

Entertainment

DH Lawrence at Special Collections

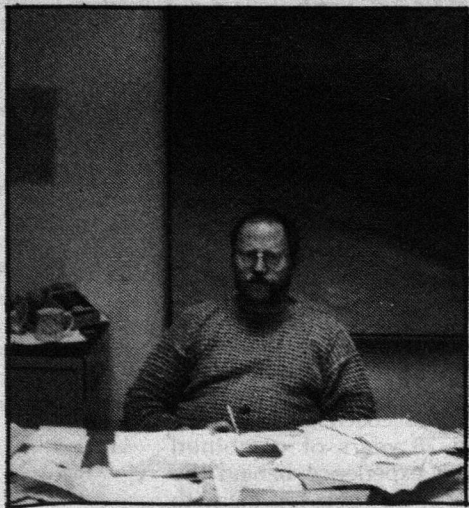


Photo Bill St. John

by Gilbert Bouchard

The University of Alberta's Special Collections are showing off their D.H. Lawrence with an exhibition of the controversial English author's works.

The current Lawrence exhibition includes first editions of his novels, two manuscript letters, film posters, movie still, and film scripts of movie adaptations of his works. The Lawrence materials are on display in the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library in the basement of south Rutherford Library.

This exhibition, including comprehensive notes and explanations on the collections gives the student of Lawrence, or any interested casual reader both an overview of his career plus a glance back through time at Lawrence's works exactly as they were published and read by his contemporaries.

"Many of the works on display are quite rare and many are with the original dust jackets," said John Charles, head of the Special Collections Library. "Collectors want everything as issued and the presence of a dust jacket on a Faulkner or Fitzgerald first edition will often add \$2000 to its price."

The core of the Lawrence collection was purchased by the university from a Montreal book dealer in the mid-sixties. The collection was originally owned by British collector Sir David Eccles, but "much has been added to that core collection," said Charles. "Two areas in particular that we have added to include the translations of the works and the film materials — film posters, still, and film scripts. Plus, we're trying to fill in the gaps in the books that the Eccles collections didn't have."

"Special Collections has also purchased first appearances of Lawrence's works. If, for example, a poem first appeared in a periodical then we'll purchase that periodical."

The Lawrence Collection also includes two letters of Lawrence's, but Charles stresses that the letters are a notable exception for Special Collections. "In general we do not

collect manuscripts — we have a much bigger collection of books."

A large collection of books indeed. Special Collections houses all of the U of A's rare and valuable texts — some 70-80 thousand books valued at over 15 million dollars.

"Any university, if it has a graduate program and publishing professors, will need large numbers of unique or rarified materials to be used for original research," said Charles. Texts that Special Collections house include all books published before 1800, any text that needs special handling (fragile texts), or books that would likely be damaged or vandalized if left in the general library stacks.

For example, the collection houses numerous texts from the 15, 16, and 17th centuries — books that because of their age need special handling, and are likely to be valued at \$1000 - \$2000. Charles stresses that Special Collections are open to all students, undergraduates and graduate student alike, it's just that because of the rare, or fragile nature of the books they need a special supervised circulation.

"We get the books for the students (who are not allowed in the collections' stacks) and they read the books here in our reading room."

Special Collections also shines in the area of western Canadiana. "We have material on all three prairie provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba), the Red River settlement, and the Riel rebellion," said Charles. And in addition to the large stock of western historical documentation they also have "a lot of literature, including early western poetry from before World War II."



Photo Bill St. John

John Charles (above left) and the DH Lawrence Exhibit.

The Lawrence display which runs until Dec. 13 is part of Special Collections' ongoing attempt to educate the U of A population to its services and materials. Future exhibi-

tions include a display of rare French history books to coincide with a conference on northwestern French historians, and a display of Louis Riel to complement a Riel conference to be held in early November.

Choir prefers chic over the robust

Vancouver Chamber Choir
Jon Washburn, conductor
Convocation Hall
Wed. noon, Oct. 31

by John Charles

The Vancouver Chamber Choir is an expert band of 20 professional singers, and their free concert yesterday was mostly enjoyable and impressive. If there's a reservation in my enthusiasm, it's because conductor John Washburn, like the leaders of many such groups, seems as caught up in polished technique as he is in the total expression of a particular piece of music.

The 50-minute program was pared down from their full-length program, so we didn't hear Vivaldi or Dvorak, which might have resulted in a classically straightforward choral sound. But the opening work, Gibbons' eight-part 17th-century anthem, *O Clap Your Hands*, seldom conveyed the ecstatic joy the music and its Biblical text contains.

The women's voices revealed variety and color in ensemble and solo passages, but the men's voices sounded fuzzy, except in the middle range. So Gibbons' eight parts didn't come through properly. And I suspect this comes from Washburn's fondness for a warm, blended, over-homogenized sound, as aptly demonstrated in Hindemith's *Six Chansons*.

These delicate, impressionistic 20th-century settings showed the choir at its best, if you like the Belgian chocolate school of singing. The glassy flow of *Un Cygne* was expertly maintained, and on *Printemps* the choir managed to sing out with a full tone while sustaining a lightness throughout. The opening of *En Hiver* was clean and solid and welcome for that.

But Stephen Chatman's arrangements of *Five British Columbia Songs* found the choir creating the most life-enhancing music of the program. One song's expressive marking, according to Washburn, is "to be sung crudely," and the choir obliged. A song

about drunken miners at a rowdy Vancouver hotel, it suddenly reminded you that music can reflect a real world beyond the concert stage. There was more joy here, and more sense of what "raising your voice in song" means than in all the glass-figurine effects a *capella* choirs too easily get caught up in.

These five songs, in their simplicity and variety, were very satisfying, but the most spectacular and playful were Sydney Hodgkinson's *Sea Chanteys*, which use many difficult and sophisticated effects in a directly communicable way, letting us bask in the comic side of virtuosity.

This concert's repertoire was selected, in part, as a focus for the choral workshop that followed, which may explain why the range of choral music offered was a bit narrow.

It's instructive to hear the Vancouver group not only because of their national reputation, but because those tendencies I've criticized are also found in Edmonton's Pro Coro Canada — a preference for the chic over the robust.

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