

Arts

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A man of talent, James Bacque

Jack Ramsey is a man of talent.

Jack Ramsey, age thirty, is Dean of Combined Studies and on the list of possible successors to the Presidency of the Ontario University. But because he is so young his friends are the 'enemy' the student radicals. He goes to their parties and smokes their dope. Despite his Upper Canada College background he is quite honestly and too ideally leftist. He thinks change is possible.

He is one of those rare profs who actually wrote a creative PhD thesis: "I wanted to call it 'A Caste of Mind' with the 'e' on caste, but they insisted on the original thesis title. So I have written a dullish book called 'Six cases of Colonialism in Canada.' There are radical conclusions foreshadowed in the book which I want to make clear, some day." Bacque emphasizes that some day is far away, for Jack's creativity has been dammed into the Administrative Stream of the University. He dissipates his energy communicating his cause over TV and writing "articles not in learned journals."

In an age of antiheroes who are capable of only the most ironically restricted and unimportant acts, Jack Ramsey has all the qualities of a Knight-in-armor-Sir Galahad or the TV commercial white knight. But Galahad types tend to arouse our scorn. They are

smetana quartet

Make no mistake about it, the Smetana Quartet are superb musicians. Not only are they good technicians, they are also expressive performers who manage to give the listener something more than "just another recital". None of the members have to makeup for the inadequacies of another and the quartet always functions as a unit, rather than as four separate entities. So even though I was satisfied with Wednesday night's concert, I must admit I still have a few misgivings about what transpired.

My first complaint concerns the selection of material. One of the Quartet's major purposes is to promote and inspire interest in the lesser known Czechoslovakian composers like Janacek and Smetana-two names that are synonymous with Czech musical nationalism. But the Quartet seemed to work against this intention by sandwiching their countrymen's pieces inbetween some dynamite Beethoven and a merry Mozart minuet that functioned as an encore. Now I'll admit I am biased in favor of Beethoven and Mozart but I am also sure that I am not alone when I say the Czech compositions seemed rather pallid and predictable in comparison to the two masters' works. The Quartet was probably aiming for diversity but an all-Czech concert would not have met much opposition.

milksops. Ramsey is a sympathetic character precisely because of this. He is a good man and he is used.

Yet, he is not perfect, despite his annoying competence on the surface. He is a man of talent because he is a good actor. In the course of the novel he discovers the lack of depth in the roles he performs. Superficially, glibly capable, he is really hollow. When he tells his mother his aim in life is to seek the truth, she replies "That's typical. You are beginning I'm afraid to follow hedonism, your ambitions, your dreams of life... utterly pagan." Perhaps her choice of words is a bit strong but she is right. Jack has no ethical stance. He just plays the roles that fit the particular situation and situations change faster every day.

His chameleon character, his talent for reflecting to people the image they want to see in him is most effectively revealed in the chapter on the death of his father. Staring into the mirror he begins chanting his roles: "Dean Jack Ramsey, host Jack Ramsey... handsome Jack Ramsey... Mourning yet mirthful... pilot skindiver skier intellectual author editor Doctor Jack Ramsey." Bacque's prose style has grown much more precise and tight since his first novel, *Big Lonely* and this passage is only one where prose merges with poetry.

But enough grumbling. The Beethoven, as I have already mentioned, was especially well conceived. It offered a striking contrast between the earlier quartet the U of A ensemble executed at the first concert. The latter composition was more complex and dramatic and the Quartet interacted in a pleasing manner to convey this intent.

The Beethoven was followed by Leos Janacek's Quartet No. 1. Janacek is finally beginning to get the sort of recognition his talent deserves. At the present time, his following is small and he is an underground cult hero of sorts, much like Scriabin or Satie. I wasn't overwhelmed by his first Quartet but I have liked other things by him. Eventhough I appreciated the entire quartet, as a whole, better than Smetana's Quartet in E Minor, I was swayed by cellist, Antonin Kahouts' gripping solo work in the latter work. Kahout was able to surrender the right amounts of passion, fervor and devotion to render an entire audience spellbound.

The house showed their approval by calling the Quartet back for an encore. Because it was simplistic and lighthearted, the Mozart minuet they chose was a pleasant and divergent finale to an evening of intense music.

David Chorley

theatre

edmonton film society



Gloria Grahame and Glenn Ford in "The Big Heat".

