

ENTERTAINMENT

Itwaru charts his poetic journey from somewhere to somewhere

Laurie Kruk

Professor Arnold Itwaru is a man who clearly separates his writing career from his teaching. Brushing off inquiries about his academic background, Itwaru states, "poetry is often devalued by an academic connection. While I enjoy teaching very much, my writing is a part of my desire for the aesthetic. I guess both these loves form two components of me."

Itwaru, a prolific poet originally from Guyana, came to Canada in 1969. He evidences an impressive devotion to literature (he won the Art Consul's National First Prize for Poetry in 1968 (Guyana) and won an

international prize for lyrical poetry the following year) and more importantly, he has a passionate dedication to his ideals. "My vision has developed in areas I had not anticipated when I was in Guyana. I have become passionately concerned about society's areas of blindness. Social reality tries to destroy us; there are too many things that imprison us, and we need to recognise them."

Teaching in the Department of Sociology at York for the past four years, Itwaru has just published his first book in Canada, *Shattered Songs (a journey from somewhere to somewhere)* and he is counted

among more than the thirty Canadian poets participating in a three-night poetry festival called "Poetry A' Go-Go" at Scuffers., St. Clair West, October 15-17. "I have never participated in a poetry festival before," says Itwaru, "though I've read aloud in many places--and I'm flattered to be asked. I think it's a good thing that this sort of event is becoming popular again--poetry should make a connection between people, instead of being just an esoteric experience, read in a book. Read aloud, the poem becomes a living thing--something you breathe and feel." He adds, "For me, this reading is not a 'performance', but because I always feel so strongly about my poems, my passion comes through."

where do you go, water and wind, blood of my blood, where do you go touching not touched, watching blinded, what perversity/lurks in the edges of the hour, who goes there dreaming my/dream?

(from *Shattered Songs*)

"*Shattered Songs* represents me--but also a kind of awakening to anyone who reads it, an awakening to dimensions of themselves and the world. I call it 'a journey from somewhere to somewhere' because we always feel we're moving from place to place, without seeing that we haven't really changed our situation at all. Each poem is a division of this experience--of the journey we all imagine we're taking--each a separate moment. Through my 'shattered songs' I would like people to become aware of the moments of this 'journey' and of their responsibilities to one another--to celebrate, and liberate each other."

the dawn bleeds faint cries/veins ripped apart/must i pound, pound my bones till the sun cracks,/where do i go bleeding not seen?



Photo: Nigel Turner

Arnold Itwaru: Poet, Professor, and participant in this week's major poetry reading in the city. Pictured here in the Excal Newsroom.

"Writing," says Itwaru, "cannot be disassociated from political realities. It is a political act and writers who don't admit this are deluding themselves."

Arnold Itwaru is currently working on a novel, entitled *The Barbed Maze* and a new volume of

poetry *Entombed Survivals*.

Shattered Songs is available York University Bookstore. Itwaru will be reading as part of "Poetry A-Go-Go" at Scuffers (76 St. Clair W. 962-6676), Oct. 16.

Paula Ross

A unique vision in dance

W. Hurst

To open Harbourfront's *Dance Canada Dance* series on Oct. 7, Vancouver's Paula Ross made her first trip east in three years, and to remind Toronto that she is unlike any other choreographer, Ross brought along a larger repertory, a smaller company and a new film.

The Harbourfront programme showed her work which spans ten years.

Coming Together (1972) mashes the dancers together, then pulls them apart. Their bodies never bend unless struck down by another dancer. Fred Rzewski's voice babbles and chokes, pushing the dancers through a few square feet of space. This tense indictment of Canada's prison system climaxes with bodies popping up and down spasmodically as the lights fade.

In contrast, Ross choreographed *Ballad to a Sad Young Man*, a solo for six-foot Ann Harvie. Harvie uses her easy stride and large, fluid back to pull audience attention. However, the telling moments are exceptionally small gestures of the hand and head, as the body is held in repose.

Ross has not choreographed the words of Roberta Flack's song. Instead, she condenses the song's empathy, by culling the ideas in the lyrics.

Ross brought only five dancers because she hasn't the money to employ her usual eight and some of the pieces suffered.

Strathcona Park (1980) shown

with three women and two men loses power. Men in white masks invade the sculptural forms created by the caped women. The contrast between the linear and the circular is never fully effective. In the film, the original cast of eight affects a more coherent, yet threatening performance.

The film, *Shades of Red*, shows standard rehearsal footage and a self-conscious interview with the choreographer. Lucid editing and Ross' special dynamism raise the product above the bland, standard dance film.

