

The arts

Experimental? Write!

The Experimental Writing In Canada public reading series continues this week with a reading by Steve McCaffery.

McCaffery is, like his friend and co-performer bp nichol, an inveterate explorer of the possibilities of language. Not as widely published as bill bissett and nichol, he has nevertheless built up a reputation through his solo work and performances with The Four Horsemen.

McCaffery has begun to publish quite recently and already his books include the massive concrete poem *Carnival* (Coach House), and the experiment in "written readings" *Dr. Saddhu's Muffins* (press porcepica).

As a member of The Four Horsemen, he has also contributed to their group anthology, *Horse d'Oeuvres* (Paperjacks). Other books, including a collection of traditional poetry, are promised soon. In performance, McCaffery is a delightfully entertaining reader.

McCaffery's reading is the sixth in a series of nine planned for the winter term. The readings are free, open to everyone and take place in Lecture Room Three of the AV Centre of the Humanities Complex on campus. Poet, critic and editor Frank Davey will appear on March 12.

Drop in, hear drop-out

Tex Konig has played literally hundreds of coffee-houses all over North America, and describes himself as steeped in the coffee-house genre.

The New York-born ballad-singer and story teller will offer three sets of his stories and songs at RATT this Saturday night, starting at 9 p.m.

"I tell ballads. I sing stories - that's what I am and that's who I am. I cannot be or do one without the other," is what the 6'4" 280 lb. singer says about his performances.

The performer has no doubt that RATT audiences will be pleased with his musical fare: "I tend towards balladry because most of it is people-stories and they fascinate me... it's a mixed bag with blues and stories,



poofs and abstracts. From time to time I do readings of all kinds; they give me a kind of rest while onstage. They give you the same while listening and they give me a different challenge and some inspiration that isn't always in music... you'll like it."

Konig describes his musical beginnings and plugs university at the same time: "I got my basic training in Washington Square Park on Sunday afternoons in New York while I was in high school, and then moved into the coffee houses after doing the Navy and gunsmithing school in Colorado where it was that I first decided to try this on as a

profession. Quit school, I did... pity... now I'll never know where that went."

And finally: "I am today and I listen to the past. We are the present and if I tie us together we will love and out of love we will be pregnant with the best kind of future."

Whatever it is that this man will offer on Saturday night, he's been doing it for a long time in a lot of places, and there are a lot of people who think he does it very well. You'll just have to go and decide for yourself.

Illusionist Davies gives us back our wonder

by Kevin Gillese

Davies, Robertson *World of Wonders* Macmillan of Canada, 1975, 358 pp. \$10.00

Robertson Davies once told an Edmonton audience that "one should listen well to old men when they tell their stories. I do, all the time... and they have strange and wonderful stories to tell."

How true. And when the old man telling the tale is one of Canada's most outstanding authors, one should listen very well to the strange and wonderful story he tells.

The story he tells now is a story of illusion, of magic, of the experiences which make the life of each man so intricate and individual. It is the final novel of the *Fifth Business*, *Manticore* trilogy, and explains the life of Magnus Eisengrim, conjurer and illusionist *extraordinaire*.

It takes its title from the circus where Eisengrim was trained and painfully grew up - *Wanless's World of Wonders*. But the world of wonders for the reader is within the pages of the novel and the brilliant illusionist none other than novelist Davies himself.

In the novel, Eisengrim is fond of telling people that an illusion will work only when great amounts of care and attention are given to the details of the illusion. Davies' could have mouthed the words just as correctly himself.

It is because of the meticulous attention to detail



Novelist Robertson Davies

that Davies' illusion works so well. The details are many and varied and when the final work is completed, the characters and lives of the three novels have been woven into an intricate and beautiful fabric.

The details connect all three novels into one fabric, but that is not to say that *World of Wonders* must be read as the final volume in the series. It stands on its own as a fine work, as cosmopolitan in scope and fluid in writing style as any fiction written in North America today.

But for those who do come

to the novel after having read *Fifth Business* and *The Manticore*, the experience is even more rewarding and satisfying.

Dunstan Ramsay, the would-be historian and hagiographer (student of saints) is back - this time to hear the tale of his sometime boyhood companion, Paul Dempster (alias Magnus Eisengrim). They hold their serious discussions in bed with Liesl Vitzliputzli - the woman who has loved and held them both and who was once thought by Ramsay to be the devil.

Once again, the general setting is Switzerland, where the backdrop of brooding mountains (and Jungian archetypes) thrusts the foibles and failings of the human characters into sharp relief.

As in *The Manticore*, the writing largely consists of monologues from the protagonist and this again gives the novel a very conversational tone and very, very smooth transition.

The narrative voice is driving, compelling, and every bit as exotically flavoured as any of Davies' previous works.

Over all, the novel is outstanding. Liesl says at one point in the novel, "We have educated ourselves into a world from which wonder, and the fear and dread and splendor and freedom of wonder have been banished."

Davies gives us back that wonder.

Look, look... see Alberta write

Last week - one short year after the publication of the first New Alberta Novels - three more first novels by Alberta authors are on the shelves: *Andre Tom MacGregor* by Betty Wilson, *Adrift* by Randal Harker and *The Mind Gods* by Marie Jakober.

This brings to six the number of New Alberta Novels published by the Macmillan Company of Canada alone since Alberta Culture's Literary Arts Branch launched its first "Search" in 1972.

Betty Wilson's *Andre Tom MacGregor* has been described as a "raw, realistic story... of the problems confronting a bright young Metis in trying to make it in the white man's world." Randal Harker's *Adrift* deals with "the life-style of Canada's young drop-outs." Marie Jakober's work is a "remarkable science-fiction" - *The Mind Gods* - and has also been scheduled for publication in England this spring.

If the fate of the first three novelists is any indication, this is just the beginning for Edmonton's Betty Wilson, winner of the \$2,5000 competition, and the two finalists, Calgary's Randal Harker and Marie Jakober. Jan

Truss, winner of the first "Search" two years ago, saw her novel condensed in *Redbook* magazine - the first Canadian to make those pages in 25 years. Fred Stenson, the 23-year-old author of *Lonesome Hero*, went on to see his book win the Canadian Authors Association gold medal and \$1,000 for "best fiction" of 1974.

"No reason these shouldn't fare as well," says John Patrick Gillese, Director of Film and Literary Arts, which is a branch of the provincial Dept. of Culture. "The sale to *Redbook*

and young Stenson's achievement are proof enough that Albertans have what it takes to make it on the international market."

Broad appeal is the major criterion of the competition.

"Alberta writers must, in writing, while utilizing their unique material, achieve international standards," says Dr.

W.G. Hardy, Chairman of the adjudication committee. Echoes his colleague, H. Lovat Dickson in Toronto: "The Canadian author is no longer writing for his own parish, but for the larger world. It is a demand on the skill of the author which previous generations of Canadians did not have to meet."

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 - BALFA BROTHERS - with MARC SAVOY from Louisiana - Cajun traditional
- Project Director - JOHN S. ULMAN

THURSDAY, APRIL 1 at 8:00 P.M.

TICKETS: \$5.00 ea. Mike's Ticket Office/S.U. Box Office/and at the door.

1953 Was a Good Year for Leaving Home



Starring LENNY BAKER, SHELLEY WINTERS, ELLEN GREENE, CHRIS WALKEN. Produced by PAUL MAZURSKY and TONY RAY

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