

Making Waves

by Dragos Ruiu

Needless Gossip:

To get your attention, the word "Sex" could have been printed at the top of this column in large letters — but it's been done.

The truth of the matter is that getting your attention is very important to advertisers, musicians and all peddlers of wares. How they do it is a field of constant innovation . . .

There are two approaches to getting his/her attention. (please note the sexist way his was placed before her!) The first approach is the tried and true funnel money into advertising approach. While this works, it is quite stuffy and no fun whatsoever. So we will ignore it.

The second, much more interesting, method is to be silly, flamboyant or outrageous. While much cheaper and with greater potential for wild success, this method could crash and burn quite spectacularly.

Just think back to the last party where you saw some goof wearing one of those baseball hats which carry two cans of beer and have straw attachments. He was trying to get attention, but I bet you that guy didn't walk home with a girl in each arm. (P.S. anyone want to buy a plastic tie?)

Though the path to crazy charisma is studded with failures and mere semi-successes (Weird Al Ripoff) the successes can be astronomical. Van Halen made mega-multi-spendolas with flamboyancy. Back when they were still struggling (And David Lee's ego was of merely large proportions, but his mike was still in his groin) they parachuted into their first appearance in a major stadium. With wild entrances and crazy stage shows they soon after set a record for the largest sum paid for a single live performance. (1.5 million, and the Who, Stones, and Mikey Mouse et . . . Jackson are hiding behind their laurels or oxygen masks as the case may be).

The jury is still arguing over strange record packaging for getting attention. Chris Houston's innovation (You may remember him from the Forgotten Rebels, an experience he told me he'd rather Forget) in record packaging consisted of a record-sized chunk of Astroturf on the cover of his *Special Astroturf Edition*. He is



not yet a rich man . . .

In the same limbo is Snake Out's *Live Pizza* album which comes in of all things . . . a pizza box. Unfortunately for these dudes, no amount of clever packaging can conceal the lack of basic talent.

One man who definitely understands packaging is the man who brought us the Sex Pistols, (and some say Punk itself) Malcom McLaren. The interesting thing is that this man holds a recording contract with a major label even though he rarely sings, cannot play any instruments, and can't read or write music. What does he do? (Good Question!) All it seems he does is package things; that means get the right people together at the right time to make the right sounds so that other people give you the right money for it. Sounds simple, right . . .

Speaking of packaging, Michael Jackson's packaging is getting weirder by the second. Not only does he sleep in a pressure chamber, but rumor has it that he wears surgical and gas masks in public. (I know that has nothing to do with anything and I am being repetitive, but someone ought to be told when someone that popular goes Fruity Tunes.)

Speaking of weird, the grand prize in weird record packaging must go to the champions of weird MONTY PYTHON

(cheer goddammit!). Their Matching Tie and Handkerchief album comes not only with a matching cardboard tie and handkerchief (on a hanging man) but with a THREE SIDED record. Although students of science will argue that it can't be done and philosophy students will contemplate the metaphysical implications of this, the Pythons did it.

One side of the record has two separate

grooves cut in it, and depending on where you set the needle down you will get one of the two second sides. I know a guy who had this album for six months and always thought that the second side was just short . . . until one day he listened to it and heard something he had never heard before. Boy, did it floor him.

BatG'day. BatSee batyou batnext battime batpeople.

Loose language makes novel limp

The Devil Is Loose!
Antoine Maillet
Lester & Orpen Dennys
Toronto 1986
(trans: Philip Stratford)

The heroine, Crach-a-pic, is the last in the line of legends-in-their-own-time rum runners. It is the early thirties and the Atlantic coast is rife with smugglers of bootleg booze. Canada has just become Prohibition-free so there is considerable alcoholic export to a thirsty America.

Crach-a-pic is the captain of the Sea Cow, a ragtag hulk whose groaning belly is often haven to many a cask and case of intercepted spiritous liquor. Her crew is a strange melange of misfits, rejects, and idiosyncratic weirdos.

Dieudonne is a bit-time smuggler, swindler, cheat, crook who bootlegs for the US president and Mr. Chicago, himself, Al Capone. For all his worldly experience and wealth and underhanded knowhow, Dieudonne is no match for Crach-a-pic, et al. The rivalry seems on the surface to be good-humoured, but a dark cloud of ruthless knavery is anchored over the Dieudonne element. One wants desperately to warn our heroine about this greasy lot of unscrupled scoundrels, but, alas, there is no way to interlineate or telegraph a message. She must cope as best she is able.

