

# Watershed-a review

Imagine yourself in Athens, Georgia, looking in the window of a house by a stream, eavesdropping on R.E.M.. The leader singer pipes up: "Okay, guys, we've done insightful alternative college rock, we've done politics and environmentalism, we've done Stand, we've done love songs, we've done absolute fluff. So what do we do for an encore?"

The fellow with glasses: "We could do rap..."

"We did that too," says the singer. "With KRS-One."

"Oh yeah."

The drummer: "We could do something with Debbie Gibson..."

The rest of the group grimaces.

the mandolinist: "We could imitate John Denver..."

The group: "Hmmm..."

The singer: "Doesn't sound to hard."

Fellow in glasses: "You'd have to water down the lyrics a bit, Michael."

Singer: "I won't go that low."

Drummer: "You did it for Stand and Shiny Happy people..."

Singer: (sighs despondently) "Oh, what the hell."

Mandolinist: "John Denver." (pauses) "We're gonna end up on Muzak grocery stores, you realize."

Glasses: "Look, we've already hit number one on the Billboard charts. What else is there left of us to do?"

Mandolinist: "Could change our name. That way we wouldn't have to live with the Muzak stigma."

Drummer: "make it sound like a solo album. do an individual's name. That might work."

Singer: "Like what?"

mandolinist: "Something with a G...G. McSomething. Ah... G.W. McLennan?"

Singer: "I like it."

Result being: **Watershed.**

One could just swear that this is R.E.M. for the easy listening set. There's a great deal of acoustic guitar. The structure just sort of "jangles," to quote a Rolling Stone article, but not as much as it could. G.W. McLennan -- if that's his real name!! -- has taken a country-style guitar rock sound -- the typical "Athens, Georgia" sound that defined R.E.M., The B-52's, and other such collegiate groups -- added a little water, blended it well and left it to rise in the sun for about two and a half hours.

**Watershed** is definitely mellow, the country flavour is more that of a country ballad than an up-tempo affair. There are some fast-paced items, of course, but the rest is rather soft and buttery. Think "Layla" on pot, with moments of lucid hyperactivity.

The lyrics -- well, they're fairly unified, but they have this sensation of prosiness with dashes of inspired poeticisms. Perhaps McLennan's gone a little too far with love-and-life-song lines (which isn't wrong, just a tad dull). They may not be the stuff of Whitney Houston-esque wanting to dance with somebody who loves him, but they're not the stuff of sheer genius, either. "Dead winter leaves, the sound of the wind through the trees" feels a little bit overdone. Just a little. If you don't listen to that stuff every day, well...it's a small dosage thing; you might not understand. One just has to like the bastard child of love songs and photography.

It's good Muzak, though. Really it is, that may be a contradiction in terms, but it's true. Some Muzak sticks in your brain and you get to like it with repeated listenings, if that's your style -- witness Madonna's success.

It takes time. One supposes.

Especially if you wished that R.E.M. had done things like "Losing My Religion" throughout existence...

Really!!!

Beverly R. White

# Happenings

The Multicultural Association of Fredericton is holding "A Short Course on Entrepreneurship" Friday afternoon, October the 18 and Saturday, October the 19th at St. Charbel's Church Hall (299 Argyle Street). Course topics include Business plans, Marketing and Selling, Government Assistance and many others. The fee is \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members, and \$15 for full-time students. The fee will cover course work (over eight hours of instruction) multicultural lunch, course notes and materials, and refreshment breaks. For more information contact the Multicultural Association of Fredericton office.

The Association is also holding a "Travelogue" entitled "Sharing the Experience of Travel - Hong Kong and Macau" at the board room in the Victoria Health Center on Saturday, October 5, 1991 starting at 7:00pm. The event will include a slide presentation on Hong Kong and Macau, refreshments and videos. There is no charge and all are welcome.

The Singapore Students Association will be holding "The Singapore Experience" on Tuesday, October 8th, from 10am to 4pm. This event will include an exotic Asian lunch including dishes from China, Malaysia, and India, and the sale of fascinating and colorful handicrafts and jewelry from the Far East (including China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, India and Singapore). Also, there will be a display of recent publications concerning South-East Asia as well as an audio-visual presentation, and a static display of posters and exhibits depicting Singapore's history and lifestyle in the 19th and 20th centuries. Tickets for lunch are available at the SUB help center for \$5. Admission to all other events and presentations is free. For more information please call Natasha Rodrigues at 450-6988.

The U.N.B. English department's reading series continues on October the 10th with a reading by poet Don McKay. McKay, author of seven books of poetry, has won the Canadian Author's Award for Poetry, and has been actively teaching and writing here on the U.N.B. Campus. McKay will be reading from his latest book "Night Field" which "reminds us of the beauty, complexity and value of a world which we inhabit too casually and far too briefly." The reading begins at 4:30pm in the Art Studio at Memorial Hall. Admission is free.

From October 5th-November 24th, the National Exhibition Centre is presenting "Women of Invention: Individuals Who Changed Our Lives" - presenting women's inventions from three points of view: by women for women; women as agents of technological change; inventions for everyone. Drop in (Queen and Carleton Sts.). The new hours are: Monday - closed/ Tuesday-Friday 12noon - 4:30pm/ Saturday - 10am - 5pm/ Sunday 1pm-5pm.

The U.N.B. Arts Center is presenting an opening reception of "Still Life With Painted Shards" - a new exhibition of works by William Forrestall on Sunday, October 6th from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. The exhibit will continue through the 31st. Admission is free and all are welcome.

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