

Entertainment

Cuckoo's Nest a Hit!

by Shantell A. Powell

Despite Wednesday night's sub-Arctic temperatures, around seventy-five people showed up for the first-night performance of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The only complaints I heard that night dealt with the weather—certainly none dealt with the play. Rather, a barrage of compliments were heard as the audience filed out of Memorial Hall after the play's close.

Despite a minor problem with the sound system at one point, the play moved along at a good pace. The play was, no, is wonderful. Compliments must go out to the set designers. Although the set is sparse and clinical, the designers have paid excruciating attention to every detail in the scenery, from the outdoor panoramic view, to the electrical outlets in the walls, to the "lifelines" played by Clark Graves, Derek Winchester, Rodger Wilkie, and Tina Buott.

Nova Lea Thorne is positively hateful as the sinister Nurse Ratched. Some members of the audience left still angry at her character. And yes, that is the desired reaction. The action between Nova Lea and Jonathon Jurmain (as R.P. McMurphy) is electric and filled with tension. The flamboyance of McMurphy is a wonderful foil to the cool and clinical Ratched. The scenes between McMurphy and Chief Bromden, played by Mike Fralic, are excellent as well. Mike Fralic does a great job portraying the fatalism of

Bromden, and the action between Bromden and McMurphy is very moving, and very intimate. These three actors received the biggest applause at the play's finale.

Don Forestall and Dan Herman are suitably bullish as Aides Warren and Williams. Melinda Arseneau is peevish and "Catholic" as Nurse Flinn, and Matthew Tierney is believable as the know-it-all Dale Harding. Scott Tibbo's portrayal of Billy Bibbit is poignant and moving, while Michael Brooks is a bit of a sociopath as Scanlon the bomb-fetishist. Michael Ingram never stops shaking and squirming as the infinitely nervous Cheswick, and Jason Medrum seems like he really is shell-shocked as Martini. Rodger Wilkie as Ruckly and Derek Winchester as Fredericks are amazing. I mean, how can anyone hold so still for so long? Melissa Blythe Clark also deserves mention as the submissive Dr. Spivey. Bill McKibbin gives much-needed comic relief as the easy-going and laid-back Aide Turkle. He's hilarious. Go to the play if only to see him! Candy Starr, played by Rebecca Emlaw, adds vibrance and colour to the stage, and Patricia A. Rogers, as Sandra, gives us a good dose of riotous laughter with her lascivious glances toward Aide Turkle.

Hey! The play is great, so go and see it. 'Nuff said. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* continues tonight (Friday) and tomorrow night in Memorial Hall at 8:00. Be there.

Gary Geddes: Rock and Roll Poet

by Andrew Sneddon

Tuesday, January 25 was a 'first' for me—when I went to hear Gary Geddes read at the Memorial Hall Art Centre, it was the first time that I had the pleasure of experiencing someone about whom I once wrote an essay. Several years ago, at another university, I wrote a paper on Geddes' "Letter of the Master of Horse". The essay was a typical discussion of modern/post-modern elements in the poem (and, in retrospect, I suspect serious over-analysis on my part); the poem, however, was not so typical. The fact that I remember it now testifies to the impression the piece made! The poem is a lengthy, vivid account of the practice of drowning horses in the horse latitudes (Doors fans should perk up at that name) in the age of New World colonization. I have read a lot of poems in the course of my student years, and Geddes' "Letter" ranks among the best for clarity of imagery and presentational impact of themes.

So, it was with pleasant anticipation that I went to hear Dr. Geddes read, and I was not disappointed. Most of the poems came from his newest book, *Girl By The Water*; most of the remainder were older works, but the last poem was brand-spanking new—finished last week, and read in public here at UNB for the first time.

Girl By The Water seems to contain poems mostly about Geddes' life in recent years. The first group of poems he read were about the farming area in Ontario in which he lives. Dr. Geddes was introduced as being possi-

bly "Canada's best political poet", and these farm-works illustrate the description. Geddes started by talking about a farming crisis, both within Canada and around the world. Small farms are dying in the new world order, and Geddes has the chance to see this on a personal level in his own neighbourhood. Thus, the poems about modern farming life are intimate and specific, yet tied to a bigger political picture—the best (most touching and most telling) of both worlds. Some of the poems discuss death and family stress, while others are lighter—accounts of the birth of a foal, and adventures with an ancient septic tank. The balance of levity and gravity complements the measures of intimacy and social commentary rather well.

The other poems from *Girl By The Water* were about a recent trip to the Yukon, and present, quite self-consciously, Geddes in full awareness of himself as a literary artist. Prior to reading the pieces, he commented on the rich literary treatment of the area (Robert Service, Jack London, Pierre Berton)—so rich that it is difficult to write about the now-Yukon without falling prey to clichés. Geddes' attempts to avoid the pitfalls present him as a self-conscious tourist/visiting writer, listening intently to the people he meets and awkwardly trying to come to grips with this famous region.

The older pieces followed the Yukon accounts. In one, Geddes credited Ezra Pound as perhaps the biggest influence (the person he borrowed the most from) on his own work. The

poem—"Last Canto"—was presented as a Pound work never published by Pound, and was read in a funny American drawl which had the audience laughing at virtually every line. The most striking (for my money) poem of the reading was Geddes' work about the Kent State shootings in 1972 (again, popular music fans will know the Neil Young penned "Ohio", performed by Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young. Gary Geddes: Rock and Roll Poet). This poem is a devilishly crafted portrait of one of the victims, rich in double meanings and painful irony. Apparently, it took Geddes a long time to find the right angle to vent his anger about this tragedy, but the resultant poem is worth any wait he went through—it is a touching and condemning presentation of a modern atrocity.

