

ARTS

Lest we Forget...

An exercise in soul searching

by Chris Lambie

Timothy Findley gave a public reading at the Dalhousie Arts Centre last Thursday evening in conjunction with the art gallery's exhibition *Lest We Forget - Souvenons-Nous*.

While he was suffering from a bad case of the flu, Findley provided an excellent taste of the dichotomy of his wit and moving sense of tragic catharsis.

He put the group of about one hundred fifty people immediately at ease with an anecdote from a

biographical play about Truman Capote. With a dramatic hand to his forehead, and a wicked southern accent playing on his tongue, he twanged "Ahhm not deykadent, Ahhm just seeick."

He told a story regarding the Canadian book of lists. Apparently,

a certain Dutch-emigre/book-store manager in Toronto was asked to produce a top ten list of books on the Canadian scene in the past twenty years. Pressed for time, she had been forced to dictate the list over the phone after running up two flights of stairs. Findley was amazed to discover that he had come in at number six in the ranking with a book he had yet to write: *Divorce*, by T. Findley...

He read from his new book of reminiscences about the evolution of his novel *The Wars*. In the piece he described how a publisher had prompted him to burn a manuscript. He said that an author burns a manuscript, "not so that other people cannot read it, but in order to get rid of that little piece of themselves the work represents." He goes on to describe how, a few months later, he was scared to light the fireplace in a cold room where his publisher was reading the first sixty pages of *The Wars*, lest his friend get any more bright ideas (through association) about editing. Findley built up the tension so well that the audience in studio one gave a communal sigh of relief when the publisher said "This is good, we can fix it."

In a piece designed to highlight

the ironic nature of war, he described the plight of an officer faced with an irreparably wounded horse harnessed deep in the hold of a troop ship. The officer is forced to pump round after round into the horse because the ship is bucking so wildly and his hands are shaking so badly that he wounds the horse many times before he can kill it. In the end, the officer asks a young sergeant to join him for a drink to sooth their mutually frazzled nerves. The boy refuses on the grounds that he promised his mother he wouldn't drink while he was away. While this may look like just another one of the many vicious digs at the mother figure that haunt Findley's work, it is also an obvious index to the bitter sweet nature of a world that will let a boy die for an empty nationalistic cause, but won't let him have a drink before he does so.

While he amused and entertained the audience with lots of stories ranging from tales of his blind cat Motyl to strange homosexual trysts in the name of art, he was not brought to read at Dal for this purpose. Findley came to share the soulful pathos of his works with a world who are constantly forgetting not to forget.

Jazz quartet dynamic

by Gurn Blansen

Last Friday The Mike Murley Quartet breezed into town on the last leg of their Maritime tour. This concert at the Sheraton was the second presentation of the fall season for JazzEast, the Halifax jazz organization.

Murley, a native of Windsor, Nova Scotia, effortlessly demonstrated why he is one of Canada's premier young lions. Along with John Macleod on trumpet/flugelhorn, Jim Vivian on bass, and Barry Elmes on drums, Murley presented a sparkling repertoire of original and standard tunes.

Most interesting among them were the various homage tunes. "Sometimes You Feel That Way",

a swinging bluesy tune had the audience hopping as Murley's tenor spun a catchy melody over the pulsating rhythm section. This piece is a loving homage to Texas tenorman Arnett Cobb and by all estimates, including Murley's, it is his most popular number.

Another piece, "Fish Heads", is dedicated to drummer Elvin Jones with the capable Elmes filling in for the former Coltrane sideman.

The remaining tribute, "Something Like Sonny", is dedicated to tenor colossus Sonny Rollins, who according to Murley, is his favourite sax player after Nova Scotia's own Don Palmer.

The rest of the band shifts into these various styles with relative ease and Murley's solos are perfectly complimented by the excit-

ing Vivian and McLeod, who blows a mean horn.

Murley himself is the perfect leader for this hot combo. He is obviously the creative force behind it, as the majority of original compositions clearly dictates. He is also a strikingly dynamic tenor player, who proudly carries on the Rolins tradition. Not satisfied with simply fronting the group, Murley's energy drives it with a commanding musical confidence that is surprising for a 28-year-old rising star.

This remarkable creative maturity is best demonstrated in a piece like "Split", a Nova Scotia-influenced number that clearly shows his ability to capture a mood and also undeniably affirms his place in Canada as one of its brightest new talents.

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