

**United front needed**

# Canadian media mafia decide their strategy

By KEITH NICKSON

A united front composed of the Canadian publishing, recording, television and film industries must pressure the federal and provincial governments for beneficial legislation, the Conference on Canadian Books and Publishing unanimously decided last weekend.

Held at the University of Toronto, the conference brought together such notables from the Canadian media establishment as Margaret Atwood; Harry Boyle, chairman of the CRTC; and Mel Hurtig, a publisher of Canadian literature.

Saturday morning a panel discussion convened to consider all aspects of foreign control in the Canadian publishing industry.

Peter Martin, the president of the Readers Club of Canada, said "There are about 200 book clubs in North America, of which 199 are American owned and are taking 99 per cent of the business. They are taking dollars out of Canada and giving little exposure to Canadian

writers."

A related problem, Martin said, was that "Book Clubs have a very symbiotic relationship with magazines. Book Clubs get most of their members from advertisements in periodicals and the Canadian periodical industry is almost non-existent."

Martin was adamant that "given the choice, Canadians will prefer a Canadian book to an imported one. We must give them that chance."

Speaking in the afternoon, Sandra Gathercole, from the Council of Canadian Film Makers, said the obstacles facing the Canadian film industry were far worse than those restricting the publishing industry. She said, "While only four per cent of films shown here originate in Canada, we are also the largest foreign market for Hollywood films. Ninety three to ninety six per cent of all film rental fees go to Hollywood."

Gathercole said the reason for

this is that most theatres were built in Canada years ago by American companies to show American films. "Due to the lack of distribution, which is American controlled, we cannot get the product out."

To improve the situation, Gathercole suggested "a legislated quota of Canadian films should be established and furthermore, a levy should be imposed on all box office returns to aid the production of Canadian films."

One of the most positive notes of the conference was sounded by Greg Hamilton of the Independent Record Producers Association, who believes that in a few years the Canadian recording industry will be quite healthy. "Nevertheless," he said, "the Canadian content regulations may have opened the door but we still have to walk through it."

In the discussion which followed the panelists' speeches, Bill Whitehead, a writer of successful

prime time Canadian television shows, accused the Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) of "having too many untalented members. Good writers are necessary, not just Canadians." Sandra Gathercole responded by arguing that "in the early sixties, 40 per cent of American Hollywood shows were written by exiled Canadians such as Norman Jewison."

The strongest counter-argument against Whitehead's accusations, however, came from Moses Znaimer, head of channel 79. Speaking in reference to the deluge of American culture in the Canadian media, he said, "Imperialism must entail the crap as well as the good. The truly talented will only emerge from all the crap. Therefore we must keep the crap."

Subsequent to this thoughtful response, Znaimer himself came under attack. An unidentified questioner asked Moses why, if he is so concerned about Canadian



content on television, does channel 79 carry a large percentage of American programs? Znaimer replied to the effect that he did not have final say on channel 79's programming. Gathercole also came to his defence by stating that "a station's existence depends on its revenues from sponsors and this is why 79 must run a large percentage of American shows."

Out of this infighting stepped the publisher of the reborn Saturday Night Magazine, Robert Fulford, whose concluding words were perhaps the most positive of the day. He insisted that "we must have the will to make it work. We must start from scratch and find other ways and methods. We must go to the wall over what we believe."

## ERIC B.

By WARREN CLEMENTS

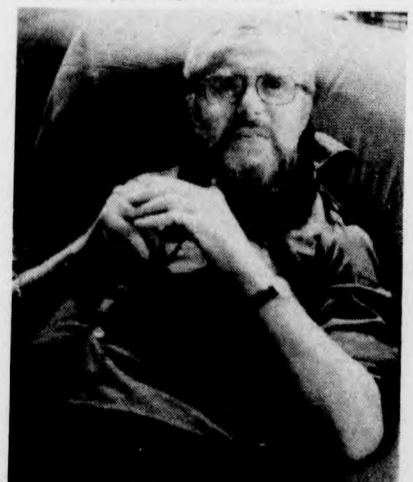
Six years ago, critic and author Eric Bentley turned up at Burton Auditorium to deliver a speech on Bertolt Brecht's work. After the intermission, the audience returned to ask him questions.

Bentley, however, returned with a small electric organ, on which he proceeded to play three hours of Brecht's songs, mesmerizing the audience until 1 a.m.

On Tuesday night, Brecht returned to Burton as part of the Performing Arts Series. He'd abandoned the speech, and traded in the organ for a piano. But the songs were the same, and the effect was just as mesmerizing.

It's hard to convey a sense of Bentley's performance. His voice is hoarse, close in many ways to Rod McKuen's (that's their only similarity). His style, apart from the lighter numbers, is blood and thunder, particularly when dealing with the discordant chords and jagged rhythms of the Brechtian songs (the lyrics of which were translated from the German by Bentley himself). And when performing his own songs, he reminds one of singer-composer Biff Rose. A tragedian's Tom Lehrer even.)

His state presence is disarming, as though he were playing his repertoire for you at a piano he happened to pass by and stopped to try out. But when he starts singing Brecht — when his rough voice interprets the powerful anthems, capturing the bitter moods, the sharp humour, and the humanity which informs all of Brecht's lyrics — he has you spellbound.



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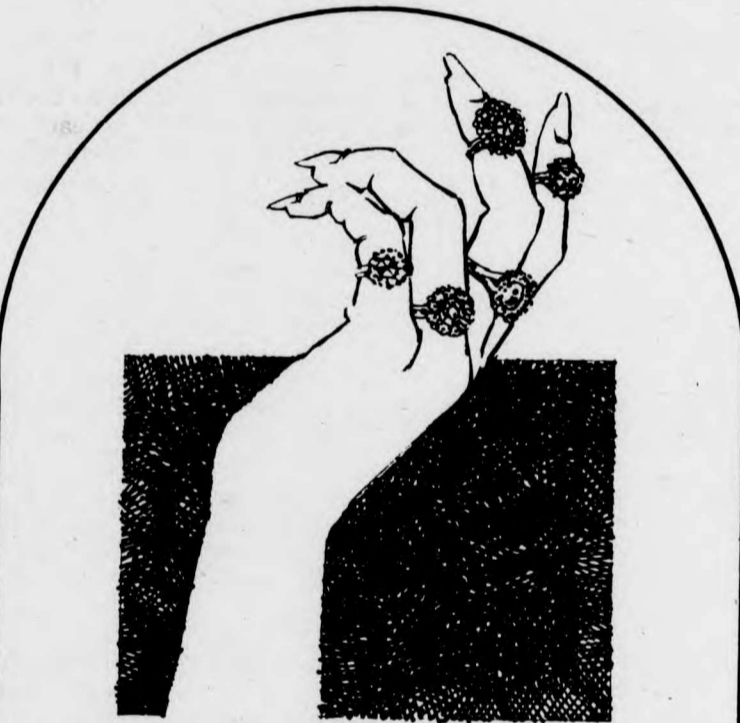
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