

Caribbean Nite '96

by Murray Thorpe
Brunswickan Entertainment

Caribbean Nite '96 was held on March 16th and was a success for the hundred-odd people who attended. It was a special evening of music, dance and poetry celebrating the spirit of the people of the Caribbean.

Before the performances were started, people had a chance to taste some of the Caribbean cuisine. Dishes such as chicken curry, vegetable chick pea curry, vegetable patties and Jamaican meat patties were part of the smorgasbord. I tried the sauce in the little bowl at the serving table, expecting to find something hot, and I wasn't disappointed. I downed whatever drink was in front of me, realizing why probably the planners were not opening the bar until after dinner.

Once dinner was ended, the guest speaker, Anthony Boxill, the retired English department head, spoke about the contribution to literature and creative expression of the people of the Caribbean. He spoke with great feeling, and pointed out that most of the creativity speaks of poverty, lack of opportunity and the past colonial exploitation of the people of the Caribbean islands. The works recognize cruelty and hypocrisy, as well as spirit and grandeur. When a person of the West Indies says no problem, it means that there is no problem their spirit can not overcome.

He mentioned names such as Derek Walcott, V S Naipul, Edward Braithwaite and George Lamming. He also spoke of musicians such as Bob Marley and the Mighty Sparrow. When one thinks of the West Indies, one must remember that Reggae and Calypso are produced



Cesar sings his songs for Cuba.

photo by Warren Watson

mostly by the slums of Kingston and Port of Spain. He cautioned one not to expect meaningful lyrics from every song.

The rest of the evening continued with dancing, singing, poem reading and a play. There were several musicians including Cesar Morales who played all of his four songs for Cuba. He expressed his frustration (with perhaps US foreign policy) by saying, "every human being has the right to be what they want." With the US ramming its culture down the throats of people here in Canada with movies, television and magazines and its attempt to stop other countries from dealing with Cuba, it is easy to sympathise with Cesar. Cesar ended, however, on a more cheerful note by playing 'La Bamba', a song which he said reflects the happiness of the Latin American Countries.

During the performance section of the evening, a play, called the "lecture at 8 o'clock", was acted out. This drama was taken from the book, *Resisting the Enemy*. In this classroom, the children were taught to recite the history of their colonial conquerors. Columbus landed in the West Indies in 1492 at Discovery Bay, at Discovery Bay. This lesson appeared to have been repeated without feeling, and perhaps shows a resistance to learning about their conquerors. This lack of feeling was in direct contrast to the West Indian readings earlier in the evening.

Among the sets of dancing were an Indian dance and the Limbo. The Limbo ended the formal part of the evening and everybody was encouraged to participate. The dancing closed out an enjoyable Caribbean Nite.

Cinema Bums

with Taigue McAvity and Andrew Rosenfeld

A: Well, only one movie this week - *The Birdcage*, starring Robin Williams, Gene Hackman, Nathan Lane, and Dan Futterman. It's a situation comedy - Williams and Lane play a gay couple who have a straight son who is about to marry the daughter of a conservative senator. A funny movie, but perhaps not as funny as promised.

T: Funny yes, but not the funniest, it was strange funny. The humour in this movie is gay oriented, that is to say that all the jokes and comedy revolve around gay characters. I guess if you wanted to compare it to another movie you could say that it was like *Tootsie* with a twist.

A: I just thought that people were laughing and laughing, when it really wasn't all that funny. Some of the jokes were just milked to death, particularly the scene where Lane is dressed in a suit, trying to appear straight, and then he crosses his legs, revealing some flashy pink socks. The camera is fixed on this shot for roughly half a minute, and the laughs continued the whole time. Come on, it wasn't *that* funny.

T: Also, many times throughout the movie I found that people were laughing, not because it was funny, but because they were uncomfortable. Like the opening scene where drag queens are singing 'We are Family', there was nothing funny about the song or the dance, yet people were laughing. However, it was really funny, at least it was funnier than anything that Jim Carrey has done in the last few years.

A: I agree. I'm not saying that this was a bad movie, it's just that it's received such amazing reviews so far, for which it seems undeserving. The acting is great: Williams is subtle, unlike his usual fare; Lane is hilarious; Hackman is mediocre; and the butler (Hank Azaria) is fabulous. The movie has been described as "smart comedy," but it was little more than situations and slapstick. Very, very blatant jokes. But still funny.

T: For sure, as usual, Williams was fantastic, but his character was limiting. He wasn't as funny as usual because the character he played wasn't funny. Nathan Lane, a relatively new actor on the big screen, was also extremely funny. But I will have to agree with Andrew in that the show and most of the jokes were stolen by Azaria.

A: I'm curious as to the audience's reaction to this film. Perhaps I'm completely wrong, but I'm somewhat worried that people were laughing at homosexuals instead of with them. I realize that Fredericton has a large gay population, while at the same time this town is very, very conservative. So this leaves me wondering...

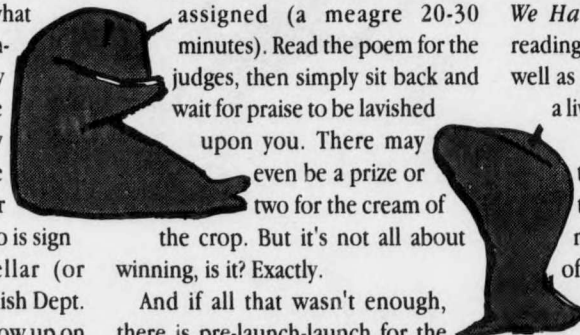
T: The easiest way to break the ice in an uncomfortable situation is laughter. This movie, apart from being a great film, was also trying to get a message across, I think that this movie was Williams's way of helping out the gay community. By getting people laughing about gays, it alleviates some of the social pressure that has been building up. So, all in all I think that this was a very successful movie, in more ways than one.

The Revenge Of The Words

The more poetic among you might want to head down to The Cellar on Saturday night at 8 pm for what can best be described as a high-speed, full contact poetry event. Slam 2! continues in the grand tradition of Slam! by keeping self-expression alive through a fun, think-on-your-feet contest. All you have to do is sign up in advance at The Cellar (or alternatively, outside the English Dept. in Carleton Hall), and then show up on the evening ready to write a poem about

the subject assigned to you by the marvellous M.C. in the time limit assigned (a meagre 20-30 minutes). Read the poem for the judges, then simply sit back and wait for praise to be lavished upon you. There may even be a prize or two for the cream of the crop. But it's not all about winning, is it? Exactly. And if all that wasn't enough, there is pre-launch-launch for the forthcoming publication of QWERTY at

Gallery Connexion on Wednesday, March 27th at 8 pm entitled *Houston, We Have a Problem*. It'll feature readings by QWERTY contributors, as well as music and visual art (including a live performance by Jon Bartlett). All in all, a pretty exciting time to be interested in all things arty. If you need any more information about either of the events, just look for the numerous posters all over campus, or call either 459-8763 or 458-8832.



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