

WRACK 'N ROLL

By ALEX VARTY

The New Santana Band; Welcome; Columbia PC32445

Airto Moreira; Fingers; CTI 6028

Picture if you can a teeming, skyscraper-shadowed ghetto in a large American city. The music of Carlos Santana and his band originated in such an urban, frenetic atmosphere. The driving rhythms and slashing guitars of Santana or Abraxas identified themselves as city-bred instantaneously, and have become classic examples of urban music. On the other hand, picture the equally urban but less familiar sight of Rio in full carnival frenzy, with thousands of costumed revellers dancing to sophisticated South American rhythms. Airto Moreira's music, though usually labelled jazz, springs directly from the complex beats and melodies of his native Brazil.

With the release of these two albums urban chicano rock and South American jazz are brought considerably closer, as each artist has been obviously influenced by the other. This intercourse is most overt in Santana's Welcome as some of the tunes therein could fit quite comfortably onto Fingers, which was issued some time earlier. Carlos and Co. acknowledge this influence by featuring Airto's vocalist (and wife) Flora Purim on the cut "Yours Is The Light". A strong religious element is also readily apparent; the lyrics to "Love Devotion And Surrender" are almost a direct quote from Sri Chinmoy; Alice Coltrane's "Going Home" is infused with an ethereal, Yes-like spirituality; and Mahavishnu John McLaughlin sits in for the incantatory "Flame-Sky". Musically, Welcome can be described as an extension of Caravanserai, that is, elaborately structured pieces of Latin jazz-rock. The complex times and layered keyboards dominate the sound, with guitar serving as punctuation and commentary. On the jazzier pieces such as the title tune and "Flame-Sky" [on which Santana's emotion steals the spotlight from McLaughlin's technicalities] Carlos phrases in much the same manner as a jazz tenor sax player does. Welcome is not a party record, as it does not possess the infectuousness of Abraxas, but it is a mature and subtle record of great depth. Santana has finally made it as Art.

Santana's album has probably been certified gold by now, and Airto's album has probably not sold more than a few hundred copies in Canada. That's a shame, because Fingers is just as good as and probably more accessible than Welcome. Granted, the vocals are all in Portuguese, but the music is quite easy to comprehend. The band has taken Brazilian folk rhythms and set them to an urban accompaniment of electric guitar, bass and keyboards, with the drumming always being quite prominent. The music is intricate and well thought out, and carries vague tinges of Santana and Booker T., among others. The overall sound is distinctive, though, and sort of sweeps one into an exuberant feeling noticeable throughout the record. In fact, Fingers is one of the happiest records I've heard in a long time. The musicians are all technically accomplished, especially guitarist David Amaro and keyboard player Hugo Fattoruso who are versatile and always interesting. With three percussionists, including Airto himself, who is considered one of the world's best, the rhythm section is super-solid, even though the bass is slightly under-miked at times. If you enjoy Santana, latin music or jazz I can recommend Fingers without any reservations whatsoever.

Etta James, Etta James, Chess CH50042

It's always good to hear a great soul singer singing good material, and on this album Ms. James covers three Randy Newman songs, plus several fine others, in her usual tough style. So many other vocalists [most notably Art Garfunkle] have taken Newman's vicious songs and have buried them under sacharrine strings and cloying vocals that it is particularly nice to hear versions snug in the same nasty spirit as they were written. The backup band is tight though rather pedestrian, but it's the voice that makes this record.

Kim Ondaatje exhibit

Paintings about pollution

By ALAN ANNAND

The Kim Ondaatje exhibit at the Beaverbrook Gallery downtown occupies two full showrooms which it doesn't quite merit. I should immediately qualify this by referring to the actual size of the works: they are larger than they are worth, many of them thirty square feet and more. Ms. Ondaatje appears to be concerned with the threat of industrial pollution, judging by her subject matter: cement companies, oil refineries and slag trains, but there is no threat in her representations. They are prettified scenes, suffering from an excess of mauve and pink, blue sky

and fluffy clouds. There is the inevitable grey haze which must attempt to suggest the menace, but it is so attenuated by the more dominant mellow tones that increased area only serves to blunt whatever sinister effect might be implied. Ms. Ondaatje has effectively defused the bomb she has so carefully painted.

