

Entertainment

"...only the absurd will survive..."
-the Preacher-

Dressed as a man in Iran



Stuart Ross

"I find frequently in life that I seem to find myself in the most amazing situations and I'm prepared to sort of grasp them and take them, go into them..."

Ten years ago, dissatisfied with an editorial job, Sarah Hobson packed up and thumbed out of England. Her destination was Iran, where she wanted to explore Islamic art and design.

She also went to learn about herself—at least that's how it turned out. "Like many people of our generation," Hobson told me, "I felt pretty disillusioned with my own society, with my own values. I was a little confused about what I was meant to be doing, what my role in life was."

Just before she left, Hobson decided to christen herself 'John' and dress as a man, as this would

enable her to see more, and would make solo travel much safer. The disguise worked even better than she had hoped, and provided many unexpected insights.

Hobson describes this first journey (she's been back many times since, as a woman) as "a very powerful personal experience." On her way, going through Italy and Yugoslavia, she helped out a youth brigade cleaning up after an earthquake. In Iran, she travelled among the mountains' Qashqai tribes on 'Mephistopheles,' a dilapidated moped. In Qum, the country's religious centre, she lived in a men's theological college. "People were saying, 'You shouldn't go there because it's a fanatical place.'" And so, of course, Hobson went.

Hobson attributes the success of her disguise to the Iranians' inexperience with Europeans. She explains that "anything that they thought a bit peculiar they put down to Western culture, not a male/female thing. Just as we have very odd attitudes and stereotypes about Iranians and

Muslims, so they also had stereotypes about Westerners as being very permissive, very uncaring in relationships, very insensitive. They were appalled by our divorce rate. We find being able to take four wives appalling. It depends on what your viewpoint is, and we do tend to develop stereotypes about other people. It's safer and more convenient, and it bolsters our own society."

Hobson was discovered a number of times. On one occasion, she was brought into a police station for a passport check and questioning. When they found out that she was a woman, they became suspicious and accused her of being a Russian spy. By late evening, they had offered her a bunk and were bidding for her services. "And I'm ashamed to say I didn't reach a very high price." She was finally able to dissuade them, and was given a large breakfast and sent on her way.

Hobson tries not to align herself politically and has very little interest in political ideologies. Instead, she takes

a humanitarian viewpoint, regarding people in terms of their culture. Iran's culture she found to be fascinating and complex. Charming and frightening. Iranian life is subtle, she says, they have their own masquerade—very involved phrases and customs disguising what they really want to say and mean.

Her travels are described in **Masquerade: An Adventure in Iran**, a travelogue that ranks among Sterne's and Basho's. It's the story of a culture, a religion, and personal enlightenment.

Hobson has also written **Family Web**, a study of life in India, where she stayed with a large family for about four months. She is presently working on three more books, including a novel. Her books have been well received by the general reading public, as well as being used as source material for universities. "I keep driving at the human element, to be able to identify with people and their feelings and the realities of their lives. That's what I feel I want to get on with."

See Martyswing

Elliott Lefko

I found myself on Queen Street last Saturday night with nothing to do at one am. I approached an upstairs cabaret called Cafe Soho which promised late night jazz. Sitting down with a cold lemonade and a french ceigarette, I sat till four am, listening to a collection of rag-a-muffin musicians known as the "Jive Bombers." Amidst a sea of coat-tail tuxedos, leopard-skin vests, yellow smoking jackets, and old caps, I noticed an old friend: Bathurst Manor's semi-legendary Marty Loomer. I had heard that Loomer had gone to York to study music and had actually become a pretty fair jazz guitarist. Now here he was, playing 1940's boozy, sexy, gut-bucket jump blues, and by the looks of things, he was really enjoying himself.

The Jive Bombers, most of whom are from York's jazz department, originally formed to play dances at The Ports. Four years later, they are still together playing gigs like Cafe Soho: smoke-filled clubs swinging to spiritual Louis Jordan numbers.

