

Poet is one of dreamy impressionism

By ALISON KING
"The People of the Dance" by Robert Hawkes

"The People of the Dance" is an anthology well-named. Robert Hawkes is a true poet of the people - his poems are songs about the community he knows, each one a little picture, a vignette. He points a spotlight on the people he has known, each one deserving a poem of his own, each another thread to be woven into the overall pattern of impressions. For like an impressionist painter he daubs on the muted but evocative colours of his childhood moments, a childhood full of nostalgic frozen moments. With his simple unselfconscious style, he evokes his community's warmth, cozy and familiar as a burrow of rabbits. Pictures of daily life are drawn, people talking to each other in easy conversational flow, people eating, listening, playing, dying - and dancing. He evokes principally this atmosphere of warmth and sym-

pathy and the natural acceptance of community solidarity. It is folk-lore poetry. Hawkes has a strong sense of identity with his people and with his land, and he indulges in no ponderous intellectualizing, nor are great conclusions drawn, though they may be implied. One reads, and lets the impressions, neatly cadenced, flow over one:

"I was the incarnation of my father's temper
my mother's father's smile
my father's mother's pride
my mother's mother's candor"
(Canaan Journey)

The sense of identity that runs through all of the poems is emphasized even more strongly in "Solution" when Hawkes writes about the new land he lives in, not that of his childhood. We feel his alienation, his bewilderment and sense of loss as even his childhood memories become distorted. However, undiluted faith in the promised land, the Canaan of his

childhood, still shines strongly in his memories:

"The soil was charcoal black
and the seeds
never failed
to dance it into greenness"

The sense of identity is again very marked in "self-historians", which has the impact of simplicity and naivety:

"Son followed son
until the memory
of their coming
to this valley
resembled cloth
exposed to
a century
of sunlight."

It is the description of people coming to their promised land, to wrest a living out of it, but there are no plaintive whining notes of hardship and suffering. On the contrary, there is a sense of strong acceptance, untainted by resigna-

tion. When he writes of the hard life his community had, there is no patronizing pity, only a feeling of kinship, as in "Son and Daughter":

"But we never
jeered at them
when they came
into the centre
of the village ... for ...

the happiness
on their faces
silenced us"

He is a poet who knows his own community. "I am your artist," he writes, in "Studies."

"I have known
I have known
my townsmen
as long
as the sun."

In the end, we get to know these people, as well as brother Dave, the cousins, and gawky, endearing Richard Trask, who provided a moment of malicious glee:

"I'll never fergit the day he
tripped on the hayrake and went
flyin' through the air till he fetched
up in a bollux of chickenshit."

We feel with them, for there is pathos in these pictures he draws, a pathos that fortunately remains unclinging, because of the simple, matter-of-fact style. There is pathos even in the energy of Pascal Black who dares to dance out his dreams, fired by sour muscatel. His vulnerability and that of others is portrayed with sympathy:

"and as people call
out encouragement
he wobbles
like a toy
uncertain of its centre."

We warm to James, who "just had to have his smokes", and even to the cruel Mrs. Pyke, as mean and sharp as her name, who cries out, on learning of her sister-in-law's death:

"The whore is dead!
Maybe I'll have
some peace at last"

Cruelty and death, dreams and childhood fantasies, sympathy and

solidarity, nothing is left out. The life the community leads is not rampant with the idylls of pastoral life - here are no nymphs or shepherds, although Hawkes does emphasize the wholesomeness of his childhood memories with constant and effective images of wholesome food, such as Aunt Lena's pies.

It is refreshing and amusing indeed to see Fredericton, usually so familiar and devoid of mystique, described as though it were the acme of aspiring nations, the place the Spartans wanted to conquer, in "Departure":

"I still remember
the day he left
for Fredericton

his father said
something I'd never
heard before

with your shield
or on it, Son

I say it now to you"

Hawkes' poetry leads one on to dream peaceful dreams in front of log-fires with flickering flames; sometimes the dreams are slow and languorous, sometimes the pace quickens as in the stark concise evocativeness of:

"broken hearts
lonely felons
thieving death
green-eyed girls
and tumbleweed."

Hawkes does sometimes graze the saccharine, but this is easily passed over. The main impression is that of cozy solidarity. Let the last word be with this dreamy poet-painter of a close-knit people who love to dance:

"I recall brief moments
of my childhood
when in the evening chill
I felt the warmth
of fire and family."

"The People of the Dance" is published by Alive Press.

Lord bless us all....

Dear Students:

Bliss Bricklin and Power Le preau, being of soundproof minds and used bodies; hereby put pen to paper to bequeath to our friends everything they deserve (subject to reconsideration by Council).

To:
Jim MacLean (The Godfather) ... a fully furnished Law Lounge in which to plot - practice law.

J. David Miller (The Godfather Part II) ... you got yours already.
Warren McKenzie ... his own Graduate Student Council to play with.

Jim Smith ... may he receive the gift of speech and not tongues.

Peter Davidson ... a money Sac.
Tom Benjamin ... nothing, because his C.U.P. runneth over already.

Allan Patrick ... a station that is not out of Commission already.
CFNB ... up your dial, is CHSR 700.

Derwin Gowan ... a PC Leadership Convention in the AUC.

Matt Penny ... hope you get yours.

Howard Goldberg ... a Patrick Shawn Shamus O'Reilly O'Neal Goldberg. Do it right next time Howard.

Chuck Spinney ... an extra slab of bacon.

