

Artist Norman Yates...

Exploring new headspace

by Shirley Glew

Norman Yates is a painter whose art is rooted in the Prairie landscape — the 'Landscape' — he terms it, the climate, land and light of Alberta. His work is permeated by the clarity of what he calls our 'film makers' light. Born in Calgary and raised in Regina, Yates studied at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto. He likens the situation there in the early '50's to that of Edmonton 15 years ago. It was difficult for young artists to find places to exhibit. As a result, he and fellow students formed a group, the 'Young Contemporaries,' and organized shows in such varied places as theatres and country clubs.

In 1954 he took the traditional year of steeping himself in the European galleries and then came to the U of C as a sessional instructor. He has taught here ever since.

Sabbaticals in '62-'63 and '67 allowed him to travel to centres such as New York, Montreal, Chicago and Los Angeles. This kind of travel and study is necessary for every young artist. Yates feels that through seeing the work of others, he can become more objective about his own work.

Yates feels there isn't really one centre of artistic activity for the world as New York once was. Every place is a region, whether London or Los Angeles, as the conditions of life there inevitably influence any work done there.

Ease of travel and communication have led to the rapid spread of ideas from one region to others. Significantly, during his most recent sabbatical, last year, he chose to stay here and

paint. Some of those works are now on show at the Edmonton Art Gallery.

Yates' house and studio are in the Garneau area where he joins in the constant battle against developers and neighbourhood deterioration. Much of his work is done on 160 acres, mostly wilderness, west of the city where he harvested his first 45 acres of hay this summer.

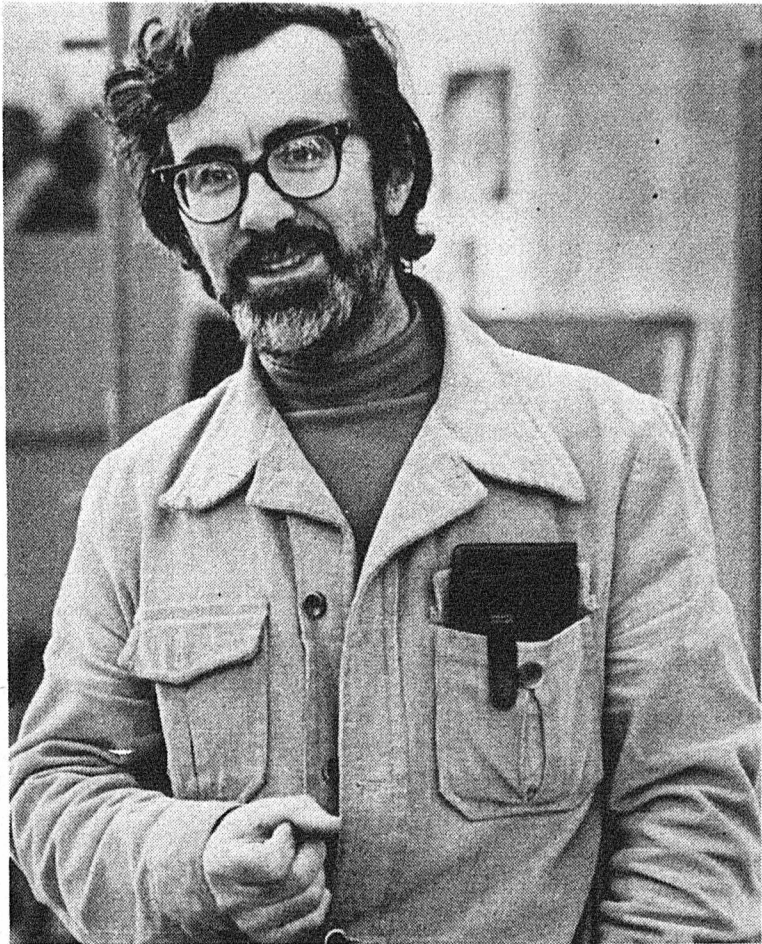
Yates feels that Edmonton is now approaching a cultural maturity which Yates feels is due to many factors. Foremost are the artists who feel the quality of our climate, light and space conducive to their work. In addition, the general economic prosperity of Alberta has created patrons for the arts, as well as increased government support and encouragement.

Yates is currently chairman of the Alberta Art Foundation which was legislated in 1972. Its purposes are threefold, to collect the work of Alberta artists, the exhibition of their work, and the encouragement of young artists.

A current foundation sponsored show toured London, Brussels, Paris, New York, the Olympics and is presently on display at the Jubilee Auditorium. These tours have led to enquiries and purchases from as far away as Europe for young

Alberta artists.

