

ENTERTAINMENT

...cities at night, soldiers, dogs...

Fred Gaysek's keen wit: state of the art writing

Elliott Lefko

Knowing Fred Gaysek, I shouldn't have been surprised when we sat down to a purple dinner after an afternoon of techno-talk. If John Tucker and Fred Gaysek, collectively KEEN, are not living in the future, at least they're eating as if they were.

Electronic technology and modern media provide extensive new models and channels for creative use on an international level. (From the KEEN manual)

Earlier in his life, at about the age of 24, Gaysek remembers travelling to the York campus, along with other compatriots like performance artist and filmmaker, Judith Doyle,

and publisher, Leslie McAllister. Under the guidance of CanLit star and blue-jeaned professor, Frank Davey, the group initiated the York Creative Writing Department with uncharacteristic, for York, zeal and inspiration.

No-one regrets the energy expanded to create the new department.

Gaysek tilts the brandy bottle and pours out just a little bit. "Let's sit down and talk," he suggests.

"Even when I first began years ago, I found that there were a lot of limitations. So I began working with other artists and composers and I found that I enjoyed working with

music and tape. John was one of those composers and eventually we became partners and formed KEEN."

"Now I knew Fred from York where we took writing workshops together," recalls Leslie McAllister. "We never got degrees though. When I was looking to start up a magazine / book series called *Identity*. I wanted to start off with something different to avoid falling into becoming just another literary magazine. Fred provided the identity that I wanted to give the whole publication."

Eminating from KEEN's philosophy is the *Curfew Piece*-

white orb, a cigarette sparked, voice flat, images forboding. "I'm trying to make a point to the more complacent attitudes that exist. The only effective way is to use the crass examples - bleak images like cities at night, soldiers, dogs..."

"Really," he adds, "I'm extremely conscious of appearance, presentation, movement on stage, voice inflection, eye contact with the audience."

Is he a performance artist or poet? Gaysek smiles. "I try to create a dramatic impact in as short a time period as possible. That's the poetic background; trying to get across in 16 lines what another person might do in a novel."

Currently, Gaysek finds himself pulling a two-day-a-week shift as a York creative writing professor. "I'm endeavoring to establish better means of imparting a creative experience to my students," says Professor Gaysek. "One way is to

give anyone studying art some sense of what has happened in art in the last 400 years. So I will have writing students, but I will talk to them about painting and music. Also about technology and film. I will try to discourage the idea of an artist going up north and living in a cabin writing poems. I encourage artists of any discipline to go out in the world and work with other people, not just artists, to go out and link themselves with the new technology which has escaped most writers."

Tomorrow night at 9:00 p.m., KEEN takes the stage in performance along with poet Jim Carroll at the Ontario College of Art. Proceeds from their performance will go toward the purchase of a Fairlight synthesizer.

"It will run our slide show and we'll be able to channel our music through it. It's one relatively small box that can fit into a suitcase as opposed to fitting in a truck," enthuses Gaysek.



Photo: Robert Baillargeon

KEEN's John Tucker and Fred Gaysek: In search of a synthesizer Friday night at the OCA.

The Green Dolphin

More than a Sixties social caricature

Paula Todd

Theatre Passe Muraille is taking a chance with two new playwrights and they're both from York.

The Green Dolphin, at TPM until November 24th, is the first staging effort of Glendon English graduate, T.M. Kelly. It will be quickly followed by *Bad Taste*, a play by York grad and *Excalibur* writer, Robyn Butt.

In Kelly's work, the Green Dolphin is restaurant and stomping ground for seven teenagers who are trying hard to grow up. It's meant to be the Toronto neighbourhood of Parkdale in the Sixties: a strange

combination of dance halls, boxing clubs and the sound of rhythm and blues.

"The Parkdale kids hated things like Etobicoke and the Beatles. They were a unique culture during the mid-sixties," explains Kelly, whose third novel, *The Ruined Season*, was published two days before his playwrighting debut at Passe Muraille.

He isn't very successful at relaying the idiosyncrasies of this "unique milieu"; but he does manage to explore various stereotypes with the eye of a sociologist.

The male pecking order, for example, is well depicted as the four

male components of the group rummage through such 'Parkdale adolescent experiences' as glue sniffing, gang bangs, B & E attempts and if-we're-gonna-have-sex-it's-gotta-be-in-the-car techniques.