Pat Potter ... a co-editor.
Ed Werthman ... a better half.
Steve Berube ... he always knew he'd be V.P.

Illa ... a centerfold in Pethouse.
Donnie Kinsman ... a breakaway, from Dave Kent.

Charlie Cortes ... a seat on Council and a caricature in the Bruns.

Eric Semple ... a Gordon Kennedy investigation book.
John McEvoy ... a speedy recovery from the traumas of the SRC.

Wency (Wendy) Batanyita ... to be introduced to the other proctor

before Frosh Week next year.
Chris Pratt ... a final solliquy.

Mark Giberson ... to become 100 percent Canadian-owned.

Monte Peters ... Bless you father for we have sinned.

Barry Hollowell ... never to be cast from the Glass Temple again.

Joe Higgins ... people used to tease you about your hair, now you tease it yourself.

Mary Lou McGibbons ... on the Campus Ministry Team? Why not?
Gordon Kennedy ... a U of T that understands him.

SAGA ... two all beef patties, special sauce ...
Dr. Anderson ... a co-ordinated R and B chorus line to dance with next year.

Dr. Thompson ... enough students at UNB to still be Dean of ...

Students of UNB, those of you who are left after the increases, wash your face in the morning, and neck at night.

UNB Film Society

Les Ordres expresses French Canadian 'condition'

UNB Film Society presents Les Ordres (Canada, 1975) written and directed by Michel Brault Saturday, March 27, 8:00 p.m. at Head Hall, Room C-13, and Sunday, March 28, 6:30 & 9:00 p.m. also at Head Hall, Room C-13.

The full extent of Michel Brault's triumph may not be appreciated outside Canada. This is not because Les Ordres contains a message or allusions meaningful only to Canadians, but precisely for the opposite reason. How easy it would have been for a Quebec filmmaker to turn the October Crisis of 1970 into a modern J'Accuse, complete with all the ludicrous caricatures and false analogies about the French Canadian "condition" so popular in nationalist circles. But instead, Brault portrayed traumatic human experiences in universal terms.

From lengthy interviews with fifty of the nearly 500 men and women arrested but never charged under the War Measures Act, Michel Brault has distilled five fictitious victims. Although their

case histories are thus composites, each is fully credible as an account of what happens to an individual suddenly and inexplicably deprived of his freedom. In fact it is sometimes difficult to remember that the characters on the screen are actors, so sensitive are the performances and so convincing are Brault's retrospective "interviews".

With each of the victims (a plant worker and his wife, a socialist doctor, a female social worker and an unemployed labourer) we relive distinct phases of the experience. They greet the arresting officers with surprise and disbelief, although these give way to anger as children are terrorized and they themselves are hauled away with unnecessary haste and roughness. Bewilderment and anger both continue as they are degraded and interrogated without hint of an accusation. This aspect of their imprisonment becomes more demoralizing as time goes on. How, asks one of them in retrospect, can you argue your innocence when

there is no charge? Increasingly, however, the victims are tormented for a different reason: their isolation. Not only are they unaware of the public events on the outside - notably the death of Pierre Laporte and subsequent national hysteria - but they are also denied news of their family affairs which were in various states of uncertainty at the time of their arrest. This deprivation finally destroys their resistance, reducing the strongest and proudest to pathetic gratitude for the return of their liberty. The frightening memory of this condition determines a sombre mood in the aftermath: anger against the authorities is a secondary reaction.

Some Canadian reviewers were disappointed that Brault ignored "the specific guilt of public officials". Indeed, it has been left to a CBC documentary to demonstrate how flimsy was the pretext for suspending civil liberties. Nor do Les Anglais appear in the film: Quebec anglophobes must seize upon (and

I would say misinterpret) very oblique references to satisfy their prejudice. For example, when the police chief employs the inevitable excuse for his actions ("Les ordres sont les ordres"), we might infer that his orders came ultimately from the "colonizing race". But even for those who insist upon a villain, Brault's portrayal of the police and his exclusion of English characters are more consistent with a different interpretation: that we are witnessing a settling of scores within French Canadian society, and Montreal society in particular.

Any such speculation is misleading, however, because Brault's primary concern is so clearly with universal themes. And perhaps ironically, it is here that Canadians must find the film's real lesson for themselves. They are not immune to the tyranny which infects other societies, albeit more frequently. Within hours Brault's victims, presumably conditioned all of their lives to believe in an enduring Canadian commitment to liberty,

abandon this comfortable assumption and begin to resemble citizens of a dictatorship for whom any degree of liberty is a privilege. And through the police and prison guards we are reminded that Canada too has its potential servants of a totalitarian regime, men and women whose reward is the perverse satisfaction of dominating, humiliating and even destroying others. Canadians have not trouble recognizing such phenomena in films about Greek colonels. In their hysteria many failed to do so in 1970. Hopefully Les Ordres will force them to understand it.



This being the biggest issue of the 75-76 session, I move my bill authentically. Hence as a favour and moved. Tuesday Gaiety have reassured that night - a darn good Carroll O'Connor and Ernest billing for names I read his character the other for very few B like one, the in the 'The His name more than been around O'Connor like a good I was for was. The sad than frustrating sketch with was drab. me less than everyday through in semblance of the worst U.S. of A.) The mess the set up O'Connor portable kitchen for swings in parcel up with it. Ha big beautiful Buick or w from his minutes to load of you and de-bol doorless, w less chais Borgnine. Elevator groceries.