As the demands made on him increase, Jack's effort to continue the performance becomes intense. He is being pulled on all sides and resents it. His first reaction is to assume another role-to play with the romantic Canadian notion or retreating to the north with a

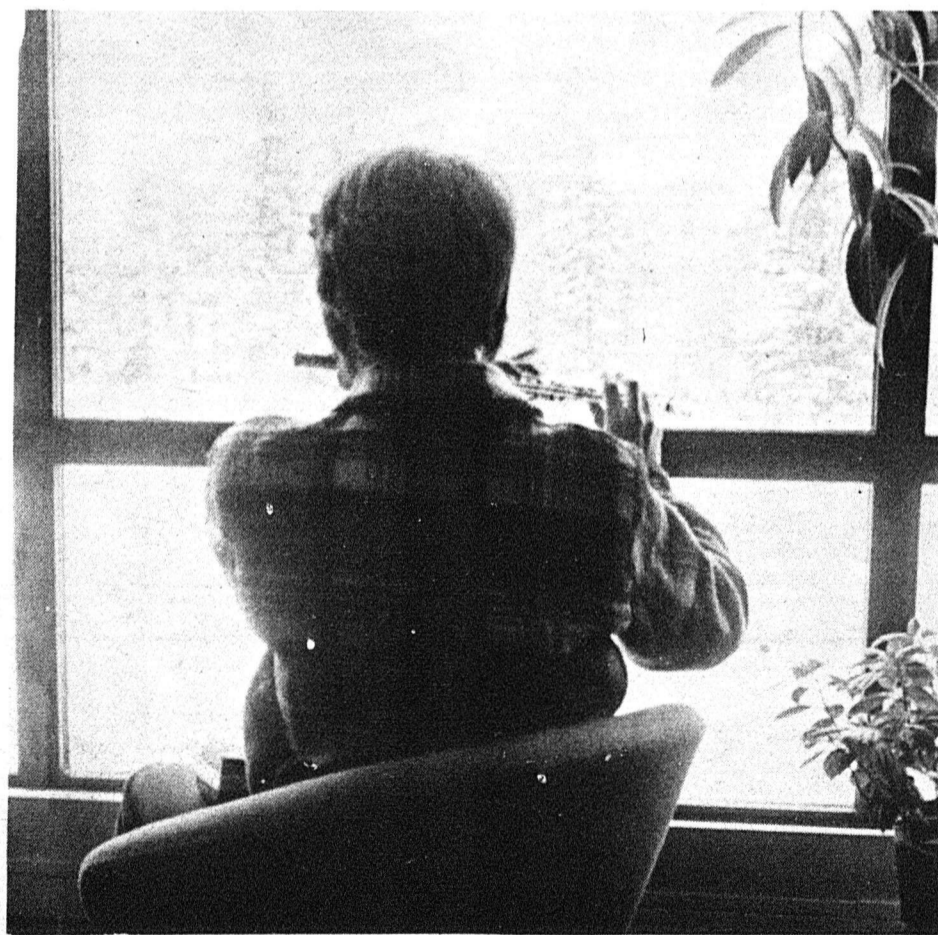
pure and natural girl. Jack's Anna is not exactly the antithesis of the image of the noble savage but she is real. Anna is not typical of any group. She too is a man of talent, a writer, a political activist, a painter. She is Mohawk and Scottish. She says she is half breed. She knows she does not belong to any idealized group. She's not even living in Canada.

Bacque has not fallen for the same romantic dreams that trap his hero. He can see Anna as the ambiguous person she is-beautiful, sophisticated and vendue, almost. Bacque is supremely successful in indicating Anna's side of the story. Although most of the novel is Jack's interior monologue, Bacque shifts the person of the narrator to achieve specific effects. When Jack seems to be distantly regarding himself the narrator is the third person. At several crucial points Anna's own thoughts are disclosed. We see the things that have made her cynical and afraid. The reader is caught in the middle- wanting to agree with both of them, and knowing better.

Terri Moore

On Monday, November 13 the EDMONTON FILM SOCIETY will feature the second films in the Classic series, namely, "Big Heat" and "Secrets of Women". Directed by Fritz Lang, "Big Heat" is an 1950's thriller. Fritz Lang says this about the film: "The Big Heat" is an accusation against crime. But it involves people, unlike other good pictures against crime which involve only gangsters. In the film, Glenn Ford is a member of the police department and his wife gets killed. The story becomes a personal affair between him and the crime. He becomes the audience."

You can find these films in TL-11 at 7 pm; tickets will be available at the door.



Silhouetted against the fresh snow, Bob Leiski plays his flute for passers-by in Cab. A first year Zoology student, Bob has only 20 per cent vision, "enough to make out general shapes and colours," and says that his almost daily free concerts allow him to meet people he would not otherwise meet.

photo by Vic Post.

next week?!

suspenseful,
coherent

of the movie

'Pride and Prejudice'
critique