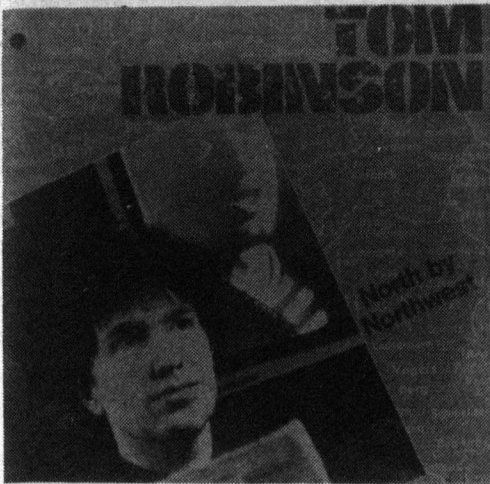


# ROUNDABOUT



by Nate LaRoi

Whether it be in standing up and shouting for his individuality ('Glad to Be Gay'), speaking out against discrimination (Rock Against Racism), or translating left-wing political sentiments into red hot licks (*Power in the Darkness*), Tom Robinson has always been a dynamic figure on the forefront of social change.

So how depressing it is to see Robinson giving up hope, descending into gloom and doom. "It's not use to face the future/Count to 20, close your eyes," he suggests in 'Merrily Up on High', a Peter Gabriel/Tom Robinson collaboration predicting nuclear decimation.

## First Blood: the wounds of war

by Brian Seibert

Time they say, heals all wounds. Not only wounds of lost loves, but wounds of lost wars as well. The gaping hole the Vietnam war tore in the social fabric of America is healing, and the movie *First Blood* is not only an indication of this, but a salve, accelerating the healing process. It is the most recent of a growing number of catalysts being injected into American society; each a stitch repairing the rent in the fabric; a fabric growing ever more khaki in colour. *First Blood* is one more sign of the resurgence of American militarism.

The movie *First Blood*, features Sylvester Stallone as John Rambo, a Vietnam veteran who runs afoul of the law in a typical right wing American small town.

It is while being processed for incarceration that Rambo escapes the clutches of said law, clobbering five or six deputies on the way out. By this time one has already learned that he is an ex-soldier, a Vietnam veteran. But following his escape, one soon realizes that John Rambo is also a veteran of the Special Forces, or Green Beret, and is more than at home in the rugged mountain forests into which he has taken refuge.

It is these rugged hills that Rambo demonstrates his survival skills and training in guerrilla tactics; training that gives the law enforcement officers a quick lesson in how the hunter may suddenly become the hunted. However, injected into these scenes of a Vietnam veteran systematically incapacitating his pursuing posse, are several scenarios bearing messages: Rambo stitches closed a terrible gash on his arm, Rambo's former C.O. arrives to help him, and Rambo spares a young boy who is hunting him.

The scene in which Rambo stitches up the wound on his arm is symbolic of the effort Americans must make in order to repair the damage incurred by the war. The wounds are too deep to heal themselves, therefore some effort must be exerted to close the gash.

The scene that is most inconsistent and therefore, most open to interpretation, is that of Rambo sparing a young boy who has somehow managed to become a member of the armed posse pursuing him.

The scenario is no longer so clear, and rightly so: the message is a subtle attempt to deny such Vietnam war brutalities as the Mai Lai massacre. How could a finely honed soldier, such as Rambo, shoot and kill innocent women and children in Vietnam, when he cannot even strike an armed boy? The implication is there that possibly it did not happen at all.

A much more direct fogging of fact is inherent in Rambo's recurring assertion that the army could have won the war if America had let them. And after watching Rambo singlehandedly hold a small army at bay, it is an assertion which is almost believable. Almost. But Rambo is neither representative of the American soldier in Vietnam, nor the veteran in America.

Rambo complains about being spat upon on his return home. But the mobs and the insults and the sailing saliva were relatively minor inconveniences compared to the actual damage that had been dealt the Viet vet and America in general. The real damage the war caused was much closer to the heart; friends and family were all directly affected.

These are typical of the wounds of Vietnam. Families were split asunder. America was divided. And ten years and

The grimness of *North by Northwest's* lyrics is only matched by the iciness of its music. All the things that made *Power in the Darkness* so enormously appealing - slashing guitar, pounding drums, passionate singing - all are either absent or in severe shortage on this year's model.