The girls are portrayed in all the glory that is the female paradox (the one that warped some of our mothers): the Madonna-Whore, good girl-bad girl syndrome surfaces with some attempt on Kelly's part to explore the stereotypes and contrast the real with the perceived.

Stuart Clow (he's also the lead singer with the local G-Men) is sincere as an intellectual precariously perched on the social periphery. Kelly said this character is the focus of his play: "He is shown rejecting and escaping" the neighborhood. That the playwright's intention is never realised (there is no 'lead' role) is more the fault of the actors and director: they're all too good; everyone shines. It makes for an enjoyable hour, but as Kelly said, "The characters are completely unlike the people I imagined when I wrote it."

Neil Affleck as Ivan, the boy on the beach with all the sand in his face, is convincing as a social reject; Victor Farkas as Billy, gives a nervy first performance as the hyperkinetic bully with oversensitive boxing gloves; and Caroline Mardon as the boyfriend-stealing imp in the 'daring backless' dress is the ironic foil to the Ukrainian good girl who did-but-noone-will-tell, Helen (Arlene Mazerole).

Kelly had beginner's luck with the casting and directing of *The Green Dolphin*. What could have crashed as a Sixties version of *Happy Days*, is elevated from social caricature by outstanding acting, flexible sets, tight pacing and a sociological perspective on an old subject.



Photo: George Whiteside

Rosie (Christine McEachern) and Helen (Arlene Mazerole) discuss "the boys" in Parkdale in M.T. Kelly's *The Green Dolphin* at Theatre Passe Muraille until November 24th.

.....ENTS.....

The Russians are coming

Pierre Careau

Following the unexpected success of *Oblovov* and *Moscow Does Not Believe In Tears*, Cineplex presents a series of 12 new Russian films at the Carlton Cinema, starting November 12 with *Love and Lies*, a fresh and touching story of first love set against the retrogressive traditional values of modern Russia.

While the techniques are not of the highest quality, the lively portrayal of two teenage lovers holds your attention. The parent-children relationship is vividly depicted and the action flows smoothly. *Love and Lies* is a serious yet humorous look into a misunderstood society. The tribulations of adolescent love, occasionally take a tragic turn, but the film ends happily with a poignant lover's reunion.

Surreal cabaret a success

Elizabeth Santia

The surreal cabaret *Fine Line* gave its final performance Sunday, November 14, at MacLaughlin College. The fine line is where the main character, an over-worked computer graphicist, leaves ordinary reality and enters his interior reality. Having crossed the Fine Line, the main character, played by Arndt Van Holtendorff, must confront his imagination, his conscience and a Temptress. His imagination, personified by J. Brett Abbey (the choreographer and executive producer of the cabaret), tries to get Arndt to forget about everyday life and his work. His conscience, played by Ann Bohm, wants Arndt to accept his responsibilities. However, the Temptress, seductively played by Dale Sturless, does more touching, less talking, and is more convincing.

The dancers' flowing and sensuous movement enhanced each scene. The variety of chosen music, suited the dances.

The tables, seating the audience, were almost full. The audience laughed, watched attentively and really seemed to enjoy itself.

York dances: a fine madness

W. Hurst

Dance is more than tutus and tights, more than bumps in a bar. Dance is student Danovia Stechishin performing a ritual to electronic music, teacher Karen Bowes-Sewell remembering lost love in an environment of German leiter. Dance is a group of neurotics revelling at the only party in town.

The York Dance Department presents a concert that shows just what their staff and students have been doing all these months. Don't expect the cute or the quaint. Dance at York is a living, varied art form. Inspiration can come from the madness of the urban world or the sanctity of religion. Most importantly, dance comes from life.

Burton Auditorium

Nov. 24, 25, 26 at 8 p.m.

26 2 p.m. matinee

admission \$2.50

Genesis--at the beginning

The Stong Titwillow Ensemble opens its musical production series with a brand new work, *Genesis*. Written by Ken Mitchell and Douglas Hicton, this play takes place in Genesis, Saskatchewan from 1904 to 1029. Moving in and around people and places of the small western town, the authors try for a sense of 'musical drama'. Mitchell and Hicton have overseen final rehearsals, promising that the Junior Common Room of Stong College will be an interesting place to be. A small town may supply a big evenings entertainment.

Nov. 18, 19, 20.

7:45 p.m.

•3.00