums and Paul Skeffington on bass), and guitarist Jeff "Pig" Conrad has potential. He also inspired a lot of women to invade the dressing room. So why does lead singer Carl look like a cross between Loverboy's Mike Reno and a punk out-cast? It's a question of image, otherwise, no complaints.

Porter's Lake band **Challenger** is onstage next, and the hometown fans are cheering full force. It's well deserved! Not quite 'metal' this time; Challenger plays a wide range of April Wine, Loverboy and whatever is going good. Michelle Mosher's set on vocals, including "Harden My Heart" and "Lookin' For Trouble" is a definite highlight. The group has a tight rock image with talent all around: Tony Voogt on lead vocals and guitar, Jimmy Axford on bass, Vernon Axford playing guitar, and Paul Chapman rounding out the sound on drums.

Headlining the concert is the local unit **Titan**. From the minute the band appears onstage in charming combinations of satin and

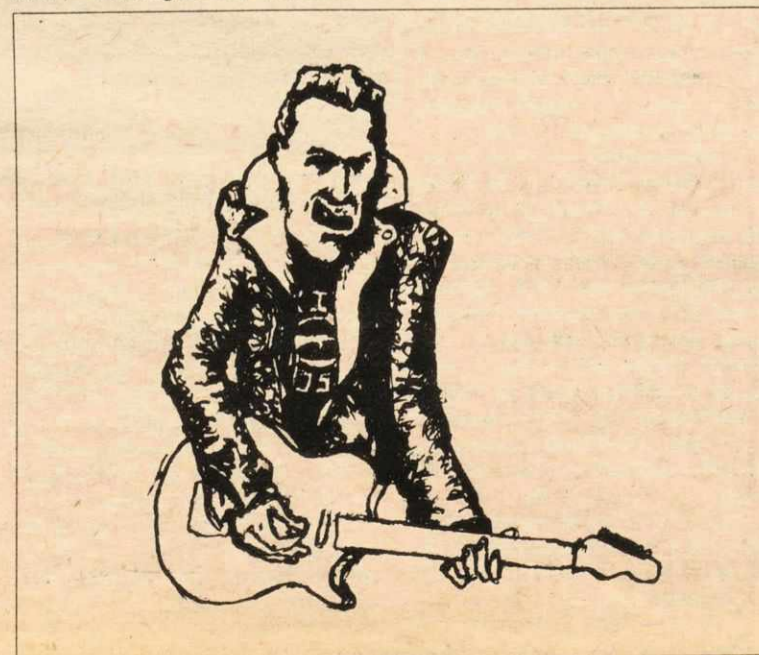
stripes, spandex and sneakers, the crowd is ready for the best. Dave Roberts struts the stage like a new superstar, while Bruce Nelson and Moe Lauzon share the limelight on dual guitars. Peter Large and Ron Mayer, drums and bass respectively, filled in the rhythm.

Thriving on the Atlantic bar scene, Titan on Tour '82 is playing some new and original material, such as (new single) "Midnight Romeo", "Outa Control" and "Light Up The Night". Among the Titanized cover tunes are "Satisfaction", "Working for the Weekend",

"Stone Cold" and some Led Zepelin. Moe's guitar solo, incorporating Van Halen's "Eruption" and leading into the Lone Ranger's theme (!) blew the audience away. "You Really Got Me" was the encore, and the crowd wanted the night to keep going on.

Not many concerts are so well worth the admission price (\$4 advance) and still promote so many rising local groups, thanks to H.E.A.D. Promotions.

Helluva night for the cause of rock and roll - let's see more!



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