



Urjo Kareda

Whatever happened in this new effort by Toronto playwright?

It has taken John Herbert a long time—five years—to move from his Fortune and Men's Eyes to its staged successor, Born of Medusa's Blood. What is there in the alchemy of a first play's success which makes the writing of a second so difficult?

Herbert's predicament isn't unique: David Freedman had problems shaping the new play, Battering Ram, which is to follow Creeps, and David French, after the success of Leaving Home, found it very difficult to resume writing.

In Herbert's case, there is the extra mystery of why this new play should be so bad, so choked with theatrical solecism and crudeness that its author seems more like an unobservant novice than a playwright of some experience. Born of Medusa's Blood is something of an embarrassment, carelessly written, clumsily staged (by Herbert himself), often awkwardly acted. It is still playing at Theatre-in-Camera, in the Bathurst United Church, Bathurst and Lennox Sts., but to tiny audiences—23 people on Thursday night.

The play, which was reviewed in The Star by David McCaughna when it opened some weeks ago, shows obvious parallels to Fortune and Men's Eyes. The earlier play dealt with power, humiliation and homosexuality among prisoners. The new work deals with humiliation and defeat among the dejected regulars of a shabby Queen St. saloon.

Once again, Herbert is intrigued with the complementary rise and decline of innocence and experience. Born of Medusa's Blood shows the young innocent Polly becoming hardened and embittered, following in the tradition of the saloon's grande dame, Clio. (Fortune and Men's Eyes followed an almost identical process, as the new prisoner Smitty is indoctrinated both by the rough Rocky and the flamboyant Queenie.)

For Herbert, innocence is an illusory, transitory strength, while ravaged experience comes to assume an aura of ingenious sanctity.

Comic dialogue

Just as in Fortune and Men's Eyes the successful writing didn't lie with Herbert's sentimental pieties or melodramatic clichés but with the rough, violent, comic dialogue, so in the new play it is the elements of vitriolic harangue and open bitchiness that overshadow Herbert's platitudinous, bathetic observations on racial strife.

But the anger and insult don't represent a process of survival, as they did in Fortune and Men's Eyes. Instead, they are almost mechanical reflexes, without energy or life. As Clio, Jodie Drake acts in a heavily mannered style which might be appropriate for Queenie but which allows no emotional depth whatever.

Born of Medusa's Blood is almost, but not quite, a complete disaster. Its sole element of possibility springs from John Herbert's

ability to evoke a stylized, lurid, arcane world. The ambience of his characters here seems several steps down the evolutionary ladder from Fortune's prisoners, and Herbert's use of extremely artificial speech, black actors frequently in whiteface and a dreamlike languor suggests the threshold of an unfamiliar imaginative world. "Playtime in the night-nursery" is what one of the characters calls it.

Though the new play is far away from a realized artistic achievement, it leaves Herbert still in an open doorway. Perhaps it will be the third play that one must watch for.

Agnes Moorehead

ARRIVING: Those who know Agnes Moorehead only through her TV series may not realize what an extraordinary actress she has been. Miss Moorehead, who opens Monday at the O'Keefe Centre in Don Juan in Hell, once gave a film performance cherished by many as one of the greatest in U.S. movie history. In Orson Welles' The Magnificent Ambersons (1942), her characterization of the maiden aunt is astonishing in its impact. As film critic Pauline Kael says: "Agnes Moorehead just about belts you out of the theatre." This was great acting, but she was never able to build upon that base, either in theatre or in films. Her director in Don Juan, John Houseman, remarked that the U.S. theatre just didn't have a place for that kind of talent: "If Aggie had been in England, she'd be Dame Edith Evans by now."

OPENING: The Firehall Theatre opens its studio space, Second Stage, on Friday with a production of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, adapted from the medieval poem by Anne Tait, who has done some most interesting work in the past with staged adaptations of literary texts.

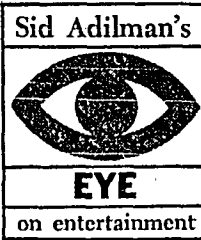
DOUBTING: Last week's New Yorker magazine carried a two-page, full-color ad for Ontario showing assorted scenes from the province's life. A skater. A snowmobiler. A dog-sled. Cocoa by the fireplace. A sleigh. A skier. Snow. The caption: "Friendly, familiar, foreign and near." It was, I admit, a bit foreign to Ontario dwellers as well—no cities, no arts, almost no people. What are we hiding?

CONCLUDING: 1972 has been a year of exhilarating theatrical expansion in Toronto with our small theatres consolidating their advances and new projects everywhere. The arrival of Toronto Free Theatre and the survival of the Playwrights' Co-Op are particularly heartening. The nature of theatre in Toronto has been revolutionized in a much shorter time than could have been imagined. There is energy, invention, activity and promise all around us. We must work to make it last. To all who toil for the theatre in Toronto, I extend my wishes for an even richer, rarer 1973.