The final, and newest, poem was different from the rest by virtue of sheer size. Geddes read selected segments, and he still took ten minutes. The work is about Leon Trotsky, and stems from a recent visit by Geddes to the Trotsky house in Mexico City. The poem takes the form of a diary, written about Trotsky's life in exile from the Soviet Union. As a diary, it functions as a linking of the personal and political, a task which Geddes performs so well. Geddes saw it as a fitting end to the reading because of the link to Halifax (the Trotsky family was detained there once while traveling); I would suggest that the scale and effectiveness of the piece made it an appropriate cap to a brief slice of an impressive life of work.

GENRECIDÉ MICHAEL EDWARDS

FIVE OF THE MOST WONDERFUL BANDS THAT YOU HAVE PROBABLY NEVER HEARD OF...

Or, in other words, an excuse for a trip into the obscure. But not too obscure - there is a fighting chance that you should be able to find at least some of the releases by a few of these bands without too much difficulty (I promise...)

So without any more to do, here goes with some of my favourites that may have passed you by.

Carter The Unstoppable Sex Machine: They deserve to be famous just for their rather spectacular name, and they are famous on the other side of the Atlantic but they just don't seem to be able to break through here. And to describe how they sound? Imagine Billy Bragg as the lead singer of a punk Pet Shop Boys and you get pretty darned close. Oh, and they use guitars to great effect too, and if you ever get the chance to see them in concert you will discover that for yourself (my ears were buzzing for two days afterwards...) They have just released their fourth album "Post Historic Monsters" which has been picked up by IRS and is getting its released sometime soon. Their singles are always worth checking out too as they inevitably put a cover

version on the b side - 'victims' in the past have been The Pet Shop Boys, The Smiths, Soft Cell and The Buzzcocks. With a passion for puns and a real sense of humour they are well worth checking out.

Kitchens Of Distinction: Another London band, but this time they have: real ace up their sleeve - a lone guitarist that can produce shimmering sounds that makes it seem that they have twenty guitarists putting layer upon layer of ethereal joy. And the most amazing thing is that they sound just like this when they play live too; quite a skill. The other really notable thing about this band is the lyrics which are incredibly tender, full of angst but yet uplifting in places - sometimes they even sing happy love songs. The lead singer and lyricist Patrick is gay, but as such a skilled poet the emphasis of the songs is the passion of love, anger, reflection and other universal themes rather than being labelled as a 'queer' band. Just a wonderful band that can touch anyone. Supposedly recording a new album at the moment, the other three are still worth picking up in no particular order - "Life Is Hell", "Strange Free World" and "The Death Of Cool".

Bettie Serveert: A band from Holland that sneaked out one of the best debuts of recent years at the end of 1992 on Guernica (who?) in Britain, but then it was received a second lease on life in mid 1993 as it was re-released by Mata-



dor in the States. The music press heaped praise on it but it just didn't take off at all alas. It's such a pity as they really do have a lot of charm even though they have only had that one release "Palomine". All they are is guitar band, but there is something else special about them that elevates them to a higher plane; maybe the way the female singer can sing so sweetly and then growl her way through a cover of Sebdah's 'Healthy Sick'. Or maybe the

way that the roughest of the guitar playing is left in, warts and all. This is the year that their first single will finally find its way onto the shelves, and hopefully the year they find their way into your hearts too.

The Pastels: Let's start at the beginning. They couldn't play very well, the singing was more than a little off-key and the songs were rather simple but they did have an awful amount of charm. After all, this was 1982, and Scotland was still reeling from the majesty that was Postcard Records. Yet the Pastels have their place in history influencing countless bands and spawning entire record labels such as K Records, and even having more than a little to do with Sarah Records too. And the Pastels just keep on going with a single here and an album there; the end of last year saw the release of "Truckload Of Trouble" which covered the years from 1985 to 1993, and featured the singles that can't be found elsewhere. They still are kind of tuneless, but that's exactly what makes them the Pastels, and look out for a full report of their place in the history of Scottish music in the weeks to come.

Momus: Not a band, but still one of

my favourite performers ever. Momus was the Greek god of mockery, and that pseudonym suits Nicholas Currie extremely well. After releasing nine albums now, he still only has a cult following but when you do get a taste for Momus it is a very hard thing to shake off. He truly is one of the greatest songwriters I have ever heard and has a wonderful ability to tell a story, or write about subject material that most other people would never touch. Not even with a bargepole. Subjects like deflowering, reflowering, religion, 'sex' (one influence he cites is the Marquis de Sade) and the most bizarre aspects of life from the point of view of the mocker; Momus. The early albums such as "Circus Maximus" have mainly acoustic music but as time progressed, money became available he advanced to higher technology. If you can pick up anything by him its a worthwhile purchase, but ones to hunt out would be "Tender Pervert" and "Monsters Of Love".

So there is just a little taste of the things that you may have been missing out on over the past few years. Go on, be just a little bit adventurous and try out something new. You'll thank me, I promise.