

ARTS

THE CHOPPING BLOCK

by Jens Andersen

Being a confirmed book junkie, I naturally made it down to the book store 50 per cent sale last week. Three times to be exact. In fact, if I hadn't been so busy putting off writing articles for the paper I would have gone down thirty times to browse through the stacks.

The sheer volume of writing always overwhelms me when I go into a library or bookstore. Here, for instance, is a book on clothes and social behaviour which mentions that the Romans once inflicted capital punishment for the crime of wearing pants (a barbaric custom in their view). And here is another, one of many on the subject of feminism, which reveals that in Denmark, my homeland, women are rapidly taking over the profession of dentistry.

I ended up buying eight books for the bargain basement price of about \$12, including a signature-bound hardback edition of Joseph Conrad's *Victory* for less than the price of a Penguin, and a signature-bound book on musical score-reading that contains, among other things, the complete score of Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony* for only 80 cents.

Perhaps the best bargain, however, is a little thin 45 cent paperback, written in 1951, called *American Diplomacy - 1900 to 1950* by George F. Kennan. Kennan is (or was) an advocate, and for all I know the author of the American policy of "containment" of communism (he was ambassador to the Soviet Union and is described on the cover as "America's diplomatic Chief of Staff").

His book, however, is not the doctrinaire anti-communist rubbish one might expect. Indeed, the last two chapters on Russian-American relations consist largely of arguments against simple-minded proposals to overthrow the communists. One can almost see such professional anti-communists as William F. Buckley scowling at lines like:

Of one thing we may be sure: no great and enduring change in the spirit and practice of government in Russia will ever come about primarily through foreign inspiration or advice.

What Kennan advocates is simply for America to set a good social example, firmly oppose any attempts at Russian expansion, and wait for Russia to change itself. The weak link in the proposal, which Kennan is acutely aware of, is America's ability to set a good example.

And he knows too well the tendency of democracies to degenerate into mob hysteria and demagoguery during times of crisis, as during wartime. Hence his implacable opposition to crusades of all kinds, and his firm belief that "idealistic" wars (like the World Wars) always become viciously punitive and much more horrible than wars of simple aggrandisement.

Also, he is well aware that democracies do not necessarily behave any better than any other type of country in their foreign affairs. His scathing criticism of the Spanish-American war is particularly noteworthy in this respect.

But it is impossible to do justice in such a short review to all the complex arguments and sub-arguments Kennan juggles about in his book. Suffice it to say that he is the sort of man who, if he were alive today, would cringe at Regan's shrill moralizing about Russian oppression of Poland and the shrill moralizing of the leftists over white oppression of blacks in South Africa, because he knows what pathetic results shrill moralizing brings.

We could use more cool heads like his in these emotional and volatile times.

The March issue of *Bantam News* contains the exciting news of Barbara Cartland's 305th and 306th books, *The Vibrations of Love* and *Lies for Love*. According to Bantam there are now over 41 million copies of her romances in print.

Are there any mathematically-minded forestry students out there who could tell us how many acres of verdant forest were aesthetically debased in the process of making these books?

After getting my expectations up at last Tuesday's rehearsal for the dance troupe Orchesis, their Thursday show was a bit of a disappointment. Many of the numbers had very ragged synchronization, during another the music cut out three or four times, and some of the others were much too formless for my taste.

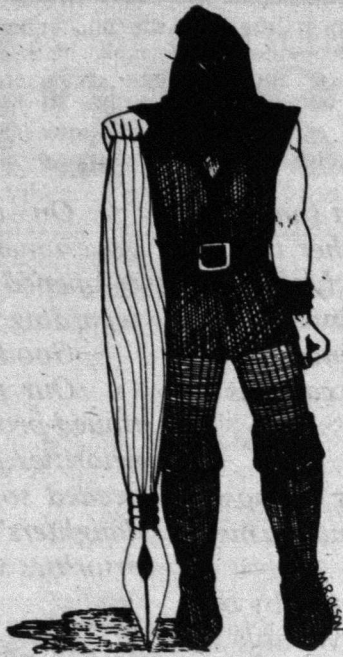
As to the last point, it seems to me that there has to be at least a rudimentary rhythm to dance music, else it becomes mere texture and the dance is simply random gesticulation, as happened with some of the avant-garde noise presented that night.

