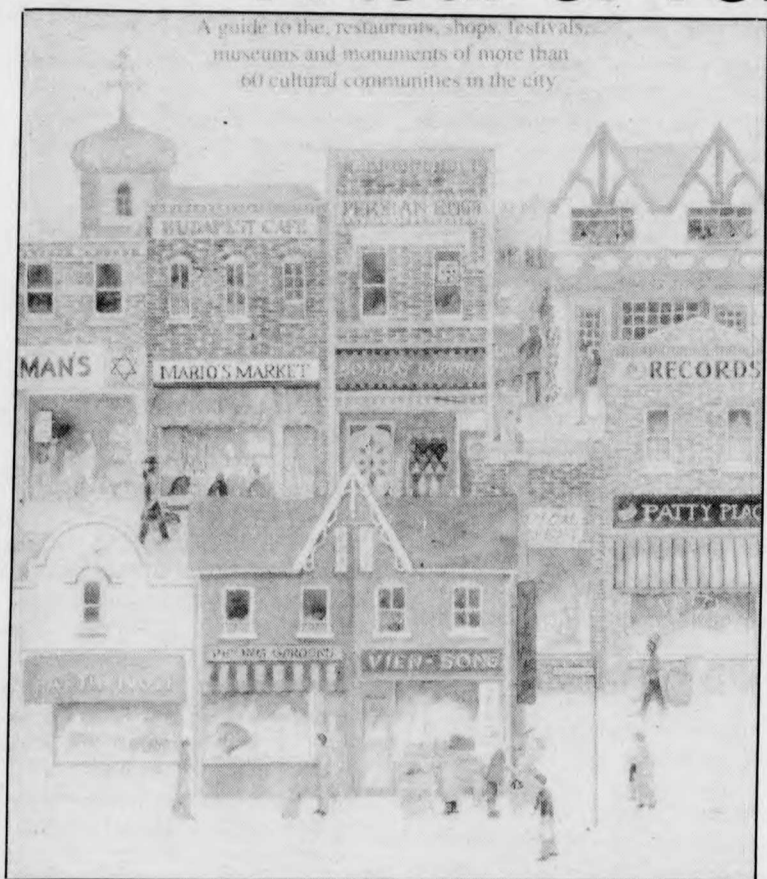


# A tour of Toronto's ethnic communities



by Howard Kaman

*Toronto's Many Faces*  
by Tony Ruprecht  
Whitecap Books

More than almost any city I know, Toronto has to work to attract the attention of its own population. As a result, landmarks such as the Skydome and Ontario Place have been built as "tourist" areas, yet promoted to attract the Torontonians. Commercials for the Dome appear on television, hailing it as the "World's Greatest Entertainment Centre," and we are urged to join the "Tour of the Universe" at the base of the CN Tower.

In the midst of all this, it is easy to forget what really makes our city great; the vitality and diversity of its people. Indeed, with so many groups visible in Toronto, there have been relatively few

books devoted to the subject. Why have people come from so many countries to Toronto? Certainly not to see the Jays at the Dome.

Into this void arrives *Toronto's Many Faces*. Tony Ruprecht's book is an admirable attempt to encompass the variety of Toronto's ethnic make-up in one convenient reference manual. Each chapter covers a different group, from the Afghans to the Welsh, and lists local religious institutions, restaurants and monuments. There are also brief histories of how the groups came to Toronto and a listing of holidays and celebrations.

Of course, the problem with a directory, Ruprecht admits in his introduction, is that it "runs the risk of being outdated the day it goes to press." By admitting this fault, and offering his address to

readers, Ruprecht shows his desire to create as complete and accurate book as possible. Any corrections or additions, he promises, will be listed in the second edition.

As it exists now, *Toronto's Many Faces* is a fairly comprehensive work. Ruprecht lists over 60 groups, including Toronto's natives, supplying enough history to interest the casual reader. The listings are also quite thorough, from a variety of restaurants, to prominent Torontonians from each group.

The book is not meant as a reference, but was written, Ruprecht says, to "foster an appreciation for the diversity of cultural expression that characterizes this city." As a result, it tends to be brief, shrinking each entry into a few paragraphs. By glossing over each group, Ruprecht often simplifies matters that are not so simple. He doesn't even touch upon the conflicts that have existed between Toronto's ethnic communities, ignoring such events as the Christie Pits riot of 1929, in which Toronto Jews

were harassed by local anti-semites.

Of course, the purpose of the book is not to provide history, but only to enrich public awareness. Being a Minister in Ontario's legislature, Ruprecht has done an enormous service for the Toronto tourism industry. By acknowledging the existence of so many groups and spotlighting them in his book, he has shown what truly makes Toronto great. The only thing I was left asking for was an index to the restaurants and services listed.

## Fair Play is fair comment

by Cynthia Phillips

*Fair Play: 12 Women Speak*  
written by Judith Rudakoff and Rita Much  
published by Simon & Pierre Publishing

"There aren't a lot of risks taken with young women writers, and I think that the reason is the old boys' network. I think it's quite logical that a sports oriented male artistic director feels much more comfortable talking to a sports oriented male writer than a singularly unathletic female writer like me."

— Banuta Rubess

To be a recognized, successful Canadian playwright is an accomplishment, but to be a successful Canadian female playwright is even more significant in this male dominated world. Hundreds of plays have been written and published by women in Canada, yet few female writers achieve respect and recognition for their work.

York University Theatre Professor Judith Rudakoff and University of Toronto Professor Rita Much conceived *Fair Play: 12 Women Speak* because they discovered a lack of reliable material available to students of drama for their research of Canadian playwrights.

*Fair Play* celebrates the accomplishments of 12 Canadian female playwrights, including Linda Griffiths, Sally Clark and Carol Bolt, with conversations that give an in-depth look at their personalities, feelings and attitudes. *Fair Play* gives a clear look at who these women are and where they came from, not just what they have done.

Common topics throughout the interviews include the passion, desire and impulse that consumes each writer to write; taking chances; and, the need to break down barriers between reality and fantasy. The definition and exploration of the word "home" was also prevalent; for

many of them, like other women, it meant security, safety and identity.

The conversation/interview format was chosen because the writers are constantly changing and growing; this portrayed them at a specific moment frozen in time. This format was particularly appropriate as it gave the reader a deep understanding and respect for each writer, and writers in general, as well as insight into the difficult and sometimes painful process of writing.

Besides Griffiths, Clark and Bolt, the writers interviewed were Wendy Lill, Banuta Rubess, Judith Thompson, Joanna McClelland Glass, Anne-Marie MacDonald, Margaret Hollingsworth, Mary Walsh, Joan MacLeod and Sharon Pollock. In that group there is a vast amount of talent, which *Fair Play* clearly defined and displayed.

This book should be a large part of future conversations, essays and critical analyses of Canada's women playwrights.

# Billy Barroo's

rhythm & brews

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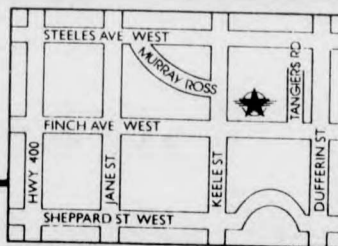
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