



Tom King

## Monitors: Striking back

Tom King

*Monitors*, at the Atkinson theatre last week, was a perfect realization of what it means to hate the educational system.

As an audience, spectators were forced to sit on a tiny uncomfortable primary school desks. This was Miss Harrison's class, and the end of the forty-five minute session, we had been roped off in the dark. The space was a concentration camp complete with a German voice screaming out commands. Searchlights roamed the auditorium, and Sherril-Lee Gullbert, representing 'Authority' viciously applied layers of ugly make-up to a docile prisoner. But this was just one of the many refreshing moments in *Monitors*.

As a statement against the loss of identity inherent to the 'system', the acted show was written and performed to display 'self-abuse'.

One highlight of 'self-abuse' was Debbie Tompkins' portrayal of herself in an audition: cutely, coyly performing, and listing her credentials before the verdict-makers. Then, in an abrupt change of mood, she somberly burned a photograph of herself.

In a more physical sense of self abuse, Kevin Magill performed an endless series of relentless calisthenics to introduce the

play and Darlene Calisthenics Harrison slapped herself repeatedly across the face. These were typical of many of the scenes, in *Monitors* that made the audience feel just as uncomfortable and alienated as the characters felt towards the institutions they were brought up in.

Here lies the power of *Monitors*. Even though some material was tired (the verbal montage of TV ads) or ambiguous (the home movies), the execution of the material always had high energy and direction.

The new segments fell into a "Naturalistic" mode. If sympathies were aroused at anytime, letting the audience feel for a performer's dilemma, director Steven Rumbelow snapped the audience out of any sort of a dream-like state with an obnoxious stage effect or an abrupt and change in the character's actions. The actors, all fourth year performance students, had enough control and sense to make sure that this show did not become another feeble attempt at Modern theatre. The classroom setting, the sound, the style of acting, the lighting demonstrated that the director and the performers were conscious of a form that was consistent with the content of the action. Bowlers off to all involved.

## Electronic titillation

Adrian Iwachiw

The past two Sundays at the downtown Music Gallery have featured concert presentations of recent works by the students of York's Electronic Music Studios. The two concerts included tape compositions as well as tape and dance collaborations, live performance, and multi-media works, performed and composed by music and fine arts students.

What is electronic music? The answer depends much on the general public's notion of it. The term is a loose reference to the electronic production and/or modification of sound, usually made with the idea of electronic tape as medium and often final product. Examples include sound effects, film soundtracks, possibly hard-core avant-garde experimentalism, or else the more commercial exponents of popular electronic music (eg. Kraftwerk.)

The wide variety of music presented ranged from short vignettes of aural titillation to larger-scale work. The most striking quality present in a number of pieces was the warmth and human feeling, something not generally associated with electronic music.

Evan Webber's *C-Call* (for sax and tape) with its soulful rolling

waves of mellow saxophone, Jean Mackenzie's *Organasm* with its hazy, dreamlike atmospherics, and Bob Young's *Into the Light* engendered a very lyrical, almost romantic warmth.

A more abstract austerity was present in Donna Lyons' dance-and-music pieces, with their apparent themes of motherhood and loneliness in a cold, alien world. Three dancers in black provided an effective counterpoint to the extra-planetary-space-capsule soundtrack.

Cecilia Varga's *Moto Kind* was a captivating multi-media *tour de force* using four-channel soundtrack, consisting mainly of motorcycle and traffic sounds, as a backdrop for her dance involving coloured lights attached to her body and switched on and off manually in synchrony with the music. The lights lit up the otherwise total darkness, and at moment provided a dazzling display of visual patterns on the walls of the room.

The closing piece of last Sunday's concert was Don Ross's *Euphrates After 100 Years of Peace*. The music represented the theme of conflict between good and evil, symbolized by a powerful, harmonic block in conflict with the sharper, erratic sounds of processed piano and percussion.

## Rickfors: sexy singing Swede

Lisa Kates

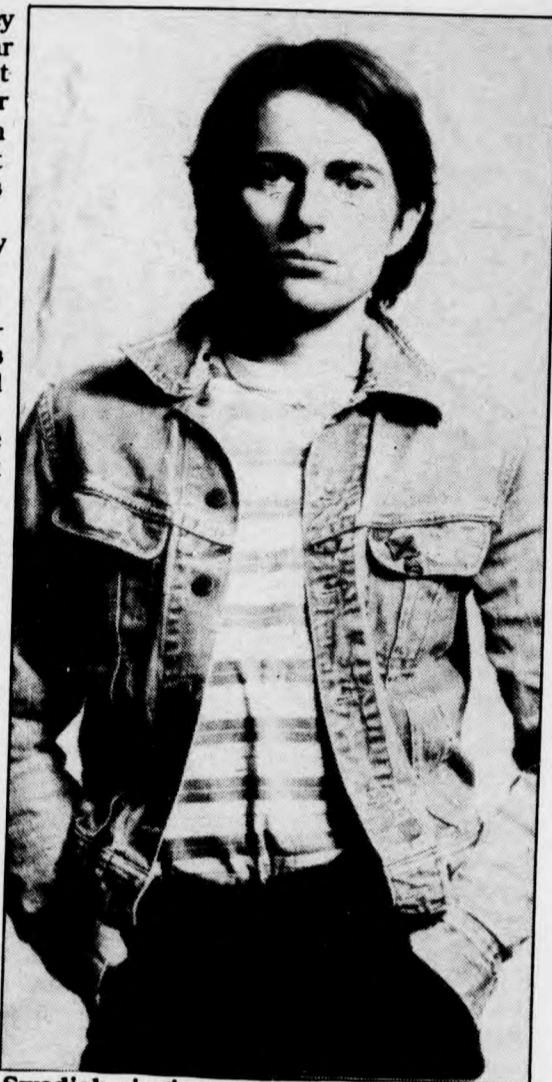
While many Torontonians have heard of Swedish hockey star Borje Salming, few have heard of Swedish singing star Mikael Rickfors: obviously not your household name. But with the help from Attic Records, this Swedish performer should soon become more available to Canadians. In an exclusive interview with *Excalibur*, Rickfors spoke about his ambitions following the recent success in Sweden of his new album *Tender Turns Tough*.