What 1973 holds for entertainment... maybe

WHAT follows is in the time-honored tradition of dusting off a cloudy crystal ball. Here then is another eye-ful from the column which last year at this time predicted that Lorne Greene would continue to ride the range as Pa Cartwright throughout 1972 and beyond:

Leon Major will vacate a fulltime post at the St. Lawrence Arts Centre and the theatre along with O'Keefe Centre and the Ontario Censor Board will be searching for new men at the top... Cleely Tyson will become the first black to win an Oscar as best actress of the



Washington correspondent Don McNeil will head home for an executive posting; meanwhile, Knowlton Nash will seek his release as head of CBC-TV news and public affairs.

Two of Toronto's brightest and most successful club owners will merge their operations into a midtown spot tripling present seating capacities... Claude Jutra's feature movie Kamouraska, starring Genevieve Bujold, will sail ahead to rave notices and a large box office both in Canada and abroad... Laugh In and Flip Wilson? Both to be cancelled; the same for Front Page Challenge, Pig 'n' Whistle and Viewpoint... Yet another major CBC-TV executive producer will find his way more happily to CTV's more aggressive public affairs department... It will be bright notices for both the Stratford Festival's European and Russian tour and for the National Ballet of Canada's U.S. visit with Sleeping Beauty. Bright, that is, not unanimous raves... Paul Anka will be back at the Royal York Hotel Imperial Room.

CBC-TV variety programmers will come to their senses by headlining Juliette and Catherine McKinnon in separate short-term series, both to reap high ratings... Canadian nationality will be a deciding factor in selection of a new dean for York University's impressive fine arts faculty... After a fall election campaign, Pierre Trudeau will remain Canada's prime minister but by a bare majority.

Near the end of 1973, CITY-TV will lose its most visible newsmen, through a growing lack of interest on his part... Bill Glasco's Taragon Theatre will find solid support from Canada Council and from other sources, some of them unexpected... Last year's hope at CBC was for Jaina; the coming year's is for the National Dream, due to begin production in March at roughly equal Jaina's budget.

A veteran Canadian newspaper critic will make public his retirement to take effect early in 1974... Ross McLean could re-emerge as the head of a weekly CBC-TV public affairs series... Audiences at home for Canadian-made movies will double... Laurent Pléard and Lister Sinclair, already having impressed the CBC board of governors, will prove the strongest leadership team in the network's history... Feux Follets could tour nationally... Box office receipts will double at the Charlottetown



MOVE PREDICTED FOR ST. LAWRENCE CENTRE'S LEON MAJOR
Centre's artistic director is presently recuperating from a broken leg

Festival due in part to Prince Edward Island's Centennial Year celebrations which will generate more summer visitors than ever... More and more local theatres will turn to Quebec playwrights for vibrant stage fare... Lorne Greene? Well, he'll still be appearing on TV in the Bonanza reruns and in less-appreciated TV movie roles.

Don Messer will cease regular TV work... Al Hamel's Comedy Bag and The Beachcombers will disappear from the air without disapproval from TV viewers... Could

be, too, that Mary Tyler Moore will finally win an Emmy along with Maude... It's not likely that movie audiences will take to such historical fiction as the planned projects about Adolf Hitler and Martin Bormann—much the same way they are rejecting Young Winston... No new sound is seen for the rock music world and none either for pop buffs... Anne Murray will do a TV show in Russia... Massey Hall's sale will be announced—to a major developer who'll need the property for a gigantic downtown development opposite Eaton Centre.



MARY TYLER MOORE
An Emmy award finally?



CLAUDE JUTRA
Raves for his new films?



CATHERINE MCKINNON
Headlining own series?



KNOWLTON NASH
Will he ask to leave?

Record mini-reviews

Her new album reveals a different Joni Mitchell

Joni Mitchell: For The Roses. Asylum (WEA) SD 5057.

For The Roses is actually Alberta native Joni Mitchell's second album since the poignant Blue. The other was a recording of her Feb. 23 Carnegie Hall concert but it was never released—she didn't like it. Joni should like For The Roses—it's a masterful collection of original songs—but its appeal doesn't stem from the known things that have made her a folk hero.

She had been known for beauty of voice and lyric, smoothness of styling. For The Roses is utterly unsettling, even disturbing. It's not for unsympathetic ears seeking melodic bliss. The album jangles the nerves with its sadness and undercurrent of strife.

Tension ripples through the 11 songs, not so much in the sharp words but in her phrasing, in the subtle harshness of her moods. She's more sophisticated but paradoxically her development has fractured her sense of direction, her grasp on freedom, reflecting a society that's losing its sanity. The moving lyrics of Banquet reflect that, while Cold Blue Steel and Sweet Fire explores in rich images the lure and trap of drug addiction.

Three pieces including the title song are witty yet bitter comments on the transience of both love and the vicious music world where idols are built in weeks, smashed in days.

Joni is a mirror reflection of the contradictions of writer Alvin Toffler's Future Shock world. She delves into problems yet is unable to answer questions—even while she seeks permanence and security she yearns for freedom. For The Roses is not a pleasing album but it's an important, stimulating one.