Instead, Robinson has opted for the same cool detachment the Cars are so often criticized for. On the first two cuts Robinson actually makes it work for him. Propelled by stacatto handclaps and a rivetting synthesizer stutter, 'Now Martin's Gone' is one of the catchiest synthpop exercises since Pete Shelley's 'Home Sapiens'. 'Atmospherics', on the other hand, pulls off the same kind of intriguing new wave posturing as 1981's *Sector 27*.

By cut three, however, Robinson is merely treading water: his decision to re-record *Sector 27's* 'Can't Keep Away' immediately suggests a lack of good new material. This diagnosis is confirmed on side two where the only notable track is a cover of Lewis Furey's 'Love Comes', notable only because it sounds like a screwball version of Robin Gibb's 'Words'. What sinks the remainder of the side is Richard Mazda's incredibly inept production which drowns all passion under a backwash of dull synthesizer, boomy bass, and droning vocals.

Having recently found himself without a band and without a recording contract, Tom Robinson does have some reason to be glum. But *North by Northwest* finds him bending over backwards to be icy. Heck, this record is so cold you need gloves to take it out of the sleeve.

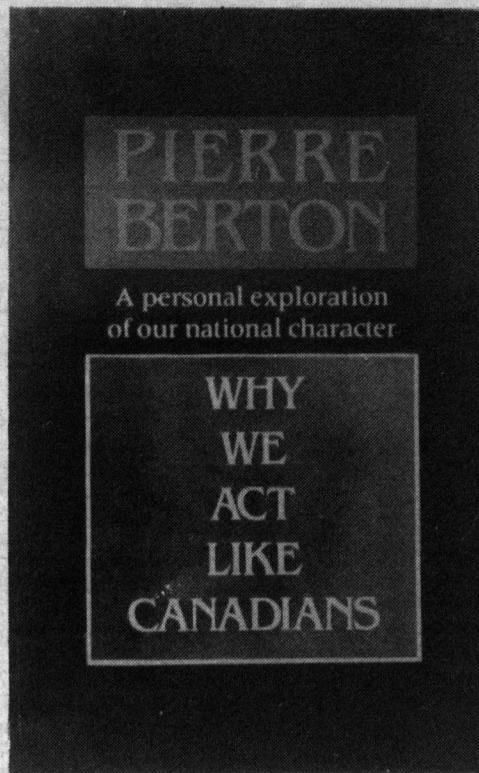
sixty thousand lives later the war was called off. The Viet vet had not only lost the war in Vietnam, but had lost the war at home as well.

And Sylvester Stallone's shallow portrayal of a Viet vet cannot alter the facts that: the war was strategically unwinnable; the Mai Lai massacre and its contemporaries did occur; the government and military did not give the Viet vets the recognition they deserved; the Viet vets are now concerned with more than just the jeering mobs they faced when they came home. The movie cannot alter these facts but it may alter beliefs and perceptions. It may help heal the wounds of war by oversimplifying them, and generalizing them, and altering them; eventually making the tragedy more palatable to the next generation of draftees - fodder for the germinating American military machine.

Vietnam was a war more documented than any other, yet it was also a war most wanting of forgetting. And the Viet vet is a physical reminder of this most questionable war; his return to America, haunting.

Sometimes the proposed solutions for complex questions are simple answers, and sometimes the solutions to complex guilts are simple lies. The resurgence of American militarism necessitates resolving the problems of guilt over the Vietnam war.

If this guilt is resolved in the simple, shallow fashion of *First Blood*, America could once again find itself in a Vietnam-like situation. Perhaps the wounds of America should be examined by more skillful physicians than Sylvester Stallone.



Book review by Richard Watts

Garbage. Pure unadulterated garbage. This is just another attempt by the great Canadian charlatan Pierre Berton to make money out of what he sees as an easily exploitable resource.

First of all he tells us we have a national inferiority complex; then adds insult to injury by trying to capitalize off it and make money by telling us why we have this national inferiority complex.

I'll explain our national character to you.

First, we're North Americans.  
Second we don't have this really idiotic pre-occupation with our national identity.

Third, we support Pierre Berton, the most boring published author to ever set himself up as a National institution.

This book is written as a series of letters to a fictitious American friend in which Berton explains how we are different from Americans.

The how part is easy, and can be stated in one sentence (although Berton uses a whole book). We are more dour than the Americans.