Seeing the sensuous singer on the *Tender* cover, I vaguely remember him from the harmony-laden group, The Hollies. Joining the British outfit shortly after guitarist and lead singer Terry Sylvester quit, Rickfors went on tour in the pre-"Long Cool Woman In A Black Dress" days. After two years when the song eventually became a hit, Sylvester was asked to return, and Rickfors was left out in the proverbial cold.

*Tender Turns Tough* is Rickfors' debut following the Hollies hustle. The stocky, yet sexy Swede has come back singing soft-rock ballads which go straight to the heart. Speaking about his new album, Rickfors explains that he is singing about the new inner peace he found by escaping from the rushed and explosive life of touring with The Hollies. He now resides in the country near Stockholm and his music his symbolic of the smooth living encountered there.

Besides his interest in music, the 33-year-old enjoys being part of the lively European art scene, but realizes breaking into the music business would be helped if he had some North American exposure. Swedish listeners have already confirmed their faith in his new music by making the melodic "Fire In My Heart" a number one single. It's easy to see why, for it's a piece of music that once heard, keeps on playing in your mind.

Rickfors would love to tour Canada and promote his album. He says that recently in Stockholm he saw his first hockey game and realizes that he would enjoy seeing more, especially the Canadian brand. Perhaps with the support of enough Canadian record purchasers, Rickfors will be encouraged to come to Canada, if not for a tour, at least a hockey game.



Swedish singing star, Mikael Rickfors.

## Los Angeles dreary so rockabilly star Johnny Dee Fury returns in a hurry

Elliott Lefko

A year ago Johnny Dee Fury had no idea that he'd be playing in a rockabilly band in squeaky T.O. But someone stole the re-born Californian's 1964 Mustang, a few of his friends had been victims of assault, and it was time for the Canadian native to come home, and spread the rockabilly word.



Canada's Johnny Dee Fury.

And so the Rockabilly Roosters came to fruition. "It's a relief to be away from the starmaking machinery," Fury quotes from the bar of the fashionable Fiesta Restaurant, his dress code consisting of red bandana, black jeans and black shirt. "The Roosters were formed to write, sing, and play and give the audience something to dance to.

Fury originally moved to L.A., as a skinny 17-year old. "It was a choice between L.A. or London. And I felt if I'm going to starve, I may as well be warm."

All this week at the El Mocambo, Fury is demonstrating his passion for rockabilly, a music he feels is "one artist with four big hits away from becoming big." Fury hopes to become part of any rockabilly craze, but he's not

waiting for Simpson's to start featuring red kerchiefs as the trivia item of the moment. "It's simple and straight forward. We're not trying to figure the audience out in advance. I think we walk the edge, working without a net. You've just got to jump in and let it work as it will."

Fury says his music hasn't made him too many dollars. "If you want to do it," continues the mid twenty-year-old, "you have to do it for something other than money. There's too many humiliating gigs, and assholes. Hold onto what's inside that made you want to do it," advises

Dee Fury, "its too easy to lose that."

Some of those to avoid are over gratuitous record company people. "There's always some one ready to change you, and put their influence on you," finds Fury. "The only way to combat that is to have it happen to you, so you know when it's going on."

Fury's future includes recording a self-produced album in late spring and early summer. In the meantime, he and manager Catherine Douglas are pursuing international deals, but he hastens to add, "not in desperation."

### Four Horsemen minus one

## Popfizzlegurglescreamshriekwail

Paul Ellington

At Glendon College, in the Fireside Lounge, the Four Horsemen made their appearance, and with them brought a unique blend of sound poetry.

The fact that one of the Horsemen was missing did not detract performance. The poetry presented ranged from poignant and tragic to the humorous and utterly outrageous.

The horsemen have realized that all of life's actions are accompanied by sounds; which, if captured, magnified and voiced, can have quite an effect on the senses. The audience was assailed by a bombardment of these sounds with startling effects. Screams! Shrieks! Wails! Gurgles! Hissings! Whimperings and Howls! There were the sounds of despair, of joy, of fear, of anger, of violence, of work and of play. Sounds of breathing, talking, eating, sucking, spitting and coughing.

What's in a name you have asked in the past? Well, the Horsemen have the answer. You can sing it, chant it, shout it, harmonize it, syncopate it, and

do it over and over again. If you have never experienced this kind of poetry before you will find it highly enjoyable, as well as a learning experience.

John Alevisakis

bp nichol, the missing Horseman from the Glendon reading, rode into Atkinson corral solo last week to read for those with an ear for poetry. An 'ear' (rather than a 'taste'), for the sounds of words play an influential part in his work. He plays with both words and with the concept of words—their sound qualities, the relationships between words, and between their meanings and sounds ('eaucean'). Similarly, he both uses, and explores, the idea behind such household items as the 'metaphor', the 'simile', the point where poems begin, and where they end. "...like other bodily processes, with the anus".

With the emotional and intellectual charges that he sparks with his rhythmic energies, it is difficult to leave a bp nichol reading with less than a new respect for language in general.