

Le Bal, collage & "P"

Arr'tissue!

Tissue paper has finally made the leap from the haunts of the kindergarten and day camp arts and crafts to the walls of York University gallery space. Wayne Emery's *Collage Paintings*, displayed in Calumet College Common Room from Nov. 11-22, pushes the use of this unconventional medium to new heights.

Emery began working with tissue paper in order to free himself from the traditional shape and solidity of paint on stretched canvas. His large-scale works seem to be against the nature of the delicate paper, thus emphasizing the vulnerability of the pieces.

The collages have a strong tactile presence. Multi-layers of texture, shine, color, opacity and translucency heighten the interest of the surface. Emery works both formally and figuratively. The brightly colored, organically shaped, and intuitively composed works are the obvious predecessors to the two figurative pieces. Emery paints figures on the collage backgrounds. Although the figures are not compositionally grounded their colors are homogenous with the background so that they do not appear to be floating in space.

Emery's collages are an enthusiastic personal experiment. However, they do tend to leave the viewer flat—the collages do not transcend their medium and technique of assembly.

—Janice Goldberg

Blitzzy ball

A ballroom sees many changes in the style of dance and music, but the people never really change. So explains *Le Bal*, a light-hearted film by Ettore Scola which was nominated for an Oscar in the best foreign film category, and opens Friday at the International.

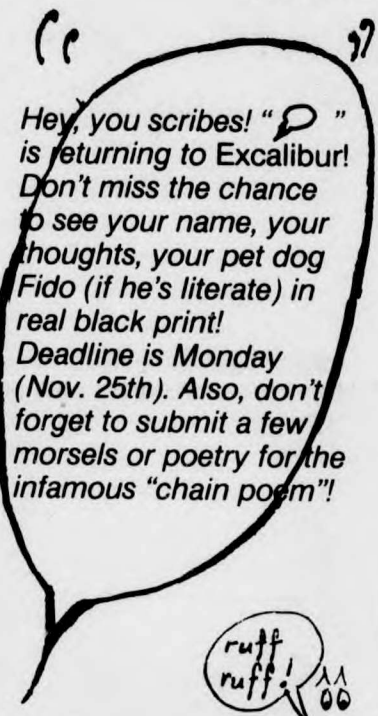
Zooming in on the action in a ballroom on no-particular-nights from the 1930s to the '80s, *Le Bal* could be

the ultimate Miss Manners of dance films: never step on your partner's feet, stealing a kiss or grabbing some flesh risks getting a smack of a different kind, and an invitation to dance that is rejected will always be a slap in the ego. Important lessons them all. The film is a series of vignettes, using only music of the various periods to express itself.

Unspoken questions are explored in the film (e.g., did Fred and Ginger choreograph their trips to the washroom together?) and the issues of whether Coke is the real thing is finally answered. Unlike the much too presumptuous *That's Dancing!* of last year, *Le Bal* never loses sight of the fact that dancing is first and foremost supposed to be fun.

The people that move through this dialogueless film are not the great dancers one has learned to expect in movies (Hi, John Travolta!), but they are not ridiculed for their lack of expertise. Director Scola treats his characters with the respect all lonely people on a dance floor should be given. Like the film, the characters are a little off the wall, but an enjoyable bunch to spend some time with.

—Kevin Pasquino



York defies Mozart

Contemporary composers capture crickets

By PETER ZAPARINUK

Imagine an entire field of crickets in McLaughlin Hall with the chairman of the Music Department, James McKay, standing amongst them playing the bassoon. A fantastic idea that was reality (well, sort of) last Wednesday.

The occasion was a concert celebrating York's 25th and the music department's 15th anniversary. The four compositions featured were world premieres by Music Department faculty members. Mac Hall was packed with a standing room only crowd that included a recording crew from CJRT-FM.

It is widely believed that modern music is meant for the "musical elite," but this is simply not so. James Tenney's "Water on the Mountain . . . Fire in Heaven," for example, can be approached on different levels. It uses six electric guitars each tuned a sixth of a semi-tone apart, expanding the regular eight-pitch octave to 72 pitches.

The piece proceeds very subtly through its three movements, not following any type of traditional development. In this way it creates a steady state with no clear beginning or end. It is similar to looking at a star-lit sky without definitive constellations.

"Species," by Casey Sokol, represents the development of the 19th century tradition of structuring music around a literary text. It is based on *More Than Human*, a novel by Theodore Sturgeon. Sokol describes it as being about several individuals "each possessing a highly developed power, though otherwise quite lacking, who eventually merge synergistically into something far greater than the sum of their individualities."

The piece for three pianos uses the twentieth century technique of serialism and minimalism. Characters are not represented by melodic motifs, but by organized pitch sequences called tone rows. The characters and events are developed through the tone rows being set to repetitive rhythmic and textural

patterns, changing as the characters themselves change.

On the other hand, one doesn't need the technical background to enjoy the constantly evolving pitch and rhythmic sequences.

"Survivor," by Phillip Werren, has been described in his own words as being an "interior journey" that deals with "space." The piece incorporates a background of taped cricket chirping over which is heard a mellifluous flowing of computer generated sound and a live electric bassoon. The solo bassoon is very effective against the lush background and certainly suggests a progressive movement in outer or inner surroundings.