A love for our winter shows very clearly in Norman Yates' pictures. The contrasts, simplicity and colors of snow, the colors and light of sky are recurrently manifest. Yates attempts to escape the single viewpoint, window-framed landscape succeed through the multiple horizon effect of grouped canvases. The viewer begins to feel as well as see, as though surrounded by it, his space; the landscape.



Norman Yates

photo Shirley Glew.

Discovering Canadian herstory

by Kevin Gillese

HERSTORY 1977 — a Canadian Women's Calendar by the Saskatoon Calendar Women's Collective (Hurtig Publishers 1976) \$3.95, 120 pp.

The theme of this fourth edition of the book/Calendar *Herstory* is "women in collective action."

Although the idea of the theme is a good one, it often seems to force the inclusion of unimportant information within this year's women's calendar.

For instance, there is a page in *Herstory 1977* devoted to quilting bees. The Saskatoon collective point out these bees were often the only chance pioneer women had to get together with other women and talk, but even so, the subject does

not seem particularly important, just as a discussion of Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) is not, I think, of particular importance even to the most interested Canadian historian and/or feminist.

Still, the many character profiles included in the book are very well done, as they have been in each *Herstory* edition. The wording in some of the articles is clichéd — "Girls in our culture are trained to compete with each other and to feel alienated from feminine support." or "She was mourned by many who would not forget her great spirit and courage."

But the calendar is still worth buying and reading, if only because it gives prominence to so many obscure points within Canadian history, or herstory.

CLASSIC NOTES

by James Leslie

Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, Op. 35 (Philips 9500 086) is a composition of historical interest. This is the first major composition in which Tchaikovsky combined a solo instrument with orchestral accompaniment. It was first presented in Vienna in 1881. Unfortunately, it suffered the same severe criticism as any other composer's first major work performed in that city.

The Concerto opens with a quiet, gentle introduction. The introduction does not foretell the major rhythm patterns of the movements but rather the composition of the movements. Its skillful horn and violin blends set the instrumental combinations for the Concerto.

The orchestra gives way to the solo violin of the first movement, *Allegro moderato*. The movement begins in a slow tempo and through much development reaches its promised tempo. The violin is then all but engulfed in powerful rising and falling orchestral passages which are destined to become Tchaikovsky's hallmark.

The focus shifts to the violin which plays to the *allegro* rhythm of the bass. The orchestral passages return with their characteristic pattern to engulf the violin, only to free it for a well balanced close to the movement.

The second movement opens on tremello strings. The orchestra intervenes after extensive violin development to bring a close to the first theme. The tempo of the orchestration is



retained on the strings as they are brought forward for the second theme. The movement draws to an end with the only orchestral pattern of the composition based on the introduction.

The finale, encompassing the entire third movement, opens with a series of violin figures based on the first and second movements. The focus loosely shifts from one movement to the other. The orchestra joins, and each instrument loses its identity in the growing finale.

Other New Releases: Liona Boyd's long awaited second album, entitled *Liona*, has been released. (Boot Master Concert Series BMC 3006). Produced and performed by herself, the album contains classical works by Bach, Besard, and Spanish composers. Several recent impressionistic pieces are also included. An album of this calibre is a tribute to a great artist.

Singing the valium blues

by Beno John

Leon Redbone's performance Sat. night was best summed up by a dissatisfied patron while exiting. "It's like going to an ersatz game -- five dollars for

about ten minutes of hockey."

The comment wasn't too far from the truth, Redbone's performance lasted for a little more than an hour and it took the better half of that for Redbone to warm

up to his usual frenetic pace.

Other than ripping his audience off, Redbone displayed the aspects of his music which make him unique. Dressed in a double breasted suit, a wide brimmed hat and the perennial shades, Redbone walked on stage like a Frank Zappa on valium. His approach to the music was casual, adding an extra dimension to his style which fluctuates from the old swing-band jazz to the bluesy finger-picking style.

His guitar playing wasn't something you would write home to mother about, but that was probably due to the dark viscous substance Redbone was sipping from continually. Time after time he plucked dull notes. Despite this, one could get an insight into the talent behind his music. What was outstanding about Saturday's performance were Redbone's vocal range — he knows his microphone instinctively enough to render the exact sound of a muted trumpet, or a soprano sax, a booming bass or a crisp falsetto.

Liberally sprinkled through the songs were examples of Redbone's unique wit. The best example; Redbone pulled out a powerful pocket flashlight halfway through his set and flashed it across his audience, while greeting them. It was a nice ironic touch — but unfortunately the only intimacy he shared with his audience for the entire evening.



Leon Redbone lighting up.

photo Rod Allan