The reasons for this include - all kinds of bullshit about our national psyche being formed by the War of 1812, the formation of the Northwest Mounted Police, the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and other sort of obscure facts of Canadian history about which most of us know few details.

Just take a look at his discussion of the RCMP. According to Pierre Berton you can't begin to understand Canadians until you know something about the Mounties.

Well, for my money every mountie I ever met was a cop. He acted like a cop, he had a moustache like a cop, and he handed out tickets like a cop. Maybe he was a bit bigger than other cops, but he was still a cop. So how come our national police force makes us unique?

Well, I put it to you, Pierre Berton, you're the only Canadian I know who can live up to your stupid generalizations. This is because you have spent so much of your time uncovering all these little tidbits of historical Canadiana that you have had your psyche warped by it all.

Why don't you just leave us alone Pierre. Who cares if we don't have some sort of really identifiable identity? Quit trying to tell us we should. We're Canadians, we live in Canada, and we've got a half-assed sort of government. What more do you want?

And everybody out there reading this. Stop buying the jerk's books. Why should we make this big fat boring fraud rich by supporting this myth that we have to have some kind of unique identity or we are an incomplete nation.

10 Guitar Workshops

## FOLK, COUNTRY, BLUES

with 'Ma' Fletcher (and instructors)  
Writer of the weekly *Edmonton Journal* column  
'The Guitar Man' and performer at the  
*Edmonton Folk Festival* **Ma Fletcher** has  
performed with *Valdy, Stan Rogers*

**Enrol Now!**  
Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced courses  
Small classes 6-12 students  
On Campus in SUB every Saturday!  
Starts the week of January 15  
(also weeknights around the city)  
\$65 for 10 week course

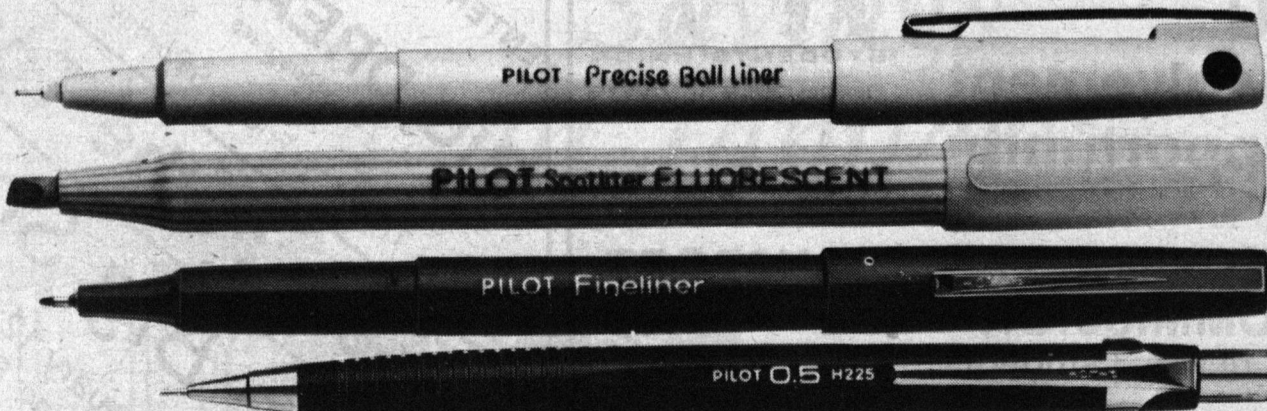
*Advanced Course Includes:*

1) 12 finger picking patterns	5) Open tunings
2) Blues guitar	6) Flat picking Styles
3) Lead guitar	7) Learn to Jam
4) Theory & improvisation	

**CALL 426-4155 or 429-0914** Monday to Friday  
9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

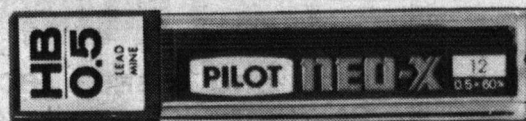
TEAR OUT THIS AD

# Basic human writes



- Incredible new Precise Ball Liner.
- Helpful, enlightening Fluorescent Spotlitter.
- Handy stand-by Fineliner.
- Magnificent Mechanical Pencil.
- And the world's strongest Lead.

They take your notes, do your term papers, even write your finals. On sale at the bookstore.



# PILOT

We make it write