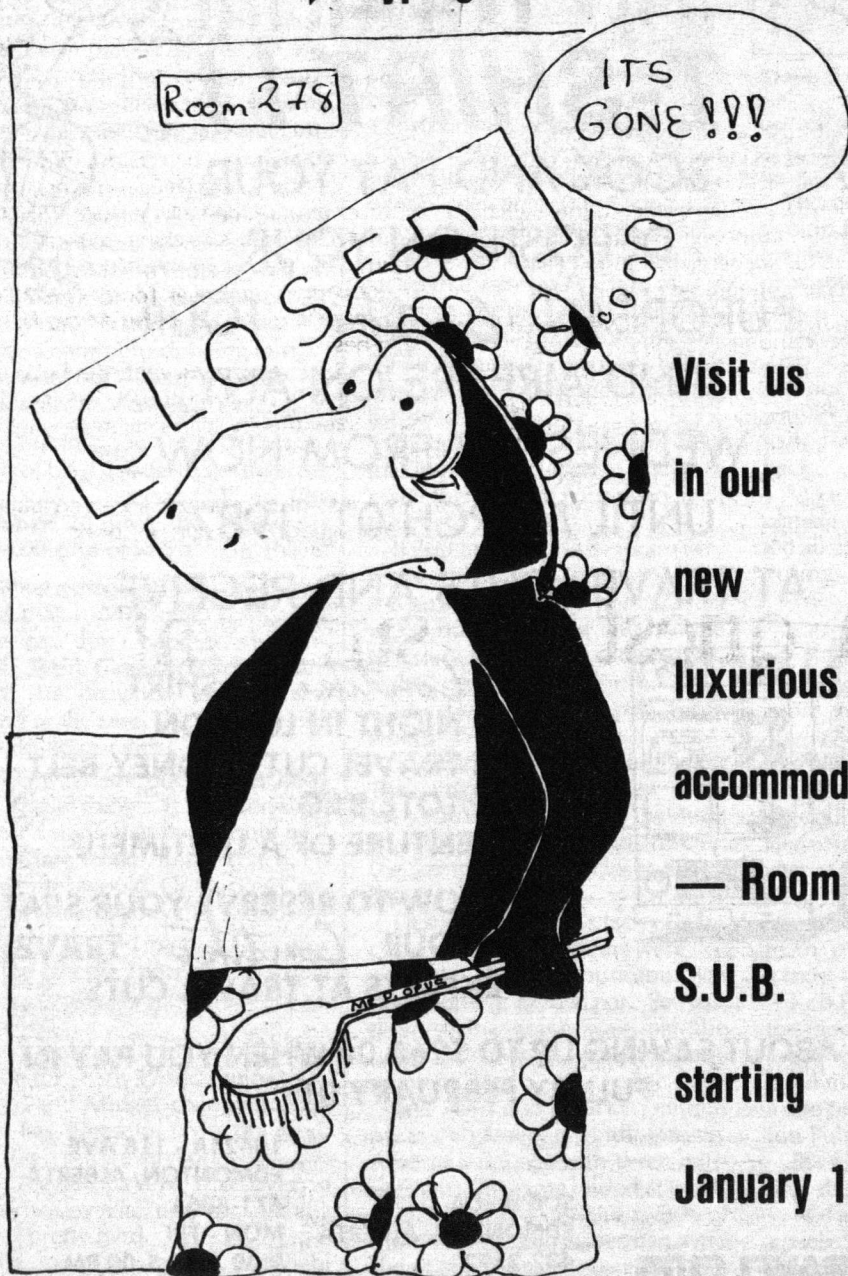
Cap-Lumiere is a terribly poor hamlet centred around a smithless forge. Weathercocks exponentially outnumber Bibles and dictionaries. Here most people love Crache-a-pic — except for certain unmarried women of religious bent. Universally,

Dieudonne is despised and his henchmen are anathematized, allowing Crach-a-pic to be the personification of the collective will (with some exceptions) of the hamlet. By her hand, villainy is routed, hoodwinked, gainsaid, and exposed in all its naked enormity. Although Crach-a-pic is not wholly/holy honest, her lies are spiritually distilled and purified by the guilelessness of her motives; i.e. the maintenance of tradition and striving toward necessary change. Crache-a-pic is a thinly veiled metaphor of/for la Canadienne Francaise: she is strong, faithful, persevering, and possessed of a cunning and ingenuity of limitless permutation. She is not inked into every page or even into every ten, but her spirit pervades. She is all that which is good about human nature and her faults serve only to emphasize and magnify her irrepressible humanity.

The novel has many subplots and tangential vignettes of questionable relevance, but its basic purpose is obvious, the representation of our species, multi-facetedness and our societal inter-relationships. We are forced to reflect on the progress, process, and meaning which define and revalidate our own lives.

The heroine's character is not well delineated, but presumably she is a wonderful and mysterious woman of epic bearing and goddesslike wisdom. Both she and her brief love affair require further development in order for the reader to empathize with her personal tragedy. She is sketchily portrayed and therefore easily upstaged. An enjoyable read which would not suffer from authorial review and revision.

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