

Bliss

Milligan work on the piece and then collaborated to nail down the choreography. Shawn Isenor is also premiering a work at this year's Jazz Bliss — Mea Culpa — which will be seen in this year's Ribbon of Dreams Fundraiser, a show supported by Halifax Dance.

In describing the process of putting the production together, Evans called it "a very complex mechanism." She stressed how much this show is treated as a professional production while in most cases, the dancers are not professionals.

"Some people onstage have never been in this kind of production machine before and are doing not very difficult dancing; others are highly-trained people doing very technically difficult dancing," she said.

This results in a high quality product that is very rewarding to the dancers in the adult recreational jazz program.

"These people are pulled into the passion of being onstage," said Evans.

The show will often develop a camaraderie among performers that just wasn't there in classes from week to week.

"This show gets people involved with each other," enthused Evans.

Evans reassured anyone unsure of whether to come to the show that they will enjoy themselves.

"Come have a great time," she said. "You're going to have a lot of fun. You're going to laugh and you're going to see some beautiful dancing. You can sit down and have a beer."

Jazz Bliss '96 is in cabaret style and there will be a bar. So you can sit down, relax, and be safe in the knowledge that you'll like what you're about to see. Live dance is always better than the ads, and the sequels just keep getting better.

Jazz Bliss '96 will take place March 29 at 8 p.m. and at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Saturday. The matinee on Saturday is a smoke-free family show. The show is being held in the McInnes Room of the Dalhousie Student Union Building. Tickets are \$14 adults, \$12 student/senior, and are on sale at Halifax Dance. Phone 422-2006 for more information.

Fantastically Fun

BOOK REVIEW

Fantastic Four: To free Atlantis
Nancy A. Collins
Boulevard Press

BY STACY DOOKS

ALL right, I admit it. I was (and still am) a comic book junkie. Like potato chips for the brain, comics are pretty cool. I've read them off and on for awhile, but growing older has caused my zeal for them to dim a little bit. Still, I do have my funnybook heroes: Superman, Batman...and the Fantastic Four. One can only spend so much money, however, so my comic buying has taken a backseat to other matters — like food.

So you can imagine my surprise when looking through the bookstore shelves that I came across this little gem of a book: Nancy Collins' *Fantastic Four: To free Atlantis*. The Fantastic Four in book form! Though the price

was steep — \$7.65 even with the avid reader card — I paid the sum. Despite my misgivings from the cheesy back cover blurb, I sat down and read a little...then a lot. For 305 pages, I got to be a kid again.

For those not in the know, the Fantastic Four are a group of costumed heroes whose job it is to save the world from various evil comic book menaces. Each member of this Quantum Quartet has a unique power: Mr. Fantastic, the brilliant scientist/living rubber band; the Human Torch; the Invisible Woman; and, the superstrong Thing. This might seem to be standard Power Rangers fare, but the hook of the Fantastic Four is this: they're a family. They quarrel, they worry about everyday stuff; they're basically human. They're more human than most superheroes, who tend to have no problems. Reed Richards and Susan Richards are husband and wife, and are parent figures to Johnny Storm



(Susan's brother), and Ben Grimm (Reed's best friend). Together they are perhaps the most interesting group of heroes in the comic book world. And the novel takes full advantage of this fact.

The plot of the novel is deceptively simple: the Sub-Mariner, Lord of Atlantis, has been poisoned and left for dead in a palace coup. The FF save him from death, and try to help Prince Namor save his people from the clutches of his usurping cousin. But they have to race against time before Atlantis declares all-out war on the Surface World (Gasp!). And to top that, the Fantastic Four come face to face with their arch-enemy, the dreaded Dr. Doom!! (Choke!).

At a glance, the novel seems goofy. One would think that I would condemn this in the same way I did *Doom*. But Collins is an excellent writer, and has done her homework. She manages to balance out the comic book silliness with character depth; she cares for the characters and the bonds between them. The Fantastic Four become more than a group of superheroes. In Collins' writing they become three dimensional people with real feelings. Her handling of the Thing is especially well done. She captures the pain Ben Grimm feels at being trapped inside the body of a lumbering stone creature; he's strong enough to level city blocks, yet so alien-looking he cannot lead a normal life. The scenes between the Thing and the Human Torch are a howl, as funny as dialogue between George and Jerry on *Seinfeld*.

Fantastic Four: To free Atlantis is a fast-paced novel and just flies by — it leaves the reader with, if nothing else, a feeling of fun. The Great American Novel it ain't, but you gotta love it when Ben Grimm says that deathless line: "It's Clobberin' Time!!"

See you in the funny pages.

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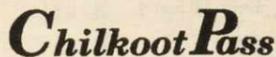
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