

## ARTS

"Class of '69" returns triumphant

## U of A's poets reunite

by Gilbert Bouchard

In celebration of the U of A's 75th Anniversary the departments of English and Canadian Studies have gotten together to co-sponsor a series of readings highlighting the teachers and staff of creative writing at the U of A.

This weekend a series of readings entitled the class of '69 will feature former and current members of the English Department (Bert Almon and Doug Barbour still teach creative writing) who were either staff or students at the U of A in 1969.

Four of the writers (Atwood, Scobie, Watson, and Livesay) have won the Governor General's award, making this an important event in the University's artistic calendar.

Friday's readings begin at noon with Dorothy Livesay reading in HC L-1. At one Elizabeth Brewster and Bert Almon read in HC L-3, followed in the same room at 2 pm by Doug Barbour and Stephen Scobie reciting sound poetry. The afternoon

terminates with Wilfred Watson reading from *The Sorrowful Canadians* and *Mass on Cowback* in HC L-2 at 2:30.

Friday night's readings return to HCL-1 at 8:00 pm and feature Margaret Atwood, Doug Barbour and Stephen Scobie.

Saturday's agenda rolls at 2 pm at the Centennial Library Theatre with Margaret Atwood, Dorothy Livesay, Stephen Scobie, and Elizabeth Brewster, and an evening's reading at 7:30 in HC L-1 highlights Wilfred Watson reading excerpts from his works.

Future readings include a series on the weekend of February 11-12 devoted to writers-in-residence. Guests include Matt Cohen, Katherin Govier, Marianne Engel, and Liz Smart (current writer-in-residence).

A writer-in-residence fund has been designated as one of the programs included in the University's 75th Anniversary drive. Hopefully a permanent endowment fund will be established to continue one of the more successful writer-in-residence programs in Canada.



Margaret Atwood: One of this weekend's featured poets in "class of '69"

## Dark Crystal modern mythology

by Gilbert Bouchard

To much malign Mark Antony's words: "I'll state that I've come not only to praise the *Dark Crystal*, but to bury the unfounded criticisms of some duller critics before me."

In a nutshell, the *Dark Crystal* is a simple, technically superb fairy tale. Jim Henson and Frank Oz flesh-out the cloth and plastic dummies, and add depth and complexity to a charming allegory.

Before I continue any further let me provide the plot in a mythical nutshell: Jen, the last of the Gelfin and raised by a peaceful race called the Mystics, is set off on an adventure to save the very sanity of their world, to replace a missing shard from the black crystal. In replacing the shard he comes across: a lover, the pod people, Aughra the astronomer, and lots and lots of little fuzzies. Oh yes, he also must defeat the Skeksis, a very nasty (also very human) band of lizard/bird people.

What bothers me is that the swarms of critics have hovered over this movie, pecking at its eyes and attacking what they call *lack of plot*, and *oversimplicity*. What these cinematic marvels fail to see is that this movie is steeped to the gills in mythic motifs, Jungian psychology, and told in the classic manner of fairy stories and folk tales before it.

To illustrate my point just look at what the movie owes its Greek predecessors in the way of mythic motifs. After all the adventures of Jen and his lady friend Karan (a petty sorceress after all) bear a more than striking similarity to the adventures of a certain Jason and Medea. I mean a wimpy (brave, but not too swift) hero who gets his fat pulled out of the fire all the time by a witch-like female with superior powers and brains.

Then you have the Mystics, this race of musical/prophetic beings who smack rather of Apollo, and their brother race, the

Skeksis, who are ironically decadent and totally Dionysian. And what more can the pod people be than simple Styres, Pan-like creatures living in innocent hedonistic forest world.

Along with Aughra the astronomer, with the popout eye, who is no more than Graeae the witch removed whole from the adventures of Perseus.

And the Gods (the Mystics/Skeksis) divided at the start of the movie are joined together at the end, like in all good Epics, through the works of common man.