David Mott's ". . . The Boogie Woogie" is best described as immense fun. Said by the composer

to be "a musical homage both to several of my musical heroes and to my friends," the piece represents influences from earlier composers of our century, such as Charles Ives, Edgard Varese, and boogie woogie pianist Mead Lux Lewis. The music is eclectic, surprising, and celebrative in itself.

It is always a treat to experience newly composed works, especially as music from past centuries plays such a major role in today's music scene. Though it is fine to appreciate Mozart and Beethoven, they, too, were at one time "contemporary composers" trying to find an audience. The music department's anniversary concert stands as a reminder that there are composers in our time who have something to say.

Poet explores cultural and imagistic dualities

By MICHELENE ADAMS

"I find being here problematic but my being there is problematic too," says Trinidadian poet Dionne Brand. How does a poet successfully communicate personal cultural experiences? Brand grapples with this problem in her work and addressed the issue in the opening of the Glendon Women Writer's Series last Thursday. Brand has had four collections of poems published and chose to read from her most recent *Chronicles of the Hostile Sun*, written in the period she spend in Grenada before and during the American invasion of that island. Aside from "Amelia," a very moving work dedicated to her grandmother, all of the poems centre around political concerns.

Brand read for close to an hour to an attentive, predominantly female audience. As a whole, they appeared to be familiar with her work; several held copies of her book on their laps and followed as she read. She delivered her poems in a conversational manner, introducing each at length and continuing to speak to the audience the second she had uttered the last word of the poem. As a result, she managed to give the sense

that the poems were not so much finished bodies of literature as they were an integral part of what she has to say and will never finish saying.

Brand's poetic delivery is particularly striking. Her voice, both firm and gentle, reflects a similar dual quality in her work. Her poetry is laced with strong political statements, yet made in the context of the beauty of the islands they are rendered more poignant. She speaks of the "duplicity" of the islands—the pain of experiencing the beauty of the landscape and the people, juxtaposed against their hardships.

Brand explained that one of her main concerns with her poetry is that it remain simple; that it should state plainly what she, the poet, intends to say. It is evident that she is politically aware and bound to the issue of freedom. However, the world she gives us in her poems, one of imperialism and endless struggle, does not remain a world separate from our experience because of the accessibility of her language.

Instead of excluding the listener who is not politically conscious, the poet draws her in through simple language and images. "Night—Mt. Panby Beach—25 March 1983" shows this exceptionally well:

... on market hill
we bawled at the air
someone must go through
something for this
only this night
afraid of the sea and what's in it
and the reef
with its mollusks and shooting tide
what a sound!
like a shot past the ear
the salivary foam on the teeth of
the sand
what a sound!
fresh and frightening
snatching what's ours again

Brand confessed that she finds herself with a foot both in Canada and Trinidad, and that while neither is exactly the right place, "straddling becomes a place." It is from this place called "straddling" Dionne Brand writes. The result is poetry with a political edge which nevertheless speaks to all of us on a more universal level.

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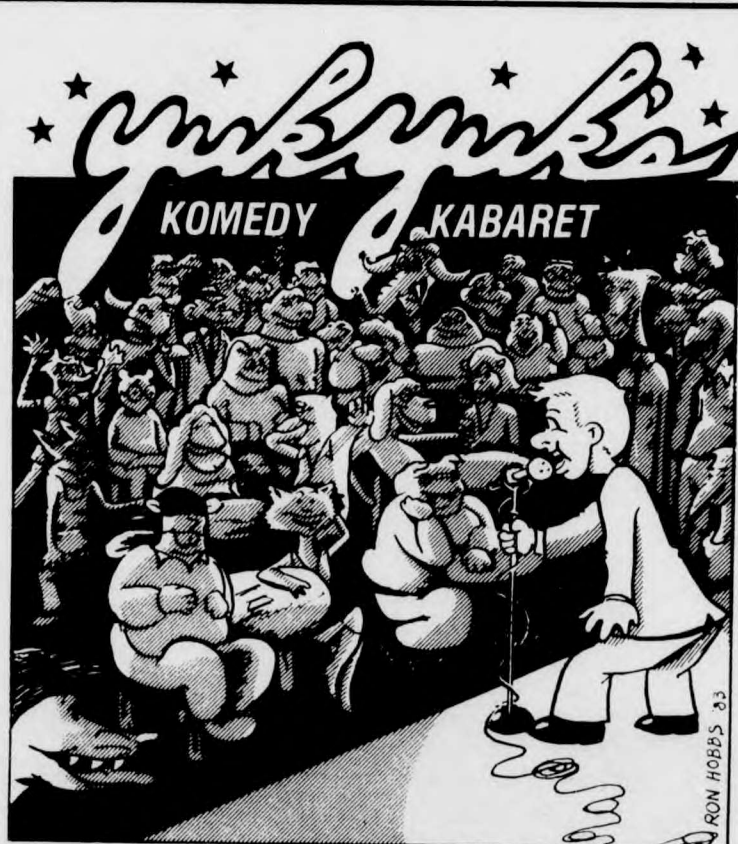
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