Loomer's musical fortune rose when he helped form the "Wee Big Band," a mixture of highly-respected Toronto jazz stars and young upstarts. Under the tutelage of sax great Jim Galloway, the group has been blazing a name for themselves with a series of hot gigs around Canada. Loomer is the principal arranger of the group. He listens to the old songs and transcribes the music onto paper, complete with harmonies and solos.

Because of his work with Galloway, Loomer's reputation has grown to the point where he now is considering forming a 10- or 11-piece band to play his own compositions. This past summer he worked at the Charlottetown Theatre Festival writing musical parts. He finds that while it is nice to be constantly working he sometimes forgets to take any

time off. After a long winter last year he was determined to find a relaxation outlet. He found it in sports.

"I see a comparison between sports and music. When you're really swinging on a song, it's like you're standing at the other side of the room, listening to yourself play and you feel that you cannot make a mistake. It's so easy. You talk to some football player about making a really impossible catch and he will say, 'It's like the ball was in slow motion. I'm just walking along here, and it takes forever to get there. But when it is ready, it just falls into your arms!'" I finish my 'ade, wish Marty lots of nachus, pick myself up and slouch into the cold November night. Hail a taxi, climb in and dream about the screaming purple tophat I plan to buy the following day.



Gary Hershorn

Off York

Music

Picture yourself in the basement of Montreal's hot and sultry Nelson Hotel. You've had a good amount of intoxication and you can barely see through the heavy cigarette smoke in front of you. Wearing so little clothing that it stings the eyeball Carole Laure saunters on stage. She sings with the grace of an angel, bawdy ballads and despicable dialogue. Now for the first time, Carole Laure is available on record, for your listening pleasure. On **Alibis** (RCA) Laure sings songs by lover Lewis Furey, and demonstrates that beauty is never skin deep.

Elliott Lefko



Film fest

Ronald Ramage

Five films produced by the upper year students of York's prestigious film program will be screened for the student body and general public on Wednesday, November 7, at 3:00 and 8:00 p.m. in Curtis Lecture Hall "L".

The program is headlined by Alan Crevier's film "Hey, Where's Everybody Going?", this year's winner of the Kodak Ltd. Grand Prize at the CNE Film Festival.

"Streetcry" by Karen Hall and "For Elizabeth" by Richard Zywtokiewicz are also worth vidding.

Other films to be screened are "Ziggy" by William Kucheran, and depending how things fall out, either "Blue Hills" by Valerie Schwartz or "7 Steps to Freedom" by Robyn Rogers. Admission is free, but remember, you get what you pay for.

Time warp art

Michael Korican

York's Fine Arts IDA Gallery is currently showing **Tenses**, an exhibition of contemporary work by Giuseppe di Leo, Michael le Blanc and Darci Schuler-Mallon. Each signifies a separate time-span but within this theme pursues very divergent directions.

Di Leo is consumed by past visions. His finely-structured pencil drawings evoke the era of their subjects and their Italian heritage. He uses his art to interpret the past and its ramifications—sometimes, as in **A San Nicandro, Si**, in an overtly religious manner.

Schuler-Mallon's work is firmly anchored in the present. Her drawings so accurately mirror the instant that they almost become Polaroid snapshots. The high contrast technique she utilizes allows facial expressions to dominate and express their individual personality. In **Toasted Danish**, the sunlight radiates harsh and distinct shadows.

Le Blanc takes a futuristic stance, satirically reporting on the now and the near now. His busy work is very statement-oriented, going so far as to write on the canvas of **Testing Ground**: "it was a good gadget, but yesterday a woman came in and looked at the Atomic Pile Cleaner and she asked whether a pad that size could really absorb all the radioactivity."

All three use or draw photographs to create their work, yet transcend these as mere pictures, fashioning images with inherent meaning and a past, present and future.

Tenses runs in the IDA Gallery through Saturday, 9 to 5 daily.