The Immediate (UK) Series, Daffodil (Capitol).

Immediate was an English record company founded in late 1964 by former Rolling Stones producer Andrew Loog Oldham and administrator Tony Calder. Oldham did his job well, producing 32 albums with artists who later became rock superstars. Calder didn't and ran Immediate into bankruptcy by early 1969.

Toronto's Daffodil label recently bought Canadian release rights for all 32 albums. Except for three albums, none will be available for years in the U.S. because release rights are tied up in U.S. courts (Immediate sold exclusive rights to

two different companies, Epic and United Artists, within a week). Daffodil plans to release all 32 in bunches of four or five over the next two years. The first four were out this month.

The Small Faces: Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake. The Immediate (UK) Series, Daffodil SBA 16015.

This delightful album is one of the reasons rock fans in Canada should be happy that Immediate recordings are now available. The first side, including the title song, is a lost cause but the second side is great. The Small Faces (now called the Faces) had Steve Marriott as lead singer then, not Rod Stewart, so there's no resemblance to their sound today.

But the 18½-minute second side is rock rendered with style, wit and

intelligence. It's a story told in six songs, about Happiness Stan who searches for happiness in a musical fantasyland—and finds it.

The Nice: Nice. Immediate (UK) Series, Daffodil SBA 16016.

This album is dreadfully boring, as is almost everything involving keyboard butcher Keith Emerson. Nice was recorded half at Trident Studios in London and half live at Fillmore East in New York, but both sides are little more than egoistic gibberish.

Humble Pie: Town and Country. Immediate (UK) Series, Daffodil SBA 16014.

Humble Pie recorded shortly before the bankruptcy, two albums for Immediate—Town and Country and

As Safe as Yesterday Is. Both have just been released in the U.S. as one album set called Lost and Found, but only Town and Country is out in Canada so far.

The group was formed around former Small Face Steve Marriott as a heavy rock band influenced by

blues. Town and Country is perhaps their greatest achievement although their lead-footed albums of '71 and '72 have been hailed by some as super-group material. The album is balanced, rocking and intelligible—a fine effort.

—BRUCE KIRKLAND

BEST-SELLING POP SINGLES

This list reflects the best selling popular records and albums for the past week and is compiled by The Star with the help of seven major dealers.

Title	Artist	Label	Last Weeks	week on list
1. Me & Mrs. Jones	Billy Paul	Columbia	6	4
2. Papa Was A Rollin' Stone	Temptations	Amplex	4	6
3. Clair	Gilbert O'Sullivan	London	1	7
4. You Are So Vain	Carly Simon	WEA	10	3
5. Rockin' Pneumonia	Johanny Rivers	Capitol	7	4
6. If You Don't Know Me By Now	Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes	Columbia	2	6
7. It Never Rains In Southern California	Albert Hammond	Columbia	3	7
8. Ventura Highway	America	WEA	5	5
9. Sweet Surrender	Bread	WEA	23	2
10. I'm Stoned in Love With You	Stylistics	RCA	8	4
11. Last Song	Edward Bear	Capitol	12	4
12. Daytime-Nighttime	Keith Hampshire	A & M	9	7
13. Crocodile Rock	Elton John	NCA	22	4
14. Summer Breeze	Seals & Crofts	WEA	11	9
15. I'm Going To Love You Too	Terry Jacks	London	16	2
16. I Can See Clearly Now	Johnny Nash	Columbia	18	12
17. Something's Wrong With Me	Austin Roberts	RCA	15	8
18. Your Mama Don't Dance	Loggins & Messina	Columbia	—	—
19. Living in the Past	Jethro Tull	WEA	—	—
20. You Are What I Am	Gordon Lightfoot	WEA	25	2
21. I'll Be Around	Spinners	WEA	13	8
22. I Am Woman	Helen Reddy	Capitol	20	14
23. Operator	Jim Croce	RCA	19	2
24. You Ought To Be With Me	Al Green	London	21	3
25. In My Life	Foot In Colwater	Capitol	—	—

BEST-SELLING POP ALBUMS

Title	Artist	Label	Last Weeks	week on list
1. Catch Bull at 4	Cat Stevens	A & M	1	10
2. Old Dan's Record	Gordon Lightfoot	WEA	2	9
3. Close To The Edge	Yes	WEA	2	8
4. Living In The Past	Jethro Tull	WEA	5	5
5. Caravanserai	Santana	Columbia	6	6
6. Summer Breeze	Seals & Crofts	WEA	4	4
7. My Best To You	Donny Osmond	Polydor	—	—
8. Sunny Days	Lighthouse	GRT	8	3
9. Guess Who Live	Guess Who	RCA	—	8
10. New Joe Cocker	Joe Cocker	A & M	—	—



CANADIAN FOLKSINGER JONI MITCHELL
New album is a masterful, but different, collection of songs



AGNES MOOREHEAD AND EDWARD MULHARE
Stars of Don Juan in Hell, at the O'Keefe Centre Monday