Her choreography shows Ross' over fondness for certain movements, such as working a leg up and out to the side, parallel to the torso. However, most of the work is free from strict adherence to any one movement style.

Her phrasing is as varied as Ross' subject matter. She also demands that her dancers adjust their focus and intensity quickly.

In *Cecilia* (1982) Denise Shreve must be flip or manically accelerated before she reaches up wistfully for the diminishing piano score.

At 41, Paula Ross has struggled financially and artistically for more than a decade. She not only survives, but triumphs with a dance vision unique in Canada.

Dance Canada Dance
Harbourfront

Student Tickets Always Available
869-8412

Three male York professors have successful deliveries at Winters

Laurie Kruk

"3 Men Give Birth", the second evening in the Winters College Poetry Series, attracted a sizeable crowd last night of poets, poetry-lovers, muses, mentors and probably many pupils, for the three men "birthing" last night were York professors: Ioan Davies, Roger Kuin and Don Summerhayes.

With the couches full of attentive listeners, you could almost feel the accumulated sensitivity charging the air with excitement. Summerhayes read first, poems mainly from his new book, *Winter Apples*. The response was enthusiastic, and he sold quite a few copies at reduced reading student rates after his performance. Ioan Davies was next with his clever, satirical "power poems", and a few pity odes to Irving Layton and Oscar Wilde, among others. He stopped too soon, to allow Roger Kuin to take his turn; Kuin read an entire short story (with feeling) and many poems. Kuin's expertise was apparent even in this brief sampling.

By popular request, Davies came back with a reading from his novel-in-progress, *The Family of God*--an ideological satire of *Roots*, as he explained. The reading lasted for two hours with most of the literati departing for the Absinthe, or homeward-running buses. It was a satisfyingly sensitive session.

AGYU part of proposed Centre for the Arts

Expansion creates a new image

Ian Bailey

Just as the show "Dutch Design in the Public Sector", now at the University Art Gallery, suggests the future prominence of graphic communication, so does the newly expanded gallery forecast a higher profile for Fine Arts at York.

In the first phase of a University-based cultural centre, the Art Gallery's floorspace has been increased from 1,150 to nearly 3,200 square feet at a cost of \$40,000. Financing for the project was raised from private donations and funding drawn from the York Development Fund.

The effect of the expansion is two-fold. In the process of increasing the floorspace, the false ceiling was removed. According to Art Curator Michael Greenwood, this resulted in 50 per cent more air space and volume, which gives the gallery a cooler, more airy feel, although there have been no mechanical alterations to the environmental controls.

The most significant benefit of the expansion is that it will provide space for the displaying of generally unseen items from the University's permanent art collection--a collection which includes 700 items ranging from inch-high ivory statues to the Alexander Calder statue at the front of Ross. According to Green-

wood, nearly 500 pieces are currently stored in N113 of the Ross Building and in other campus locations. The vulnerability of the items, as well as a gradual increase in their value, demanded the retreat to storage and well-secured offices, notably that of the University President and various Deans. "The lack of space was depriving the community as a whole of a collection that was there for their benefit. I welcome the expansion because it will allow us to put on display a substantial part of the collection," says Greenwood.

Along with the Nat Taylor Cinema and a proposed Recital Hall in what is now Lecture Hall D, the Art Gallery is part of a Cultural Centre that will be completed by the end of 1984 at a cost of nearly one-half million dollars. The Centre will include a Special Collections Room to be completed by 1983. Collections demanding special protective care will be displayed there. It will also include an upgraded storage facility in the basement of the Ross Building.

The Lecture Hall will seat 175 people. It will be acoustically tuned and will have a recording booth and dressing rooms. A major factor in joining all the Centre facilities will be the extension of the corridor at

the north corner of Ross (the entrance near the Behavioural Sciences Building) eastwards through Room N119 into the corridors in which the entrances to Nat Taylor and the Art Gallery are located. The corridor will continue onwards into the large hallway north of the Central Square cafeteria beside Lecture Hall D. Construction of the corridor will cost \$90,000 and both Greenwood and Assistant Dean of Fine Arts, Temple Harris, agree that it will help in opening the generally unseen art gallery to the public.

The future of the project, which was envisaged in 1976, is tied to the availability of funds. According to Harris, the expansion of the gallery occurred this year because money was available; the rate of future expansion will be dependent upon the availability of funding, but he says that he is optimistic. Greenwood notes that with reasonable support, there is no reason why York shouldn't become an important focus for art, dance, cinema, and exhibitions.

"York deserves the three-phase project," says Harris. "If we don't have the amount of money required to build a major, first-class centre then this is the next-best thing. It meets the needs of the facility in terms of presentation space."