Other of her smaller works feature portraits of her favourite windows, halls, doors and cupboards which, with the exception of a colourful floating living-room chair, are pretty clear evidence of an artist's uninspired day at home when it wasn't smoggy outside. Nevertheless, some of the works I do like, as a child, delighting in the

acute drawings of Shell tanker trucks, the perspective of a train on a curved track, the oil tanker whose bow stands out in relief. Her house looks like a nice place to fall asleep, but her industrial landscapes are as remote as the other side of the window in a coach car in somebody else's city. Maybe that's what she means.

Kim Ondaatje now lives in Toronto, has six children and is married to the writer Michael Ondaatje. She began painting full time in 1966, and has since been widely exhibited in Canada and Europe. She has received two international awards.



The Tenants were Corrie and Tennie

A book about a man going insane

By FORREST ORSER

"The Tenants were Corrie and Tennie" is about a man going insane in Fredericton.

The man is Bill Boyd, an American school teacher who comes to Fredericton on a bus tour and decides to stay here. He buys a house, a duplex. He lives in half and lives on the rent he receives from the other half. This of course changes his whole way of life. He walks out of his house one morning and realizes that it is the first morning of a school term that he has not been in school, either as a student or as a teacher. He likes the feeling.

Not insane at all - Boyd is in a position that many of us would envy. But even in the beginning of the book, Boyd is a strange fellow. At one point he stands in the middle of his living room singing Anne Murray songs to himself. He puts a bed in his guest room, but "for the fun of it" puts slats in the bed because he is not expecting any guest.

This is understandable since Boyd is not a very sociable person. He makes no friends in Fredericton, except for an acquaintanceship with Corrie. Corrie is Tennie's wife. (Corrie and Tennie are of course his tenants.) As far as we know he had no friends back in the States.

He spends his time writing "The Alien's Guide To Survival." Mainly this work explains to the world Boyd's wisdom. He begins by telling us why democracy will not work (Johnson and Nixon "illustrate the essential stupidity of the masses") and moves on to discussing such things as freedom. He feels this book is good, but that it will never be published because people "prefer to live in a world of illusion and delusion." So he decides to write letters to the

editors of various newspapers as well. These, he thinks, will express his views within the context of current events.

These are not Boyd's first attempts at communicating with the general public. When he was a boy he printed up "Shares of Love" which he passed out on the street. The shares were free, but increased in value as they were passed from hand to hand. Boyd was pulled into an alley by older boys who drew designs on his stomach and private parts with lipstick. He ran home crying. His "Shares of Love" were scattered all over the sidewalk.

And this is not Boyd's only frustrating experience. Among other things, he married the daughter of his minister, and she cried everytime he tried to make love to her.

So it is understandable that Boyd does not have a high opinion of people in general. He still tries to communicate with them apparently only because he does have a high opinion of his own opinions.

Boyd lives in Fredericton, writing and thinking, and slowly going crazy. The thing about the book is that the reader is never totally sure when Boyd is making good sense and when he's being crazy.

He imagines a detailed plan for breaking up nonreturnable bottles and scattering them over the lawn of the local representative of an American soft drink company.

He is very concerned that Canada does not become like the United States. "Canada was founded as a nation that said NO! to the everlasting 'Yes, MORE' of the U.S.A. . . . We must say NO."

Why does he drink cup after cup of coffee? Why does he write by candle-light? Why does he walk around his house naked, except for a hat that he thinks makes him look

like Bing Crosby?

Is he right when he says, "In fact there are only two real Virtues, I believe: Courage and Endurance. And if you consider Endurance to be part of Courage, then there is only one. Man faces the awful confusion of the universe and his fellow man, and has the courage to live until he dies."

Is Boyd really making it with Corrie? He does say, "Fantasy is the only freedom available to a dying man." Why does he like to lay in bed moaning, pretending he's dying?

There are a lot of questions you could ask about this book, but whatever the truth about Bill Boyd is, it's an interesting novel. It will make you think and also make you laugh. That's a good combination.

Canadian publishers usually consider a first novel a success if it sells 1500 copies. "The Tenants Were Corrie And Tennie" sold half that in the first months after its publication.

"It got pretty good reviews right across Canada," Kent Thompson says. Thompson, an English professor here at UNB, added, "Usually they liked it, but were puzzled. And that's what I wanted!"

Thompson has written a second novel, but it has been rejected by two Canadian publishers. It is now being considered by an American publisher.

The CBC is considering using a television play he wrote.

In future he plans to write in a wide variety of forms, including another novel, short stories, plays, and poetry.

Many thanks to the bookstore for the donation of this book.

"The Tenants Were Corrie And Tennie" by Kent Thompson: Macmillan of Canada, 200 pp, \$6.95.