To my mind the best dances of the evening were the erotic and flirtatious one which was set to Bette Middler's "Daytime Hustler," and the closing "Tangents" which had music by Vivaldi, Gram Parsons and the B 52's. The elaborate arrangements of both, and the precision of the dancing gave them the appearance of some intricate and fantastic human clockwork; but what really blew my mind was the music: simple, direct and I suspect highly propulsive to the dancers. When Parson's "Hickory Wind" came on, the dancers responded so naturally and gracefully to the languorous song that the motion and the music actually seemed to fuse.

Some of the other dances had their good points too, like the concise Indian motif done to a tom-tom beat, but they paled next to the above two.

For those who are wondering about the Third World Film Festival review and the review of Barbara's Amiel's *Confessions*

THURSDAY FOR SURE!



Lousy film; lousy Yankees

Cannery Row
Capitol Square

review by Peter West

This film takes a lesser-known work by a lesser American novelist and makes a mess of it. (I'm not sure there are any greater American novelists, apart from Henry James, whom I count as English, but that's another argument). The film goes so far as to cannibalize the novel that it uses John Huston to provide a narrative - which works reasonably well, at times.

Essentially this film is too slow. Its best moments - and they are moments - occur from character development, and unfold slowly. Numerous patrons found

the tension of waiting for the film to do something just too much to bear, and left. It's certainly not the kind of film the average Med student would enjoy, let alone the Engineers and Phys Ed types.

What's wrong with the film? It might be easier to list the things that seemed right. The set was attractive, for the first half hour or so, and some of the characters seemed interesting, but weren't. And the female lead Debra Winger, has a pleasant way of looking vague and sexy. Nick Nolte was almost convincing sometimes. I think that's all the good bits.

Maybe I've been spoiled by all the Australian films I've seen lately. This film isn't really bad, it's just awful. I reckon it's pretty safe to give it a miss.

Brahms not so hot either

Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Jubilee Auditorium
March 6

review by Beth Jacob

Uri Mayer directed the ESO in another strong performance last Saturday night. The program consisted of three works: Copland's "Suite from Appalachian Spring", Ravel's "Piano Concerto in G", and Brahms' "Symphony No. 2".

My favorite of the evening was the Copland suite. Simple straightforward music, the piece has a certain evocative charm brought on by the use of folk-inspired melodies. The orchestra did justice to the music with fresh, lively playing, clean, crisp brass and lots of well-rounded woodwind solos particularly in the "Tis the Gift to be Simple" quotation section. An occasional lack of direction caused the piece to wander and seem drawn out at times but was not a serious flaw in the performance.

Guest artist for the evening was pianist Gwenneth Pryor. She gave the audience an excellent rendition of the Ravel concerto. Her playing was sharply etched, with good strong attacks in the syncopated, highly rhythmic sections. In the long solo introduction to the slow second movement, she demonstrated a rounded singing tone, controlled with subtleties of shading and dynamics. At all times throughout the piece, she showed mastery of technical demands. The orchestra was solid throughout, lending sparkling backing to the soloist. Mayer exerted strong rhythmic control, keeping things jumping, particularly in the third movement which was a dazzling flash of sound.

The Brahms symphony came after intermission. I have a blanket dislike of Brahms, so it was hard to be objective. The orchestra played quite well, with a fine horn solo by David Hoyt and a lot of good music from the cello section in particular. The playful dance-like third movement was my favorite: short and sweet. The

finale was in your basic bombast style, but was full of energy and drive, bringing the work to a fitting close.

The near capacity audience lapped it up, bringing Mayer back onstage for four curtain calls. They say old soldiers never die, and with audience attendance and reaction like that of Saturday night, it's plain to see we'll be continuing to hear old warhorses like Brahms' "Symphony No. 2" for a long time to come.

Literary Supplement

Wanted:



Bring them to the Gateway offices before Friday, March 19 and we will emblazon them across our pages to the wonder and astonishment of an awestruck world.

ARTS QUIZ



Match the authors with their work:

1. *The New Machiavelli*
2. *The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody*
3. *Roderick Random*
4. *A Walk on the Wild Side*
5. *Bodily Harm*
6. *Letters From the Earth*
7. *Jude the Obscure*
8. *Main Street*
9. *The Way of All Flesh*
10. *God and Man at Yale*

- a. Sinclair Lewis
- b. Thomas Hardy
- c. Margaret Atwood
- d. Samuel Butler
- e. Will Cuppy
- f. H. G. Wells
- g. Tobias Smollett
- h. Mark Twain
- i. William F. Buckley
- j. Nelson Algren

Answers page 13