As for the Jungian roots, the movie can be easily interpreted in that light: boiling down to an allegory with all the races representing portions of the human psyche.

The Skeksis become man's instinct, his base desires; the mystics represent man's spiritual yearnings, his search for contentment; Aughra is symbolic of man's reason, his science; the Gelfin stand for those learnt responses that guide us through the murky day to day world; and the pod people are those day to day hungers, the hedonistic urges that more or less rule our lives.

The Jungian interpretation gains even more credibility when one takes into account the dark crystal itself, seeking to unify all humans into a spiritual whole; the soiled universal consciousness seeking to be clean and whole.

And as for comments on the lack of character development, fairy tales and even epics are not famous for super-individual characters, relying more on archetypal entities than true human creations.

All in all the dark crystal is hardly light fare, and while it might be simple, and maybe not the most perfect of movies it was still tight and very well woven; a well-spun fairy tale with intelligent use of mythic motifs, and the epic tradition.



## Revolutionary rhetoric rock

Greg Copeland  
*Revenge Will Come*  
Geffen XGHS-2010

A working class hero is something to be.  
—John Lennon

by Nate LaRoi

With *Revenge Will Come*, Greg Copeland establishes himself not only as southern Cal's most talented new singer/songwriter but also as its most proletarian. "You with your hundred dollar bills unfurled/You're the whores in this Trenchtown world," he says, immediately making clear just whose side he's on.

Think of the four sisters shot in the back

For holding a land reform school  
Think of the ones taking heart in the hills  
They can be beaten but they'll never be ruled,

he says in 'El Salvador', as much a commitment to third world socialist revolution as the Clash's *Sandinista!*

However while The Clash face the formidable task of winning Americans over to their music before winning them over to the politics, Greg Copeland serves up his revolutionary rhetoric in music as mainstream American as possible.

Digging in with producer Jackson Browne and surrounding himself with some of L.A.'s most talented sidemen, Copeland is consistently melodic and dependably tasteful. Jackson Browne's influence is readily apparent throughout, both in the vocals-first-arrangements and in Copeland's vocal style itself.

'Richard Hill', in particular, is a better execution of the *Pretenders* style than Jackson Browne has done is some time. What starts as a tale of bitter revenge ("I shot him down at a table, son/No confusion in what we done") suddenly absorbs a cathedral organ and becomes a stirring account of religious revival.

What impresses more than anything else about Greg Copeland is his lyrical

cleverness, his ability to come up with phrase after phrase that sticks in your head.

Better yet, he sings like he really means it. In 'Revenge Will Come' he wraps an eloquent guitar solo around a bitter chorus climaxing with "Revenge Will Come for every child kept down," his voice hardening on the last word and coming down like a fist on a table. This guy's serious!

Sometimes Copeland's words almost have to support themselves. When Greg gets heated up and starts jacking up the tempo, Jackson Browne doesn't seem entirely sure how to respond. The simplistic blues guitar of 'Used' and the equally simplistic organ fills of 'At the Warfield' - neither quite do justice to the potency of the lyrics.

The blistering 'Full Cleveland', however, has all the toughness you could ask for. As Danny Kortchmar and Rick Vito flail away at the electric guitars, Copeland punches away at rich capitalists:

You try to change but that's too tough  
You can't buy us

And you can't kiss us off  
We're going to hound you to  
the end of time

There's blood all over the bottom line.

Whether you want to call this hate or conviction is up to you, but Greg Copeland seems to feed off it:

Limousine on the runway  
Shiny and long  
Somebody's been doing somebody wrong

That's alright

Ah, don't it shine

Just to spit on the fender

Does good to this heart of mine.

Sure seems to anyway. Time picked *Revenge Will Come* as one of the ten best albums of 1982. This may be over-enthusiastic, but Greg Copeland is a man to watch and *Revenge Will Come* is easily the make-the-rich-pay album of the year. Trouble is, with this much talent and this much determination, Copeland could end up very rich himself.

High unemployment for students;

Tuition going up 22%

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